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LIKE WHITE ON RICE:
ASIANNESS, WHITENESS, AND IDENTITY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLE

LIST OF APPENDICES

ABSTRACT

The primary goal of this study is to examine the intersection between Whiteness and Asianness from the perspective of Asian Americans in order to acknowledge ways in which racial consciousness relates to communicative patterns and behavior. This primarily method is intensive-interviews of forty 1.5- and second-generation Asian Americans, ages 19 to 59, living in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area, including those with Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese ethnic, national backgrounds. Surprisingly, most participants have never heard of the term model minority. Some who understand it embrace it whereas others do not. Asian Americans describe the performativity of their racial-ethnic identity through Twinkie/Banana, Whitewash, Chinesey, Azian, and FOBs. Informants equate Twinkie, banana, and Whitewash as "yellow on the outside, White on the inside." Some participants self-identify as a banana, Twinkie, or Whitewashed and offer complex reasons for doing so such as racial melancholia. Lastly, the participants present emergent ethnic discourse on FOBs (Fresh Off the Boat), Azians, and Chinesey—terms indicating differences within Asian American groups. The results indicate identity is a relational, discursive process situated in power and history, and subsequently reified in the body. Unlike Whites who create their own racial and ethnic discourses, Asian/Americans must compete and negotiate between the dominant racialized rhetoric and emergent ethnic discourse. If the dominant majority is creating the public perceptions of Asianness, it is impossible *not* to talk about Whiteness when analyzing Asianness in the United States.

CHAPTER I

ASIANNESS AND WHITENESS:

AN INTRODUCTION

You might want to balance us out with another more chinesy/asian fabulous couple. We're pretty white-washed.

—Russell, second-generation Chinese American, San Francisco Bay Area

While researching Asian/American[1] language usage and identity, I asked several of my Asian American friends from San Francisco, California to participate. One of them, Russell, replied with the above. The response implied that Russell and his life partner, Lucy, were not as "Chinesy/Asian" as another couple and instead "white-washed."[2] They were, therefore, not ideal candidates for representative interviews on Asian American identity and language use in the United States. I was surprised for a number of reasons. Russell and Lucy were both second-generation Chinese Americans who met while actively participating in a predominantly second-generation Chinese American, religious group. They grew up in a neighborhood with a high concentration of Asians, and went to schools and universities with mostly Asians. They often chatted with me about attending Chinese cultural events with family members. They have strong ties and respect for their parents and their parents' immigrant culture. From my point of view, their behavior, choice in partners, friends, education, neighborhood choice, and lifestyle were common narratives of many Asian Americans who embraced their Asian ethnicity and cultural heritage. Yet their self-identification was anything but Asian or Chinesy. I wonder what the self-identification signifies of their Asian American identity, and how that self-identification relates to Whiteness.[3]

In this case, identities are a combination of experiences and perceptions. Their definitions of Asianness (e.g., "Chinesy/Asian") and Whiteness (e.g., "White-washed") signify evolving and dynamic identities. My research examines discourses of Asianness

and Whiteness among Asian Americans living in the San Francisco Bay Area (high concentration and population of Asians) and the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area (predominantly White populated area) of the United States. The goal of the examination is to understand how close to or far from Whiteness are Asian Americans, and how this situated sense reflects in various Asian American identities.

The link between Asian American identities and Whiteness in the United States are present to some extent in the literature on Asian American scholarship. Central motifs to the scholarship relate to the model minority myth, Asian American identity development models, and the notion of Ethnic/Other. Though these are not all the motifs, they provide gateways to discussing Asianness and Whiteness in identity scholarship. The first motif indicates that Whiteness is an oppressive feature that ties to the construction and reification of the model minority myth in the United States. The model minority myth is the construct that Asians are a "model" race in that they achieve success despite racism, prejudice, and systemic oppression (e.g., Chou & Feagin, 2008; S. J. Lee, 1996; Suzuki, 2002). Asian/American financial and educational successes are due to a good work ethic, hard work (part of a good work ethic), strong family ties, and respect for education (F. H. Wu, 2002). Often times, voices of the dominant White culture imply that these characteristics are intrinsic to Asian culture. Moreover, these characteristics are often applied broadly to all groups with Asian phenotype, despite economic and educational statistics to the contrary (Okihiro, 1994). Asian Americans perform so well that they are supposedly, "outwhiting Whites" in college admissions, aptitude tests, and income (F. H. Wu, 2002). Scholars largely believe the dominant White culture creates and perpetuates the myth to further oppress and shame Blacks and

civil rights activists protesting against systemic injustices. Some Asian Americans believe they emulate the myth and firmly believe its truth (P. Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, & Lin, 1998; Zhou, 2004). The myth leads to other ways of describing Asians as "honorary Whites," "new Jews," or "new Whites" (Liu, 1998; F. H. Wu, 2002). Just as Jews and other immigrant groups (e.g., Italians, Irish, and Eastern Europeans) have grown over time to be perceived as equal in status to Whites despite persecution, Asians (supposedly) follow in that path toward White assimilation. The model minority myth is one way of saying Asians have the hope of becoming White. Scholars reviewed but not thoroughly examined how this myth became a part of the identities of Asian Americans as a distinguishing element in Whiteness and Asianness.

The second motif involves Whiteness as a component that inhibits Asian Americans from developing strong, confident Asian American identities in the United States. A representation of this perspective is the Asian American Identity Development Theory (AAID) by Jean Kim (2001) where Whiteness is seen as restrictive and negative. White identification is the second stage of the model. In this stage, Asian Americans living in predominantly White areas experience Active White Identification, whereas those living in predominantly mixed-race or Asian areas employ Passive White Identification. In the former, Asians may feel more connected and similar to Whites. They rather be seen as White than Asian and do not have meaningful relationships with other Asian Americans. In the latter condition of Passive White Identification, even though Asians do not openly believe they are similar to Whites, they "experience periods of wishful thinking and fantasizing about being White" (Jean Kim, 2001, p. 75). Some may never grow out of this stage if they continue to believe they can integrate

successfully with Whites (Jean Kim, 2001). This motif shows how Whiteness and Asianness converge through identity, especially of Asian Americans unable to exit the stage of White identification. The problematic nature of this motif is that it shows Whiteness as a barrier and not an evolving feature of identity.

The third motif is that Asian Americans traditionally struggle with being displaced in societal discussions, policy, and education, and are often referred to as being foreign. Asian Americans as well as people of non-White racial-ethnic groups feel alienated from the dominant culture, especially from Whites. This idea, Ethnic/Other, is analyzed to some extent in psychoanalytic and postcolonial examinations (Bascara, 2006; Lowe, 1996). Some scholars identify this theme concerning Asians and Pacific Islanders through Orientalism (e.g., M. Kim & Chung, 2005; R. G. Lee, 1999; Ma, 2000). Orientalism is the duality between the Orient and the Occident (Said, 1979). The Occident (the West) creates a discourse and fantasy about the Orient (the non-West). The Occidental distances itself from the Orient and appropriates certain ideas and thoughts from the Orient to further this idea. This fantasy and discourse are Orientalism. This duality can be framed in different ways such as Dominant or Non-Dominant cultures, Subject and Object, and Ethnic/Other and White. Ethnic/Other also relates to immigration discourse. For instance, a chronological look at immigration and citizenship law shows consistent increasing restrictions from 1860's to World War II on the ability of Asians to legally come to the U.S., to obtain U.S. citizenship, and to be accepted into United States society (Ancheta, 2006; Hing, 1993). By reducing opportunities for immigration and citizenship, this furthers the notion of Asians as Other and different. This difference through separation creates spaces for

material and aesthetic forms of culture that resist assimilation (Lowe, 1996). “American of Asian descent remains the symbolic ‘alien,’ the metonym for Asia who by definition cannot be imagined as sharing in America” (Lowe, 1996, p. 6). The Ethnic/Other provides the impetus for the perceptions that Asians are “forever foreigners” to dominant White society.

These themes lead me to ask the following questions: How do Asian Americans living in the United States perceive, communicate, and perform their racial-ethnic identities? In what ways are Asian American perceptions, communication, and behaviors intertwined with Whiteness? These two major questions then lead to the following related ones: How do Asian Americans talk about their identities to others of the same race and ethnicity and to others outside their race and ethnicity? In what ways do Asian Americans see themselves in terms of race and Whiteness? How do Asian Americans identify themselves in relation to other races? How do Asian Americans negotiate identities between the ascription of labels by others and their self-identification? By exploring Asianness and Whiteness through these questions, I will address how these three themes intersect and diverge.

The primary goal is to examine the intersection between Whiteness and Asianness from the perspective of Asian/Americans in order to acknowledge ways in which racial consciousness relates to communicative patterns and behavior, and societal change. I study these themes by examining discourses of Whiteness and Asianness through intensive-interviews of Asian Americans living in the San Francisco Bay Area and Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area. Asian American participants include those of Chinese, South Korean, Asian Indian, Vietnamese, and Filipino background. By

interviewing Asian Americans from a broad spectrum, I can observe the intersections of pan-ethnicity in perceptions of Asianness and Whiteness, and bridge the patterns of similarities between and among ethnic groups (Espiritu, 1992; Min & Kim, 2000; Otis, 2001; J. Z. Park, 2008; Shinagawa, 2005). More importantly, I can provide the ways and means dominant racialized talk among Asian Americans pervade and coexist with ethnic talk. Asian Americans are referred to as racialized ethnics in the United States; they are portrayed as one race based on crude and arbitrary phenotypical traits, whereas within the community, differences are based on ethnicity and national origins (Kibria, 2002; Tuan, 1998). Even though many scholars disagree with the melding of many ethnic groups into one racial category, Asian American scholars rarely look on Asian Americans' collective talk on race. Asian Americans have a pan-Asian identity, and over time, the differences between ethnicity and national origin subside to the overarching dominant ideals of pan-Asian cohesion (Espiritu, 1992; Min & Kim, 2000; Otis, 2001; J. Z. Park, 2008; Shinagawa, 2005). In this way, my focus is on the overarching theme of Asianness from a pan-Asian outlook.

The discourse emerges through rich points—phrases and ideas with complex meanings. The entextualization of rich points, phrases that are lifted from one context, analyzed, and reframed when utilized outside that context (Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Blommaert, 2005), offers a nuanced understanding of the everyday perceptions and communication of Asian Americans.

The space or context in which one is racially, ethnically, and culturally socialized is highly significant in the dynamic nature of identity (Jean Kim, 2001). The San Francisco Bay Area has a strong tie to Asian immigration history (reviewed in more

detail in Chapter III), and both historically and currently has a substantial and large population of Asian/Americans. Not only does San Francisco have multiple generations of Asian Americans, but also is still a "gateway" city for recent immigrants from Asia. Its ethnic ties are ripe with pan-Asian cultural intersections. The Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area historically did not have an Asian/American population, but in recent decades primarily due to immigration, an Asian/American population has emerged (e.g., Browning, 2003; Thúy, 2004), albeit not as large as that of the San Francisco Bay Area. Since the Oklahoma City Metropolitan area is populated primarily by White Americans, Asian Americans living in Oklahoma have differential access to ethnic communities. Some create their own racial and cultural groups, while others choose to primarily associate with other racial ethnic groups such as Whites, Blacks, Native Americans, and/or Latino/as. The differences of these two spaces raise the question if one can portray Asianness and Whiteness as relative to the places one inhabits. For instance, Asianness and Whiteness can converge and diverge depending on the positioning of the individual within these spaces. The complexity of these spaces allows for a richer discussion of identity negotiation.

To these ends, this project focuses on individual, lived experiences as voiced by 1.5 and second-generation Asian Americans. Chapters II and III provide an overview of the relevant literature and scholarship regarding racial-ethnic identities, Whiteness, and Asianness. Chapter II briefly addresses essentialist, social constructionist, and critical realist constructions of identity and highlights key threads from this identity scholarship. I also provide working definitions of culture, ethnicity, and race. From there, I look at works on Whiteness and question its symbolic value to the greater sense

of race. In Chapter III, I explore common dominant perceptions of Asian Americans in various forms of media. To complete this literature review, I discuss Asian/American history through immigration laws and emigration/immigration patterns.

Chapter IV details the research methods and procedures of intensive-interviewing and participant-observation for this project. I provide demographic information regarding the forty participants. I discuss how the research sites of San Francisco Bay Area and the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area are fascinating places for analysis. In addition to detailing recruitment procedures, I offer information regarding interview contexts and questions, and field notes resulting from participant-observation and the compilation of publically available resources (i.e., Asian/American-focused magazines and websites). I also address the process of analyzing the audio transcriptions of the interviews and observational field notes. Lastly, I provide a self-reflective analysis of my role and position in this project as researcher and participant.

I next present three results chapters from a spectrum ranging from a racialized, dominant discourse to an emergent, ethnic discourse. The first results chapter, Chapter V, starts from the point of dominant, racialized discourse of Asian/Americans as the model minority. The second result chapter, Chapter VI, provides the contested terrain between the dominant majority discourses of acting White to the ethnic discourses of Asianness. The last results chapter, Chapter VII, offers the emergent ethnic talk of intraethnic differences and behaviors of Asian/American subgroups.

More specifically, Chapter V addresses a common stereotype of Asian/Americans as model minorities. The participants provide their views on Asian/Americans being academically inclined and passive. Though the informants

simultaneously reject and accept the model minority stereotype, the stereotype is not as important to their racial-ethnic identities as scholarship would indicate. I engage with the literature on model minority as a way to juxtapose the voices of the informants.

Participants in Chapter VI provide their voices on acting White, Whitewashing and perceptions of racialized terms such as Banana/Twinkie. Participants' views vary as they self-describe and label others using these terms. These descriptions reflect theoretical notions of performativity, symbolic group disassociations/associations, and racial melancholia.

Chapter VII presents and analyzes emergent terms that participants use to express ethnic differentiation, including FOBs (Fresh Off the Boat), Azians, and Chinesey. These terms did not signify dominant racial perceptions of Asians—Asian/American vs. White, but how Asian/Americans address themselves as they simultaneously accept and resist a marginalized identity in the United States.

I conclude my dissertation in Chapter VIII with a summary of findings, and how these findings answer or illuminate my research questions. I identify the relationship between the findings and broader questions on identity negotiation and racial-ethnic discourse. Specifically, I discuss how central notions of identity are evident in the informants' voices, especially when the voices are viewed as texts and embodiments. Finally, I provide opportunities in the future for researchers to grasp a richer understanding of Asian Americans.

Chapter I Endnotes

[1]"Asian" in the 2000 U.S. census encompassed people with "origins in any of the original people of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent" which included "Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam" (J. S. Barnes & Bennett, 2002, p. 1). Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPI) lobbied successfully to be considered a separate racial category from Asian in the 2000 Census due to their varying cultural and socioeconomic differences from groups under the Asian category (Lai & Arguelles, 2003). Even so, much information on Asians continue to include data on Pacific Islanders in hope that they "act together as a unified social and political force" or perhaps because of their history of collective resistance (Lai & Arguelles, 2003, p. 3). In this way, publications such as Lai and Arguelles (2003) employ Asian Pacific Americans (APA) to reference both Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. In this work, "Asian/American" indicates Asians (which can be identified as recent immigrants or those individuals heavily identified with their Asian racial-ethnic heritage or group) *and* Asian Americans (which can be indicative of second-generation, multi-racial individuals, or persons of Asian descent who choose to claim United States citizenship and/or culture). If the work specifically addresses Asian Americans, I label it as such. "Asian/American and Pacific Islanders" references Asians, Asian Americans, and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

[2] Whitewashed is one word and capitalized in this entire work even though the quoted text is lower case and hyphenated (white-washed). The capitalization of Whitewashed differentiates the racial-ethnic colloquial term from the painting technique of whitewashing where one utilizes a process to create a lighter, white aesthetic on wood and paintable products.

[3] I capitalize White and Whiteness when referring to race and ethnicity just as I capitalize Asian, Black, and Hispanic. Beverly Tatum (1997) also capitalizes White whereas other scholars such as Tim Wise (2005) and Robert Jensen (1998, 1999) do not. The capitalization of White/Whiteness is highly contested. Some argue that by capitalizing White, scholars give more power to White race and ethnicity. Others like me believe that by capitalizing White, scholars acknowledge that White is a racial-ethnic group, and due to this recognition, people can appropriately interrogate and deconstruct Whiteness.

CHAPTER II

IDENTITY AND WHITENESS

IN SCHOLARSHIP

Asianness and Whiteness intersect in examinations on racial-ethnic identity. Scholarship on culture, race, ethnicity, and identity is rich and broad. Many disciplines such as communication, psychology, philosophy, sociology, law, and anthropology participate in the discourse on these topics. This chapter provides an interdisciplinary review of literature on race, ethnicity, identity, and whiteness. The chapter is organized accordingly: the first section briefly describes perspectives and central conceptualizations of identity. The second section offers definitions of culture, race, and ethnicity. The final section provides an overview of Whiteness and its connections to race and identity scholarship.

Negotiating Identity: Constructions of Self

Identity is an elusive, slippery subject. There is no consensus on its definition, distinction, or boundary. Identity is multidisciplinary; a strong broad literature spans anthropology, communication, philosophy, psychology, and sociology. Identity is associated with and importantly linked to race, ethnicity, culture, gender, nationality, sexuality, ability, class, and the "self." Among the discourse are strong debates from the essentialist, social constructionist, and critical realist standpoints. I focus on these three because they provide a good overarching synopsis of identity, even though there are many other perspectives, such as deconstructionism and cultural politics of difference. My goal is not to deconstruct every aspect of essentialism, social constructivism, and critical realism, but rather to utilize representative authors from these respective perspectives to provide a summary of their viewpoints from which to draw central ideas of identity, race, ethnicity, and culture.

Essentialism

The concept of essentialism has basis in Aristotelian logic that things have essences (Aristotle, 1952). When reducing a phenomenon to its first principle, one arrives at its essence. Deconstruct an apple to its first principle and one has what made it "is." The difficulty arrives when applying essences to humans, humanity, and abstract concepts. For instance, what is the essence of justice, or in this case, what is the essence of identity? With the advent of technology, essence in identity and race equates to DNA, biology, heredity, blood, and genetics (Wade, 2002). An essence is not what makes humans "is," but rather, a deterministic attitude that biology or genetics determines identity, race, and ethnicity. Essentialist identity then refers to a priori substance that makes us who we are. Handler (1994), for instance, notes that in common literature on identity, nations are "imagined as natural objects or things in the real world. As such, that is, as natural things, they have a unique identity, and that identity can be defined by reference to precise spatial, temporal, and cultural boundaries" (p. 29).

Essentialist perspective views identity as primordial (pre-existing). Clifford Geertz (1973) refers to primordial attachment as, "one that stems from the 'givens'…or…assumed 'givens'…of blood, speech, custom, and so on" (p. 259). It is the "tie" to kin and others. Geertz recognizes the often times "overpowering, coerciveness" of these givens (p. 259). Identity is a given of social existence which varies from group to group, person to person, and time. Blood is a very important feature in essentialism (Sturm, 2002). For instance, Native American/American Indian tribes and groups base affiliation on blood quantum. The politics of the physical person

through blood and heredity intertwine with racial binds regardless of custom and everyday affiliation and association with the tribe (Sturm, 2002).

Identities have core features and unique properties. In this way, one identity is distinct and comparable to other identities. Identity is spatial in reference. For example, a nation spatially references a geographic region. Identity also binds to time—one can find its connections and linkages through a history of people. Due to this, essentialists study identity objectively. Essentialism also indicates who has the right to speak for or of identity. Because I am Asian American, I through an essentialist perspective may dissect Asian American identity with more authority than a White or Latina American.

The main argument in neo-essentialism is that even though identity may be a social construction, the world does not view identity in those terms. Because the world still sees essentialism, scholars and activists engage in identity politics, utilizing strategic essentialism to achieve their goals of equality and dialog (McRobbie, 1985). Strategic essentialism is the use of essentialist arguments in public policy issues (e.g., “I have the right so speak on environmental racism because I am a Native American and personally have been affected by environmental racism.”). In this context, essentialism is a tool to achieve truly equal opportunities and to fight against systemic racism.

Social Constructivism

According to social constructivism, identity forms through and in social interaction and dialog. Identity is not a priori; core features do not constitute unique properties of individuals or collectives. Identity creates, modifies, and sustains itself through human interactions, systems of power, time, and space. The classic authors often quoted in this tradition are Berger and Luckmann (1966) who espouse all human

knowledge and reality are maintained, modified, and even created through conversation. Furthermore, identity situates itself in a dialectical relationship with society, working in conjunction with social structures and institutions. Berger and Luckmann (1966)'s work provides a starting point from which many social constructionists embark. The symbolic nature of identity develops more in "imagined communities" and nationality (Anderson, 1991). "Nation-ness" is a limited and sovereign imagined community. In our imagined community, we never meet our fellow members face-to-face. Notions of the imagined community come from the plethora of print media, drawing individuals together in the ideology of "nation-ness." Despite this, we sense the nation as a community based on comradeship.

Identity therefore lies in the imaginary, virtual notions with loose ties to space and time, but not always with roots in these areas. Just as nationness is developed in this way, identity is a construction through dialog either through the media or though day-to-day interactions. Even though identity is dynamic, individuals focus on the language or significance of labels to differentiate themselves from others. Though a range of beliefs exists in social constructivism, central to this perspective is its anti-essentialist rhetoric and the basis of reality as socially, humanly derived.

Critical Realism

The critical realist perspective reacts to the negative positioning of identity politics and deconstructionism. Critical realists attack identity politics for a lack of generated empirical knowledge and fragmentation of subjective experiences. With this in mind, critical realists reframe subjective experiences as "based on the objective location of people in society" (Alcoff & Mohanty, 2006, p. 5). Critical realists

disapprove of absolute claims in identity but see a loose, socially approved reality from which individuals and groups occupy. Critical realists strive to make identity politics analyzable and objective (Alcoff & Mohanty, 2006). Their goal is to collaborate in the "third space" for social rights such as socioeconomic equality and self-representation.

Critical realists define identity as "'socially significant and context-specific ideological constructs that nevertheless refer in non-arbitrary (if partial) ways to verifiable aspects of the social world'" (Moya, 2006, pp. 96-97). Identity is not essential, but viewed by society as reality. Scholars should carefully examine identity as not merely descriptive but "causal explanations of our social locations in a world that is shaped by such locations" (Alcoff & Mohanty, 2006, p. 6). For realists, identities are frameworks that make sense of the world. Furthermore, critical realists explore "identity in direct relation to social structures, noting how social structures configure, condition, limit, and constrain agency and never forgetting that agency has the potential to transform social structures" (Sánchez, 2006, p. 32). They position themselves differently from Stuart Hall—though they agree that identity is discursive, they reject that discourse is the only medium for identity formation. Their contention is that not every person *equally* participates and creates social structures and reality (Sánchez, 2006). Critical realists offer an emerging perspective to identity and identity politics by emphasizing that material reality is much more tangible and objective than deconstructionism contends.

Central Conceptualizations of Identity

These three perspectives provide a summation of the study of identity. Though I align myself more with the social constructionist perspective, often times my research

falls under strategic essentialism and critical realism. To further the goal of equality and opportunity, it seems better to frame my work as objective like the critical realists, rather than subjective. Other times, however, I embrace the dialogic component of identity to negotiate disparaging vocalizations of experience. To unify the fragmented aspects of the application of identity research, I claim that identity has the following six components. From these six elements, identity is a relational, discursive process situated in power and history, and subsequently reified in the body.

First, identity constitutes itself in multiple constructs. It not only deals with multifaceted paradigms and disciplines, identity works with race, ethnicity, sexuality, ability, and class. Individuals have multiple identities, be it ethnic, national, or gendered (Barvosa, 2008). These multiple identities or constructs intersect and create self-consciousness. When scholars only discuss one aspect of identity such as gender, they lose the prominent roles of other concepts. Sanchez (2006) provides an example, "class cannot be the *only* positioning that matters; one is always situated within interconnected and interrelated gender, racial/ethnic, and sexual social structures as well and subject to a network of social relations linking these various structures" (p. 35). One cannot talk about identity without mentioning other concepts. On the other hand, these concepts though important may be overwhelming to discuss at once. Scholars choose which concepts to bring to the forefront in order to adequately and appropriately explain views on identity.

Second, identity is relational and not a bounded self. We become more in tune with identity as we function in relationships with others. Identity transforms, molds, and modifies when interacting with systems, institutions, other individuals, groups, spaces,

and ideas. Geertz (1973) notes, “Human thought is consummately social; social in its origins, social in its functions, social in its forms, social in its applications. At base, thinking is a public activity—its natural habitat is the houseyard, the marketplace, and the town square” (p. 360). Geertz in this statement observes the implicit need for everyday interactions in formulating culture. Identity does not live in a vacuum.

The relational aspect of identity is our associations and disassociations. For example, Rockquemore and Brunsma (2008) note that identity partially forms in relation to the dominant majority and through interaction with others,

> Identity development is a process in which individuals understand themselves and others, as well as evaluate their self in relation to others…Identities, as validated self-understandings, depend upon confirmation from others in order to be developed and maintained (p. 20-21).

Identity is dis-identification, part of how one sees oneself, part of pushing away (de Lauretis, 1990). Identities are “the nonessential and evolving products that emerge from the dialectic between how subjects of consciousness identify themselves and how they are identified by others” (Moya, 2006, pp. 96-97). Identities are ascribed by the self as well as by others, a negotiation of “being” when interacting with others. It is partly how one sees itself through the eyes of others (DuBois, 1903/2005). For instance, Kibria (2002) found that individuals differed in identity, and public and private affiliations based on their acceptance or rejection of being Asian American. This affected their experiences and choices in college such as joining Asian American student organizations and forming pan-Asian social groups.

Identity is not passive—in other words, institutions do not always construct identity. Instead, identity modulates with the surrounding world and in its institutions. Individuals “in forging their self-identities, no matter how local their specific contexts

of action…contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications" (Giddens, 1991). Hall (1988) provides a voice for systemic relational labels. Labels such as "Black" signify all non-White ethnicities and races. Identities are constantly affected and effecting institutions. Identities are not only relational to others; they interact with those positions.

Third, identity is a process deeply embedded in history. When discussing identity, deconstructing the language of historical knowledge of these terms allows us to see how identity maps over time and space. The narratives and stories before us provide context and structure of identity. For Heidegger, "consciousness was not separate from the world and instead was a formation of historically lived human existence" (Polkinghorne, 1983, p. 205). Identity provides references to the past. S. Hall (1996) comments, "Precisely because identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse, we need to understand them as produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practices, by specific enunciative strategies" (p. 4). By analyzing histories one can better understand the "becoming" rather than the "being" of identity (S. Hall, 1996).

Fourth, identity situates itself in webs of power. Identity intertwines with socioeconomic, political, and historical power. When one relates to another be it the dominant majority or not, one's identity becomes apparent. The awareness of difference and inequality forms identity. Comaroff and Comaroff (1992) explain,

> The emergence of ethnic groups and the awakening of ethnic consciousness are…the product of historical processes which structure relations of inequality between discrete social entities. They are… the social and cultural correlates of a specific mode of articulation between groupings, in which one extends its dominance over another by some form of coercion (pp. 55-56).

Identity is subjugated knowledge, in which the historical buries, disguises, and/or strips to formalize ideology and discourse. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (2002a) discusses how society disciplines through power structures. Corporeal punishment (e.g., torture, prison) establishes the boundaries of the "normal" body as in what physically hurts and bleeds. Corporeal punishment persuades the *body*; however, what is even more persuasive is power that coerces the mind through societal institutionalization. Foucault furthers understanding of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon in a disciplinary society. Prisoners live in glass walls in the tower of the panopticon. Those in the tower can view the other prisoners where presumably a guard watches all their actions. The prisoners, however, never really "see" the guard. Since they do not see the guard, every prisoner becomes every prisoner's guard. Power is "visible but unverifiable" to Jeremy Benthem (Foucault, 2002a, p. 212). Power does not belong to the individual but to the ideology of fear. The prisoners view their prison within the institution as truth.

Truth and power are interwoven; people in power define truth (Foucault, 2002b). In this production of truth as power, one must question that production of truth. "It's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power (which would be a chimera, for truth is already power) but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time" (Foucault, 2002b, p. 210). In his *Two Lectures* on power and knowledge, Foucault (1980) expands his description of power. Power shapes truth, becomes a commodity, and is in social relationships. Power, such as identity, is commonplace, and subsequently hegemonic discourse. One cannot define or explain identity without the

surrounding power structures. Identity positions within the political and the personal. The power is in the discourse that shapes the sense of subject. The discourse is powerful and based on the positioning of identity, explained further below.

Fifth, identity is discursive. Hall (1988, 1992, 1996) reminds us that identities are narratives, stories that constantly change. “My own view is that events, relations, structures do have conditions of existence and real effects, outside the sphere of the discursive; but that it is only within the discursive and subject to its specific conditions, limits and modalities, do they have or can they be constructed within meaning” (S. Hall, 1988, p. 27). Discourse gives existence and reality meaning. Language constitutes multiple realities.

These realities do not live in a vacuum—holding fluidities, multiplicities, and textualities. Acceptance of “noisy” interpretations of identity allows us to co-exist in one society, allowing for complexity. Bakhtin’s notion of heteroglossia illuminates “simultaneity” of dialogues in text, in conversation, in knowledge—the voices of all the characters in a text along with the author and the situation. Thus, when we combine language and culture together, the context, speakers, and behavior provide a cacophony of knowledge and identity. Heteroglossia is:

> a situation, the situation of a subject surrounded by the myriad responses he or she might make at any particular point, but any one of which must be framed in a specific discourse selected from the teeming thousands available. Heteroglossia is a way of conceiving the world as made up of a roiling mass of language, each of which has its own distinct formal markers….The idea of heteroglossia comes as close as possible to conceptualizing a locus where the great centripetal and centrifugal forces that shape discourse can meaningfully come together (Holquist, 1990, pp. 69-70).

Heteroglossia provides a reason why different worldviews exist in one language, and why multiple languages have distinct worldviews. If heteroglossia exists, we

constantly achieve dialogism with our history, with our biology, with the layered experiences of each event, and with our identit(ies). With each world, we call upon its multiple definitions, its past, its relation to the here and now, and the anticipation of the future. It exists in and out of time. It eliminates the need for false dichotomies like universalism versus relativism, objectivism versus subjectivism. With this notion of heteroglossia, we see a need for its application to our understanding of perspectives, views, and being. Therefore, when relating to identity, they are fluid and linked. Attention has been garnered for "the construction in language of models for construing experience" known sometimes as "folk theories about the world, carried in everyday, ordinary language" or as Lakoff would note "idealized cognitive models" (Foley, 1997, p. 179).

Language as identity is the "framework" we use to understand the unfamiliar, guiding our cognitive structures, assumptions, and behaviors. In essence, "folk theories or models constitute people's understanding of phenomena" (Foley, 1997, p. 181). Metaphors are an important part of understanding the world, relating others to it and a source of "embodied experience." Metaphors are a powerful example of the tie between language and identity.

As de Lauretis (1990) notes, identity is displacement from a "home" or safe place. To be in a place of flux is difficult and painful. This

> dis-placement and a self-dis-placement: leaving or giving up a place that is safe, that is 'home'—physically, emotionally, linguistically, epistemologically—for another place that is unknown and risky, that is not only emotionally but conceptually other; a place of discourse from which speaking and thinking are at best tentative, uncertain, unguaranteed. But the leaving is not a choice: one could not live there in the first place. Thus, both aspects of dis-placement, the personal and the conceptual, are painful: they are either, and often both, the cause and/or the result of pain, risk, and a real stake with a high price (p. 138).

For de Lauretis (1990) that constant state of flux lies in the discursive. The choice of living in and breathing in the discursive is a risk worth taking. Identity thus is a language. Discourse is fundamentally the realm where identities live, breathe, and change. However, the discourse is not the *only* reality of identity, but a large portion of it.

Finally, identity is reified in the body. The discourse of identity often reflects and normalizes in the body. This embodiment is performativity, which consists of two things: one "anticipation of a gendered essence produces that which it posits as outside itself" and two, repetition in which acting, doing becomes naturalized in the body and "culturally sustained" (Butler, 1999, p. xv). The anticipation of the subject refers to Derrida's work, in which we have an expectation of appearance and of our bodies. That anticipation is in the expectation that humans are separate as male and female. When that expectation or anticipation acts repeatedly, it becomes "natural" to the individual. Ritual of that expectation lives in the behaviors and the construction of the human body. This action of embodiment ritualizes utilizing an understood language. To perform drag, a man must use the language of "woman" to act as "drag." Strangers characterize the man as a woman utilizing the language of woman. The ritualization of the body must be in a way that others can understand. Humans collaborate to produce commonly understood linguistics.

Performativity moves beyond this question and demonstrates that the result of signification is not primordial, not essential. Performativity moves into the realm of a ritualized identity of race. Butler's work provides one way how language, race, gender, culture, and identity tangle—a ritualized ongoing performance of the body through an

accessible language. Performativity moves beyond the social constructionist and essentialist debate to how these intersect in our daily lives (S. Hall, 1996).

Culture, Race, and Ethnicity

Definitions and studies of race, culture, and ethnicity are problematic in communication (Jackson II & Garner, 1998). They are all variable concepts with no single accepted definition. Reasons for this disparity are the integrative ties to one another and their dynamic natures. Some scholars equate the three terms as one in the same (Sturm, 2002). For instance, ethnicity once replaced culture and tribe to represent identical concepts in anthropology (Cohen, 1978). The same could be said for culture as a replacement for race (Barth, 1969). The popularity of each term came with new representations and shifts in historical, theoretical, and ideological perspectives (Cohen, 1978). In the following pages, I summarize the common rhetoric of these terms starting with culture.

Culture

Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1963) took on the task of defining culture in their foundational book, *Culture*: *A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (and also developed in Kluckhohn's (1957) *Mirror for Man*). Their efforts yielded several *categorizations* of cultural definitions, ranging from descriptive, normative, and psychological to structural and genetic definitional claims. These conceptualizations of culture remain popular today, though subtly shifting to integrate technological advances and critical/cultural ideology.

The central thread in most definitions of culture is patterns shared by a group of people, whether that sharing is real or imaginary. Geertz (1973) defines culture as

semiotic, that a human is, “an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself [*sic*] has spun,” in which culture is “those webs” (p. 5), and therefore “public because meaning is” (p. 12). Due to the public formation and interpretation of culture, culture is intergenerational and develops over time. His concise definition is that culture denotes, “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men [*sic*] communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (p. 89).

Jackson and Garner (1998) offer a similar definition to Clifford Geertz’s, where culture is, “a term used to describe a set of patterns, beliefs, behaviors, institutions, symbols, and practices shared and perpetuated by a consolidated group of individuals connected by an ancestral heritage and a concomitant geographical reference location” (p. 44). Their definition differs from Geertz in that they specifically discuss the importance of place, a “concomitant geographical reference location.” These definitions have underlying notions: culture is referenced as essentialist in the vernacular since individuals can lose, preserve, or steal culture (Michaels, 1992). In order for culture to be used in any capacity, it becomes essentialist (Michaels, 1992).

In this work, culture is similar to all the above definitions, only the ideas of space and “sameness” are further developed: a learned set of patterns, beliefs, behaviors, symbols (such as language), and institutions shared by individuals living in the same space (be it physical or virtual space), though the sharing translates differently based on individual experiences and perceptions. Since there is never one “true,” objective culture, culture cannot be matched or the “same.” I can label someone as the

"same" culturally but that sameness is never true, exact, or perfect. Though it has some essentialist ties (one can reclaim culture), I regard culture in this text solely as externally learned patterns and knowledge from those structures. Being able to navigate the public transit systems in the San Francisco Bay Area or perpetually using personal cars in Oklahoma, and the thought patterns brought on by these behaviors are cultural components.

This also means culture transcends phenotype: one even without physical blood or ancestry can have similar cultural components. A disclaimer here: modern day literature often references culture alongside race—at least to the *rhetoric* of race. Cultural identity cannot and should not be a replacement for racial identity (Michaels, 1992, 1994) though not for essentialism's sake, but for race's signifiers. Cultural identity is a form of racial and ethnic identity (Michaels, 1992, 1994).

Ethnicity

Many scholars once simply described ethnicity as an-outsider-ascribed concept of unique, cultural distinctions shared by a group of people. Ethnicity "was understood as the result of a group formation process based on culture and descent" in which culture referenced language, behaviors, customs among others and descent as a biological tie (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 15). Keyes (1976) for instance commented that ethnicity "permits the recognition of such groups as having a 'primordial' quality, that of descent which is given by birth, while also taking their specific form as the consequence of the structure of exchanges of marriage, of goods and services, and of message between groups" (Keyes, 1976, p. 210). His argument being that blood tie was

the only factor that was salient through most groups, unlike language, bonding relationships such as marriage, behaviors, customs, and material goods.

Barth (1969), however, framed ethnicity as a process of boundary maintenance between groups instead of viewing ethnicity as a collection of traits. Furthermore, ethnicity was a self-ascribing and self-identifying category, and had "a characteristic organizing interaction between people" (p. 10). By moving the definition to an insider perspective and affirming the importance of social interaction, ethnicity became more a subjective experience and in-line with cultural pluralism (Glazer & Moynihan, 1970). At the time, the anthropological discipline was retreating from the usage of race but at the same time, the public did not accept the distinction.

The usage of "ethnicity" provides a way to talk about differences without mentioning race. While examining the "Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians, and Irish of New York," Glazer and Moynihan (1970) consistently framed their analysis of racial differences as ethnicity and cultural frameworks. They noted,

> ethnic groups, owing to their distinctive historical experiences, their cultures and skills, the times of their arrival and the economic situation they met, developed distinctive economic, political, and cultural patterns. As the old culture fell away…a new one, shaped by the distinctive experiences of life in America, was formed and a new identity was created (p. xxxiii).

Glazer and Moynihan (1970) advocated what Omi and Winant (1994) perceived to be the assimilation perspective: that differences were merely cultural changes and inherent in a changing world view. It was evident that "ethnicity" often referenced groups and people that were not in positions of power or were otherwise non-White (S. Hall, 1988, 1996; Omi & Winant, 1994). Thus, the decline of race as a key concept and the increase of ethnicity tend to be used to de-polorize, de-racialize, and de-historicize difficult

topics of the Civil Rights Movement, slavery, and dehumanizing avenues of U.S. history. In other words, ethnicity reduces race into a limiting ethnicity paradigm.

The ethnicity paradigm supposes that racial minorities such as Blacks and Asians are homogeneous, whereas Whites are (presumed to be) varied and complex. According to the paradigm, White Americans first used ethnicity to describe the positive outcome of assimilation of White European immigrants to the U.S. They subsequently applied ethnicity to other groups. In practice, most Americans cannot distinguish ethnicities, but can with some difficulty distinguish races. Non-White groups are "racially identified—their identities are racially constructed—by processes far more profound than mere state policy formation" (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 23). They advocate the open use of race instead of ethnicity.

Moving to a strategic standpoint of conceptualizing ethnicity, Zelinksy (2001) defines an ethnic group simply as "*any substantial aggregation of persons who are perceived by themselves and/or others to share a unique set of cultural and historical commonalities*" (italics in original, p. 43). He continues by offering a highly detailed definition since the simpler one is inadequate in describing the nuances of ethnic groups. In his detailed definition, an ethnic group is highly subjective to those with either real or imagined commonalities, with or without space, with or without awareness of its existence, and with optional or mandatory affiliation.

> "*The ethnic group is a modern social construct, one undergoing constant change, an imagined community too large for intimate contact among its members, persons who are perceived by themselves and/or others to share a unique set of cultural and historical commonalities, which may be real or imagined. It comes into being by reasons of its relationships with other social entities, usually by experiencing some degree of friction with other groups that adjoin it in physical or social space. Levels of awareness of its existence can vary considerably over time and in accordance with circumstances. Ethnic*

> *groups can exist within a hierarchy that ranges from the smallest aggregation meeting the stated criteria to a politically sovereign national community or even beyond to entities transcending international boundaries. For individuals, affiliation with the ethnic group may be either mandatory or a matter of personal option, one susceptible to change and contingent upon political and social circumstances*" (italics in original, Zelinsky, 2001, p. 44).

Ethnicity is "*the generic condition of being ethnic*" with an emphasis of "generic" removing ownership of the term to any group or person (italics in original, Zelinsky, 2001, p. 48). Zelinksy's definition, especially his longer definition, permits malleability, subjectivity (should it be deemed necessary), and relative application to social interactions and systemic, political intersections.

Race

W.E.B. DuBois' (1903/2005) stated that the 20th century's problem was "the color-line," the divisive nature of racial differences in all aspects of society. Even in the 21st century, many still believe this is the case (e.g., Hubbard, 2003). Scholars once thought race to be a biological trait, that race was essential and primordial. Its roots laid in the biological determinism of 19th and early 20th century scholars who created arcane categorizations of races based on skull sizes, facial features, skin color, and other physical traits. Johann Frederich Blumenbach provided five generic varieties of human races: Caucasians, Mongolians, Ethiopians, Americans, and Malays (Bhopal, 2007; Blumbenbach, 1865). Blumenbach was famous for utilizing skull sizes as a basis for racial differentiation. Carleton Stevens Coon (1962) also divided humans into five races: Caucasoid, Negroid, Capoid, Mongoloid, and Australoid. Each race had its own evolution, in that some races reached a higher, civilized stage before others. The biological determinism resulted in dehumanization and subordination of many groups.

With the advent of the published results of the Human Genome Project, scholars in hard and social sciences in short reject the biological basis of race (AAPA statement on biological aspects of race., 1996; Bonham, Warshauer-Baker, & Collins, 2005; Jorde & Wooding, 2004). Race is not related to morality, personality, or intelligence. For this reason, when referencing physical traits, phenotype is used, "The observable traits or characteristics of an organism—for example, hair color, weight, or the presence or absence of a disease" (Bonham, et al., 2005, p. 10). Phenotypical traits are not necessarily genetic. Even if race does not exist, racial identities and racism exist (Appiah & Gutmann, 1996). How people *think* and *relate* to the construction of race often perpetuates the existence of racial identity and racism (Wade, 2002).

Most scholars view race as a social, political, and historical construction, however, continuing debate exists about the essentialism that underlies race. The United States 2000 Census refers to race in phenotypical and biological terms even though their definition states races are "sociopolitical constructs and should not be interpreted as being scientific or anthropological" (Questions and answers for Census 2000 data on race, 2001). White, Black, American Indian/Native American, and Asian are races, whereas Hispanic is an ethnicity. A White individual has "origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. It includes people who indicate their race as 'White' or report entries such as Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab, or Polish" (Grieco, 2001, p. 1). The addition of "origins in any of the original peoples" recognizes heritages, blood, and consequently signifies primordial essentialist ideas.

Main topics concern the continued *usage* of race. Gilroy (1998, 2000) openly advocates for the elimination of race altogether, whereas Winant (2004) proposes the opposite. Race is highly politically based. Related words such as racism, racial formation, and racial identities are all products of the U.S. political climate. Omi and Winant (1994) note race is, "a constituent of the individual psyche and of relationships among individuals; it is also an irreducible component of collective identities and social structures" with further implication that race is key to past, present, and future political relationships (p. 138). Race transforms or "rearticulates" through time. Race is historical; race has pertinent history in its formation as articulated earlier. Race deals with more than just the past 60 years. Omi and Winant (1994) provide evidence of the specific relationship of the political to the collective—not necessarily the political to the individual. They relate how currently the state promotes notions of universalism and meritocracy, which strive (arguably unsuccessfully) to be color-blind. The current state view is highly problematic; it negates and belittles racial history, the sociopolitical forces, and do not address reality in everyday perspectives on race.

Due to this nature, Winant (2004) defines race as, "a concept that signifies and symbolizes sociopolitical conflicts and interests in reference to different types of human bodies. Although the concept of race appeals to biologically based human characteristics (so-called phenotypes), selection of these particular human features for purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social and historical process" (p. x). The symbol of race relates to the products of social and political interests. Race then imparts that even though race does not have biological basis, it has basis in the

discourse of those bodies. This definition most closely aligns with my beliefs on race because of its combination of power and discourse on bodies.

As stated earlier, ethnicity is the soft state way to talk about racial differences according to Omi and Winant (1994). Kibria (2000) frames race as distinct from ethnicity. Race is formed by "a system of power, one that draws on physical differences to construct and give meaning to racial boundaries and the hierarchy which they are a part" in which a dominant group places on another (Kibria, 2000, p. 78). Ethnicity, however, emerges from the group itself. The "self-conscious sense of group membership" was an important feature in ethnicity, not in race (Kibria, 2000, p. 78). In this way, the dominant culture's perceptions creates and perpetuates Asian Americans as racialized ethnics, those individuals with unique cultural and ethnic qualities but signified by their phenotype (Kibria, 2002; Tuan, 1998).

Race and ethnicity are often paired together because of the similarities between the terms as stated earlier. Hegemony exists in how race and ethnicity situate. If dominant culture's power of other groups creates racial constructs of marginalized groups, and ethnicity emerges from the group itself, hegemony is the intersection between race and ethnicity. Together the terms of race and ethnicity forge together to create a complicit understanding of race and ethnicity. To represent this connection in this work, race and ethnicity are hyphenated as racial-ethnic or ethnic-racial.

Whiteness and Ethnic-Racial Contestations

Based on the previously mentioned conceptualizations of culture, ethnicity, and race, Whiteness and Asianness are racial and ethnic formulations. The power structures of those bodies and the emergent perceptions by individuals within those groups create

what is White, Asian and the combination of them. The difference between Asianness and Whiteness involves the power dynamic and public perception of the two in the United States. Since Whiteness is the dominant ideology in structures, institutions, and people, the pervasiveness of Whiteness often escapes the individual. In the following pages, I review the common rhetoric on Whiteness.

Whiteness

To be White or perceived as White involves a multitude of factors that go beyond the color of the skin, shape of the eyes, and size of the nose (Dyer, 1997). Whiteness and race talk are not confined to actual phenotype, but highly intertwined with the symbolic—societal implications and interpretations of all these traits (Dyer, 1997). For instance, Jewish, Irish, and Slavic features were once considered non-White but are now perceived as White. Whiteness has invisible and visible powers that other skin colors, ethnicities, and races do not. Whiteness contains social, cultural, and economic capital.

Unlike the dilemma of Asian/Americans, Jews and Irish, who were once considered non-White and experienced historical discrimination in the U.S. are currently perceived as part of the White racial/ethnic group. Karen Brodkin (1998) systematically showed the reasons why Jews became "Whitened." Brodkin's (1998) Jewish family believed Jews succeeded in the United States by pulling themselves up by the bootstraps. Her family members attributed their success "due to hard work and a high value placed on education" (p. 32). However, Brodkin (1998) attributed her family's Whitening to U.S. laws.

How Jews became White occurred after World War II with the GI Bill of Rights or 1944 Serviceman's Readjustment Act. Brodkin (1998) believed the act was "arguably the most massive affirmative action program in American history" since the GI Bill's goal was "to develop the needed labor force skills and to provide those who had them with a lifestyle that reflected their value to the economy" (p. 38). This included "preferential hiring…financial support during the job search, small loans for starting up businesses, and most important, low-interest home loans and educational benefits, which included tuition and living expenses" (p. 38). With the GI Bill, segregated and discriminated Jews now had the footing to own land, earn higher degrees, and eventually be perceived as White. Jews in this instance were a model minority—achieving the American dream with the help of government programs and assistance.

Many other European immigrants such as Italians and Irish also assimilated into the United States as Whites (Roediger, 2005). Irish immigrants who were not protestant or Anglo-Saxon strategically utilized labor unions and embraced racist views toward African Americans (Ignatiev, 1995). In other words, Irish assimilated by transforming from oppressed to oppressor. Irish mostly in labor groups or unions were also held responsible for animosity toward the Chinese in late 1800s and early 1900s (R. G. Lee, 1999; Okihiro, 2001; Takaki, 1998). These actions supposedly aided them in being White (Ignatiev, 1995). Italians marked themselves as White "color" on immigration forms in the immigration stations of Chicago (T. A. Guglielmo, 2003). Unlike immigrant groups from Asia, the Italians' somewhat reluctant racial identification to White provided means for them to obtain property and economic opportunities at least

in Chicago, Illinois (T. A. Guglielmo, 2003). Despite prejudice against Italians, their racial identity proved to be an asset in their assimilation and acceptance into the United States (e.g., J. Guglielmo, 2003). The literature on these three immigrant groups, Jews, Irish, and Italians illuminates the arbitrary dictation of Whites, and its largely prejudicial framework against those of darker skin tones and non-White phenotypic features.

Whites and Race

Whites are "those persons, typically of European descent, who are able, by virtue of skin color or perhaps national origin and cultures, to be perceived as 'white,' as members of the dominant group" (Wise, 2005, p. ix). I use this definition primarily because it includes those groups and individuals who only 50 years ago were once labeled as something else, i.e., Jews, Italians, and Irish. "Perceived as 'white'" notes the importance of social construction of labels in determining race. Whiteness and White privilege are synonymous to many scholars—to be White comes with all the privileges that it denotes. Furthermore, "to be white not only means that one will typically inherit advantages from the past but also means that one will continue to reap the benefits of ongoing racial privilege, which itself is the flipside of discrimination against persons of color" (Wise, 2005, p. ix). To discuss Whiteness is to discuss White privilege. Despite one's own original socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality, and geographic location, White privilege is just as powerful and pervasive.

Whiteness in the everyday is non-raced. This is evidenced when friends, coworkers, neighbors are raced only when they are not White (Kendall, 2006). When this occurs, Whiteness is the norm, becomes "invisible," wherein the power lies.

Richard Dyer (1997), a prominent scholar on Whiteness, provides a strong claim: "There is no more powerful position than that of being 'just' human. The claim to power is the claim to speak for the commonality of humanity. Raced people can't do that—they can only speak for their race. But non-raced people can, for they do not represent the interests of a race" (p. 20). Whiteness is a power to speak for and represent *all* of humanity. In short, Whiteness refers to humanity, and people of color are less than human and unable to speak for humanity. At first Dyer's words sound condescending; people of color can only speak for themselves and all the power falls into the hands of Whites. People of color are the victims, and Whites are the victimizers. But Dyer's (1997) goal in *White* is to interrogate this notion of Whiteness—to reveal how "White" is symbolic in our ideas of high art, Christianity, and cinema. He centers on the visual of Whiteness and how Whites represent themselves. By examining the presentation of Whiteness, we can go beyond Whiteness speaking solely for humanity to Whiteness' voice as one of many stories of humanity. Though Whiteness is powerful, it is not total.

White racial identity falls under Whiteness studies. Most current Whiteness studies try to mark White as a racial category. Scholars study the emotional package that comes with the acknowledgement of White privilege. These scholars, mostly White, create lesson plans and goals to understand and overcome their negative emotions (e.g., Kendall, 2006). These works are largely autobiographical in nature.

Interrogating Whiteness: Racial Consciousness

Many scholars have long written about Whiteness and derivative discourses (Chatterjee, 1986; DuBois, 1903/2005; Fanon, 2005; hooks, 1990; Lorde, 1979; Hemant

Shah, 1999). The majority of the U.S. academic community, however, at first did not take their voices, (arguably) as seriously. Even self-proclaimed radical White scholars could not even imagine themselves perpetuating White privilege. Toni Morrison's (1992) foundational work on the literary imagination of Whiteness, *Playing in the Dark,* examines Hemingway and others in their interpretation of Africanism, "a term for the denotative and connotative blackness that African peoples have come to signify, as well as the entire range of views, assumptions, readings, and misreadings that accompany Eurocentric learning about these people" (Morrison, 1992, pp. 6-7). Morrison notes the presentation of Africanism is self-reflexive of Whiteness and subsequently Americanism. The Africanist persona is, "an extraordinary meditation on the self; a powerful exploration of the fears and desires that reside in the writerly conscious. It is an astonishing revelation of longing, of terror, of perplexity, of shame, of magnanimity. It requires hard work not to see this" (Morrison, 1992, p. 17). While studying these key works, Morrison (1992) remarks, "What became transparent were the self-evident ways that Americans choose to talk about themselves through and within a sometimes allegorical, sometimes metaphorical, but always choked representation of an Africanist presence" (p. 17). When we study what underlines these literary works, we can see Whiteness and White privilege.

Morrison's (1992) foundational book speaks to English rhetoric and film studies largely because she takes Whiteness from the individual to a cultural level as a phenomenon that is reified, perpetuated, and reinforced through the canons of American literature classes. She calls for scholars to interrogate how the Africanist forms into "surrogate and enabler" of Whiteness and is the idiom for difference and modernity, and

how Africanism shows humanity its mirror (p. 51). Underlying this call is self-reflexivity—a call also made in her Harvard lecture series. Though Morrison's work is not the first of its kind, it still speaks to the White (academic) public.

White voices awoke to their Whiteness. One ground-breaking White woman talking about Whiteness includes Peggy McIntosh's (2001) "White privilege and male privilege" and subsequent versions of it (also known as "White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack"). McIntosh (2001) notes, "As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage" (p. 95). She identifies a list of at least 46 privileges she has simply for being White (later versions have less or more depending on the audience). McIntosh's works are personal, intimate, and raw—principally because she writes accessibly and sincerely. If she wants White males to understand their privilege, she needs to understand how her own White female privilege affects people of color, such as the following five:

> I can, if I wish, arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
>
> When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
>
> I did not have to educate our children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.
>
> I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.
>
> If I declare there is a racial issue at hand, or there isn't a racial issue at hand, my race will lend me more credibility for either position than a person of color will have (McIntosh, 2001, pp. 98-99).

From these five points, Whiteness is knowing that Whites can always count on respect for personal contributions rather than contributing to their own race, and not having to discuss racial survival skills to their kin. Interestingly, Whites have more power and credence in announcing racial issues—whether it is about their own race or not. Her metaphor of Whiteness as an "invisible weightless knapsack" is very powerful and touching. Her knapsack is full of "unearned assets" she can "count on cashing in each day" and "remain oblivious" to the transaction (McIntosh, 2001, p. 95). She refers to privilege as "unearned advantage and conferred dominance" (McIntosh, 2001, p. 102, italics in original).

White female liberals during the 1980s, who considered themselves radicals, intelligent, and "tolerant," fell short of understanding their Whiteness. Audre Lorde (1979) at the Second Sex Conference revealed that the conference was perpetuating the difference of the patriarchy by excluding the many voices of color. Lorde (1979) asked, "What does it mean when the tools of racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy?" further exclaiming in her famous phrase, "For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house." She concluded, "Racism and homophobia are real conditions of all our lives in this place and time. I urge each one of us here to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there. See whose face it wears." Lorde shows that even in the most collegiate and "liberal" conferences, difference is raced—and the "acceptable" often times are White and heterosexual.

In the age of multiculturalism and liberals who feel they respect races and ethnicities, many believe they are not racist, yet still use the coded words of racism.

Two examples of this are the studies of Whiteness among liberal individuals. Ruth Frankenberg (1993) interviewed around 30 women living on the West Coast. Most of the participants identified with feminism or liberalism. Despite these considerations, they were mostly unaware of how race affected their lives. For instance, many believed in the blood metaphor, that we all bled the same color. At the same time, "color" or "non-Whiteness" was bad. If they saw race and were not "color-blind" they were "bad." Evelyn, one of her interviewees, discussed how her son came home disturbed that "Aunty Jean" had said the word, "nigger." Evelyn mentioned how her son was "innocent" and even though Aunty Jean had said a bad word, because she had done many good things in her life, and was not intentionally prejudiced, she could not be racist. The interviewees desired to avoid feeling bad about themselves, and in so doing, often were blind to their own racism. These arguments were/are part of the White experience and their understanding themselves.

The second examination of White individuals who feel they are devoid of racism is Kendall's (2006) work. Frances Kendall (2006) observed the commonality of statements Frankenberg noted, "White privilege has nothing to do with whether or not we are 'good' people. We who are white can be jerks and still have white privileges; people of color can be wonderful individuals and not have them. Privileges are bestowed on us solely because of our race by the institutions with which we interact, not because we deserve them as individuals" (p. 64, italics in original). Frankenberg's (1993) and Kendall's (2006) works are two revelatory studies on Whiteness: one can be prejudiced, privileged, and racist despite their own vocal distancing of anti-racism.

Whiteness is intimate within the psyche of the individual. Many individuals encounter their Whiteness, a denial or fissure erupts.

White Encounters with Whiteness

Literature in Whiteness studies often discusses White racial consciousness, especially how White individuals become aware of their privilege as briefly engaged by the words cited above. There are five points of interest to this study. The first point includes how Whites are "born into belonging," "born in a system that has been set up for the benefit of people like you, and as such provides a head start to those who can claim membership in this, the dominant club" (Wise, 2005, p. xi). Many European immigrants come to the United States already possessing this power. Whites often explain their first experiences with "racial others" rather than their own experiences, despite their long-standing immigrant ties to Europe. This is cultural capital—knowledge that one can succeed merely by trying. One inherits racial legitimacy. Whites believe they do not have to think about race until a non-White is present—leaving themselves from ever having to encounter their own race as Whites, instantly belonging to power and advantage. For instance, Wise acknowledges that people read his book because he is White—and a White man talking about race. If his skin is of a darker hue, he may not have much legitimacy.

Secondly, Whites create systems that benefit themselves and perpetuate their privilege (Haney-López, 2006). Courts define which races belong in the White category. Legal precedence dictates courts' ruling that Chinese, Japanese, Koreans are not White through scientific evidence and common knowledge (Haney-López, 2006). Legal precedents for Asian Indians are much more complicated. Many courts ruled on

"common knowledge" of races, bolstered by Blumenbach's racial classifications (Haney-López, 2006). In the infamous *United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind*, the U.S. court ruled that Asian Indians were not White despite linkages between Asian Indians and the Causoid race, a similar ruling as in *Ozawa v. United States* (Haney-López, 2006). These rulings illustrate that a supposedly unbiased system benefits one group over another, and the legal construction of race.

Another example includes how seemingly mundane experiences in education are in White privilege (Hytten & Adkins, 2001; Hytten & Warren, 2003; Lewis, 2006; Marx & Pennington, 2003; Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005; Urrieta Jr., 2006). These articles illustrate how teachers and educational administrators (knowingly and unknowingly) perpetuate racism and White privilege. While as a high school debater, Wise (2005) participated in debate concerning pertinent issues without caring about the actual issue. Actual personal beliefs meant nothing in debate, even if the issue at hand was truly life defining: health care benefits, welfare, capitalism, affirmative action, famine, unemployment, criminal justice. As a White male he could choose not to care because, "Serious things matter to people who have to deal with serious things on a daily basis, and they likewise make little difference to those whose position in life is fairly secure" (Wise, 2005, p. 34).

Third, when Whites encounter their Whiteness, they have difficulty accessing their privilege and racial-ethnic identity. One example is the reaction of the "Intellectualizer face"—someone who knows about Whiteness but distances himself or herself through their knowledge rather than through thoughtful and careful reflexivity (Warren & Hytten, 2004). In another example, Robert Jensen (1998) published a piece

titled, “White privilege shapes the U.S.” in the *Baltimore Sun*. After writing this piece, he received quite a bit of hate mail. In Jensen (1999), he responded to the four common reactions to his 1998 piece. One of them being, “White privilege doesn’t exist because affirmative action has made being white a disadvantage” (Jensen, 1999, pp. C-1). Jensen’s response was that affirmative action did little to combat racism built over 500 years. Another common reaction was, “White privilege exists, but it can’t be changed because it is natural for any group to favor its own, and besides, the worst manifestations of racism are over.” Jensen instead noted, “This approach makes human choices appear outside of human control, which is a dodge to avoid moral and political responsibility for the injustice we continue to live with” (Jensen, 1999, pp. C-1). Many people also accused Jensen for having “White liberal guilt.” Jensen (1999), however, believed guilt was individual and counterproductive—rather we should look at this issue as a “moral and political one” (p. C-1).

Fourth, unfortunately, even if one really desires to resist unjust privilege, many Whites feel guilty or believe they are “saving” the “Other.” This is also one stage in White identity developmental models such as Helm’s (1990, 2007) or the “Torpified face” of Whiteness (Warren & Hytten, 2004). If Whites resist White privilege, they may encounter setbacks, mistakes, and general screw-ups such as inadvertently collaborating with racism as Audre Lorde (1979) hail as using the master’s tools to dismantle the master’s house. Nevertheless, if Whites do not do anything about dismantling privilege even if they unintentionally collaborate with racism, Whites continue to experience much loss—loss in their own identity, an identity based on what they are not, an identity based on being different from non-Whites. Thus Whites base themselves on

being not Black, Asian, Latino/a, or Native American/American Indian. Based on this "loss" there are many reactions one has toward "Others" when they encounter Whiteness.

Finally, Whiteness revolves around class and Whites. Class and race intertwine and affect one's perceptions of Whiteness (e.g., Morris, 2005; D. Smith, 2004; Wander, Martin, & Nakayama, 1999; Weis & Lombardo, 2002). Often times, White privilege ties (at least perceptually) with the higher middle classes. Dorothy Allison (2005) in her autobiography told about escaping her "White trash" background to pass for an upscale radical lesbian later on in life. She recalled all the negative constructions based on her family's class in South Carolina, believing "that poverty is a voluntary condition" (p. 15). Individuals in her community considered her family lazy and were on the lowest rung on the socioeconomic and civilized ladder. Lowering Blacks from their own position was common because it was easy for her family to perpetuate "otherness" (the oppressed become the oppressor). The internalization of her shame as "White trash" helped in writing *Bastard out of Carolina*. As indicated, "the noble poor" and "White trash" are complex issues related to race and class.

According to work on Whiteness and class, Whiteness is much more than mere essentialism of being White. These beg the questions of which Whites hold more power and privileges and if Whites are similar all around. Wise and Kendall remark that even though socio-economically "White trash" has less power than upper middle-class Whites, White in totality have more power than people of color do. Also, lower class Whites have more power to change their economic position and "pass."

Like all aspects of race and identity, I view Whiteness as a combination of status and class. Marx's works (see edited Marx works in Antonio, 2003) offer how race is sometimes economically based. Whiteness increases one's "life chances" to move up the economic ladder. Conversely, for those that are not White, and/or do not perform "White," are less likely and able to reach their human potential. Whiteness like status can move across contexts and classes—even the noble White poor has greater economic standing than certain racial groups as Allison (2005) writes. Two works help in illustrating this: Cheryl Harris' (1993) famous review of property rights, and George Lipsitz (1995, 2006), *The Possessive Investment of Whiteness*. In these works, "Whiteness" is a commodity, a wealthy economic condition. Whiteness, for instance, has functions to use and enjoy property, and an absolute right to exclude anyone else from ownership (Harris, 1993). A second example, if two families, one Black and one White, buy the same type of house, 20 years later, the houses will be valued differently. If the house is in a predominantly White neighborhood, it will be valued higher than a house of the same condition and specifications in a predominantly Black neighborhood. A final example, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) studies on toxic waste reveal that the most significant variable in determining toxic waste dumping is race—predominantly White neighborhoods are less likely to have toxic waste dumping regardless of class (Lipsitz, 2006).

From these examples, political economy helps to examine the material conditions, standards, and economic "property" of Whiteness. Whiteness is not *always* a commodity, mainly because Whiteness cannot be given away or exchanged with other racial-ethnic groups. However, in strategic discussions with students, co-workers, and

family, political economic descriptions are accessible starting points to understanding Whiteness. Acknowledging White privilege in every activity allows for greater understanding of research, power, the self, and the *relational* aspect of identity. Such is the case for Vicki Mayer (2005) who de-centers White privilege by acknowledging the background and the assumptions of herself as an ethnographer researching media audiences in Brazil. Mayer (2005) furthermore recognizes that as a term, Whiteness, "exhibits what Derrideans call 'slipperiness,' or at times signifying a 'norm' or 'emptiness' and at other times, a 'property' or a 'choice'" (p. 153). For Mayer (2005), decentering privilege starts with acknowledging power and the often times easy slippage into what she articulates as "narcissistic whiteness" and "defensive whiteness." As a researcher, one chooses to present Whiteness as either, "a colonizing force, which exerts dominance through the visage of the ethnographer" or "a vulnerable individual who plays the role of a sensitive explorer, especially through reflection after leaving the field" (Mayer, 2005, p. 151).

Whites' perceptions of themselves is racially bound to and intertwined with the Whiteness racial category's power. Though Whiteness and White privilege are separate but related concepts, academics often place them rhetorically as the same. To be essentially White is to possess privilege. Even though Frankenberg (1993) does not equate Whiteness with White privilege, these texts heavily rely on essentialism.

Whiteness is not a pan-White description of Whites in general and is not static. Whiteness is hegemonic, situated between ideology (a distorted, misrepresentation of reality by a dominant group) and values (what is perceived as the social norm) as Gramsci notes. It is rhetoric, a language of and for viewing the world. It is evident in

discourse on affirmative action, class, ableism, sex, and sexuality. It is, "a *historical systemic structural* race-based superiority" (italics in original, Wander, et al., 1999, p. 15). Seshardri-Crooks in Mayer (2005) refer to Whiteness as "a 'master signifier,' that is, a construction that individuals need to define themselves, and promises a symbolic wholeness as everything not-other, but cannot be named without concealing part of the whole" (p. 153). Thus, Whiteness is incomplete, imperfect but is still what we use to define the subject via its opposition (as in not Black, Asian, Hispanic, disabled, homosexual, or lower class).

White privilege is only one way Whiteness plays out in behavior. To know how Whiteness becomes Whiteness is to understand White privilege. At this point, I need to clarify that even though many understandings of Whiteness are similar to White privilege, Whiteness should not be synonymous with White privilege. Whiteness as stated earlier is a discursive intersection between race and ethnicity reified in the body. The implication of this is Whiteness, though bound and created through dominant majority (which is itself dominant), is nuanced and emerges from individuals within the group. However, because it is dominant, Whiteness is *always situated in power* of the White body.

Conclusion

This chapter provides a literature overview of identity, race, and ethnicity, and a brief analysis of Whiteness. Even though identity is contested in essentialist, social constructionist, and critical realist perspectives, I offer six conceptualizations of identity that bring together these perspectives. For the purposes of this work, identity is a relational, discursive process situated in power and history, and subsequently reified in

the body. Culture, race, and ethnicity are also contested concepts. The overview on these terms shows that race is a signifier of the body created by dominant culture, and ethnicity is an emergent characteristic.

The literature on Whiteness reveals questions on my research on Asian/Americans. If Whiteness is a master signifier, how does it permeate other races and ethnicities? Specifically, how does Whiteness work with Asian/American self-constructs, communication, and behavior? In the following chapter, I present the experiences, stereotypes, and the contextual underscoring of U.S. immigration laws on Asian/American perceptions.

CHAPTER III

SITUATING ASIANNESS IN IMAGES AND TIME

Over 11.8 million Asian Pacific Americans live in the United States—4.2% of the total population according to the 2000 United States Census (J. S. Barnes & Bennett, 2002). Of those in this category, 10.2 million in 2000 are Asian alone, the remaining 1.6 million are Asian in combination with six other races (Native Hawaiian, White, African American, "some other race," and "all other combinations including Asian") (J. S. Barnes & Bennett, 2002). In this section, I provide literature on stereotypes of Asian/Americans with special attention to the model minority stereotype, and the historical United States immigration patterns of Asian racial-ethnic and national groups.

Public Faces of Asianness: Stereotypes and Images of Asians in the U.S.

Six popular images of Asian/Americans (more demeaning, Orientals) exist: "the pollutant, the coolie, the deviant, the yellow peril," gook, and the model minority (R. G. Lee, 1999, p. 8). These images emerge to present Asian/Americans as foreigners. The title of R. Lee (1999), *Orientals* signifies the intense racist and demeaning interpretations of these portrayals. The Asian as *pollutant* started in California because Chinese immigration presented supposed moral and racial chaos during mid-1800s (R. G. Lee, 1999). California was (a fantasy of) pure, unmolested terrain and the heathen Chinese immigrants threatened the racial purity with their foreign ways. They supposedly ate dogs and cats, styled their hair with pig tails, and did not support community development (R. G. Lee, 1999).

The *coolie* appeared in the late 1880s due to the perception of Chinese labor disrupting White (Irish) working class' jobs (R. G. Lee, 1999; Shim, 1998). The coolie was another way to describe the Chinese as cheap, undesirable, and threatening labor.

For instance, the commemorative photos of the completion of the transcontinental railroad did not include the Chinese laborers due to the blatant disregard for their contribution (Shim, 1998).

The *deviant* persona of the Oriental reflected the sexualized nature of the Chinese domestic labor as a "figure of forbidden desire" (R. G. Lee, 1999, p. 9). The domestic workers were childlike, passive, obedient, and exotic, sexual creatures. Already popular images primed Chinese women as prostitutes. When entering the home, they threatened the family household.

The popular *yellow peril* depicted Asian/Americans as invaders—threatening economics, values, behavior, and racial purity (Fong, 2008; e.g., Kawai, 2005; Marchetti, 1993; Ono & Pham, 2009; Suzuki, 2002). Yellow peril desired to overpower and control the United States, hoping for chaos and U.S. collapse. One example of yellow peril was the depiction of Korean shop owners in the Los Angeles race riots as "merciless gun-toting vigilante[s]" (Shim, 1998, p. 385).

The *gook* face depicted Asian/Americans as potential threats of the Vietnamese during the Vietnam War (R. G. Lee, 1999), and eventually for Koreans during the Korean War (Jodi Kim, 2009). American military fighting in Vietnam during the Vietnam War called the Vietnamese gooks to "dehumanize them, making them easier to kill" also known as the "Mere Gook Rule" (Williams, 2003, p. 216). The term remained popular in films depicting the Vietnam War (Williams, 2003) and eventually toward Koreans during the Korean War. In the fictional novel *Native Speaker* by Chang-Rae Lee (1995), Henry, the protagonist, believed the origin of gook for Koreans became popular because as American soldiers entered villages during the Korean War, the

villagers shouted, “Mee-gook”—the Korean term for “Americans.” The term combined the words for nation—gook—with a sound phrase for American—mee. The soldiers mistakenly thought mee-gook meant Korean, as in “me [I am a]-gook,” and the name stuck as a racial epithet (Jodi Kim, 2009).

Currently, the most popular face is the *model minority* in which the dominant White majority places Asian/Americans as an example of successful assimilation in terms of education, materialism, and values. Common advertising depicts Asians as educated, prosperous, and savvy with technology (Paek & Shah, 2003). Though this stereotype is superficially positive, the stereotype has sinister roots in race relations. In the following sub-section, I present in greater detail the model minority face.

The Model Minority Myth: “Success Stories” and Whiz Kids

The Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s brought to light the plight of racial minorities. *U.S. News and World Report* (and other magazines at the same time) published the now infamous, “Success story of one minority group in U.S.” in 1966 (reprinted in Success story of one minority group in U.S., 2000). The author of the article praised the “hard working” achievements of young Chinese Americans. According to the article, Chinese youth studied hard thanks to strict discipline, and they were able to achieve educational success despite the Chinese Exclusion Act, low wages, and harsh working conditions. The article claimed Chinatown streets were “safer” than “most other” parts of San Francisco and second and third generation Chinese preferred living in White neighborhoods even though the anti-Chinese 1871 deadly riots formerly occurred in White neighborhoods. It was a slap in the face to the African Americans protesting for the rights of racial minorities. The underlying message of the article was,

"if Asians can achieve so much with so little in this society, other racial minorities could succeed if they tried harder; if they fail, the fault lies in their lack of initiative and not in the deep structural inequalities based on race" (Success story of one minority group in U.S., 2000, p. 158). As the later sections show, this was the not the first time certain Asian groups were "examples" of passiveness and uncomplaining success.

During the Civil Rights Movement and anti-War protests in the 1960s, many Asian/Americans were aware of systemic racism and actively sought to bring forth change (e.g., Louie & Omatsu, 2001). For instance, activists Yuri Kochiyama and Grace Lee Boggs were central in the Civil Rights Movement. Yuri Kochiyama was best known for holding Malcolm X while he died. Before and after Malcolm X's death, she fought for many civil rights causes including Black liberation and the independence of Puerto Rico (Fujino, 2005). Grace Lee Boggs fought for Black power, labor, women's justice, environmentalism, and Asian American equality alongside her husband James Boggs from the 1960s onward (Boggs, 1998; J. J. H. Choi, 1999). Before then Grace Lee Boggs worked with C. L. R. James and Raya Dunayevskaya, Marxist historians and activists (Boggs, 1998; J. J. H. Choi, 1999). Another example of many, Asian Americans were at the forefront alongside African Americans and Latino/as in 1968-1969 striking against racial disparity in higher education (Umemoto, 2007). This strike was the "longest student strike in American history" and resulting in the creation of the first Department of Ethnic Studies in the United States (Umemoto, 2007, p. 25). From this point, Departments of Ethnic Studies sprouted all across California and the United States. Many more accounts of Asian American activism since Civil Rights movement were reviewed in Louie and Omatsu (2001), Võ (2004), and Zia (2000).

The model minority is a myth. The myth is reductionist; the myth applies a broad stroke of ideas to millions of people with diverse cultures, experiences, and societal structures (e.g., Suzuki, 2002). In addition, the dominant culture utilizes the myth to "both to deny that Asian Americans experience racial discrimination and to turn Asian Americans into a racial threat" (F. H. Wu, 2002, p. 49). The myth ignores real struggles of many Asian/Americans (Kawai, 2005; Suzuki, 2002).

Not only is the "Success story" article a slap in the face to African Americans, it displaces the contribution of Asian/Americans to the Civil Rights Movement—almost silencing from public ears the actual work of prominent Asian/American activists and participation in the United States and globally (e.g., Adalberto Aguirre & Lio, 2008; Bascara, 2006; Palumbo-Liu, 1999). Instead of these contributions, the recurring image of Asian/Americans in the media is that of the model minority. Wu (2002) restates the positive perception of Asian/Americans: "As a group, we [Asian/Americans] are said to be intelligent, gifted in math and science, polite, hard working, family oriented, law abiding, and successfully entrepreneurial" (p. 40). In addition, people believe that, "Asian Americans do not whine about racial discrimination; they only try harder" (F. H. Wu, 2002, p. 44). Asian/Americans "graced" the cover of *Time* in August 31, 1987 with the caption, "Those Asian-American Whiz Kids." Even before and after the *Time* cover, several prominent periodicals such as *The New York Times*, *New Republic*, *Newsweek*, and *People* published articles praising the intelligence, diligence, and ingenuity of Asian/Americans (Chou & Feagin, 2008; F. H. Wu, 2002). Supposedly, non-Asians fear having Asians as classmates because they set the curve and are more likely to attend prestigious Ivy League universities.

The model minority myth lends itself to the prevalent theme of "Asians as the new Jews" in political and casual conversation. Liu (1998) revisited the racialization of pseudo success: "Hard work and sacrifice," delayed gratification, and emphasis on education were originally considered "Protestant values" (e.g., Weber's work on capitalism and the Protestant ethic) and then a decade or so after World War II, these same values became American "Jewish values." Now these are "Asian values" (p. 158). From Liu's argument, one can see that these values were once (White) Protestant, then Jewish, and now Asian. Wu (2002) further notes Asian/Americans are often viewed as surpassing Jews. With these observations in hand, Asian/Americans are the poster race for success and uncomplaining assimilation, and keepers of the model minority myth. The model minority myth is strong in its relationship to Whiteness especially in popular representations, articles, and works about the supposed success of Asian/Americans.

The model minority myth is a stereotype, a dangerous stereotype. Many scholars agree that the model minority myth and its related concepts are hegemonic devices (e.g., Bascara, 2006; S. J. Lee, 1996; Lowe, 1996). With the myth, the focus is not on systematic racism and White privilege. The focal point instead is a fundamental attribution error: attributing racial success/poverty on innate racial character flaws rather than on circumstances and contexts. Blame is placed on certain races because their race and culture lend them to fail, ignoring the history and experiences of long-term oppression and systemic restrictions. The model minority myth is an example of the bootstrap model—a race group that supposedly pulls themselves up from poverty to success by their bootstraps (Omi & Winant, 1994). Asian/Americans, who agree with and embrace the model minority myth without critically analyzing its implications,

consent to the hegemony. Furthermore, “When Asian Americans and African Americans engage in interracial competition/tension, they are consenting to hegemony” (S. J. Lee, 1996, p. 9). Thus, the model minority stereotype is pervasive in public thought and is reality.

The effect of the model minority myth is profound. Some Asian/Americans embrace and believe the myth (S. J. Lee, 1996; P. Wong, et al., 1998; Zhou, 2004). Certain groups try to go against the myth by acting the opposite: lazy, tough, loud, and stupid. Many essays by Asian/American women in edited books such as *Making More Waves* (E. H. Kim & Villanueva, 1997) and *YELL-Oh Girls!* (Nam, 2001) reveal glimpses of self-hatred based on the model minority myth and other stereotypes about Asian/American women. One result of the myth is the exclusion of Asian/Americans in discussion on race (Chou & Feagin, 2008; S. J. Lee, 1996). The exclusion aids in the perception of Asian/Americans as an illegitimate racial minority (Lowe, 1996). In other words, Asian/Americans are not worth inclusion into racial-ethnic discussions, and subsequently their needs are not important to public policy. Asians are merely “unassimilable foreigners as opposed to American minorities” (S. J. Lee, 1996, p. 4).

An example of the unassimilable foreigner is during the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan when MSNBC posted a story titled, “American Beats Kwan.” Michelle Kwan, a member of the United States ice-skating team, received a silver-medal to Tara Lipinski’s gold, also a member of the United States team (Tuan, 2002). Even though Michelle Kwan is a United States citizen, a second generation Chinese American, and a successful representative of the United States team, media portrayals depicted Kwan as a foreigner, and un-American due to her race (Tuan, 2002). The

(White) American, Lipinski, beat Kwan, an Asian American who appeared foreign to the United States.

The unassimilable alien assumption, also known as the sojourner thesis (Eng, 1997), places into question the model minority myth. It implies that no matter the assimilation of Asians through citizenship, English ability, education level, and socioeconomic status, Asian/Americans are un-American and unassimilable. The unassimilable foreigner is an extension of Asians as the Ethnic/Other in that Asian/Americans do not perceptually belong to the landscape of the U.S. The two ideas, the model minority myth and unassimilable alien, are in constant opposition and give mixed messages to the place of Asian Americans in the United States.

These oppositional messages play out in other stereotypes such as yellow peril and coolie. Furthermore, the six images often blend into one another depending on the medium, time period, and political situation as seen in *Year of the Dragon* (Cimino, 1985) and *Blade Runner* (Scott, 1982) (R. G. Lee, 1999). Asian American characters are evil and treacherous as the yellow peril, and passive as the model minority in these films. Furthermore, dominant culture presents these images in terms of gender.

Gendered Stereotypes of Asian/Americans

In addition to the six popular images described earlier are portrayals of Asians based on sex. The images of Asian women stereotypes in film and literature can be separated into two main types of submissive (desirable) and dominant (feared) (Prasso, 2005). The submissive (desirable) stereotypes can be further divided into the geisha girl (also includes lotus flower, lotus blossom, servant, and China doll), vixen (or sex nymph), and prostitute (or victim of sex trade, war, or oppression) (Prasso, 2005). The

geisha girl or china doll is docile (M. Kim & Chung, 2005). These women are loyal girlfriends and wives, especially domicile to a White husband or boyfriend, and idealized in 1950s movies (M. Kim & Chung, 2005; Prasso, 2005). Often staged with U.S. military personnel's love affair with the World War II conquered enemy, "presented Japanese women as romanticized and idealized—delicate, doll-like creatures who wish for nothing more than to scrub their husbands' backs" in films such as *Japanese War Bride* (Vidor, 1952), *China Doll* (Borzage, 1958), and *South Pacific* (Logan, 1958) (Prasso, 2005, p. 88). Geisha girls or China dolls do not talk back to their husbands or "think too much" unlike their (White) American counterparts (M. Kim & Chung, 2005). Sometimes Asian men are placed into this category and therefore effeminate.

As (sex) vixens, Asian women are overly sexual and manipulative, whereas the prostitute/victim stereotype have a heart-of-gold but is in need of a (White) savior. James Bond in *You Only Live Twice* (Gilbert, 1967) slept with a Chinese woman who immediately allowed evil gunners into their bedroom romp, and later a Japanese woman led Bond into a trap. Opposite of this image as presented in the infamous *The World of Suzie Wong* (Quine, 1960) is the prostitute victim. Nancy Kwan played Suzie Wong, helpless, orphaned, and kind prostitute who fell for Robert Lomax (played by William Holden), a White Englishman. Lomax helped save her child—an example of the (White) savior or knight (Fong, 2008; Hagedorn, 2000; M. Kim & Chung, 2005; Prasso, 2005). Some of the other stereotypes responded, placated and almost showed gratitude toward White male domination such as in *Year of the Dragon* (Cimino, 1985) and *Heaven & Earth* (Stone, 1993) (M. Kim & Chung, 2005).

Dominant (feared) stereotypes include dragon lady, dominatrix, and martial arts mistress/master (Prasso, 2005). Dragon lady stereotypes, portrayed by Anna May Wong in 1930s-40s Hollywood films, are intelligent but calculating and evil (Ono & Pham, 2009; Prasso, 2005; Hemant Shah, 2003; Zia, 2000). The dragon lady can even desire to kill or harm (White) others as Anna May Wong did in many film characters (Hemant Shah, 2003). Anna May Wong's dragon lady characters in *Daughter of the Dragon* (Corrigan, 1931) and *Shanghai Express* (von Sternberg, 1932) won her fame (Fong, 2008; Leong, 2006; Ono & Pham, 2009). Anchor and news correspondent Connie Chung in the 1990s was the dragon lady in daily television—cold, calculating, and aggressive—even making figure skater Tonya Harding cry during an interview (Prasso, 2005). The two remaining dominant (feared) stereotypes of dominatrix and martial arts mistress are current portrayals by Lucy Liu in popular films and television shows. In *Payback* (Helgeland, 1999) and *Ally McBeal* (Robin, et al., 1997-2002), Liu played a dominatrix, an emotionless and cold woman who liked to sexually dominate men for her own purposes (Fong, 2008; Prasso, 2005). The dominatrix is a modern day dragon lady. In *Shanghai Noon* (Dey, 2000), *Charlie's Angels* (McG, 2000, 2003), and *Kill Bill Vol. I* (Tarantino, 2003) Liu acted as a martial arts mistress—she kicked ass (literally), had amazing physical prowess and discipline, but like the dominatrix, was emotionless (Prasso, 2005).

Asian men have their own share of racist stereotypes (Ono & Pham, 2009). Surprisingly, Asian males share almost the same stereotypes as Asian females—one of the main ways Asian men are feminized and as David Eng (2001) state, "racially castrated." The homosexual, queer, overly feminized Asian male affects America's

view of Asian/American men's sexual identity (Eng, 2001). For the most part, Asian men are "small, sneaky, and threatening—or spineless, emasculated, wimps, or incompetents who may well be technically proficient in martial arts, but impotent when faced with white man's superior strength or firepower" (Prasso, 2005, p. 103). Asian/American male actors like Jet Li never "kiss the girl" evidenced in *Romeo Must Die* (Bartkowiak, 2000) (Han, 2008). Even though Asian/American males are depicted to be heterosexual in film, they are too feminized to be sexually attractive to the opposite sex (Han, 2006, 2008; Ono & Pham, 2009). Jackie Chan is arguably known in Asia as a symbol of masculinity with his physical strength; however, the opposite holds true in his American-made films such in *Rush Hour 2* (Ratner, 2001) and *Shanghai Knights* (Dobkin, 2003) when he played "cute, comic asexuality" (Prasso, 2005, p. 108).

On the other hand, Asian/American men are portrayed as smart but evil. In the television series, *The Adventures of Dr. Fu Manchu* (Adreon, Witney, & Scott, 1956) based on books by Sax Rohmer (2000), a White actor puts on yellow face as Dr. Fu Manchu—an evil intentioned scientist (Prasso, 2005). Fu Manchu is the male version of the dragon lady. He is smart, cunning, and a purely wicked villain—especially waging debacles against Western nations such as Britain (Ono & Pham, 2009; Shih, 2009). Fu Manchu represents the fear of yellow peril of the time (Shih, 2009; Zia, 2000). The yellow peril was apprehension that Asians would rule the world, strip the United States and Western nations of their strength, and pollute the genetic pool. Due to his evil intentions and intelligence, one must be wary of the Chinese Fu Manchu (Shih, 2009). Furthermore, the White British, portrayed as intelligent and physically strong, were

warring Fu Manchu (Shih, 2009). Nevertheless, the common thread in all of these is the portrayal of weakness and stripping of masculinity by Western standards.

Modern day literature, television, and films reinterpret, blend, and progressively alter Asian stereotypes. They influence how Asian/American women and men in the U.S. perceive themselves in relation to other races, and their perception of America (Ono & Pham, 2009). Seeing that "mammy" stereotypes are harmful to the subordination of African Americans (Collins, 2000), so is the perpetuation of oversexualized, cold, cunning yet evil, effeminate, and docile characters to Asian/Americans. Furthermore, the stereotypes put aside the real history of Asians in United States. These stereotypes are part of the hegemonic discourse—they place Asian/Americans as perpetual foreigners, the passive, accommodating, and appreciative victim, or the ultimate cunning victimizer. They do not respond accurately to the reality of immigration laws, the U.S. justice system, or the political economy of the group as a whole.

Scholars and Asian American actors have long languished over the industry's lack of non-stereotypical roles, or for that matter any leading role (Deo, Lee, Chin, Milman, & Wang Yuen, 2008; Fong, 2008; J. F. J. Lee, 2000; Ono & Pham, 2009). Those who have prominent roles are multiracial and/or play roles that are not necessarily from their own racial-ethnic background (e.g., Fong, 2008). For instance, B. D. Wong comments, since there are no acting parts for Asians, he for some time did not want to be Asian (Zia, 2000). When he played an Asian in the play *M. Butterfly* (Hwang, 1988), a retelling from an Asian American perspective of *Madama Butterfly* (Puccini, 1990), he became more secure in being (and acting as) an Asian (Zia, 2000).

Asian Americans in the industry are creating their own niches and films. Though Asian Americans wrote, directed, edited, produced, and acted in *Better Luck Tomorrow* (Lin, 2002) and *Saving Face* (A. Wu, 2004), they achieved little box office success and notoriety.

Asian American actors in popular films include John Cho and Kal Penn (Kalpen Suresh Modi) (Ono & Pham, 2009). They had some box office success and a cult following with *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle* (Leiner, 2004) and its sequel, *Harold & Kumar Escape from Guantanamo Bay* (Hurwitz & Schlossberg, 2008). In television, Sandra Oh from *Grey's Anatomy* (Casper, 2005-Current) is a popular face in celebrity magazines. Kal Pen hit the small screen from 2008-2009 with his role as an ambitious doctor on *House* (Attanasio, Jacobs, Shore, Singer, & van der Meer, 2004-Current) who was recently killed off the show due to Kal Pen's new job with the President of the U.S. in Washington, D.C. Even though these "exceptions" are prominent in these movies and television shows, unfortunately many episodes feature them as the model minority or yellow peril (Fong, 2008). In other words, it is very easy for screenwriters, producers, and directors to move roles back or toward common Asian stereotypes.

With the accessibility and overwhelming popularity within the last two years of social media such as YouTube, many Asian Americans create their own roles and shows (Ono & Pham, 2009). For instance, highly popular internet personality, Christine Sombito known as HappySlip (http://www.youtube.com/HappySlip) achieved most-subscribed-to status on YouTube. She produced, filmed, acted, and edited her own comedy sketch shorts based on her family and experiences growing up in a Filipino

household. Her fame propelled her to be the Ambassador for the Philippines by the Department of Tourism. Kevin Wu or KevJumba (http://www.youtube.com/KevJumba) is also a top-subscribed YouTube comedian who filmed his views on daily life including Asian American stereotypes. Another notable is one-woman show Kristina Wong (http://www.kristinawong.com/), who catapulted to fame with her fake mail-order bride site, http://www.bigbadchinesemama.com. Even though these young entertainers are popular on the internet, they have not achieved box office success or obtained prominent roles in television and other media.

Online-based politicized blogs and publications are also important media to Asian Americaness such as Angry Asian Man (http://www.angryasianman.com). The site is a central locale for anything and everything Asian/American in popular culture. Taking stylized pictures of Bruce Lee as his unofficial mascot, Phil Yu updates the site to encourage dialog about both the good and the bad of Asian/Americans, individual and as a group. He also actively reveals the undercurrents of racism and stereotypical depictions of Asians. His famous refrain at the end of some of his articles, "That's racist!" at offensive statements and images bring together his goal of revelation and a central space about Asian/Americaness. I subscribe to Hyphen, a non-profit magazine advertised as "Asian American Unabridged" targeted toward, "the culturally and politically savvy." I look at these media to paint the relationship between Asianness, Whiteness, and foreignness in arguably Asian/American popular culture. Those Asian/Americans across the United States are participants of this mediated discussion whether they are aware of it or not. Though I will not do an in-depth symbolic or

content analysis of the media, they provide a space of immersion and connection with Asian/Americans conscious of Asian/American issues.

These mediated messages also raise questions about what it means to be an Asian/American (Ono & Pham, 2009). For those with little contact with Asian/Americans in day-to-day life (such as myself living in Oklahoma), I must choose and actively seek out applicable media and with my social life: finding opportunities to meet, engage, and dialogue with Asian/Americans. I did not actively seek contacts with other Asian/Americans when I lived in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Overall, this section details the stereotypes and public image of Asian/Americans. This includes the six dominant images of gook, pollutant, coolie, the deviant, the yellow peril, and the model minority. I concentrate on the model minority due to its importance to the unassimilable foreigner. I also examine stereotypes of Asian/American women as submissive/desired and dominant/feared, and of Asian/American men as racially castrated. Lastly, I briefly describe current popular Asian/American media celebrities. In the following pages, I present the history of Asian/Americans in the United States.

Asianness and the Historical: Immigration to the U.S.

Racial and ethnic identity is embedded in history. Awareness and understanding of the history of Asian/Americans in the United States place into context contemporary Asian/American issues. Hing (1993) note that even though Asians were initially welcomed to the United States, they "were the first group whose presence prompted the passage of a federal immigration law…moreover, the first group excluded by federal

law" (p. 19). Thus, historical analysis helps negotiate the ongoing oscillating views of Asians as perpetual foreigners and honorary Whites.

Providing an adequate historical analysis of Asian/Americans is a daunting task. Sucheng Chan (1991) separates Asian/Americans and Pacific Islanders into at least five main historical conjectures based on specific racial ethnic groups: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, and Filipino. Chan (1991) fuses these five groups' histories together based on categories such as reasons for emigration, livelihood, community formations, dealings with "second-generation" Asians, and current economic status. Ronald Takaki (1998) organizes his historical analysis by discerning between two main waves of immigration from Asia and the Pacific Islands: the first wave starting in the 1800s, and the second and most current wave post-1965. Then he discusses each racial ethnic group specifically in terms of their individual group contribution to the wave, cultural values and laws. Entire chapters are devoted to specific racial ethnic groups in the first wave, but not so after 1965. Intertwined in each group's history are personal accounts, oral histories, and newspaper writings—painting an "on the ground" perspective of history. The mass produced question-answer *Everything You Need to Know about Asian-American History* distinguishes history entirely by racial/ethnic groups (Novas & Cao, 2004). Bill Ong Hing (1993) instead focuses more on immigration law and its effects prior and post 1965. By retracing immigration legality, Hing opens up discussion on the inherent racism of the law, and the telling signs of actual immigration community development.

All of these histories have merit; therefore, this section organizes Asian/American history by large waves and small waves of immigration by racial ethnic

group. The large waves are the major flows of immigration pre-1940s, during 1940s-1960s, and post-1965; and the smaller waves are the particular groups that migrated during a certain period of time (e.g., Vietnamese refugee relocation after the fall of Saigon in 1975). Intertwined in these waves is the immigration law that restricted specific and all Asian racial groups.

In the following section, entitled "Immigration Before 1940s," I present the waves of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino and Asian Indian immigration and related Congressional laws. After this in the second section, I discuss important historical Asian/American moments between 1940s-1960s, including important issues of that time. The last section offers information of the post-1965 immigration era, which includes Vietnamese immigration.

Immigration Before 1940s

Between the mid-1800s and early 1900s, approximately one million Asians and Pacific Islanders immigrated to the United States (and Hawaii), in comparison to the 35 million European immigrants from the same time period (Chan, 1991). The first Asians in America came between the mid-1500s and early-1800s when Filipino and Chinese sailors on cargo ships came from Manila to Acapulco (Chan, 1991). Some eventually settled in Louisiana.

Chinese Wave

Histories usually began with Chinese because they were the first group of significant numbers to immigrate. Reasons for a high concentration of Chinese immigrants were partly due to the pervasive Western presence in China (Chan, 1991), pure necessity of poverty in China, and the attraction of the United States (Okihiro,

2001). After losing a series of wars against Western governments, China opened up trade to the West and the English and French recruited peasant boys to evade China's ban on emigration (Chan, 1991). The lure of gold in California was another driving force (Takaki, 1998). In addition, social and economic upheaval, and civil and political unrest pushed suffering Chinese to leave for survival and a better life (Chan, 1991). Chan (1991) believed, "Had Western ships not called at Canton, Hong Kong, or Aomen (Macao) to take them to these far-off destinations, however, they very likely would had simply traveled by junk to Southeast Asia" instead of moving to the United States, Australia, and Canada (p. 8).

Geographically, the Chinese initially lived in San Francisco in 1870 and gradually extended not only to "San Francisco (Dai Fou, or 'Big City'), Sacramento (Yee Fou, or 'Second City'), Stockton (Sam Fou, or 'Third City'), Marysville, and Los Angeles" by the 1900s (Takaki, 1998, p. 79). Simultaneously, Chinese historical tied to Hawaii remained strong.

Captain James Cook noted Chinese laborers when he visited Hawaii in 1778 (Takaki, 1998). To boost the production of sugar on Hawaii's plantations, Cook and others like him sought for more Chinese laborers to aid the Hawaiian laborers by the early-1800s. Eventually Japanese, Korean, and Filipino laborers cultivated the cane—sometimes working side by side, sometimes competing for greater quotas (Chan, 1991). Already in this history, Asians were singled out to create friction among other racial ethnic groups—another key to the modern model minority stereotype.

By the mid-1800s, Chinese immigrants were used not only to cultivate sugar cane in Hawaii, but cleared vast wild lands, mined metals, and built the transcontinental

railroad in the continental United States (Takaki, 1998). This was largely due to the 1868 Burlingame Treaty that permitted open migration to the United States for trade (Fong, 2000). The treaty hoped Chinese migration would increase wealth to Western nations, with a cursory acknowledgement about the benefits of Chinese culture and artifacts to the United States and culture. Soon after, unrest toward Chinese increased. In 1870, barely two years after the Burlingame Treaty, the Chinese were denied citizenship rights. The 1870 amendment of the 1790 Nationality Act allowing African immigrants rights to citizenship simultaneously denied naturalization to the Chinese (Hing, 1993).

An increasing national anti-Chinese atmosphere reached the culmination of the famed Chinese Exclusion Act on May 6, 1882, which substantially decreased Chinese immigration to a mere trickle (Chang, 2003; Hing, 1993). This act was in stark contrast to the European immigration into the United States. Before the exclusion act, extensive violent outbursts against Chinese resulted in countless undocumented murders and beatings in Los Angeles and Idaho (Daniels, 1988). More heinous regional Sinophobic violence occurred after the exclusion act including the Rock Springs Massacre in Wyoming and little known Snake River Massacre in Oregon (Daniels, 1988).

The Scott Act of 1888 and the Geary Act of 1892 were (almost the) final measures to restrict, reject, and deject the Chinese. The Scott Act completely eliminated the possibility of Chinese labor immigration; even those with valid work return certificates (Hing, 1993). The Geary Act was even more disturbing, “Claiming that Chinese names and faces were all alike, the nativists argued that a registration requirement was necessary to distinguish those legally in the United States prior to

exclusion from those who might have been smuggled in afterward" (Hing, 1993, p. 25). In effect, the Geary Act extended the Chinese Exclusion Act by 10 years, required registration of all Chinese laborers, denying bail, and threatened imprisonment of Chinese if they could not prove lawful entitlement to stay in the United States (Hing, 1993). These acts provided the national sentiment at the time toward immigrants; a sentiment repeated again and again toward certain immigrant groups even today. A recession that affected the (White) working classes encouraged perceptions of immigrants as the cause of work and economic problems (Hing, 1993). The Scott and Geary Acts began a series of 30 years of exclusionary laws against the Chinese, resulting in a sharp decline in the U.S. Chinese population (Hing, 1993).

Most of these Chinese immigrants were men. The ratio of 2:1, men: women, continued until the end of World War II (for tables of males to female ratios, see Daniels, 1988, pp. 69, 72, & 73). Chinese women were denied entry to the United States in 1870s on suspicions that they were prostitutes (Hing, 1993). Furthermore, high restrictions after the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act prevented Chinese men already in the United States to bring their wives and children, fracturing families (Chang, 2003; Hing, 1993). By denying Chinese women entry, the Chinese were naturally prevented from establishing families and strong, flourishing, communities (Hing, 1993). With the lack of women and the need for basic community services after the end of railroad construction, the now unemployed Chinese men took jobs usually deemed as "women's work" such as tailoring, laundry, and other domestic services (Daniels, 1988, p. 74). With Chinese men participating in womanly work and the mostly all-male communities,

these events could have perpetuated the stereotypes of the overly effeminate and weak Asian male.

The Chinese men (and very few women) created pockets of communities, most notably in San Francisco, California. San Francisco's Chinatown was built during the 1850s with general merchandise, restaurants, boarding houses, and alike—shops and services for a growing community (Takaki, 1998). Over the next decades, Chinatown increased in size and numbers. Other Chinatowns popped up in Sacramento, Marysville, and Stockton (Takaki, 1998). Chinese not only created their own "space," they formed social communities: tongs (organizations for economic, personal, or political purposes), fongs ("close family and village members"), and clans ("larger groupings of village associations") (Takaki, 1998, p. 119). With their space somewhat established and social organizations, the Chinese immigrants could openly worship their own gods, celebrate the lunar New Year, and hold Moon Festivals.

Despite restrictions on Chinese immigration, by the 1920s, some Chinese were able to move to the U.S. mostly "because of a loophole" which "allowed those Asians who had resided for five years in a country in the Western Hemisphere to immigrate to the United States" (Hing, 1993, p. 47). However, this was short-lived. The 1924 Immigration Act made all aliens "ineligible to citizenship" including southern and eastern Europeans (Hing, 1993, p. 47) which further cinched the ability of Chinese to become lawful citizens after the 1870 Naturalization Act.

Japanese Wave

Japanese reasons for immigration were similar to the Chinese—but with less violence (Chan, 1991). Japan was intentionally isolated from European powers after the

Portuguese Christian missionary influence in the mid-1500s. In 1853, Japan signed trading treaties with United States (Chan, 1991). Subsequent treaties with other European powers resulted in a transformation in Japan. Japanese leaders desired to learn from the West's rapid industrialization (Chan, 1991). To fuel the industrialization, Japanese instituted heavy land taxation, hurting agricultural stability, collapsing the feudal system.

By 1868, hundreds of Japanese were illegally shipped as laborers to Hawaii, Guam, and California (Chan, 1991; Okihiro, 2001). Similar to the Chinese who came to Hawaii to cultivate sugar cane, thousands of Japanese were recruited to do the same during the late-1800s. Japan's emigration laws were eventually altered, allowing for persons to legally leave Japan (Chan, 1991; Hing, 1993). American Robert Walker Irwin was instrumental in establishing Japanese-Hawaiian relationships under the Irwin Convention (Chan, 1991). Most Japanese laborers lived in cramped, primitive housing devoid of privacy on the sugar plantations. The majority of these laborers contracted to work three-years cultivating cane in harsh, regimented working conditions.

The Organic Law in the 1900 "made all contracts null and void in Hawaii" which encouraged railroad, lumber, and farming companies in the U.S. to entice Japanese workers (Chan, 1991). Since contractors could no longer bid for the attention of the Chinese due to the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the Japanese were prime targets for labor. Thousands of Japanese moved to Pacific Northwest areas in the United States during 1902-1906.

A central place in Japanese history at this time was San Francisco, just as it was for the Chinese. The Japanese entered America mostly through San Francisco, "where

the most important Nihonmachi or 'Japan town' developed, where the Japanese consul general had his headquarters, and where the anti-Japanese movement had its birth during the 1890s" (Daniels, 1988, p. 109).

On the mainland, sometimes the Japanese competed with the Chinese for labor (Daniels, 1988). But that soon ended with the waning Chinese population after the Chinese Exclusion Act (Daniels, 1988). By 1909, Japanese labor on the mainland in the United States reached "30,000 in agriculture, 10,000 in railroads, and 4,000 in canneries" (Takaki, 1998, p. 182). As on the Hawaiian plantations, their living conditions were terrible: sleeping in box cars, barely surviving in extreme weather conditions, suffering from malnutrition, and working long hours (Takaki, 1998).

Outside the labor environment, businesses were popping up all over the cities on the West Coast in the early 1900s to service the growing Japanese community. The Immigration Commission noted, "there were between 3,000 and 3,500 Japanese-owned establishments in the western states, most of them in major cities like San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, and Sacramento" (Takaki, 1998, p. 186). Some of these businesses were hotels, restaurants, barbershops, poolrooms, laundries, and tailor shops. Japanese entrepreneurs; however, were under scrutiny by the general (White) population. For instance, wealthy potato farmer, Kinji Ushijima (also known as George Shima), was praised in the San Francisco Chronicle as a positive example of U.S. success, yet chastised in Berkeley newspapers with headings like, "Yellow Peril in College Town" (Takaki, 1998, p. 192).

Agriculture economic success "reflected the effectiveness of Japanese ethnic solidarity and the mutual-support systems they had developed in America" (Takaki,

1998, p. 193). Japanese farmers formed strong support societies such as kenjinkai which organized social activities and encouraged mutual economic support; tanomoshi, a credit-rotating group, or kobai kumiai and sango kumiai—groups that purchased bulk foods and marketing crops, respectively (Takaki, 1998). More organizations existed for real estate problems, obtaining supplies, agricultural information, and basic selling techniques. This mutually supportive group strength also transferred to smaller unions such as the famed Japanese-Mexican Labor Association (JMLA) in 1903 that struggled against the Western Agricultural Contracting Company (Takaki, 1998). A successful strike ensued: resulting in stable work for both Japanese and Mexican laborers. Despite the success of JMLA, they were denied membership into the older and larger union, the American Federation of Labor (AFL), on the basis of racial exclusion against Chinese and Japanese (Takaki, 1998).

The Japanese like the Chinese had their fair share of anti-Japanese protests, sentiments, and negative comments (Daniels, 1988). Already by 1891, San Francisco papers printed stories of recent Japanese immigrants as undesirable, "filthy" who wore, "'a fearful and wonderful mixture of male and female attire'" (Daniels, 1988, p. 110). San Francisco legislatures held off Japanese segregation until the turn of the century (Daniels, 1988). At the point of renewal for the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1903, White laborers in San Francisco protested against the "Japanese peril" (Takaki, 1998, p. 200). In their protests the White laborers said, "Unlike the Chinese, the Japanese had a particular 'virtue'—their 'partial adoption of American customs'—that made them 'more dangerous' than the Chinese had been as 'competitors'" (Takaki, 1998, p. 200). Thus, the White activists acknowledged partial assimilation of racial/ethnic groups as

threatening. The anti-Japanese clamor reached the ears of Californian legislatures. They promoted statements of White racial purity and fears of White women marrying Japanese men. Their voices were heard—San Francisco Board of Education segregated Chinese, Japanese and Koreans from White students by creating the Oriental School on October 11, 1906 (Takaki, 1998).

The Japanese government, however, was obviously upset about the riots and segregation. To save face, President Theodore Roosevelt publicly admonished San Francisco's School Board for their segregation decision (Takaki, 1998). From personal accounts after his presidency, Roosevelt obviously favored Japanese exclusion. Violence abounded in California after the school board decision. Californian legislatures began creating laws aimed at denying Japanese land rights (Takaki, 1998). Recognizing the power of Japan's influence on the United States, a Gentleman's Agreement was reached 1907 and 1908 (Hing, 1993). The provisions of the agreement precluded Japan from allowing Japanese worker emigration to the United States. The United States, however, would allow the immigration of wives and children of Japanese males already living in the United States (Hing, 1993). In addition, the U.S. federal government would do something about the San Francisco School Board's segregation decision (Hing, 1993). The Japanese, then, had a similar though not as restricting predicament as the Chinese before them. Japanese immigration reduced which contrasted with the growing European to U.S. migration (Hing, 1993). The upside was those Japanese already living in the United States were able to establish families and communities—nestling a growing Nisei (second-generation) population. The international political environment of the growing military strength of Japan, saved

Japanese from Congress' limiting laws of the Chinese (Hing, 1993). All immigration halted with the 1924 Immigration Act causing tension between the Issei (first immigrants to the U.S.) ineligible for citizenship and Nisei who by birth were U.S. citizens (Hing, 1993).

Korean Wave

The American Korean population was significantly smaller than Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos (Hing, 1993). Many reasons contributed to the trickle of Korean immigrants. Korea "sealed itself off from the outside world" for roughly 250 years after wars with the Japanese and Manchurians in the late 16th and early 17th centuries (Chan, 1991, p. 12). After defending its waters from Western and Japanese ships, Korea signed the Treaty of Kanghwa of 1876, which succeeded foreign trade to Japan (Okihiro, 2001). Eventually this led to more treaties with United States, Great Britain, Germany, Russia, Italy, and France (Chan, 1991; Okihiro, 2001). Korea became Japan's protectorate after Japan won two wars (Chan, 1991). United States missionary Horace N. Allen set to work in Korea, building the bridge between Korea and Hawaii.

By 1900, Koreans emigrants were already in China and Japan so the idea of leaving Korea was not a new concept (Chan, 1991). A pattern was set—when one Asian group was no longer available, American companies vied for the next Asian candidate. Since the Chinese, and then Japanese were no longer welcomed into Hawaii, Koreans were the next group to work on Hawaiian plantations via Christianity. It made sense that roughly "40 percent of the 7,000 emigrants who left the country [Korea] between December 1902 and May 1905 were [Christian] converts" (Chan, 1991, p. 15). The

Korean government noticed, however, the mistreatment of Korean emigrants in Mexico—and thus they withdrew emigration permission in 1905.

The few Koreans remaining in the U.S. moved inland primarily to California like the Chinese and Japanese. On the mainland, there were only "1,677 [Koreans] in 1920 and only 1,711 twenty years later" (Takaki, 1998, p. 270). With such a small population, Koreans were unable to build their own racial ethnic communities. They somehow to their chagrin found homes in predominantly Black and Mexican communities, segregated from White areas (Takaki, 1998). The Asiatic Exclusion League went to work restricting rights of Koreans. As stated earlier, Korean children were segregated in the 1906 San Francisco School Board decision with the Japanese and Chinese (Takaki, 1998). By 1907 Koreans and Japanese could no longer migrate from Hawaii to the mainland (Takaki, 1998). Important in this time span was the Alien Land Act of 1913. Due to the denial of Koreans to obtain citizenship, Koreans could not own land (Takaki, 1998). The Koreans held one more thing in common with the Chinese; the predominant Korean population was male. Even though picture brides arrived from Korea for these men, the disparity between men and women persisted that by 1920, Korean men accounted for 75% of the Korean population on the mainland (Takaki, 1998). The majority of these men worked in agriculture.

A strong philosophy among the Korean immigrants included conscious assimilation into American culture. The Korean publication, Kongnip Sinmun, included this statement: "'The reason why many Americans love Koreans and help us, while they hate Japanese more than ever…is that we Koreans gave up old baseness, thought and behavior, and became more westernized'" (Takaki, 1998, p. 277). In other words,

Koreans gave up their own Korean customs, learned English, professed their belief in Christianity, and believed the goodness of American society (Takaki, 1998).

Some believe this assimilation was so because of Korea's needed to separate itself from (perceived) Japan's prying colonial hands. Koreans living in the United States combined forces for Korean independence (Okihiro, 2001; Takaki, 1998). They worked during the day, giving their profits and serving patriotic organizations. The independence movement aided community development; Koreans rallied under patriotic support such as the Korean Nationalist Association (Takaki, 1998). Takaki (1998) noted two reasons for Koreans to congregate: to worship Jesus or to protest for Korea's independence. Often these meetings occurred in churches such as the Korean Methodist Church of San Francisco or the Korean Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles (Takaki, 1998). They rallied under the mantra of education as well—a belief that education was a weapon against Japan. They established Korean-language schools for second-generation Koreans all over California including San Francisco, Sacramento, and Los Angeles (Takaki, 1998). Their activism against Japanese included lateral discrimination by promoting their own products and rejecting all Japanese made products. When Japan lost the war in 1945, Korea became two nations: North and South Korea (Hing, 1993; Okihiro, 2001).

Filipino Wave

As stated earlier, Filipinos and Chinese historically found their way from Manila to Acapulco, eventually settling near Louisiana in the mid-1500s and early-1800s (Chan, 1991). Those small groups of Pinoys (as they refer to themselves) "aboard Spanish galleons as early as 1565 jumped ship in Mexico and made their way to

Louisiana to establish the first Filipino American community" (Hing, 1993, p. 61). By then, Spain had taken control over the Philippines (Chan, 1991). A few hundred years would pass before more Filipinos came to the U.S. mainland. Filipinos were technically not foreigners due to their status as American nationals; United States acquired the Philippines from Spain after the Spanish-American War in 1898 (Chan, 1991; Takaki, 1998). The Philippines resisted; they put up a fight against the U.S. The little known Philippine-American War occurred from the Spain's succession of Philippines to the U.S. until 1901 (Chan, 1991). Filipinos utilized guerilla tactics against their new possessor—needless to say bloodshed, death, and more violence riddled the Philippines (Chan, 1991). United States launched "benevolent assimilation" campaigns in that area. Besides that, Filipinos became American nationals and had some rights to come to the United States mainland. The role of Filipino immigration was significant to understanding U.S. racial policies. By placing the Philippines under U.S. control, the U.S. "relinquished the capacity to control an Asian group through immigration policy" at least for approximately thirty short years (Hing, 1993, p. 63).

When Chinese, Japanese, and then Koreans were no longer available, U.S. companies looked to the Philippines for low-wage workers since the "the privileged travel status became a highly used commodity" (Hing, 1993, p. 61). The Filipino population in the United States was 2,767 in 1910 and 26,634 in 1920. In 1930, the Filipino population was 108,424 with over 60% residing in Hawaii and the rest on the mainland (Hing, 1993). Like the Chinese and Japanese, Filipinos came into the mainland via San Francisco and then found ways to Stockton, "the gathering place of Filipinos as they came to America" (Takaki, 1998, p. 316). By all accounts,

predominantly single Filipino men were recruited; however, the ratio of males to females were not as extreme as those for the Chinese (Hing, 1993). Due to anti-miscegenation laws, Filipino men could not marry White women but could marry Mexican women and other women of color (Hing, 1993). The majority of the Filipinos worked in the service industries, fisheries in Northwest and Alaska, or agriculture with jobs such as kitchen helpers, janitors, bellboys, salmon cleaners in the fisheries, farmers filling in the labor gap left by Chinese, Japanese, and Korean (Takaki, 1998).

Filipinos along with other Asian groups soon became target for protests by White nativists. Eventually Filipinos were a problem and some believed granting independence to the Philippines was the answer (Zia, 2000). Protesters succeeded as the 1934 Philippine Independence Act (Tydings-McDuffie Act) freed the U.S. from the Philippines, and added immigration quota of 50 a year. Filipinos could no longer freely enter the United States as American nationals (Hing, 1993). They now had little to no rights for U.S. citizenship like the Japanese, Koreans, and Chinese.

Asian Indian Wave

India was under British colonial rule since 1857, and until their national independence in 1947, ceded emigration laws to the British Crown. Indians could travel to other British colonies, and some Indians took a risk traveling to the United States when Britain established a loose relationship with them (Hing, 1993). Asian Indians, mostly from the Punjab region, came to the United States starting before the 1890s (Chan, 1991; Hing, 1993). Before the 1890s, only 359 Asian Indians immigrated (Hing, 1993). By 1910, the Asian Indian population reached 5,424; the population reduced to 3,130 in 1930 due to the 1924 Immigration Act that affected all Asian/Americans with

the exception of the “American national” Filipinos (Hing, 1993). Some of Asian Indian immigrants before World War II were highly educated and surprised by the harsh and prejudicial treatment in the United States, but the majority that came to the United States worked as agricultural laborers (Hing, 1993). Often times Asian Indians were labeled Hindus, despite that some of the Asian Indian immigrants were Muslim and Sikh as well (Takaki, 1998).

In the early 1900s, Hing (1993) noted an increasing xenophobic attitude against Italian, Russian, and Hungarian immigrants that coincided with Sinophobic remarks. Congress ceded to this by passing the Act of February 5, 1917 in which all immigrants needed to read and understand some language or dialect. More importantly for the Asians was the establishment of the Asiatic barred zone which “covered South Asian from Arabia to Indochina and adjacent islands” such as “India, Burma, Thailand, the Malay States, the East Indian Islands, Asiatic Russia, the Polynesian Islands, and parts of Arabia and Afghanistan” (Hing, 1993, p. 32). China and Japan were already covered in the aforementioned Chinese Exclusion Laws and Acts, and the Gentlemen’s Agreement (Hing, 1993). Due to the Act of 1917 and further humiliation with the Supreme Court’s 1923 decision, some Asian Indians returned to India (Hing, 1993).

After arriving to the United States as workers, most Asian Indians desired to stay in the United States and develop communities (Okihiro, 2001). Some rallied around religious associations (Okihiro, 2001). They found solace in groups reading the Koran together (if they were Muslim) or worshipping in temples. Like the Chinese and Filipinos, the Asian Indian population was male. Like the Filipino men, Asian Indian men intermarried with Mexican women due to regulations of the 1917 Immigration

Law. Takaki (1998) estimates, "[i]n northern California between 1913 and 1946, 47 percent of their [Asian Indian men's] wives were Mexican. In central California, 76 percent were Mexican…in southern California…92 percent" (p. 310).

The Supreme Court's 1923 Decision was important to mention. Asian Indians were considered Caucasian prior to the 1923 decision (Hemant Shah, 1999; Takaki, 1998). In ethnology books of the time, Asian Indians as well as most Europeans were deemed Caucasian based on their skull size and other physical features (e.g., Blumbenbach, 1865; Coon, 1962). There was also a linguistic basis for this assumption as well: in 1786, Sir William Jones found that Sanskrit was an Indo-European language (adding "Indo" to European), related to Latin and Greek, suggesting a deep historical tie between India and Europe (Agar, 1994). Asiatic Exclusion League proclaimed, "'Hindus [their inaccurate term for all Asian Indians]' were 'members of the same family' as Americans of European ancestry. But…the people of the United States were 'cousins, far removed, of the Hindus of the northwest provinces'" later referring to Asian Indians as the weaker, "degraded race" (Takaki, 1998, p. 298). In other words, Asian Indians may be technically Caucasian but they were not in the same league of the superior Whites of the U.S. (Haney-López, 2006; Hemant Shah, 1999). Even though Asian Indians were eligible for citizens since they were Caucasian in earlier naturalization laws, that was stripped from the in the 1923 Supreme Court decision of United States v. Bhagat Singh Thind (Haney-López, 2006). The Supreme Court defined race on the basis of common knowledge or "'understanding of the common man'" (Haney-López, 2006; Takaki, 1998, p. 299). White, then meant European immigrants and not immigrants from other countries (Haney-López, 2006). Even though there may

be historical ties between Asian Indians and White Europeans, the current physical appearance proved otherwise.

1940s-1964 Asian Immigration and Livelihood

The 1940s-1965 ushered in hope for some Asian groups but hardship for another. World War II created new environments and perspectives on Asian/Americans: allies and enemies. Chinese, Korean, Filipino, and Asian Indians were on the positive receiving end, the Japanese on the other hand were definitely not. Chan (1991) detailed four main reasons for better attitudes toward the "fortunate" groups: a) better public personas, b) perception of Asians getting more prestigious jobs, c) large population of Chinese, Filipinos, and Koreans fighting for the cause in the war, and d) the elimination of the restricting immigration and naturalization acts for Chinese, Filipinos and Asian Indians. Despite serving in the army as well, the Executive Order forced Japanese living in the United States into concentration camps.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941, anti-Japanese sentiment in the United States reached a critical fervor. War raged in the Philippines soon after. Suddenly, Chinese and Filipinos were the "good guys," allies; whereas Japanese and Germans were the bad ones (Zia, 2000). Fearing they would be seen as Japanese since Asians looked alike, Chinese, Koreans, and Filipinos tried to show their difference—the Chinese for instance posted signs on shops, "This is a Chinese shop" or wore buttons, "I am Chinese" (Takaki, 1998, p. 371; Zia, 2000).

Navy Secretary Frank Knox strongly suggested the Japanese in Hawaii be interned due to suspicions those living there had somehow aided in the attack on Pearl Harbor (Takaki, 1998). Military Governor of Hawaii General Delos Emmons

announced the internment was not necessary. Emmons' suggestion eventually won over the War Department as they escorted the Japanese out of Hawaii. The political wheel toward Japanese internment began to escalate in the President's office. Curtis Munson assessed the threat of Japanese in the U.S. Munson's conclusion was, "For the most part the local Japanese are loyal to the United States or, at worst, hope that by remaining quiet they can avoid concentration camps or irresponsible mobs. We do not believe that they would be at least any more disloyal than any other racial group in the United States with whom we went to war" (Takaki, 1998, p. 386). The authorities largely ignored Munson's report. Western Defense Command, Lieutenant General John L. DeWitt, spearheaded the Japanese American paranoia. On February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, in effect allowed DeWitt to deal with the Japanese anyway he chose (Takaki, 1998). DeWitt with the Order created concentration camps and then forcefully removed Japanese living in the U.S. to these camps. The Italians and Germans escaped the same fate. The trials of the Japanese in the internment camps were documented in Takaki (1998) and Chan (1991). Finally in December 1944, the internment order was rescinded (Chan, 1991). Before the end of the war, when Emmons had replaced DeWitt, internment camps slowly disappeared. The now freed Japanese returned home to nothing: almost every material item earned, worked, and created before the internment was gone, damaged, or ruined. The Japanese had lost their American communities. The Chinese, on the other hand, had a much different story.

In the 1940-1950s, Chinese men and women entered more professional and technical jobs such as engineers and technicians, and other white-collar jobs; this stimulated more positive attitudes toward Chinese (Chan, 1991). The 1943 Chinese

Repealer Act permitted Chinese to become citizens for the first time since 1870 (Hing, 1993). But with the 105 quota restriction of Chinese immigrants (i.e., only 105 immigrants a year were accepted into the U.S. from China), the act did not improve Chinese immigration (Hing, 1993). The big change occurred a few years later when Congress allowed Chinese who were U.S. citizens to bring their wives and children, which did not apply to the 105 Chinese-quota. Another door opened with the Immigrant and Nationality Act of 1952 (also known as McCarran-Walter) which eliminated the 1924 Immigration Act citizenship restrictions but retained the quota immigration system (Hing, 1993).

Koreans were highly invested in the outcome of World War II; they wanted Japan to lose in order for Korea to be free from Japan's colonial rule. Some Koreans also insisted on participating in the U.S. Armed Forces. Those that could not physically fight, bought defense bonds, volunteered in the Red Cross or other emergency agencies (Takaki, 1998). Both the Filipinos and Asian Indians received benefits due to their perceived advantage or their activity during the War. President Franklin Roosevelt added Filipinos to the draft due to Filipino insistence on fighting in the War (Takaki, 1998). By fighting in the war and being part of the U.S. Army, Filipinos could become citizens in 1943 (Takaki, 1998). They were also allowed to lease lands especially those previously managed by the Japanese (Takaki, 1998). In 1941, the president also signed Executive Order 8802, providing equitable employment opportunities beyond race (in law): "'It is the duty of employers and labor organizations…to provide for full and equitable participation of all workers in defense industries, without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin'" (Takaki, 1998, p. 362). U.S.

government realized that by favoring Asian Indians, they could take advantage of India's military against Japan. Congress took to task promoting naturalization rights of Asian Indians in 1944.

Japanese, Chinese, and Filipino who fought for the U.S. in the War returned home at the end of the War and took advantage of the GI Bill for college education benefits and assistance in purchasing real estate (Chan, 1991). In addition, the 1945 War Brides Act allowed (male) GIs to bring home their brides from Asia. The Japanese, Korean, and Filipina wives mainly married non-Asian men, whereas there was a more balanced ratio of Chinese women marrying Chinese American men and non-Asian men (Chan, 1991). The United States presence in Korea during and after the Korean War (1950-1953) encouraged more Korean women married to American GIs to immigrate. The result in population was an overwhelming amount of Korean immigrant women and girls through the 1950s and 1960s (Chan, 1991). The American presence in the Philippines had a similar effect in Filipina immigration. In the late 1950s, "approximately 1,000 Filipinas a year immigrated as U.S. dependents…up to over 4,000 a year in the 1970s" (Chan, 1991, p. 140). The rise in Asian women in the United States created a higher second-generation population in the U.S and biracial children (Chan, 1991).

Both Filipinos and Asian Indians benefited from Congress' act to give naturalization rights to Filipinos and Asian Indians on July 2, 1946 (Hing, 1993). This act, along with the 1952 the Immigrant and Nationality Act (also known as the McCarran-Walter Act), allowed aliens including Asians to become U.S. citizens, but retained quota systems for these groups (Hing, 1993). Of an important item to note

about the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act was a detail of the racist quota system. Usually under this act, if one was born in a country, the birthplace determined the counting in the quota (Hing, 1993). This did not hold true for those with at least half ancestry in the nineteen nations of the Asiatic Triangle (noted earlier). In those cases, the ancestry of the Asiatic Triangle was charged the quota rather than the birthplace (Hing, 1993). One example:

> A person born in Great Britain of a Russian father and a Norwegian mother…would be charged to the quota for Great Britain…[However persons] born in Great Britain to a British father and a Japanese mother, he or she would be charged to the quota for Japan even though his or her mother and family had resided in Britain for several generations and were all British citizens (Hing, 1993, p. 38).

President Truman vetoed the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act (McCarran-Walter Act) because of the retention of the quota system. Obviously, Congress overrode the veto. Truman was still adamant about the elimination of the quota system and formed a committee to study the immigration and naturalization system (Hing, 1993). President Eisenhower agreed with Truman's stance but did not successfully repeal it. Ten years later, the laws finally changed.

Post-1965 Asian Immigration

The second largest Asian immigration wave began in 1965. The Civil Rights Movement and President Kennedy's inspiring speeches filled the public and private sentiment for the reduction of racism in laws (Hing, 1993). U.S. government officials estimated that few Asians would take advantage of the proposed new immigration law; the purpose of the 1965 Immigration Act (framed as an amendment to the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act or McCarran-Walter Act) was intended to encourage European immigration (Hing, 1993). The 1965 amendment removed the quota system,

provided maximum immigration limits based on western and eastern hemispheres rather than by country/nation, provided a system of preference in immigrants from the eastern hemisphere, created labor certifications, and allowed for family members of U.S. citizens to enter without application to immigration maximums (Chan, 1991). Specifically, "The eastern hemisphere received a total of 170,000 visas per year, with a maximum of 20,000 per country, while the western hemisphere got 120,000 a year, without any country ceilings" (Chan, 1991, p. 146). For those from the eastern hemisphere, preferences in immigrants included highly educated and professional individuals, those entering to fill U.S. labor needs, and refugees (Chan, 1991). The western hemisphere was not subject to the same preferences.

To some, the Asian floodgates opened, taking some U.S. government officials by surprise. Asian population in the U.S. was one million in 1965 and soared to five million in 1985 (Takaki, 1998). The new Asian population also included more professionals, less laborers, and complete families—altering the socioeconomic, community, and perceptional development of Asian America. This changed the landscape of Asian/American population as well:

> [I]n 1960, 52 percent [of Asians living in the U.S.] were Japanese, 27 percent Chinese, 20 percent Filipino, 1 percent Korean, and 1 percent Asian Indian. Twenty-five years later [1985], 21 percent of Asian Americans were Chinese, 21 percent Filipino, 15 percent Japanese, 12 percent Vietnamese, 11 percent Korean, 10 percent Asian Indian, 4 percent Laotian, 3 percent Cambodian, and 3 percent 'other' (Takaki, 1998, p. 420).

Subsequent amendments affected Asian immigration. By 1976, those applying for work visas could not enter the U.S. until they already had job offers (Chan, 1991). A positive, however, was the removal of substantial regulations between the western and eastern hemispheres (Chan, 1991). Those applying for siblings to come over, mostly

Filipinos, had caused a backlog and thus further restrictions of who could apply also incurred (Chan, 1991). Immigration Amendments 1988 upped the ceiling from 5,000 to 15,000 maximum visas issued for those from 36 specified countries (Chan, 1991).

Vietnamese Wave

With the new immigration provisions, Filipinos, South Koreans, and Vietnamese arrived in large numbers to the United States. In this section, I took a special look at the Vietnamese, largely refugee, population. This important smaller wave enriched the Asian/American landscape. At the end of the Vietnam War, the U.S. desired to aid in evacuating thousands of American personnel (Hing, 1993).

In 1975, 130,400 Southeast Asian refugees, the majority from Vietnam, made it to the United States. Some did not like how the government arranged the movement of refugees, and some were fearful of the amount of refugees; they were expecting only 18,000 (Hing, 1993) and passed the 1980 Refugee Act. This act separated refugee and immigration policies (Hing, 1993). The new law though reduced the number of refugees from Southeast Asia. The relocation effort of the refugees became a daunting task for the U.S. government. Overwhelmed by the number of refugees, the Interagency Task Force (IATF) made poor choices in managing and supervising the refugee dispersal across the United States (Hing, 1993). The government did not want a substantial impact of refugees on "local communities" so the refugees were dispersed widely across the United States. Almost half of those refugees relocated once again after their arrival to the U.S. Specifically in 1990, the Vietnamese resettlement locations were mostly in the West, followed by the South, Northeast and Midwest (Hing, 1993). Vietnamese refugees worked toward economic stability since then (Takaki, 1998).

Many of the Vietnamese refugees did not hold jobs of the same technical and prestigious level as they had back in Vietnam. They worked often in technical areas, such as brick layers, mechanics, or carpenters (Takaki, 1998). Even so, Vietnamese-owned businesses seemed to flourish in Orange and Los Angeles Counties in California, so much so that a designated area was officially deemed, “Little Saigon” (Takaki, 1998). Areas in San Diego were also magnets for Vietnamese-owned businesses. Though not mentioned in these texts, Vietnamese concentrations did not just inhabit California but Oklahoma as well.

Conclusion

Overall, this chapter provided perceptions and stereotypes of Asian/Americans, as well as Asian/American immigration patterns and laws. The stereotypes and images of Asian/Americans intersect with historical conditions surrounding the immigration and supposed threat of Asian/Americans to the U.S. For instance, the derogatory name of gook signifies the Vietnamese and Koreans as enemies in times of war; the model minority signifies a wrench to the Civil Rights Movement. U.S. law and statutes prevented and hurt the opportunities of many Asian groups into the U.S.

Dominant culture embraces and perpetuates the stereotypes and images of Asian/Americans. The images are presumably ingrained in the Asian/American racial consciousness. For instance, how do Asian Americans respond to the model minority stereotype? How does this play or intersect in their racial-ethnic identity? How do Asian/Americans perceive other people of color? How do they consent or resist the model minority myth? Do these images and history in immigration reflect more the racial constructions of the dominant culture or the emergent ethnic talk of Asian

Americans? Furthermore, how do these images intersect with Whiteness? These questions illustrate the complexities of Asian/American public persona. To help guide the development of these answers in the participants, I provide the methods and procedures of this study.

CHAPTER IV

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

My primary research method includes face-to-face intensive-interviews of 1.5 to 2nd generation Asian Americans in the professional classes from ages 19 to 59 who reside in the San Francisco Bay Area and the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area. A secondary method is participant-observation of 1.5- to second-generation Asian Americans attending small groups in those areas. In this chapter, I provide information on this study's methods and procedures including participant demographics, site information, recruitment procedures, interview questions, and analysis. Lastly, I situate myself as a researcher and participant.

Participants

Forty of forty-seven individuals interviewed are included and analyzed in this work (see Table 1). The seven removed from analysis do not fit the generational criteria and/or self-identify as bi-racial. Of the forty participants who meet the criteria, twenty-four are women; sixteen are men. Their ages range from 19 to 59 with an average age of 28. Twenty-one currently reside in San Francisco Bay Area for a minimum of two years at the time of the interview. Eighteen currently reside in Oklahoma for at least two years at the time of the interview. One participant who grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area recently moved to the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area. Four identify as having an ethnic-racial affiliation with Indian (Asian Indian), four Vietnamese, six Korean, twenty-three Chinese, and three Filipino. The Asian Indian participants are all from Oklahoma and all participants with Filipino ethnic-racial heritage live in the San Francisco Bay Area. This is not to say there are no self-identified Asian Indians or Filipinos in the respective interview areas, only that my access to individuals from those groups is limited in certain geographical areas.

Initially, I intended only to interview Vietnamese and Chinese individuals (including those with origins from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Malaysia) living in the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area and San Francisco Bay Area. My contacts encouraged their friends, regardless of ethnic or national origin to participate in this study. The contacts invited Asian Indian, South Korean, and Filipino friends to participate. At first, I decided to interview them as a comparison and to enrich my understanding of Asians from a wider range of ethnic and national backgrounds. As I conducted the interviews, I noticed that their thoughts and perceptions on Whiteness specifically were similar to Chinese and Vietnamese in the study. Due to the emergent analysis and the noticeable similar pattern perceptions, I include them in the study. Many Asian Americans regardless of generational status have a bond in the racial label of Asian and or Asian American, and many studies support a cross-ethnic view of Asian American identity (Coloma, 2006; Espiritu, 1992; Min & Kim, 2000; Otis, 2001; J. Z. Park, 2008; Shinagawa, 2005). Due to this, many Departments of Ethnic Studies include a broad curriculum of Asian American ethnicities and nationalities. For these reasons, this study includes participants from Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Vietnamese backgrounds.

Twenty-nine participants are second-generation, individuals born in the United States to immigrant parents from Asia. Some participants born in the United States refer to themselves and others like them with an acronym starting with AB for American-born. For instance, ABC stands for American-born Chinese (e.g., Kibria, 2002; Yang, 1999). The more common slang way to describe American-born South Asians, such as individuals with origins from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, is not American-born

Asian Indians but Desi (Bhattacharya, 2008; Mohanty, 2004; Poulsen, 2009; Shankar, 2008; Vaidhyanathan, 2000). Desi, however, is not strictly for *American*-born or raised South Asians but any Indian or South Asian not born or raised in South Asia (e.g., Hilton, et al., 2001). Another pejorative, slang term for an American-born Indian is ABCD, American-born confused Desi (Poulsen, 2009). ABCD signifies the complexity of many Asian Indians' acculturation and assimilation in the United States. To encompass all these slang terms of American-born individuals, I employ ABA to stand for American-born and/or raised Asians.

Ten of the forty participants are 1.5-generation. Generation 1.5 terminology refers to individuals born outside the U.S. but immigrated to the United States in their early years. Characteristics of individuals labeled as 1.5-generation range from study to study. Some studies base 1.5-generation status on native language(s) and English abilities (e.g., Yamaguchi, 2005), whereas others base 1.5 status on the age of arrival to the U.S. (e.g., Ellis & Goodwin-White, 2006). Other scholars, based on a number of factors, label individuals second-generation status even if they are born outside the United States as long as they immigrate to the United States before a certain age (e.g., Kibria, 2002). For the purposes of this project, I define 1.5-generation as those individuals who immigrated to the United States at age 12 or younger, regardless of language abilities and cultural nuances. One participant is born in the United States to one second-generation parent and one immigrant parent. For ease of description, I refer to this participant's generational status as 2.5-generation.

TABLE 1: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Pseudonym	Sex*	Interview Location **	Generation ***	Ethnic or National Background	Age	Age of arrival to US
Madison	F	OK	1.5	Korean	early 20s	5
Faith	F	OK	1.5	Korean	early 30s	6
Samantha	F	OK	1.5	Korean	early 20s	12
Ava	F	OK	1.5	Korean	early 20s	12
Daksha	M	OK	1.5	Indian	early 20s	9
Lily	F	SF	1.5	Chinese	mid 40s	9
Devin	M	SF	1.5	Chinese	late 50s	7
Nicole	F	SF	1.5	Chinese from Burma	early 30s	6 months
Bruce	M	SF	1.5	Chinese	late 20s	10
Logan	M	SF	1.5	Chinese	late 30s	2
Brooke	F	OK	2	Korean	mid 20s	N/A
Jordan	F	OK	2	Chinese	early 20s	N/A
Chloe	F	OK	2	Chinese	early 20s	N/A
Ella	F	OK	2	Vietnamese	early 20s	N/A
Alyssa	F	OK	2	Chinese	early 20s	N/A
Tuyen	F	OK	2	Vietnamese	early 20s	N/A
Chinja	M	OK	2	Indian	early 20s	N/A
Blake	M	OK	2	Chinese	early 20s	N/A
Carson	M	OK	2	Vietnamese	early 20s	N/A
Seth	M	OK	2	Vietnamese	early 20s	N/A
Ian	M	OK	2	Chinese	mid 20s	N/A
Bodhi	M	OK	2	Indian	early 20s	N/A
Adi	M	OK	2	Indian	early 20s	N/A
Christian	M	OK/SF	2	Chinese	early 30s	N/A
Kaylee	F	SF	2	Chinese	early 20s	N/A
Kimberly	F	SF	2	Chinese	early 30s	N/A
Michelle	F	SF	2	Filipino	late 20s	N/A
Evelyn	F	SF	2	Chinese	mid 20s	N/A
Avery	F	SF	2	Filipino	late 20s	N/A
Russell	M	SF	2	Chinese	early 30s	N/A
Lucy	F	SF	2	Chinese	early 30s	N/A
Joy	F	SF	2	Chinese	early 30s	N/A
Teresa	F	SF	2	Chinese	late 20s	N/A
Rachel	F	SF	2	Chinese	late 20s	N/A
Stephanie	F	SF	2	Filipino	late 20s	N/A
Audrey	F	SF	2	Chinese	mid 30s	N/A
Evan	M	SF	2	Chinese	early 30s	N/A
Justin	M	SF	2	Korean	late 20s	N/A
David	M	SF	2	Chinese	mid 40s	N/A
Ariana	F	SF	2.5	Chinese	early 30s	N/A

* F = Female; M = Male

** OK = Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area; SF = San Francisco Bay Area

*** 1.5 = Born outside of U.S. but immigrated to U.S. at age 12 or younger; 2 = Born in U.S. to immigrant parents; 2.5 = Born in U.S. to 1 immigrant parent & 1 U.S. born parent

All but two participants' primary language, defined as language most used in daily activities, is English. The remaining two participants' primary language is Cantonese. Thirty-four participants self-report varied proficiency in secondary language(s), which include (in alphabetical order) Cantonese, Gujarati, Hindi, Korean, Mandarin, Tagalog, Toisan, and Vietnamese. Six participants do not report consistent usage of a secondary language.

One participant is pursuing professional certification in medical services and already obtained an Associates' degree. Thirteen participants are college students at a large, Midwestern University. Sixteen participants have already received at least one Bachelor's degree. Majors include those from the hard sciences such as Biochemistry, Botany, Chemistry, Computer Science, and Zoology; and those from the social sciences such as English, Communication, Drama, Business Administration, Animation, Marketing, Social Welfare, and Design of Costumes and Textiles. Two of the sixteen are currently enrolled and attending graduate school courses. Ten have already completed degrees beyond a Bachelor's such as a M.A. (Master of Arts and Sciences), DDS (Doctor of Dental Surgery). I recognize that the participants are highly educated. This is partly due to my access to individuals in work environments, which require college degrees, and those in university settings. However, the highly educated participants provide an interesting point of view of the model minority stereotype among other areas of race and Whiteness.

Research Sites: San Francisco Bay Area and Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area

One area is more cosmopolitan, the other is still an integral area in the "Bible Belt." Researching the varied experiences of individuals living in either of these two contexts, San Francisco Bay Area and Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area, allows me to take into account different racial climates, racial consciousness, racial identity development, and communicative behaviors.

San Francisco Bay Area

As a gateway city for immigrants from Asia, especially the Chinese via Angel Island Immigration Station, San Francisco was/is host to multiple ethnic and racial enclaves. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, California has the largest Asian population in the United States; San Francisco ranks third in percentage of Asians (alone or in combination) in California behind Los Angeles and San Jose (J. S. Barnes & Bennett, 2002). With 32.6% of the total population Asian (alone or in combination), San Francisco is a well-known top ten, metropolitan area for Asian immigrants (J. S. Barnes & Bennett, 2002). As stated in the previous chapter on Asian/American history, San Francisco is central to the community development of the Chinese, a place of business for Japanese, and a Filipino gateway city to the U.S., to name a few (Chan, 1991; Hing, 1993; Takaki, 1998). The birth of Departments of Ethnic Studies in higher education began in San Francisco with the San Francisco State protests (Umemoto, 2007). Scholars mention in almost every Asian/American history text currently available that San Francisco is as an integral area for Asian/American racial consciousness.

Twenty-one participants live and/or work in San Francisco City, the Peninsula, outer East Bay, and South Bay, which are all part of the San Francisco Bay Area. Locals describe areas within the San Francisco Bay Area according to their location from bodies of water, specifically the San Francisco Bay and San Pablo Bay. The East Bay refers to areas immediately east of San Francisco Bay, which consists of Alameda and Contra Costa counties. Locals further divide the East Bay into inner and outer East Bays. Inner East Bay includes cities such as Oakland, Berkeley, and Alameda. Outer East Bay refers to cities such as Lafayette, Orinda, Moraga (the three towns locally known as Lamorinda), Walnut Creek, Concord, Pleasant Hill, San Ramon, Pleasantville, and Danville. The outer East Bay towns are notably wealthier neighborhoods, featuring a suburban lifestyle and higher income residents. The weather is also much warmer than San Francisco City. The Peninsula is known locally (not officially) as the area between San Francisco City and the South Bay. Example cities of the Peninsula include Daly City, South San Francisco (a city separate from San Francisco City), Colma, Belmont, Burlingame, Millbrae, Pacifica, and San Mateo. The South Bay, also known as Santa Clara Valley and Silicon Valley, includes the cities of San Jose, Santa Clara, Milpitas, Cupertino, Los Altos, and Mountain View. A couple of participants lives in the South Bay and had family in the Santa Cruz area, south of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Participants comment during and before interviews that cities in the San Francisco Bay Area have distinct socioeconomic populations and atmospheres. For instance, Lamorinda (Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda) and Walnut Creek are higher class, offering million dollar homes and elite neighborhoods. Oakland has a more

diverse population and higher criminal activity than surrounding cities. Different districts within San Francisco City also hold different characteristics, demographics, and personalities evident in the interviews. The informants base their perceptions on space and time. For instance, the demographics of the Chinatown district in San Francisco City during the 1970s are different from the 2000s. In addition, the population of some areas of the Bay Area grows at exponential rates, whereas the population in other areas stagnates. Many participants mention moving from one city of the San Francisco Bay Area to another. Some commute everyday from a suburb to San Francisco City. For this reason, many participants hold strong knowledge of the areas within, between, and outside the San Francisco Bay Area.

I have strong ties to the San Francisco Bay Area Asian/American community. I attended elementary school, middle school, and my first year of high school in San Francisco's Sunset District, at the time a combination of low and middle socioeconomic classes, and a high concentration of Asian/Americans. Since housing costs were high, many homeowners rented out converted garages and basements to new immigrants or to those of the lower socioeconomic classes (such as my family). I graduated from a high school in Walnut Creek, a much wealthier area of middle to high socioeconomic classes and a predominately White community. I was highly involved in Chinese churches on the outskirts of San Francisco's Chinatown and in the wealthier areas in and surrounding Walnut Creek.

Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area

Oklahoma's tie to Asian/Americans is much different from the San Francisco Bay Area. Oklahoma City and surrounding areas have a predominantly White

population. According to the 2000 Census, in 1990 only 1% of the entire Oklahoman population is Asian alone, and in 2000 1.7% of the population self-describes as Asian alone or in combination (J. S. Barnes & Bennett, 2002). Oklahoma City has a slightly higher percentage of the Oklahoman state total population as roughly 3.5% Asian alone (State & county quickfacts: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, n.d.), whereas in California the predominant Asian group is Chinese, Oklahoma has a higher population of Vietnamese. Oklahoma City is one of the areas earmarked for Vietnamese refugee relocation after the Vietnam War in 1975 (Muzny, 1985). Over 400 Vietnamese families, 3% of the relocated Vietnamese families, were initially relocated to Oklahoma City (Interagency Task Force on Indochina Refugees as cited in Muzny, 1985). A section of Oklahoma City, "Little Saigon," which hosts a number of Vietnamese-owned businesses, has been renamed the Asia District. The documentation of Vietnamese experiences in Oklahoma is lacking, limited to a few theses, dissertations (e.g., Chung, 1998; Muzny, 1985; Rutledge, 1982; D. A. Smith, 2000; Thúy, 2004), and news articles. The opposite holds true for the historical and modern accounts of Asian/Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area and greater California. As I skim the indexes of popular Asian/American history texts (Chan, 1991; Okihiro, 1994, 2001; Takaki, 1998; Zia, 2000), they do not even mention Oklahoma and most Midwest states.

Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area consists of Canadian, Cleveland, Grady, Lincoln, Logan, McClain, and Oklahoma counties. Nineteen participants currently reside or have familial ties to the following cities: Norman, Moore, Midwest City, Oklahoma City, Edmond, and Yukon. Norman, Oklahoma City, and Edmond have various private and public universities. Participants comment on the socioeconomic and

racial-ethnic concentration between the towns (e.g., differences between Edmond and Oklahoma City) and within the towns (e.g., East versus West side of Norman). For instance, participants mention that Edmond is upper middle-class, and depending on the neighborhood and community, Oklahoma City varies from low-income housing areas to upper middle-class. One participant comments, “North Oklahoma City. I call it the North side, like a.k.a. [also known as] the ghetto area. That’s where all the Laotians are. I’m not saying they’re all poor ghetto, but the ones I know are.” These perceptions of each area, whether inherently positive or negative, are evident in the interviews. I am familiar with Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area having resided in the area since 1996.

Recruitment and Interview Context

My contacts from the San Francisco Bay Area are instrumental to this study. I initially asked a few friends and their relatives for help in finding participants. They in turn encouraged their friends to participate. One participant asked over five of his coworkers to participate, handing me contact information as available, and providing a place and accommodations to conduct the interviews. One of his coworkers asked a friend to participate as well. In addition to this, a married couple emailed their friends offering to take potential participants out for dinner if they contacted me for an interview. All these contacts helped me tremendously even though I could not repay them in any way besides good conversation and an anonymous “spot” in my dissertation.

I also have ties to the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area Asian/American community. From my time in Asian-interests societies and residential facilities at a large, Midwestern university, and my direct involvement in pan-Asian religious

communities in the area, I developed several Asian/American contacts. My original contacts aided in providing additional participants. A couple of participants encouraged me to seek participants from a nearby, relatively new, small religious group. From my participation in this religious group, a few more participants emerged. In addition to personal contacts, for college-age students, I offered communication course extra credit to undergraduate students attending a large, Midwestern university. Participants from communication course extra credit did not provide any additional contacts. These participants reflect the younger demographic of the participant population (19-21 years of age).

I contacted most of the participants gleaned from the snowball approach or from personal friendship via email or a social networking site (e.g., Facebook, Myspace). Participants, who also served as recruiters, copied me on emails sent to their contacts to begin email conversations. This was especially useful to participants who were strangers to me, allowing for both the potential participants and me to feel comfortable meeting face-to-face. Participants recruited from communication course extra credit initially contacted me through email after seeing a request for participants in a communication department's study boards, and in-class announcements or web-postings from a communication department's instructors.

I conducted interviews at mutually agreed upon areas. This included coffee shops, private residences, dormitory study areas, university offices, restaurants, vehicles, and public libraries. The place of the interview provided important contextual information. For instance, interviews conducted during dinner and/or at a private residence led to longer, more in-depth interviews than those without dinner or those

conducted in public areas. The longest total face-to-face time (which included pre-interview chatting, completing consent forms, demographic questionnaires, intensive-interviews, and if applicable eating and accompanying socializing times) lasted four hours. The shortest interview was a little over one hour. The average face-to-face time was two hours and 14 minutes.

One reason for the disparity in length of the interviews was that I allowed the participants for the most part to have a timeless guide for the interview, and at the same time had to accommodate informants' time constraints. If the participant had a flexible schedule, even though I provided questions and topics, the participant elaborated or jumped from subject to subject, more on his/her preference than mine. Those participants who allowed a short amount of time for the interview (e.g., the interview was scheduled an hour before a meeting or undergraduate course), the participants desired to come back after class to further elaborate and provide additional insights. The point being—they enjoyed the process as much as I did and wanted to talk more about it. In only a few cases, I carefully picked questions and probed sparingly to respect the participants' time constraints.

A couple of participants was uncomfortable with sharing or did not provide in-depth perceptions of their thoughts. In these interviews, I tried to engage the participants through different avenues or different types of talk, but perhaps I did not recognize their contextual cues or their personality for short, concise conversation. All but one participant gave permission to audio record the interview. The interview with no audio recording, I jotted down notes and answers to questions. Afterwards, I followed up that interview with email correspondence.

Interview Questions

The main goal of this research is to see the intersection between Asian/Americaness and Whiteness. My primary theoretical lens is critically interpretative from a hermeneutical tradition (Gadamer, 2004). I do not want to create a grand theory, but search for a greater understanding of the co-created world. Human product, expressions, and behaviors are texts; texts include the daily interactions and processes of human communication (Blommaert, 2005; Bruner, 1986; Clifford, 1986; Gupta, 2007). Reality consists of multiple realities and these realities are not necessarily good or bad. However, those realities have intense consequences. The consequences reveal power differentiations and pain among individuals, especially those marginalized by the dominant culture. A critically interpretive perspective permits me to reveal power differences and to understand the everyday experiences of Asian Americans. I choose intensive-interviewing (Briggs, 1986; Lofland & Lofland, 1995) because it allows for the perspective of the blurring of the observer/observed in the "now," and allows for re-interpretation by multiple listening and readings of the "capture" of discourse. Intensive-interviewing also is a good fit for my critically interpretive perspective.

As stated earlier in my literature review, I see a pervasive power in Whiteness, the model minority stereotype, and Asian/Americaness. The review of literature identifies these key issues as part of this intersection: a) How do Asian/Americans become racially and ethnically conscious? b) How do their behaviors and choices connect with their Asian/Americaness? c) Like Brodkin's study on Jews, what ideals of hard work and college education factor in their perception of their race or ethnicity? d)

Are there ties between Asian/American perceptions of socioeconomic standing and Whiteness? e) How Asian/Americans discuss and perceive Asian stereotypes? f) In what ways do Asian/Americans behave and communicate differently in areas of high population of Asians as opposed to a high population of Whites? Finally, g) what is the relationship between Whiteness and Asian/Americans? The interview protocol and short demographic questionnaire hope to inspire dialog about these issues with participants.

Upon receipt of participant consent, the participant completes a brief demographic questionnaire, including current age, sex, primary language, birth place, educational level of parents and self, parental birthplaces and birth years, and academic concentration (see Appendix A: Preliminary Questionnaire General). If the participant is from the university subject pool, the questionnaire requests additional information about the person's major, years in college, and anticipated graduating semester (see Appendix B: Preliminary Questionnaire College Student).

Interview questions concern seven main topics with probing questions (see Appendix C: Interview Protocol). The first main section concerns the participant's background such as the person's hometown, and childhood experiences. For instance, how does the person feel about the environment living in San Francisco or Oklahoma City? The second interview section asks about the person's family. Questions include how the person's parents are different from other parents (if appropriate), or the relationship between the person and his/her siblings. This section ascertains the cultural, racial-ethnic socialization of the participant. For instance, how is the participant taught to deal with racial discrimination? How about socioeconomic classes? How does the

family perceive educational attainment? If the participant works, the next section concerns the person's co-workers and job prospects. Another section concerns the person's friends, the number of friends, and relationships between the friends.

One section has questions discussing how the person describes his or her race and ethnic identification. For instance, does the person prefer Chinese American, American, or Asian American as a racial-ethnic descriptor? Questions in the fifth section relates with the person's perception of Whites, and views on other races. For example, does the person prefer working with African Americans or Hispanics? The sixth section concerns racial discrimination experiences such as teasing, negative comments, and general feelings of racial isolation. The last section discusses racial consciousness—when did the person realize his or her own race and what are his/her thoughts of the race of others?

After each interview, I immediately write detailed interview notes on a password-protected computer, collecting my thoughts and impressions of the interview answers, the participant, their behaviors, and appearance. The interview questions are more of a guide. I ask at least one question per section depending on the participant's elaboration of each answer. In the majority of the interviews, I rarely ask every question listed in the protocol. In a couple of cases, I ask participants for additional clarification on certain answers or interview topics. I email them or contact them through a social networking site after the interview.

Participant-Observations and Popular Culture

In addition to conducting face-to-face, audio-recorded interviews, I ethnographically observe and participate in the activities of many of the Asian

American participants (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1992; Geertz, 1983). Often before and after interviews, participants invite me to attend religious groups' meetings and services, and university campus performances. Participants also invite me to accompany them along daily activities (e.g., grocery shopping, watching movies at theaters), and dinner or lunch with their family and friends. I include these observations in interview notes. By participating and observing these activities, I learn more contextual information from each participant. For instance, a few months after conducting the interview, Madison (a pseudonym) invited me over for dinner at a local restaurant. On the drive there, she brought up the topic of Whitewashing—to the degrees she saw her Asian friends as Whitewashed. Her comments at first contradicted her interview statements; however, after listening and asking for clarification, the ideas brought a richer perspective of her thoughts on her notions of Whitewashed.

Most of the participants allow me to view their social networking pages (e.g., Facebook or Myspace). The technological medium provides an additional element of contextual information. One participant, for instance, acknowledges that her friends think she is Whitewashed based on the race-ethnicity of friends in her social networking photos. I can view the photo albums that provide a visual element to the statement.

Lastly, I immerse myself in popular Asian American culture. This includes viewing YouTube videos about and created by Asian Americans, watching movies and television produced, written, or acted by Asian Americans, and reading Asian American magazines and blogs such as *Hyphen* and *Angry Asian Man* (http://www.angryasianman.com). The immersion in Asian/American produced media provides ways Asian/Americans expressed their views in public forums. The media also

keeps me up-to-date on problems and issues of Asian Americans in popular culture and government.

Overall, I conducted interviews in the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area between March and May 2008 when not conducting interviews in the San Francisco Bay Area. I participant-observed Asian American groups in the Oklahoma City Metropolitan area well before then: I began in October 2005, occasionally attending meetings and get-togethers. I consistently observed one Asian American group in the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area from late March 2008 to April 2009, and currently continue involvement with the group as a participant, not as an observer. I traveled to the San Francisco Bay Area twice to conduct intensive-interviews and to participate-observe April 15-28, 2008 and June 19-July 1, 2008. My immersion in Asian American popular culture is continuous and ongoing, beginning October 2005.

Analysis

I paid a professional transcription agency to produce verbatim transcripts of thirty-six interviews; I transcribed three of the remaining interviews verbatim (one of the interviews did not have an audio recording). Following this, I checked all transcripts by listening to each audio recording and reading each transcript, checking for accuracy, and making corrections where needed. I also inserted nonverbal elements (speaking patterns) and other relevant information gleaned from my interview notes (e.g., if the person stood up during portions of the interview, or if strangers interrupted the interview process).

After I check transcriptions, I analyze the transcriptions and interview notes utilizing an iterative-inductive process (O'Reilly, 2005). Iterative-inductive process

involves going from the data to the theory, back and forth repeatedly to understand the complexities and nuances of the information. The start of my analysis begins first with the participants and their interview statements, and then I draw from the literature to interpret their experiences, and then back again to the data for further insights and clarity. This process continues for some time until through my lens I gain a more complete understanding of each interview.

In analyzing the participant interviews and participant-observations, I rely on analysis utilizing entextualization (Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Blommaert, 2005), discussed in the next paragraph. In the narratives of the participants, I notice inherent patterns and structures. Part of this pattern is the structure of the interview: I thoughtfully form questions and bring order to the interview. However, as stated earlier, the participants can bring forth topics of personal interest in relation to Asian/Americaness and we further discuss its implications. When first addressing the interviews, I look for rich points, thickly buried pieces of language, "When one grabs such a piece of language, the putty is so thick and so spread out that it's almost impossible to lift the piece of language out" (Agar, 1994, p. 100). By looking at the rich points, I examine its thick description (Geertz, 1973) of Asian/Americaness by providing the contextual behavior and public discourse on the subject. For instance, a wink can be confusing without context, therefore the provision of the ongoing discourse and characteristics of the wink give further meaning and understanding. I examine the rich points and thick descriptions of the informant voices, layer by layer.

All forms of analysis are entextualization, plucking ideas and meanings from former uses (decontextualization) and reframing them in a new context and meaning

(recontextualization) (Blommaert, 2005). This project employs two entextualization processes. First, participants decontextualize their thoughts and feelings toward identity through a process of reflexivity. They negotiate how their ideas of banana, Twinkie, and FOBs, for instance, situates their view of themselves and the world, and subsequently shapes "the reception of what is said" (Bauman & Briggs, 1990, p. 69). They act this out through dialogue with me, the participant-observer, and reframe it in a recognizable fashion. The expressions banana, Twinkie, and FOBs has important meanings to these participants, so much that often times without probing, they discuss these terms, recontextualizing for the audience, in this case, the audio-recorder and me. We engage in intertextuality in which we "constantly cite and re-cite expressions, and recycle meanings that are already available. Thus every utterance has a history of (ab)use, interpretation, and evaluation, and this history sticks to the utterance" (Blommaert, 2005, p. 46).

Secondly, the process of entextualization occurs again in my interpretation of the participants' thoughts and rich points in an organized manner relative to scholarly literature. Instead of having a predetermined specific theory, I seek how the participants' voices provide a rich understanding of identity, and whether scholarship supports this understanding.

Situating the Researcher-Participant

According to the dominant culture, I am an insider to Asian American culture. In some respects, I have behavioral and cultural knowledge. However, to say that I have knowledge of all ethnicities with links to Asia is a stretch. My father grew up in Hong Kong, and my mother in Taiwan. In that respect, I have an understanding of the tension

between these islands and mainland China. I know that a person with a family name of Nguyen is more likely to be of Vietnamese heritage, Park is more likely Korean, and Wong is from a Cantonese language origin, whereas Wang is Mandarin. My knowledge is limited in depth: I hold limited understanding of subcultures and nuances within Vietnamese, Laotian, Korean, Filipino, and Asian Indian groups, as well as subgroups from Taiwan, Hong Kong, and mainland China. Many participants think we were/are comrades under the rubric of Asian. On many other levels such as ethnicity, socioeconomic class, or age, I do not fit in with their ethnicity or group. Like Nazli Kibria (Kibria, 2002), I am an insider in some ways, in other ways an outsider. Part of this is due to my physical appearance as someone of East Asian descent, with my mid-length black hair, round face and nose, small eyes framed by black plastic glasses, olive tanned skin, and short stature. Second-generation Asian Americans often thought I am either Chinese or Korean before proper introductions and obligatory ethnic references. The experiences of Filipino and Asian Indian participants who do not share the same phenotypes may not have felt that bond of essentialism and common heritage.

In Asia, the locals do not consider me native to the country. In Thailand, I am Japanese; in Xinjiang, China, I am Taiwanese; in the U.S. Midwest, I am an alien. Strangers consistently ask where I am *really* from when my answer San Francisco does not suffice: the point being I never appear to belong or originate from any place. Many participants explain the same thing: the sense of strangers unable to identify whom they *really* are and where they are *really* from no matter *where* in the world they temporally inhabit.

The sense of bonding or disassociation is evident in the interviews. One second-generation Vietnamese participant immediately after the interview told me she would have felt uncomfortable or her answers would not have been as detailed if I, the interviewer, was White. One of the Asian Indian participants made it clear through his nonverbal and choice of words that he felt slightly uncomfortable with me being a Chinese American and asking him about being a second generation Asian Indian. One of the first questions he asked me before the start of the interview was, "Do you think people from India are Asian?" Even though I felt bonded with the Asian Indian participant under the rubric of Asian and common experiences (at the time of the interview I had a student job similar to his), he did not feel the same. Though he may not have felt close to me, he divulged detailed information about his thoughts and ideas of Asian American identity, providing extensive knowledge on acting and being White.

Even though I may feel and believe one way about pan-Asian identity, not all the interviewees feel the same. My goal, when I sense any participant resistance or anxiety with the interview questions, context, or me is to assuage the differences by carefully pointing toward mutual associations and similarities. At such times, I divulged my personal experiences growing up in San Francisco or my difficult times of self-discovery in Oklahoma, showing that we share similar experiences. At other times I would avoid certain questions, rephrase questions, or provided time for small talk to build rapport.

The act of interviewing, transcribing, and analyzing aids in the continual process of negotiating my identity. During my earlier years in graduate school, I grew tired of reading researchers with little to no racial-ethnic tie to Asian/Americans. I read articles

in intercultural communication course readers (e.g., Gudykunst, 2001) and textbooks with mixed feelings. I could not put into words my frustration that a relative stranger would write about someone who looked racially like me. When I read *Women, Native, Other* by Minh-Ha (1989), I learned the vocabulary to articulate the experiences of marginalization and oppression, postcolonialism and orientalism, observer and observed, and subject and object. At the same time, I became aware that Asian/Americans in my home neighborhoods in San Francisco Bay Area and in my new home in Oklahoma City Area treated me as an alien to their culture and ethnicity. I feel the same when encountering individuals from the dominant culture who assume English is my second language, or as stated previously, want to know where I am really from. The point being, like many participants in this study, the questions I ask are also questions for me to answer. My experiences and my performativity frame how I see and read the participants. It is the great thing about being a researcher—to learn more about myself while I learn about others. The following chapters are the results of this analysis.

Most information presented in the results is direct quotations from the interview transcripts. I use pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the informants. A note on symbols in the quotations is appropriate to discuss here: [ ] Words within this refers to contextual information added to the quotes to aid in understanding the statements ([University Town] instead of UT or “I don’t care [about] race when choosing friends” instead of “I don’t care race when choosing friends”). Words between <> brackets substitute for identifying information that would be in violation of anonymity as required by the Institutional Review Board. Substitutions include the real names of the participants, their friends and family members (<My boyfriend> or <Craig> instead of

Mark). Conversational fillers such as “uh, um, like, you know, okay” and repeated words (and, and, and) are removed from the quotes unless noted. Ellipses (…) represent information removed from the quote with the intent to help readers in understanding the message. Areas that are removed should not hurt or change the original interpretation of the message (“He’s really all about money…he spent a million dollars just rebuilding the church” instead of “He’s really all about money, like he spent so much, he spent like a million dollars just rebuilding the church.”).

In summary, this chapter discusses my research methods of intensive interviews of Asian Americans living in different environments. This study seeks to understand the intersection of Whiteness and Asian/Americaness by analyzing participant voices, behaviors, and communication.

CHAPTER V

MODEL MINORITY AND THE IMMIGRANT SPIRIT:

RACIAL DIFFERENCES AND FRACTIONS

The model minority myth is in stark contrast to the yellow peril beliefs of the World War II era (R. G. Lee, 1999). The yellow peril is the perception of Asians as evil, fearful subjects (Marchetti, 1993). Many scholars often poise the model minority and the yellow peril as dialectic (Kawai, 2005) and history supports this. In the infamous *Life* (How to tell Japs from the Chinese, 1941) magazine article during World War II, the journalist positions Chinese as victims of the war and Japanese as the yellow peril. Pictures with captions help readers distinguish the taller kind Chinese from the shorter sinister Japanese. This eases the transition to the model minority stereotype in which the public perception silences the systemic problems of Asian Americans by uplifting the racial group as uncomplaining, crime-free, and successful (R. G. Lee, 1999).

As stated in Chapter III, the model minority stereotype grows out of the Civil Rights Movement. Many African Americans fight against the overwhelming racial inequities in the United States. Media points to the Asian Americans as the model minority—a group that does well despite past transgressions (i.e., the Japanese internment), and are not in the media limelight in the protests. The model minority grows to include educational and economic attainment in the 1980s through the 1990s, to a point that Asians are supposedly "outwhiting whites" (F. H. Wu, 2002). The problem is that this is not necessarily true, and mutes the prevalent theme of Asians as unassimilable foreigners (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000; Y. Choi & Lahey, 2006; Chou & Feagin, 2008; S. Lee, et al., 2009). In this chapter, I present the participants' thoughts toward the model minority stereotype.

Though the majority of the participants have never heard of the phrase "model minority," when I explain the phrase, many reply they know of the concept. They

express their understanding of it through popular stereotypes of Asians. Those that have heard of the phrase have specific definitions of the term, usually gleaned from college classes, and/or educational documentaries seen on television. The following are representative interpretations of the model minority.

Ariana, the daughter of a second-generation Chinese American father and an immigrant mother from China, offers her definition of a model minority. She, who lives in California, observes the range of Academic Performance Index (API) scores by Asian group and generation in the United States (see site website http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/ac/ap/). California education system measures academic performance through the API. Someone who is a model minority is:

> A good student, excellent in math, very obedient, good citizen, hard worker, blah, blah, blah, frugal [Laughs]. Basically does whatever authority says…I think it's kind of true. In some ways, I think it's good… for example, specifically Chinese are considered more of the model than some of the other Asian cultures…Southeast Asians don't put as much emphasis on education. You see it in a school in <South Bay>. If you look [at] the API scores —the way for them to grade schools—it very [much] reflects the demographics of the children who go there. And where there are a high number of Chinese, Americans, Japanese, Indian, the API scores are high. Then on the flip side where there's a high number of Southeast Asians, Vietnamese, they tend to be lower. I'm not exactly sure if it's really about emphasis on education or if those are more newer immigrants which could be also that. But Chinese have been here longer than a lot of the Vietnamese and…Hmong community…[Their API scores may be lower] because they don't know as much English; their children don't know as much English and the test is only given in English. So if you don't score well in English it's probably you just don't understand the material; it's not that you don't know it.

Ariana provides a clear description of the model minority, popular in scholarly texts—so popular she inserts "blah, blah, blah" in the midst of her definition. The problem is that the stereotype has some truth, but more for the Chinese than the other groups. She creates a distinction between East Asians, South Asians, Whites, and

Southeast Asians. The areas with a high concentration of Southeast Asians, specifically the Hmong and Vietnamese, have lower API scores, whereas areas with a high concentration of Chinese, Japanese, Asian Indians and Whites have higher API scores. She reasons the differential scores are due to a possible cultural emphasis on education, recent immigration status, and/or English proficiency. Ariana presents a common thread: the model minority is partially true but it does not apply to all Asian ethnic groups. This also encourages an educational and economic difference between ethnicities and nationalities.

Evan, who was born and raised in San Francisco, currently works in the South Bay.

> We took some course in our freshman year in college or maybe in some sociology class I heard that…and they talked about that briefly…I mean I think there's substance to every rule, but there are…hyphenated Asian Americans that definitely fits that motif very well. We probably have a lower crime rate. We probably have a higher graduation rate. God knows that any school district would have any more Asians. No, correction—that's not always the case—depends on what kind of Asians, too. Southeast Asians tend not to care as much as Koreans and Japanese and the Northern Chinese folks about their grades and stuff. A lot of Asians in Cambodia, some in Vietnam, Thailand they're probably not as heavy doing hard core. They don't force feed their kids to get 4.0s or jump out the window. They don't make it to Stanford or Harvard or MIT. Did you hear about… the Asian chick that killed herself in the back of her own trunk? She got her Ph.D. from Stanford or something. My wife was saying she probably had too much pressure from her Asian parents force-feeding her to get a career-orientated education. Insanity. Probably true in Hong Kong, too. I hear a lot of people kill themselves if they don't meet their parents' expectation, and the shame is too much.

Evan remarks that in every stereotype, there is always some truth. He met Asian Americans that fit the model minority stereotype. Asians may have low crime rates, and may have a high graduation rate in high school and college. Like Ariana, he believes there is a difference between Southeast Asians such as Cambodians, Vietnamese, and

Thai as compared to Japanese, Koreans, and Northern Chinese. In his interview, Evan repeatedly discusses how certain Asian families "force-feed" their kids to do well in education. The force-fed nature could cause mental problems such as suicide as mentioned in his example of a Ph.D. recipient's suicide. To fit into the model minority stereotype is too great a pressure for some, leading to pain or shame, regardless of supposed success.

Chloe, who was born and raised in Oklahoma to Chinese immigrant parents, explains, "I don't know if I regret saying this or not but, last semester in [an Asian American race] class I said, 'I *am* the model minority stereotype.' Personally, I have no problem with it because to me the model minority stereotype means that you're the person you set out to achieve" (emphasis in interview). Unlike the other participants, she embraces the model minority stereotype despite knowing the complications of the stereotype learned from an undergraduate class on Asian American representation and history. The class offers a critical look on race so her announcement comes as a surprise to her friends in the class.

The reason Chloe finds comfort in the stereotype is:

> I feel like I need to win. But that's just me…If anyone else fit the stereotype and they were a minority, then the[re] would be no problem…The stereotype says you're intelligent and you are out to achieve everything, and do anything [to the] best [of] your ability. If I'm not the stereotype and if I don't want to be the stereotype, does that mean I have to try less as hard? Does that mean that I have to fail at things? It makes no sense to me, and I don't like it when people are offended by it.

If other people of color ("anyone else") had her drive and achievement then her classmates would not be upset of her open acceptance of the stereotype. Because she is Asian and she does believe she is the model, she examines the negativity of the

stereotype. The stereotype among others gives her the motivation necessary to succeed. By disagreeing with the stereotype, she negates her own experiences. So in this case she agrees with the stereotype. Those who disagree with the stereotype do not understand her drive, her competitive nature, and her success.

> I wasn't as fortunate as others, which is why I want to work harder...But for me, my parents never had the opportunity so now I'm the person. I have to do well just so my parents can feel like I really have the experience of taking advantage of my opportunities and stuff. So I'm not going to complain about being labeled model minority when I know that...I said that I please people because I know what I want, like I'm going to please my bosses because I want to get ahead...For me to win, I need to be able to advance. If I have enemies then I can't do that kind of thing.

The stereotype includes pleasing others. She does so to get ahead, "to advance." Chloe continues to mention that unlike many Asian Americans she meets, she comes from a family that does not have as many privileges. Her parents worked long hours. Due to their difficult life, she competes and drives for the next generation's success. Her siblings are attending or about to attend prestigious, tier one universities. She compares her achievements to them. Sometimes she does not feel as smart as her siblings; however, she recognizes she is a model in comparison to students she meets at her current school. In her eyes, she is the model minority stereotype.

Faith moved at six years of age to the United States from Korea. She provides an example of the model minority:

> If a teacher would reference to somebody, "You should be more like him," it would be towards the Asian kid who is smart and who is doing his work…I find it a compliment especially if it was coming from a dominant White culture. They're saying, "You should [be] more like this Asian" and to the White kid. I find that very—"Thanks, like it's an honor," like they look up to us 'cause we've done something good or right.

The model minority stereotype assumes Asians are academically doing better than most White Americans. Faith finds the statement of academic achievement as a compliment, "especially if it was coming from a dominant White culture" to other Whites. Model minority is a reward or acknowledgement of the bootstrap success of Asian immigrants despite oppression, that Asians have "done something good or right." Faith could be referencing that Asians have reached beyond the status of White Americans.

Samantha and Ava are sisters whose parents were born in Korea. At a young age, they moved from country to country, finally immigrating to Oklahoma in their early teens. Before the next excerpt, I gave them a brief summary of the model minority stereotype as hard work, intelligence, and uncomplaining. The following is their debate about the virtues and problems with the model minority stereotype:

Samantha: I guess there is some truth to [the model minority stereotype]. So, usually Asians study hard and they work hard so they accomplish more, but that doesn't mean that other races don't. I think it's just that stereotype…

Ava: It's like they're trying to push everyone to…not complain and it's kind of rude. That could be offensive in some ways like, "You guys don't complain and that's good and we like that." Maybe we should complain, you know? Because it's like they're trying to make us the model… they are sort of complimenting us as a race, but then it's also like they're trying—

Samantha: Well, who wants to work with people who complain?

Ava: I know, but it's like they're trying to change people.

Samantha: I was thinking more on the context of like a workplace. If you are [a] lower [job rank]…you're not supposed to complain to your employee, right?

Ava: But then you become submissive sort of.

Samantha: …Employees are supposed to be submissive to their employer.

Ava: I know, but they put you in that position as being—

Samantha: I guess you're [Ava] just looking at it differently…At <our family business>, if you had a whole set of all the races and if the Asians were the model minority and they were working hard and not complaining and stuff, I'm sure the employer would want all of them to be like that one.

Ava: Yeah.

Samantha: That's what I was thinking; not necessarily that Caucasians are saying that all the other minorities should always…not complain, or be submissive or something like that. Just like in certain situations if you had like a set of minorities as your employees…You're [Ava] right too, because that means that they're thinking of all the other races as quote-unquote employees, right?

Ava: I guess.

Samantha first states that my description is partially true because Asians do work and study hard. When working at their family business, they are often times in the employer position. A complaining employee is undesirable. An employer desires employees to work well and be generally compliant. If the employer notices certain employees are racially similar, it would make sense that these racially similar employees would be models. Ava, however, does not like the stereotype because it assumes Asians do not complain. Ava sees it as a compliment, but it is troublesome to her because the stereotype itself is intentional in changing people's behaviors, almost encouraging Asians to be compliant and obedient, rather than thoughtful and assertive. The model minority stereotype then encourages submission of almost all races. Samantha, recognizing Ava's point of view, sees that the stereotype involves inequitable relationships. Samantha now sees that the stereotype though relevant in employee-employer relationships is problematic when applied to all races and in all

contexts. Submission is only desirable in certain situations—the model minority does not allow for this. Their conversation concerns the relational power dynamics of the model minority. If living in the United States is a job, the employers are Whites and the employees are all people of color. This power dynamic is troubling.

Lily, who immigrated at age nine from Macao to San Francisco, refers to the model minority as:

> You're a go-getter, you are successful, you own a house with two foreign cars, and you have six digits bank accounts and you have three cell phones [attached to] your head…Those are the successful types…Everyone likes you, and you are well accepted in the society, and you work hard. Basically, you work really, really, really hard. We tell people you work twenty-six hours a day. It's hard to live up to that. It's good to have a goal, but that's such an impossible goal.

Lily describes model minorities as wealthy and accepted into society. They display it through multiple cars and cell phones. The key though is that they work too hard and long hours. These expectations are difficult to achieve. When asked if Lily felt she lived up to the model minority stereotype she responds:

> I don't. I'm unemployed [Laughs]. Even though I don't clip coupons, I wait for sales [Laughs]…I don't live up to it…All of us [my Asian friends] bought into that scheme when we were in college 'cause we were young, and we think we can do it, and we have self-confidence. But I don't do it anymore. I don't do the rat race anymore.

Lily and her other Asian friends once strived to be the model minority. They could not attain the vision of success. She attributes her drive to the model minority, youth and idealism. In this next quote, Lily also finds that because of this, the model minority stereotype aids in:

> reverse discrimination…In college, a professor saying, "You should do better. I expect you to do better. I expect you to know this." Or, your boss out of college: "You should be doing better. I should expect this out of you."…I think it's a goal that for some it's hard to reach, and sometimes it's frustrating. But it's also

> nice to have a goal to say, "Okay, I want to live up to that." But it's a lot of pressure and it's hard to live down as well.

Lily states that those who are not as successful or do as well as the stereotype indicates might experience reverse discrimination, in which professors expect greater achievements and higher test scores than the average students. A goal is good to have but the model minority is too high. Furthermore,

> We [Asians] are climbing up in terms of the success ladder. We actually have arrived…I'm always amazed to see how many Asians are in the upper management…We are the ones that they do rely on, we, the model citizen...That's to our advantage that we are there now. Our counterparts are the White[s], but we are the counterparts. We're not subordinate anymore, not so much.

The assumption is Whites are more privileged than any race, yet Asians are succeeding, "outwhiting Whites" and achieving. She believes that Asians are no longer "subordinate" or in follower positions anymore. She sees many Asians and Asian Americans in leadership roles, as CEOs, active in government positions especially in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Kaylee, who was born and raised in the Midwest, works in the East Bay after attending college in the area. Her understanding of the model minority comes from debates on affirmative action, especially in the reduction of college acceptance of Asians into prestigious universities.

> I came across it you know when they were arguing about affirmative action back in high school…I really didn't know about it before that. Then, I still don't hear very much about it. But, they're saying that affirmative action didn't apply to Asians, because Asians excelled in school and didn't need affirmative action to get into colleges and universities…implying that Asians are more successful in academics…I mean you could argue that a lot of it's pressure from parents, forcing kids to succeed, or pressuring them to succeed…It probably has to do with environment, too. Because, if you're talking about like parents that immigrated over into the United States, most of them are going to try and live in an area with a good school system. So, they're going to try to put their kids in

> you know in the hands of a good education. Then, from there you can't really say whether it's a mix of parental pressure, and… the education system…You could say that's different from other races…they don't live in areas with good public schooling…It's also to do with the difference in culture…a lot of Asian culture, their school systems are totally different; it's like apples and oranges. They were beaten with…rote memory. It's just a different way of teaching kids…They're teaching their kids what they know. So that could be seen as really tough pressure and really strict parenting, but that's just what they know. I wouldn't blame it on them even though a lot of people would, it's not fair.

Kaylee sees it could be parental pressure toward their children to achieve. She also sees that immigrant parents may choose areas with highly rated school systems and therefore Asian children would receive enough academic stimuli. Another reason could be the strict school systems in Asian countries. Parents parent what they know and if that is what they know, they provide extreme pressure and strict academic discipline toward their children.

Devin moved to San Francisco from China at seven years of age and comments on how he heard of the model minority stereotype:

> That the Chinese are always smart and they always succeed…Really throughout my life whenever you deal with Asians, sometimes a comment comes up, "Oh, those Chinese—they're always smart" or "they're always well educated" or "a lot of doctors [are] Chinese," that kind of thing. And they don't mean it in a bad way. But whether they mean it in a bad way or not it's still a stereotype and still racism because people are different. You can't really define somebody as "oh you're all Chinese" or "oh you're all American." That really has no meaning.

Devin attended UC Berkeley during the Civil Rights Movement. He took one of the first Asian American studies courses offered at Berkeley. He is an avid reader of Asian American literature and scholarship. He has heard statements of Chinese success and intelligence. He comments that the intention of the statement is just as important as the statement itself. Despite intentions, stereotypes do not allow for individuality and complexity, and are part of racist ideology. Individuals cannot be "All American" or

"All Chinese." Stereotypes such as the model minority have no meaning in defining and completely examining a person's behaviors and beliefs.

I ask Devin a series of questions gleaned from popular scholarship on Asian Americans. When I ask if he has heard of the concept of "Asians as the new Whites," he states:

> I think there is a perception that Chinese are more successful than Whites. And I think that's true but that's only true because there are many, many more Whites so there's many, many more opportunities for Whites to succeed or not succeed. Whereas with the Asians there's a smaller group of them and they all tend to be more or less successful so there's a lesser portion of the Chinese that are not successful. Who we see are the successful ones. They are doctors. They are lawyers. They are engineers. They are professors…So I wouldn't say that they're the new White but I would say that they tend to be a little bit more successful than Whites purely because of the profession…Maybe the Chinese are more recent generations of immigrants and they still have that drive to succeed and so you're noticing it now. Maybe 50 years from now you find that the Chinese are just like the Whites—only a small minority of them will grow up to be very successful and there will be some that are not as successful. We have to kind of wait and see. Maybe they'll be plumbers as opposed to being professors. We don't know.

Asians, specifically Chinese, are perceived to be more successful based on appearances. Devin brings up a brief statistical analysis to the kernel of truth of the phrase. Whites are a greater percentage of the population in the U.S. than Asians. If one sees the majority of Asians in prestigious professions such as engineers, professors, and lawyers, Asians may appear to be more successful than Whites. He comments that part of the reason is the industrious attitude exhibited by recent immigrants. This may change when the Asian population falls farther from their immigrant lineage. When asked if he heard of the concept of Asians as the new Jews he responds:

> I think the perception is that Whites as a class are not as successful. So anybody who is successful sticks out like the Jews…Chinese, they're successful. They stick out. The Blacks, they're not successful. They stick down. Hispanics are on the rise and so maybe in a few years, they'll be up there too… But even Jews, I

> think they're getting to the stage where the difference of Jews being more successful I think is diminishing. The only way now you can tell whether someone is Jew or not is by their last name—the Rubens and the Rubensteins and that kind of thing so if they didn't have that name you wouldn't be able to tell. And then you would say, they're really White because they look White, where[as] the Chinese, you can tell they're Asian because of the skin color. It doesn't matter what their last name is, you can tell they're Asian…But you can tell if they're successful that they're Asian. So they stick out a little bit more than the Jews.

Devin furthers his previous point of Chinese appearing to be more successful by pointing out the underlying point in the phrase Asians as the new Jews: Whites are not as successful as Jews and Asians. If certain races appear to be more successful or less successful, they stick out in some way. For Asians they stick out as successful and other races do not have that perception. Asians have recognizable phenotypic traits that stand apart from other races—whereas one can appear to be socially White even with Jewish heritage, Asians cannot escape anonymity. Jews do not have as distinctive physical features besides a family name. In other words, Asians cannot appear to be White even though they may have surpassed the social status of Whites.

The stereotype causes differences in privilege and perception between races as Devin states:

> I think Asians have it easier [than other races]…When Asian[s] are stereotyped, they're stereotyped as intelligent, but when Blacks are stereotyped, they're stereotyped as people with a lack of education and people that are slower which I really don't like…Asians also have it better because the Hispanics are on the same page as Black people when it comes to being stereotyped. They're the people that can't speak English and the people that just illegally got here and stuff like that.

When Asians are stereotyped, they are the "model" which is the opposite of Blacks and Hispanics. Blacks and Hispanics have socially perceived negative stereotypes. Asians

presumably have better opportunities because of the positive nature of those stereotypes.

Stephanie, a second-generation Filipino, works in San Francisco at a policy advocacy group.

> San Francisco tests very well overall compared to the rest of California, but we have the largest achievement gap. So our White, Asian students here in the city are doing much, much better than the Black, Latino and Pacific Islander students. Sometimes in our conversations [at work] the model minority stereotype necessarily comes up. But not as often, because we're not so much in the business of explaining why Asians students are doing better, although that needs to be part of our analysis.

As part of her policy work, she provides information regarding academic achievement and test scores to legislatures. San Francisco school system scores reveal that the city itself has higher scores than the majority of cities and town in California. The statistical findings are that White and Asian students (in which she clearly does not include Pacific Islanders) score much higher in achievement tests. This is not the case for Black, Latino/as, and Pacific Islanders. At her job, working against the stereotype is a challenge.

Stephanie observes the stereotype in action during college:

> I think I first learned about it, at some point, when I was at <California University>…At <California University> the way it was split up is like North campus is sort of the more liberal arts area and South campus is all about the math and science. Most of the students walking around South campus are White and Asian. They have smaller groups for other students of color; but it's obvious when you're walking around, that's how it is.

Her undergraduate institution has a social sciences area and a hard sciences area. Those that populated the hard sciences area are predominantly White and Asian. In this way, the Asians and Whites seek degrees in supposedly intellectually rigorous disciplines of

engineering, math, and biological sciences. By mere observation, she sees how others can perceive this point of view.

Stephanie who majored in engineering in college retraces how this came to be.

> I think it's an oversimplification to say that [choice of major] it's cultural. For me I sort of was buying into the cultural pressure of the stability of an engineering career. That's part of why I stuck with it, even though, I knew I wasn't happy with it. I think there's also this idea that Asian students are more likely to stick with something that they're not necessarily happy about because they think it's going to make their families happy… I don't know if it's just more familiar for people in our communities to take those types of career paths. So you're less likely to find people who take the risks of doing something different and taking a non-traditional career pathway…I don't know if it's just part of our immigration experience, like people who came here before us come thinking they'd have more economic opportunity here. So those careers traditionally are the ones that are the money making ones, are more secure…My parents were looking for more security when they came and each generation sort of expects the next to do better…I don't know if that's it. I just don't have a really sophisticated way of understanding why it happens that way and I don't like making assumptions or over-generalizations about it. But it was definitely my experience, it's what I saw when I was there.

Stephanie graduated from college with an engineering degree despite her distaste in the discipline. Like many of the participants, she explains that this could be due to a variety of reasons. One, stable careers are needed for immigration generations. Like Devin, she sees that each generation wants to improve the circumstances for the next generation. Majoring and working in these traditionally stable careers provide financial and social security. From being educated in racial discourse, she hesitates about making any comments. She thoughtfully interprets her experiences of her educational pathway. She sees how the familial pressure, immigration experiences, security, and improving social/economic standing for the next generation, all play some part in deciding to major in traditional careers in the hard sciences.

Teresa is a second-generation Chinese living in San Francisco.

> I would define it as a stereotype that the majority puts on specifically one culture group or one race, saying that even though they are a minority, they carry out all the characteristics that they think are ideal in terms of an ideal work ethic, an ideal value system, prestigious, whether it's a job title or achievements. That's what a lot of Asian Americans are. I think they are those things because of the pressures that their generations' past had to fit into a society that wouldn't accept them otherwise.

Teresa's definition of the stereotype is ideal characteristics placed by the dominant culture on a minority group. Teresa represents many participants who see the truth in the stereotype.

Avery, a second-generation Filipino working in the East Bay, sees a connection between the model minority stereotype and popular ideas of affirmative action.

> I do know how like supposedly affirmative action is gone. But I don't think that it is because…we're still considered a minority, yet…if you have good grades or whatever and you're Asian…that's like a point against you…'cause we flood the colleges.

Avery continues her explanation with her observations of race, GPAs (Grade Point Averages), and SAT (Scholastic Reasoning Test or Aptitude Test) scores in college admission.

> I noticed in high school…there was a student and she was Black and she was in honors classes, but… she wasn't one of the top students…There was a good number of people that had better grades…and better SAT scores than her…[Her scores] were still good, but she got into all the schools she wanted. And then we noticed that…for our friends who were Hispanic…their grades were just okay… but then they got into all the schools they wanted, too. But then our valedictorian and…Chinese… they had really high SAT scores… but still they didn't get into all the schools they wanted because it's just more competition.

Prestigious universities accepted Blacks and Latino/as; the Asian Americans were not. The assumption is that all the students were good but the Asian students had better scores and grades. SAT scores and GPAs are not the only factors of admissions to

prestigious universities and Avery does not mention whether the students applied to the same universities. She sees admission acceptance partially based on race.

> I think it's not really a backlash [toward Asians] necessarily but… they still want a diversified student body. But because there's so many of us that it seems like at least applying and at least want to do pretty well… I do think that education is important to us, whether it was instilled through our parents or not…I think maybe it is culture…With some families it's not that they were unintelligent but they just never went to college. So they never knew that it was an option, whereas like I think for a lot of Asian families…not going to college is not an option, like you never heard someone say, "You're not going to college." [Instead, you hear] "You're going to college." You've always known you're going to college.

The rejection of Asians in certain colleges and universities indicates an overabundance of Asians at these institutions, and a need for a more diversified student population. Avery believes this has something to do with culture and a strong emphasis on education.

Christian, born to Chinese immigrant parents, lives in both San Francisco and Oklahoma City areas, believes Asians have a skill set ripe for many academic disciplines. He explains:

> The Asian American, especially second-generation culture encourages very academic disciplines like medicine, or law, or computer science, or engineering…I believe that this is because…many generations back [there was] emphasis on education as a status symbol...Parents value those things and they send their kids to school for those things. So, you have a disproportionate number of Asians who are, for example, engineers. Not because I am at the core of what would make a good engineer. But that's what my culture gravitates toward.

Christian reiterates Asians have a cultural quality to education and engineering professions. Education as a status symbol is one such cultural quality. In his mind, this originates from Mainland China's history and immigrants' language barriers:

> I think there are a number of reasons one of which is the Mainland [China] cultural perception of education…Another would be the fact that when a lot of

> first generation immigrants came here they didn't have a lot of education and they didn't speak English. So, they couldn't easily get self-educated like people could in the past. For example, when European immigrants came they spoke the language that was necessary to become self-educated. These Asians didn't. So, they mainly got educated through going to schools and because I think of that experience they value school a lot.

Mainland China's cultural perception of education may have historical underpinnings in Confucius' teachings of education, self-improvement, and underlying filial piety (familial loyalty toward generations past and present). Christian believes another reason for education as status is immigrants overcoming language barriers. Instead of self-educating or learning skills sets like European immigrants, Chinese immigrants promote public education to gain knowledge not already within the skill set of the community such as engineering. English being part of the Indo-European language family, made it easier for many Europeans who did not already have English skills to learn the language and self-educate. This is probably why Chinese immigrants value education.

Conclusion

The underlying assumption is that model minority is indicative of higher intelligence and achievement. The participants to some degree would like to believe they possess these attributes. Not all of them are comfortable with the stereotype, especially those that took courses in Asian/American history. Samantha and Ava's discussions offer one interpretation of this. It is easy for some to accept certain aspects of the stereotype such as intelligence. Other aspects such as passivity are not. A common thread is the interpretation of the model minority as residue stemming from archetypes of the immigrant spirit or from prestige of high educational attainment. The values connected to Jews and European immigrants are now Asian/American ones.

Most participants did not find the model minority stereotype important to discuss. The participants may provide information regarding immigration history and their parents' sacrifice of comfort in a different country for their children's opportunities in the United States.

Many studies point to the importance of the model minority stereotype in the perception of Asian Americans (Hattori, 1999; S. Lee, et al., 2009; P. Wong, et al., 1998; Yu, 2006). Without a doubt, the model minority stereotype is important to the historical condition of Asian Americans in the United States (Palumbo-Liu, 1999). It represents Asians as the ideal immigrant; a group that allows dominant culture to oppress, imperialize, and colonize the racial body (Yellow) in order to oppress, imperialize, and colonize another racial body (Black and Brown) (Hattori, 1999; McIlwain & Johnson, 2003). The model minority is a consensual process of allowing these created images to pervade and infect the Asian American condition, and Asian Americans such as those few in this study believe in it (S. J. Lee, 1996; P. Wong, et al., 1998; Zhou, 2004). Most scholars find the stereotype a bane to proper conceptual racial and ethnic discourse (F. Wong & Halgin, 2006).

Nevertheless, participants in this study display a lack of interest of this topic, as it does not play a major role in their daily lives, especially in their *articulated* conception of their identity. Model minority conceptions hide in the participants' stereotypes of Asians (e.g., Asians are smart, good at math). Participants (e.g., Stephanie) who understand the hegemonic quality of the model minority find the motif troubling; they see some of its truth, and are unsure how they can resist it such as. Others embrace it like Chloe, or present reasons supporting its validity, as did Christian.

The participants, however, do discuss interracial labeling in their interactions with other Asian Americans and with members of the dominant culture. By embracing the model minority stereotype, they perpetuate the White hegemonic beliefs of race and systemic oppression.

There are no apparent differences between participants from San Francisco Bay Area and participants from Oklahoma Metropolitan Area regarding their perceptions of the model minority myth. In both locations, there are approximately the same numbers who embrace the myth versus those who reject or feel uncomfortable with it. They articulate similar identities and labels in both locations—thus when engaging in talk about the myth they use language that is parallel to participants in the other interview area. One explanation can be that exposure to concepts related to the model minority myth are pervasive in both the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area and San Francisco Bay Area.

CHAPTER VI

BANANAS, TWINKIES, RICE CRACKERS, AND WHITEWASHED: NEGOTIATING ASIAN AMERICANESS AND WHITENESS

By not appropriately intersecting race, ethnicity, people of color, and Whiteness, scholars often note that Whiteness scholarship Whitewashes race. An overemphasis on Whites may no longer be an effective tool to antiracism (Andersen, 2003; Brown, et al., 2003). Scholars also point to scholarship on the "burden of acting White" and "selling out," which is prominent in African American ethnic studies and education literature (Horvat & O'Conner, 2006; Spencer, Noll, Stoltzfus, & Harpalani, 2001; Tyson & Darity, 2005). Acting White is a complex notion of possessing characteristics of the dominant White majority and shunning the essence of Blackness. Even though Whitewashing and acting White are prevalent in Black and African American literature, this is not the same in literature concerning Asian Americans. The perception of acting White and Whiteness is different for Asian Americans as voiced in this study.

During half of the interviews, participants from San Francisco Bay Area and Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area inserted Whitewashing and its various permutations (e.g., Whitewashed, Whitewash) into conversations on race, Asian American identification, and in relation to themselves or descriptions of other Asians. In everyday conversation, the term signifies acting and behaving in a "White way" among Asian Americans. Acting White varies differentially based on the area of interview, identification with what constitutes a performance or ritual of Whiteness, and access to and active participation in an Asian and/or Asian American community. Among these Asian Americans, acting White is synonymous with banana, Twinkies, and Whitewashing. Twinkie and banana both reference someone who is of Asian heritage but behaves in a stereotyped White way; in other words, Yellow on the outside but White on the inside. FOBs (Fresh Off the Boat) intermingle into the conversation to

explain the difference between themselves and/or Whitewashing. FOBs are persons who exhibit behaviors and appear like recent immigrants from Asian countries, especially from the East and Southeast Asia. For the purposes of this section, I will primarily focus on Whitewashing and only discuss discourses on FOBs as it pertains to Whitewashing. This chapter explores what Whitewashing, Twinkie, and banana means to Asian Americans and what implications this has toward their identity. These intersections emerge from identity as performativity, associative and disassociative symbolic structures, and racial melancholia. Racial melancholia is a condition of intense mourning where one cannot and will not give up the object of loss.

A quarter of the participants who have heard of Whitewashing feel uncomfortable with the term and instead prefer Twinkie, banana, or Americanized. They find Whitewashed too strong or a pejorative. If they choose to use the term, they refer to themselves and not others. However, at least one participant freely uses the term for others but not herself/himself even though s/he finds it distasteful. A handful of the participants such as Brooke and Russell references Whitewashing for themselves and other Asians. These individuals—from both locations—identify Whitewashing as a positive or neutral term; it references a natural process of assimilation for Asian Americans living in Oklahoma and San Francisco Bay Area.

While not all participants embrace the term or its variants, most of them regardless of interview location readily recognize it. In this sense, these Asian Americans all participate in the discourse of Whiteness. Even though participants may not have initiated discussions of the term Whitewash as opposed to my directly asking their usage, all participants had a response to the interview question, “Some say Asians

act White. What are your thoughts on that?" Though these Asian American participants may not use or agree with Whitewash, banana, or Twinkie terminology, they acknowledge the contested ties between Asianness and Whiteness.

The participant interviews reveal three analytic frameworks in reference to Asian American identity and Whiteness. They reference that identity in Whiteness is reified in the body and obtained through discourse on race. They specifically refer to the categorizations of themselves and others. Lastly, racial melancholia is intensified by racial discourse and performativity.

Performativity

The first emergent analysis is the performativity (Butler, 1993, 1999) of Whiteness among Asian/Americans. As discussed in Chapter II, performativity is one aspect of identity; it is how discourse is embodied through one, an anticipation of a subject outside itself such as race; and two, naturalization of this anticipation through repetition (Butler, 1999). Performativity is therefore the ritualized behavior of expectations and thoughts (Butler, 1999). The reification of thoughts in the body is sustained in society by all who participate in ritualized anticipation, and who create the language of understanding of the object (Butler, 1999). For instance, sex as in male and female may seem to be biologically based or essentialist. Sex rather is the performativity of maleness and femaleness through a co-constructed, recognizable language of woman and man. Society creates the discourse (in both physical and verbal forms of talk) of maleness and femaleness: how one displays physically, aesthetically, and emotionally of maleness and femaleness. The same exists for racial and ethnic constructions. The participants easily recognize Asianness and Whiteness as racial

discourse (produced by the dominant culture) and ethnic discourse (developed from the group). Whiteness to the participants is reified in the body through behaviors, aesthetics, and space as an extension of their bodies (E. T. Hall, 1982).

Lily moved at age nine to San Francisco from Macao. She calls her younger sister, Margaret, a banana due to her ritualized behavior associated with Whiteness:

> My younger sister…she's a—completely banana. I think in the beginning it's by choice, but now it's become a habit…I think she now realizes and she tries to break it, but it's really hard. She only dates White people. Whenever we go to her house for dinner it is the White spread, which is Martha Stewart kind of cooking. …I think all of her friends are non-Asian…she has very few Asian friends… I don't think she even speaks any Chinese at all, and she probably does broken, gibberish Chinese with my parents with a lot of English in terms of communication…I don't know if she's acting White because she wants to or if she's just so assimilated to the culture and that's who she is…Whenever we're together she would call me up and say, "Hey <Lily>, this is <Margaret>." She would announce herself…You don't need to announce yourself but she does. "Can I come over?" She would make an appointment…It's not very Chinese. "And I would like to invite you to dinner. Would you come over to my house for dinner?" And then it's a White spread…We have appetizers, we have cocktails, then we have entrees, salad, and then Port at the end…It's not a Chinese affair.

Margaret exemplifies what Lily would deem banana behaviors. This includes linguistic (dis)abilities in Chinese, her racial-ethnic choice in romantic partners, proper phone etiquette, and providing a multiple course meal in a "White spread" similar to Martha Stewart's cooking. This bothers Lily: Margaret treats Lily like an acquaintance rather than an older sister. The "White spread" signifies not just the food served but the order and the ritual of the service, similar to a five-star European or American restaurant. The stylized dinner is far from comfort or "family style" Chinese home cooking. Lily comments that acting White may have initially been a conscious choice, but through consistent ritual, this has become second nature for Margaret. Margaret is further away from Chinese culture and ethnicity than Lily.

This passage explains how one performs Whiteness as an identity in the habits of the every day. Margaret made choices to act in her language of Whiteness. As the choices became more apparent, actions are ingrained in her body and being, ranging from the voice and tone of her phone conversations to the style of dinner. Margaret acts in a way that makes her visibly banana to her older sister, the reification of the body that is spoken in the language of Whiteness. Due to its reification, even racial-ethnic consciousness cannot easily break these rituals.

Tuyen, second-generation Vietnamese college student living in Oklahoma, describes a friend that acts White. Tuyen's friend, Kai, is ethnically Vietnamese and is one-eighth White. Tuyen is irritated that Kai "tries to be White." Tuyen notes,

> She's [Kai] really…annoying. It's like, "Dude! You're like mostly Vietnamese. Why don't you just be the way you are?"…But you know she's just like, "Oh! I'm going out with these White people."…Especially in high school it was the cool thing to wear Abercrombie [and Fitch] and Hollister …Those are what all the rich White kids wore. Some Asians that try to be White would dress like that…It's really stupid. But yeah there are Asians out there that try to be White…There was a point where she avoided her close Vietnamese friends and only hung out with White people…But that didn't last too long. I noticed on her <social networking site> all her pictures…there has to be White people in it apparently.

Tuyen can easily recognize Kai's language of Whiteness. According to Tuyen, Kai does not want to associate with Vietnamese individuals as much as with Whites. Kai brags about her associations with Whites, wearing what "rich White kids" wear, avoiding Vietnamese people, and posting photos publicly of Kai with mostly White friends. Tuyen finds this abhorrent. Her distaste for people like Kai violates self-appreciation of one's racial and ethnic background. Such rich White high school students branded themselves and in turn, some Asian/American students did the same. Tuyen associates the branding with Whiteness. The irony is many of Tuyen's Vietnamese friends often

refer to her as Whitewashed for similar reasons, such as talking patterns, clothing choices, and choices in close friends.

Brooke, a second-generation Korean American who grew up in a predominant White area in Oklahoma, refers to Whitewashed as:

> You do everything that White people do…like anything in the typical White person's life: what they wear, what they say, what they do, where they go, what kind of car they drive, everything involves in comparing to the White people…Everything about me probably could be Whitewashed…so you could say I'm Whitewashed…The White girls like to wear the $300-$200; the most I paid was $200 jeans…just clothes wise, the songs and the movies that we listen to or watch, how we live also…If you come to my house, it looks like…a White person lives there.

Whitewashing connects with consumption such as music listening preferences, decoration, and clothes. "If you come to my house, it looks like…a White person lives there" is in reference to perceptions of traditional homes of immigrant Asians. When I think of a traditional "Asian" home I think of my closest friends from junior high and high school, a 1.5-generation Filipino American, and 1.5 and second-generation Chinese and Taiwanese Americans. Visiting their homes, which represented both lower to middle class homes, I remember the smells of the rice cooker, vinegar and soy sauce, the piles of newspapers in Chinese, Tagalog, or English, the obligatory upright piano hidden under mail and papers, and the kitchen cabinets filled to the brim with large cooking utensils. The kitchen felt "sticky," not from lack of cleaning, but from years of constant use. The furniture is more functional than decorative. Piles of shoes overwhelm the front door areas (see Liu, 1998). Decorations on the wall are limited to old calendars from a local Chinese bank or cultural ministry. Higher-class Asian immigrant homes presumably have better quality items from my experience, but the products are the same: a high-grade dependable rice cooker or better furniture.

Brooke is positioning herself far from that—as someone who has a clear contemporary or modern style of decorating, pictures on the wall, the aesthetics of beauty and organization. In order for individuals to embody performativity, they must learn and embody the language of the subject. The language Brooks speaks is in the voice of upper middle-class Whites. Earlier in the interview, Brooke spoke of a woman of Korean descent, who was adopted by White parents. Brooke states, "She's so Whitewashed, it's unbelievable! She's like me." She freely calls other Asians and herself as Whitewashed. She is comfortable with White friends teasing her White behaviors. In this way, Whitewashing is a bonding agent between Brooke and her friends. She continues describing the teasing in the following.

> Anna: How do you feel about some people calling you, "Oh, you're so White?"
>
> Brooke: I think it's funny actually just because I *am* kind of White…I am Asian American but I look at myself—I'm the Whitest Asian you will ever meet [Laughs]! It even shows on my profile on <social networking site>…which is true because I just like to do what other White people do. It's not like I'm mimicking them…It's just…comes to me…instantly…[My friends say] just for fun though, not like to hurt my feelings, "Hey, you Whitewashed girl!" not like that but just for fun. I even say it myself, too. So yeah, sometimes, when I'm drunk I'm Whitewashed [Laughs].

The consistent teasing by her White friends becomes a play on her identity; "I *am* kind of White…I'm the Whitest Asian you will ever meet" (emphasis in interview). As she recalls this, she laughs. She associates intoxication with Whitewashing. She mentions later in the interview that she does not meet very many Asian American women that are like her: that enjoy "partying" and bar hopping. For this reason, she is uncomfortable with most Asians. Brooke is a case in which she embraces Whitewashing not as a pejorative but as status. Her public announcement on a social networking site is actively

projecting the status of White behaviors. In this way, she is performing Whiteness on a daily basis by acting, listening to certain music, and dressing in her interpretation of the language of Whites.

The reification of her perception of Whiteness conflicts with her identity: she is White, and laughing about her statements of Whiteness. She acts White like Margaret—she lives and breathes in a world where her penchants for certain behavior and materialistic consumption are parallel to Whiteness. Individuals from the dominant culture, her White friends, racially place her and tease her as White. Her acceptance of Asian American racial identification (in this statement she does not refer to Korean Americans but to the pan-Asian terminology of Asian Americans) conflicts with the teasing of her White friends and her public announcement of being the "Whitest Asian you will ever meet."

Many participants often place Whiteness in opposition to traditional Asian values and behaviors, not in opposition to Blackness. Ian, a second-generation Chinese from Oklahoma, notes his observation of Whites as opposed to traditional Asians.

> Like most White people tend to go to the chains…White people trust the chains cause it's on TV, it's on the newspapers…The way you spend money also. I think it's probably stereotyped. But I know for a fact…a lot of my American friends when they see something, they'll buy it immediately…whereas I'll wait for a sale or I'll only look at the sale racks. I think school also. I think Americans are more, more open to being a well-rounded kind of person. They want to…have abilities in sports, academics, music, everything, whereas [for] Asian parents academics are foremost and then music and then maybe sports if you have time…Whitewashed is not really who you hang out with. It's just what you really appreciate as far as your heritage or culture.

Being Whitewashed is not connected with whether an Asian's primary group of friends is White or Asian. Ian brings to light the effect of media. He observes his White friends prefer chain restaurants because they "trust" media advertisements. This trust is in the

visual and in the hegemony of media. Along with this is the need for instant gratification of goods. He also observes that Americans value the idea of the Renaissance person, a person who has *equal* abilities in a variety of subjects including sports, academics, and music. The traditional Asian values the same thing but in preferential order where academics is higher than music and sports. He vehemently denies he is Whitewashed because he is frugal, prefers "authentic" restaurants, and values his culture. He studies and learns about Chinese history; he emotionally connects with Chinese ideology. In his explanation of differences between traditional Chinese and White Asians, Ian switches the term to "American," a nationality and culture, to reference behaviors. Like many other participants, American is synonymous with White and Western ideology.

Ian's comments illustrate the ideology embodied by Whites and subsequently Asians who hold these beliefs. According to Ian, Whites believe in equal abilities in all facets of life, espoused by Aristotle, and revived in the Renaissance age. Capitalism and the search for new and brighter items are recognized to be a predominantly White, Western framework.

The embodiment for Russell, second-generation Chinese born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, is an ideology and personality of the White American ideal.

> I identify it with [being White] when I walk into meetings and I speak my mind. I express my opinions, and I'm not afraid to get feedback or get criticism. I'm not afraid to rub people the wrong way slightly…I have [Asian/American] colleagues who are…more passive and I can identify that with more their Asian roots where they won't say what they believe is right because they don't want to rock the boat.

Russell's engagement of the performativity of Whiteness ties to assertive characteristics. The strength of his beliefs, no matter how potentially offensive, sets him apart from his Asian/American passive colleagues.

To engage in performativity, participants require complex skills of performing Whiteness. As Ian indicates, they need to agree with ideology pervasive in the United States—desire to be well-rounded, seek immediate gratification, and flagrant spending. One aspect of performativity is utilizing a recognizable language such as through a style of talking, dressing, and behaving. Another is to *believe* and acknowledge like Russell and Brooke. In essence, performativity of Whiteness is an art form. Participants do not learn it overnight but rather through consistent ritual, choice, and belief.

Symbolic Structures: Self-Identifications and Disassociations

As stated in Chapter II, identity is relational and discursive. It is created through interactions with others, and the disassociations and identifications between the self and racial-ethnic groups. One way to identify and disassociate with others is the formation of symbolic structures or categorizations of persons and their behaviors.

> One of these pervasive orientational necessities is surely the characterization of individual human beings. Peoples everywhere have developed symbolic structures in terms of which persons are perceived not baldly as such, as mere unadorned members of the human race, but as representatives of certain distinct categories of persons, specific sorts of individuals (Geertz, 1973, p. 363).

The "representatives of certain distinct categories" is fraught with the labels and stereotypes of peoples, such as those who act White. This second subsection discusses the symbolic structures emerging from Asian American participants in identification with or from Whiteness. One of the interview questions asked whether participants have ever heard of or used the phrases banana, Twinkie, or Whitewash. Some participants,

without me asking the question, initiated the topic by inserting their own labels referring to themselves or other Asian Americans. Others, when asked, already *knew* about the labels even though they did not initiate the discussion. All participants provided their own interpretations and different labels used to refer to people in their groups.

Self-Identifications with Whiteness

Some participants clearly articulate their identification with Whites more than any other racial-ethnic group. Those that identify with Whites use terms such as Whitewashed, banana, or Twinkie. The usage of the terms varies by degrees of self-perception of Whiteness and Asianness. For instance, if participants define Whiteness in terms of limited racial-ethnic language abilities and Asian immigrant behavior, they may feel more inclined to use Whitewashed as opposed to banana or Twinkie. Others prefer to use banana or Twinkie based on having some racial-ethnic connection to both Whiteness and Asianness. A few dislike the term Whitewashed because it is condescending and pejorative.

Russell self-identifies as Whitewashed based on associations with groups from middle school and in comparing himself with his recently immigrated cousins. Whitewashed is:

> Russell: When they think and prepare a response the native answer comes in English and gets translated to another language…If someone talks to me in a foreign language like in Cantonese or Mandarin, my initial response is in English, so my grammar, my perspective is all in English…I identify with that because I have cousins who came from Hong Kong that are the complete opposite…That's how I kind of demarcated the difference between me and my cousins.
>
> Anna: So you think of yourself as Whitewashed? [He mentioned this before the interview, and also wrote the comment in an email excerpt from the Introduction.]

Russell: Yeah.

Anna: When did you come to that realization?

Russell: I guess in…middle school…people start to lump you in different groups. Some teachers started to lump me with…some of the FOBs and some of the ABCs [American-born Chinese]. I didn't identify myself with them. I identified myself with American, the White group more or less…When I was younger I felt very nervous around large groups of Asians, but I found myself perfectly at home in large groups of White people, probably because I went to a White church when I was younger, too.

Russell associates Whiteness with places such as a "White church." Even though he had many options to attend churches with predominantly Asian or a variety of races in the San Francisco Bay Area, he chose a church with a predominantly White congregation during middle school. This also holds true for his group of friends in middle school. The middle school is a time and space for the construction of a racial identity. Russell presents a dichotomy of Whitewashed and FOBs. First, he notes his fluency in English is one factor in his Whitewashed identity. Second, he made a conscious decision during middle school to associate with Whites as opposed to second-generation Asian Americans and recent immigrants from East Asia. This combination together creates his notion of a Whitewashed identity. Even though later on he began attending a predominantly second-generation Chinese American church during and after college, he still identifies as Whitewashed. This self-identification has reached a racial-ethnic consciousness and awareness for him. He finds a closer tie between his White friends than Asian friends.

As in her previous quotes, Brooke embraces the term Whitewashed for herself. Not only do her White friends label herself as White, her brother refers to her as a banana.

> Anna: Have people called you or referred to you as a Twinkie or a banana?
>
> Brooke: All the time! My brother, he shouldn't even be saying that but my friends, well they don't like comment it like every day…but every once in awhile if we're out on the bars and drinking, they're like, "Oh my gosh! You're so White!" and I know I'm White… because I act just like they are…But I'll make fun of myself too, get a joke going …[My White friends] know that I'm joking with myself and that I don't get along with other Asians…My brother calls me that…all the time, a banana just because I have a lot of White friends. But he just does that because that's a brother.

Her brother notices her primary social group is White, and for this reason is a banana. Her brother identifies strongly with his Korean ethnicity. Brooke plays along with her White friends' teasing of her White behavior—in this case bar hopping and public alcohol consumption. It is not that Asian/Americans do not go to bars in the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area. She does not find many Asian/Americans who have the same values as her. During the interview, she disassociates from Asian/Americans that study all the time and occupy every corner of the university library. She not only engages in performativity of Whiteness, she engages in the verbal identification of Whitewashing and Whiteness.

Christian provides an interesting point of view. He was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area and recently moved to Oklahoma. When describing himself to Whites in Oklahoma, he refers to himself as a banana. This term becomes a means for discourse on race and culture.

> I'm White on the inside and yellow on the outside…It's interesting because that's supposed to be like offensive, right? But I use it to explain to people why I am the way I am. So they say, "Oh, you're Chinese, right?" I'll say, "Yeah, but I'm a banana." I'm actually White on the inside and that explains everything for them…I'm the one who uses that language… I will purposely like joke around with them and use a little bit of offensive language, just so they know that it's okay for them to talk to me about it… If I were just to say, "Well I'm Americanized," they might think I'm kind of closed off about it and I don't want to talk about it because they offended me. The thing is they did offend me a little bit by saying, "What country are you from?" But I'm not going to let that get in the way of helping them understand where I'm coming from. They can tell when they talk to me I'm not deprecating myself. I moved here [to Oklahoma] because I'm a banana…And I'm proud of the fact that's who I am. You know I would be equally proud if I was just White all the way through.

Banana then is no longer derogatory or self-deprecating. He chose to move to a predominantly White area because he believes he is Whiter in his values and beliefs than are other Asians. His goal is to help others become comfortable with his banana behaviors. The insinuation that he may not be American offends him. The question, "What country are you from?" assumes that the person in question does not belong to *this* country, United States. Though strangers ask him this question, he moves beyond it because he self-identifies with White Americans. The act of moving from a predominant Asian community to a White one shows that his understanding of Whiteness and Asianness is spatial. By moving to this area, he is one-step closer to embracing and choosing to be a banana. His pride of being a banana, "just White all the way through" is evidence of this. Christian is *consciously* identifying with White American culture just like Brooke and Russell.

Stephanie grew up in an area with a high concentration of Filipinos in California. Her parents, however, sent her to a predominantly White private high school. During college, she became involved in Asian advocacy groups. She does not agree with the behavior of anyone of color acting White. She sometimes calls others

that in her mind but she is embarrassed she does so—she sees the complexity and problematic nature of Whiteness:

> Anna: Some say Asians act White. Is that true?
>
> Stephanie: I have trouble with that statement…One of the things that we talked about in my [race] class…The story that <my professor> told us was, "In this study Asian groups were more likely to say that they have an affinity towards White people versus towards Latinos or Blacks. Black people were most likely to say they had an affinity towards Latinos, and Latinos had an affinity towards Whites, as well."…At least for my own [Filipino] community, I know that there definitely exists a certain level of prejudice towards the Black and Latino community that I'm not proud of; but I see it and I hear it. I hear it coming out of my parent's peers' mouths…My mom, in particular, comes with her own set of prejudices. I don't know why there is a thought of Asian people acting White and not that they're just acting Asian, I don't know why that is. I don't know if that's sort of wrapped into the whole model minority.

Stephanie brings up a conversation in her undergraduate race class. She understands the connections racial-ethnic groups have toward other groups. She is embarrassed as she evaluates her parents' prejudice towards Blacks and Latino/as. The prejudice could somehow serve a relationship to "acting" White or Asian. If this is true to her, she integrates this with a public perception of Asians in the model minority stereotype. The affinity is one explanation Stephanie brings towards Asian Americans ties to Whiteness. It becomes a natural, primordial tie between Asians and Whites, which would explain why her Filipino mother holds a bias against Blacks and Latino/as.

Disassociations from Whiteness

The disassociation from Whiteness is based on the perceptions of Asian/Americans' performativity of Whiteness. Dress and mannerisms signify degrees of closeness to Whiteness. Participants, who disassociate from Whiteness, regard

themselves as either an observer or encapsulation of what *is* Asianness. Some participants disassociate themselves from Whiteness by reaffirming their racial-ethnic identity or by calling *other* Asian/Americans Whitewashed, rice cracker, or Twinkie. When disassociating themselves from Whitewashing, banana, or Twinkie, they deflect and reject the behavior. They do not want people to view themselves as White and give examples to those Asian/Americans that act White. Disassociations and self-identifications are also spatial—regional geographic ties to perceptions of Whiteness and Asianness. For instance, participants in Oklahoma previously identified performativity of dress with their perceptions of middle-class Whites. However, participants in California place the differences based on Northern California and Southern California differences.

Evelyn, who was born and raised in the Bay Area, describes that Whitewashed is never a serious insinuation but rather teasing.

> Don't think I've really heard that in a derogatory way to Asians…I've seen it as jokes…like, "You rice cracker." [chuckles] [My ex-boyfriend's] friends would joke [toward another Asian friend] that, "You rice cracker"…Rice I can understand is associated with Asian culture and cracker I understand it to be White, so it's kind of like: "Yeah, you Asian White person."…Maybe it's the way he talked and maybe because he also liked White girls, too.

Evelyn introduces another term: rice cracker. Rice is symbolic of Asians as a cultural food or as indicative of Asianness (Currarino, 2007; Mannur, 2006).

As a resident adviser in college, I participated in many dormitory staff bonding activities of which I was the only person of color. During one staff bonding activity, our assignment was to go to a grocery store and purchase an item that represented a characteristic of our assigned coworker partner. The White coworker assigned to buy a grocery item for me gave me a bag of long grain white rice. My coworker exclaimed,

"This item made me think of you." From my limited conversations with my coworker, I never talked about rice nor did I eat rice in her presence. My only explanation was that she associated rice with my racial-ethnic background. The dominant culture associates rice with Asians despite having roots in many other cultures and nationalities.

Even popular online retailers targeting Asian Americans offer t-shirts with logos, "Got rice?" or "Mochi is nice! Mochi is rice!" (see http://www.blacklava.net). The term "Got rice?" was popular in my youth in San Francisco Bay Area in reaction to the "Got milk?" campaign by the California Milk Board. Youth resisted the idea that "milk" was inherently important to one's diet and life. As a form of resistance, the phrase "Got rice?" signified anything Asian within the United States that did not fit into dominant culture. In addition, an Asian American youth created, "Got rice?" lyrics to the music of "Changes," one of rap artist Tupac Shakur's posthumously published works. When asked what makes them "Asian," many participants said something similar to Evelyn, "That makes me Asian—'cause I stir fry and I make rice." Rice is also used in describing street racing cars. Rice Rockets for instance refer to modified imported foreign cars (e.g., Acura, Honda, and Toyota) driven by Asian/Americans (discussed further in Chapter VII). These Asian/Americans and their vehicles represent a subculture of street racing. Rice, in summary, is strongly associated with Asians (Currarino, 2007; Mannur, 2006).

Cracker, however, is decidedly a slang and pejorative for Whites, since saltine crackers contain white flour and have a white color and hue. Just as rice is symbolic of Asians, cracker is a symbol of Whites. Rice cracker then is a term of Asians who act White. Even though Evelyn is referring to an Asian who acts White, she defines that as

an Asian White—a slip in grammar of an Asian who acts more White that s/he is an Asian White rather than a White Asian. This Asian White talks in a manner that is White in nature and who romantically associates with Whites.

Evelyn would never associate herself with being Whitewashed or rice cracker. The most popular group of girls in junior high and high school were predominantly second-generation Filipino Americans who were witty, clever, and physically attractive. She dissociates herself from Whiteness because during her formative years, she desired to affiliate with the Filipino American girls. She would let strangers believe she was Filipino and not Chinese because of this longing. She never associated with Whiteness. By engaging in a discourse of "rice crackers," she is consciously identifying with Asianness.

Humor is a common way to insert potentially offensive racial-ethnic terms (B. Barnes, Palmary, & Durrheim, 2001; Göktürk, 2008; J. H. Park, Gabbadon, & Chernin, 2006). For instance, Brooke's White friends and Korean brother call her White or banana in the guise of teasing. Despite the joking manner, the words are embedded into Brooke's thoughts on her race and identification. Evelyn, by passively participating in the talk on rice crackers, shows how the terms embed in her sense of self. The awareness of the Asianness and Whiteness ties to her understanding of the world, her racial-ethnic identity, and the connection with other Asians.

Ian from Oklahoma comments directly about Asian Americans who are Whitewashed.

> Joking around, I say, "You're really Whitewashed…You have no appreciation where you come from." It's really mean [to say this to other people]…There is a type of person that's more, appreciates more of their Western upbringing than their parents'…culture…Like for me I learned a lot about Chinese history,

> Chinese culture, the language and different types of… groups…For someone not to really understand that…and also not to appreciate it. A lot of people stay away from it altogether because they don't like it. I think that makes you more Western, more White.

Ian equates being Whitewashed with "more Western." There is no motivation or appreciation of history, culture, and language. Being Western is also related to consumerism, choosing chain restaurants, a well-rounded education, instant gratification, and the lack of motivation to learn about racial-ethnic practices and beliefs. He dissociates from Whiteness by labeling others as Whitewashed. He further associates himself with people who embrace their racial-ethnic heritage. In his social networking page, he writes he is a FOB and his friends tease him as such. By associating with the opposite side of the spectrum of FOBs—highly identified recent immigrants—and strongly disassociating from the latter side of Whitewashed Asians, he creates a clearly demarcated tie to Chinese Americans.

Disassociating from Whiteness—by labeling other Asian Americans as acting White—is contested. In the next excerpt, Stephanie explains her own shame for thinking someone acts White.

> Anna: Do you sometimes catch yourself saying, "Oh, that person is acting more White"?
>
> Stephanie: Oh yeah, yeah. I mean I would be lying if I said I'd never thought that…I think it's what's most obvious is like people's vernacular, like if they talk a certain way that I'm not used to.…I grew up around a lot of Filipino kids and, so my norm was the way that they talked. I have cousins in L.A. [Los Angeles] that had more White friends than my brother and I had growing up. When they went to school…I remember [my cousin] complaining of people telling her that she was Whitewashed. She resented it—like I think any normal person would. I think it was partly the way she talked. I think that's what was the most obvious; but, it's just such a superficial thing to pin on somebody. There's really no reason for it…other than pointing out that, "Hey, you might act a

> little bit differently from some of my other Asian friends or my other non-White friends." I think it's partly what makes people feel comfortable. If that's what she grew up around and that's how she's comfortable being…let her be! Kids are harsh; even young adults and older people can be harsh too.

She does not want to think of individuals as acting White because it supposes that one *can* act in a perceivable way and that she *judges* and thinks of herself capable of saying one is more or less Asian/American. One reason for her mixed emotions is hearing the stories of her Filipino American cousin living in Los Angeles. Her cousin does not appreciate the label Whitewashed. The cousin prefers mostly White friends. The choice, according to Stephanie, reflects her Los Angeles upbringing. Stephanie acknowledges one cannot change the contexts of their upbringing, if "that's how she's comfortable being…let her be!" By labeling people of color as acting White, it is "superficial" and corruptible.

Her explanation of why people self-identify or disassociate from Whiteness begins with her view of others labeled as Whitewashed, as evidenced in the following:

> I'm sure I've heard other people being called that [Whitewashed]. I've heard other people label themselves that way. I think it's partly because of what other people project onto them and they sort of own up to it, type thing. My brother's friend…has an older sister; she also grew up in L.A. and moved to San Francisco. I remember her saying... "When I was in L.A., I thought I was Whitewashed and then I came here in San Francisco and then all these other people-." It was like sort of implying that here she didn't really feel as Whitewashed as people would label her in L.A. which was kind of surprising for me to hear.

Whitewashing is contextual in this case—it depends on geographic connections. With other Asians in San Francisco, one may no longer embrace the term because Whitewashing does not have the same meaning. No longer would she have to "own up it" and embrace the term when surrounded by Asian Americans with a variety of

behaviors and beliefs. Southern California, represented by Los Angeles, has its own spectrum of Asianness and Whiteness. This means one's surroundings relates to identification with Asians or Whites.

Racial Melancholia

The symbolic structures and performativity intersect to create conundrums within the participants. Categorizations from outside the self, whether it is within the Asian/American community or outside the community affects the participants in varied ways. The few participants who view themselves as White or Whitewashed are the direct result of racial melancholia, the overt mourning of racial othering, and self-acceptance (Cheng, 2001). Racial melancholia has roots in Freud's distinction between mourning—a normal and healthy method to deal with loss, and melancholia—when one cannot get over loss. Melancholia is "the ego itself" and is "endless self-impoverishment" in which the "melancholic eats the lost object—feeds on it" (Cheng, 2001, p. 8). The loss excludes the person—s/he cannot meet or deny this loss. Melancholia is an exclusion of an object/abject that is neither completely rejected by the melancholic nor completely embraced. The melancholic must first "deny loss as loss in order to sustain the fiction of possession" and secondly "make sure that the 'object' never returns" (p. 9) Thus in melancholia, the loss is never truly "lost" and at the same time, never fully accepted into one's life. The melancholic's object of loss lives in the mind as a ghost. Racial melancholia is an "elaborate identificatory system based on psychical and social consumption-and-denial" (Cheng, 2001, p. 11). Racial melancholia is formed through the "dynamic of retaining a denigrated but sustaining loss that resonates most acutely against the mechanisms of the racial imaginary as they have

been fashioned in this country" (Cheng, 2001, p. 10). According to Cheng (2001), racialization in the United States through institutions produces "a dominant, standard, white national ideal, which is sustained by the exclusion-yet-retention of racialized others" (p. 10). Racial melancholia is a constitutive and strong force in the development of identity and one's sense of self.

One such case is Adi, a second-generation Asian Indian American from Oklahoma. In the following quote, he associates high achievement, intelligence, and middle-class to Whites. During high school:

> I would associate me wanting to fit in socially to the popular White smart group, which ended up being my friends who are all honor students…[They were]top 15% of the class including me. To fit in I participated in a lot of things that they participated in, not necessarily because I wanted to but because that's what the cool kids were doing… So it wasn't when you compare, Latinos, Mexicans, Blacks, I think it best fit who I was at the time…My self-view is I'm White. Others' view it's now becoming a blur. They don't know. They can't figure it out and they can't figure it out based on my skin color. They just think I'm a really White person with a nice tan…It's interesting because they're viewing me more as a White-White person which is good because I'm trying to fit in more as a White-White person because I think in the long run it'll benefit me. I won't be looked down upon. I'll be looked at as an equal. And I think that's why I'm kinda striving towards doing it that way.

From one standpoint, Adi's self-identification with White is the direct result of racial melancholia. While he was in middle school and high school, he noticed that the smart White kids were in the honors math, whereas most students of color were in the accelerated. Even though he was in the accelerated courses, he desired to be in the honors one. He soon got there—and his primary friends were in that group: smart, White, and Christian. He became a Christian for that reason. His primary friends currently are White. He views himself as White and acknowledges others see him as "a White-White person" which is his goal. Anything other than White-White is inferior.

White is equality. Adi does not use Whitewash, Twinkie, or banana in his everyday conversation. He is aware of the term Twinkie but hears ABCD (American-born confused Desi) more often among his Asian American friends.

His case provides a starting point for understanding racial melancholia. His desire for Whiteness is so great he converts to Christianity. The desire of Whiteness is something he can never be or truly obtain. To him it is a loss. Yet while he changes his self either by the way he talks, his friends, or choice of religion, he loses the Asian Indian self and heritage. He does not see the pervasiveness of his ethnicity and the signification of his skin.

Nicole, who immigrated to San Francisco at six months of age, asserts labeling or stereotyping any person as acting White is rude. Someone who supposedly acts White:

> Depends on who they associate with and when they came to America and their parents' influence on them. But sometimes people say some Black people act like White people. But that's really mean because it's like, "What, you think like White people are civilized or something like that?" And then when there is a civilized African American, "Oh, they're acting White." So I'm wondering what they're saying about Asian people, when we are civilized, when we're clear, when we know how to speak our minds. Then we're being White. It should just be we are who we are.

She examines Whiteness and being "civilized"—a reflection of polished behavior, speech, and refinement, mimicking high-class socialization. She despises the connection that when Blacks are a certain way they are acting White, as if Whiteness is symbolic of civilization and gentrification. She does not believe behaviors represent a higher, desired way of living. Even though she would never use the term for others, her mother calls her something similar:

> My mom, she has a similar saying. She goes, "Ah, low fän nuey"…That means White girl. So whenever I don't want to eat something she gives me or when I don't want to do something…then she'll say to probably express her displeasure in my more Americaness instead of Asianness…It's just the way I've grown up and it's like, "Mom, what do you expect? I was here since I was six months. Of course I'm ah, low fän nuey." Now that I'm older, like I think she accepts it more, like I am who I am.

The dialectic between how she views herself and her mother's view is painful. The generational differences prove problematic.

Even though she would never call others this term, her mother freely uses a similar term in the Toisan language (also known as Taishan hua, a dialect or regional Chinese language that was widely spoken by the earliest generations of Chinese immigrants to the U.S.) (Chang, 2003) to describe Nicole's behaviors. The "Ah" in the phrase signifies exasperation; "low fän" is White, and "nuey" is girl, which together reads, "[Exasperation], White girl!" She does not protest her mother—it is a natural process for those raised in the United States. Acting White in this case is different from being civilized. In the context of the quote, she is referencing a general cultural element of America rather than racially based. The fact she comes to terms with White girl is conflicting from her previous discussion of calling other races as White.

For Adi, Brooke, and Russell, their identity is in between White friends' perception of them as "other," an identifiable person of color that is accepted to some extent as White, and their self-identification with (perceived) White middle-class values, aesthetics, and educational goals. Assimilation toward dominant White culture is Whitewashing. The assimilation is a catalyst in racial melancholia.

From another standpoint, their views of being White and Whitewashed are far from mourning; it is a staged event in the negotiation between how others view them

and how they view themselves. It is not a form of assimilation but recognition of themselves as freeing from the anger and frustration of racialization. By conforming to the dominant White majority's perceived views, they strategically own their identification.

When discussing Asian stereotypes, Lucy from the San Francisco Bay Area mentions Asians in relation to Whites. In this quote, she is discussing popular Asian stereotypes such as the goody-goody Asian. The stereotypical good Asian person is:

> Lucy: Like pretty Whitewashed like I am, just with an Asian exterior…
>
> Anna: What do you mean by Whitewashed?
>
> Lucy: Well, not really embracing the [Chinese] ideals that he lives with, or just the thoughts that he has. It's very American, very Caucasian and not necessarily very traditional Chinese. But that is kind of the same way that I grew up in. But now that I am older I like to embrace the Asian culture more…It's like, "Okay, it's not bad to be Asian."…But as I was growing up it wasn't like that…You tried to just spin it as much as you could. In order to do that you had to brush away your Asian culture and embrace the American culture to prove that you're as American as the next person.

American and Whites are synonyms in this case. Lucy refers to being Whitewashed as a process of acceptance and assimilation into White American culture. To be American was to reject the Asian culture. Whitewashing is therefore like herself—the younger self that chose to embrace one aspect over the other. The "spinning" is mourning, a sense of loss that produces a defiant nature of structure and pain. In order to be "good" participants like Lucy have to be something they are not, to present a façade. In part, it is performativity—agreeing to and ritualizing the perceptions of Whiteness. One must consciously fight against the performativity before it takes over in racial melancholia.

Tuyen, a second-generation Vietnamese American who grew up in Oklahoma, has been accused of being Whitewashed by other Asians. Before the following passage, she chooses American, corrects the statement, and then chooses Asian American.

Anna: Which term best describes you from the following: American, Asian American, Vietnamese, Vietnamese American, any part of that or any combination?

Tuyen: American. Or no, I would say Asian American…I associate with the Asian community so I would probably say Asian American. Yeah. Asian American…I don't want to flat out say American 'cause when people say/think American, they would probably view me as a Whitewashed person. But I'm not really Whitewashed…Around Vietnamese Chinese New Year, there's events and stuff. I go to those and Moon Festival… So I still associate with the Vietnamese community as well as other nationalities like Laotian, Filipino and stuff. I would probably say Asian American…I would never have considered myself Whitewashed…It depends on the person's definition of Whitewashed…They'll be like, "Oh she's Whitewashed. She can only speak English." And they would probably just assume I don't associate with Vietnamese people at all I guess. But then that's not true, I'm not Whitewashed. I don't like to call myself Whitewashed…I hung out with my best friend <Mary>, she's White… and sometimes we hang out with some of our White friends. And so those Asians were like, "<Tuyen's> Whitewashed"…I was like, "That's not entirely true. I hung out with you guys too."

If she chooses solely "American," she becomes Whitewashed. She consistently repeats, "I'm not Whitewashed." The initial accusation hurts her but she believes this is not the case. Her previously noted Asian friend acts White based on dress styles similar to higher class Whites and avoidance of other Asians. Tuyen provides this example and inserts her feelings of disapproval; she rejects accusations she acts White. The way people view her come into question. She finds it painful—she mourns that perception of her as Whitewashed. She has to prove through actions her tie to Vietnamese communities.

Jordan from Oklahoma realized she was once Whitewashed and through a transformative experience in an Asian American course, she began incorporating a stronger Asian American identity.

> I was really, really Whitewashed…because I just rejected Asians. I didn't want to learn Chinese at home…Well like before…I was constantly reminded that I was Asian, not that I think I was Asian…When I was in Oklahoma, I thought about it because people reminded me all the time that I was Asian. Asian meant different…But now it's like I can find positive things about being Asian…I know more who I am and being Asian is part of that identity…That class [on Asian Americans in the U.S.] helped me, and now I just know that Asian isn't bad.

In the interview, Jordan reflects her former rejection of Asian Americans. Her dislike was strong enough for her to avoid both dating Asian American men and associating with Asian American women. One reason for the rejection is the problematic tie with Asian/Other and White. The class gave her vocabulary to explain discrimination experiences and to find positive reinforcements of her Asian self. Jordan represents those that believe Whitewashing is a derogative term created to displace Asians and reinforce White privilege.

Audrey, a second-generation Chinese living in San Francisco Bay Area, discusses her negative view of Asian Americans who act White.

> Anna: Some say Asians act White, is that true?
>
> Audrey: …I don't know what you would call White as it was another type of culture. I don't like it when I see people of Asian races not liking their own culture like discriminating or when they pronounce words, enunciate very slowly as if to not have an accent and make fun of those who do have an accent. I don't appreciate that…Or those who try to distinguish themselves from their own culture as like, "I want nothing to do with it."

While growing up in the San Francisco Bay Area, she met many Asians who did not appreciate their ethnic heritage and race. They would make fun of recent immigrants of

the same race, especially their English speaking abilities. She also met people who did not want to associate with their ethnicity or culture. She despises these actions and gives reasons why in this next excerpt.

> I think that is more denouncing your own race…That would be the closest interpretation of what you're asking to be as Asians being more White….But as an Asian being White…I know other people who are like, "Oh bananas or like you're yellow on the outside, but you're White on the inside." I really don't agree with that term. I believe that everyone should have the right to have their own say and live their own life. Just try not to be disrespectful of others, that's the main thing. Golden rule, everyone lives by the golden rule, and that's not White, that's not Asian, that's everybody's culture.

For those who make fun of recent immigrant behaviors knowing that their parents behave similarly: it is denouncing one's own race. By calling others Banana, it is insulting and disrespectful. She believes acting White is not an appropriate concept. She views it similarly as Nicole. In this way, she is not disassociating or associating with Whiteness. Audrey has a unique perspective on Asian American behaviors. Audrey not only sees racial melancholia, she shuns it. Audrey represents the painful parts of identity consciousness. She believes that those that behave or desire to be White not only mourn, they reject themselves. They do not realize they are perpetuating their grief over that loss of themselves. There are multiple perceptions and sides to racial melancholia.

CHAPTER VII

FOBS, CHINESEY, AND AZIANS:

STRATEGIES OF IDENTITY DIFFERENTIATION

Before immigrating to the United States, individuals from Asia develop specific differentiations from others through nationality, language, socioeconomic status, education, and or other categories of value to their point of view. Upon entering the United States, those categories evolve. United States society frames *all* Asia as one racial category without consideration of ethnic and national variance (see Kibria, 2002). Even though their ethnicity and nationality are perceived as one thing by the group, their body is assigned an unusual indexical frame of race, i.e. Asian. Asian Americans in this way are *racialized ethnics* (Kibria, 2002; Tuan, 1998). *Racialized ethnics* imply that racial categories and denotations are values originating with the dominant culture, whereas the ethnic nuances and disassociations/associations emerge from within the ethnic and national group.

While in the United States, groups develop ethnic distinctions either transposed from Asian popular culture or derived from common immigrant experiences. The concept evolves to accompany the space, time, and fluctuations of the context. One of these *racialized* discourses imposed by the dominant majority is the model minority stereotype visited in Chapter V. The discourse negotiated between dominant and ethnic groups is in conceptualizations of banana, Twinkie, and Whitewashed, presented in Chapter VI. A discourse created by American raised Asian *ethnics* concerns FOB, Chinesey, and Azian reflexivity (pronounced Ay-Zee-Ens as if one is spelling out A-Z-N). Azians, Chinesey, and FOBs along with their various permutations are in informal conversations and during participant-observations in addition to the interviews. The discussions surrounding these terms are thick (see Chapter IV) with complexity and historicity. This chapter focuses on this ethnic discourse.

Questions concerning FOBs, Chinesey, and Azians are not in the interview protocol. After conducting all interviews, I began analyzing discourse on the ways participants talk and relate to Whiteness. In many interviews, participants would use recent immigrants or other Asian/Americans as yardsticks for their identification to/from Whiteness. Initially, even during the interviews, I did not notice its importance. The phrases are quite common in my every day talk. Growing up in the San Francisco Bay Area, I participated in conversations containing and utilizing these terms. I recognize these terms as rich points (Agar, 1994) when providing context for these terms, only to find that these words are so thickly buried that to provide a customary description shortchanged the complexity of the words. When re-analyzing the interviews for discourses on FOBs, Chinesey, and Azians, the phrases became visible.

These terms are not new to the talk of Asian/Americans living in the San Francisco Bay Area and Oklahoma City Metropolitan area. Asian/Americans write about these terms on Asian/American focused websites or blogs (e.g., G. Lee, 2008, February 13), and in editorial sections of newspapers and magazines (e.g., Hsiang, 2005; J. Park, 1990; Pham, 1997). FOB is even the main subject of an Asian American play (Hwang, 1990). The terms enter qualitative research as descriptors of other Asians, but only in a handful of work (Jeon, 2007; Kibria, 2002; H. K. Kim, 2005; Pyke & Dang, 2003). These few studies trace the use of words such as FOBs and Twinkies to internalized racism, differentiation, and markers of undesirable behaviors within racial-ethnic groups. These studies, however, do not at length discuss Azians and Chinesey.

Fresh Off the Boat (FOBs) and Recent Immigrants

As stated in Chapter VI, FOB stands for Fresh Off the Boat. It specifically refers to recent immigrants who display behaviors characteristically associated with individuals in Asia. It also refers to a way of dressing, food preferences, and a way of talking either in their mother tongue or in their use of English. The adverb or adjective variation of the terms such as FOBby and FOBbish are common. Sometimes participants spell it out as in F-O-B, rather than saying it. There is no apparent distinction from saying or spelling out FOB in the interviews. In most interviews, participants refer to the terms as a negative social and cultural characteristic and/or group. Participants placed FOBs as opposite to bananas and Twinkies.

Participants with origins and/or connections to mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Philippines refer to the term FOB. Participants with origins and/or connections to India rarely mention the terms. This observation does not necessarily mean participants who align themselves with Asian Indian origins never use the terms, only that they are not in the interviews. Participants self-ascribe or call other Asians these on social networking sites. Those self-ascribed as FOBs say so in jest, knowing that their behaviors are beliefs most closely associated with recent immigrants from Asia. Usually this is framed humorously, either teasingly or as a joke. One participant living and working in the San Francisco Bay Area casually refers to his predominantly Cantonese-speaking religious group as FOBbish, recognizing that he may also exhibit FOBbish behaviors. Chuckles and laughter often accompany the statements. The participants represent their FOB behaviors as an energetic self-revelation of thoughts and behaviors. However, when referring to *other* people as

FOBs, participants do not consistently frame FOBs with positive, energetic vibes. There is an underlying play and humor but it becomes a form of disassociation and a pushing away of behaviors, values, and individuals (de Lauretis, 1990). FOBs are a point of joking departure, but not a self-ascribed signification.

A common thread in most descriptions of FOBS is they are all recent immigrants. Before moving to Oklahoma, Jordan lived in a predominantly White area in a nearby state. The only Asians were "FOBby people and people like me." FOBby people are, "like fresh off the boat, like international students." In terms of their behaviors, "FOBby people are so fucking loud and when you're trying to study. When Asians get into groups, they're really, really loud. It's really annoying." She continues, "I don't really like FOBby's people to be honest…because I always get lumped into that part of the population. I'm not that person because I'm not foreign. I grew up in America but people can't see that." She disassociates from FOB and she is well aware of her reasons. Strangers from the dominant culture lump her, a second generation Chinese American, with FOBs. Even though she distinguishes between Asian immigrants and second generation Asian Americans, members from the dominant culture do not.

Blake, a second generation Chinese American from Oklahoma, references FOBs when he describes himself as Whitewashed:

> I don't listen to any Chinese music. I don't really purposely go out and buy Chinese food… I can cook for myself and everything is mostly Chinese, but then again…I learned in school like how to make a pizza, [Laughs]…lasagna, and macaroni and cheese… If they're like a FOB, you wouldn't say all that stuff... Sometimes the way I dress. I dress more American than whenever I see people come from China. They'd [FOBs] just be in a t-shirt, maybe have some designs at most…Most of the time I'm dressed in what everybody else is around me. That's [my] definition of Whitewashed: just everybody around you, just

> doing the same thing. But then again, I have some friends that everything they do is as if they were their parents. If they go home, [they] make some rice, [chuckles] and wash some clothes…You don't even use a washing machine, like scrub it and stuff like that….It's just you would say very primitive, like they don't use technology. It's literally they just came out of China and they don't use any of that stuff.

FOB is a yardstick for a consideration in Whitewashed behaviors. He details the specifics of FOBbish behaviors, which include hand-washing clothes instead of utilizing a washing machine. They do not immerse in technologies associated with American culture. Not all FOBs are this way, but some are.

One of the times that participants choose associations and disassociations with FOBs comes when the participant enters high school. Where student groups congregate and with whom they choose to congregate in the cafeteria are topics of many teen angst movies such as *Mean Girls* (Waters, 2004) and books such as *"Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?"* (Tatum, 1997). Several participants from the San Francisco Bay Area note how the location one chooses to sit during lunch in high school determined one's association with a racial-cultural group. For Bruce who at age ten moved to the East Bay from Taiwan, FOBs occupy one table in the cafeteria, whereas American-born and/or raised Asians occupy another table. White Americans predominantly took the area outside of the cafeteria, around the high school building. He recalls his experiences in high school when choosing which territory he should associate.

> In high school, it's a lot where you eat at lunch is where your friends is going to be… There was two tables in the cafeteria. One table was a mixture of ABC… American-born Chinese and other American-born Asian groups. And then the other one is what we call FOB [chuckles], Fresh Off the Boat. They [the FOBs] just got here not long ago and basically they have very heavy Chinese accents, or they really love Asian stuff, culture, food or anything. We had an Asian club at the high school too…There were lots of Asians when we were at that club…I

> felt really together in terms of being in the same ethnic group… That's how it started. I wasn't eating where the Caucasians were eating food, which were mainly outside the building.

Bruce starts noticing the differentiation between the FOBs, American-born Asians (ABAs) and Whites while in the high school cafeteria. He feels closer and more comfortable when he is around with other Asians, regardless of immigration status or generation. As he is more involved with the Asians and Asian Americans in the high school, he gravitates toward one subgroup more than the other groups. Bruce is engaging in ethnic-racial socialization (Hughes, et al., 2006) by choosing to be associated with recent immigrants of a similar ethnic-racial background. The majority of the FOBs during high school also came from Taiwan, which was a strong draw for Bruce. He felt more at ease with individuals from the same racial-ethnic group than Whites or even American-born or raised Asians. Bruce says,

> At first I'd say most of [my friends] are ABC [American-born Chinese], and then switch over to more FOBby ones, [chuckles] because maybe I missed home. Maybe I missed Taiwan, 'cause I haven't been back to Taiwan for a long time, and I couldn't go back… So I guess I kind of miss home, I miss the mother land.

When Bruce enters high school, his primary group of friends consists of American-born Chinese. Later in high school, Bruce misses Taiwan, "the mother land," which draws him to a FOB groups. He has strong memories of the place as indicated when he later addresses memories of childhood in Taiwan. His group of friends is now mostly FOBs from Hong Kong and Taiwan. He laughs when he becomes closer to FOBby friends. He recognizes the term as humorous, especially since his current friends are mostly FOBs.

Russell, a second-generation Chinese American from San Francisco Bay Area, in Chapter VI, associates with Whites more often than American-born and/or raised

Asians. During middle school, teachers began grouping Asian students into different groups. He did not fit in with the FOBs or the ABCs. Instead, he found solace in the White American group. A similar association and disassociation occurred in college when discovering extracurricular activities.

> In college on campus, I tried joining the Asian Student Union. That lasted about a month 'cause they're just weird…Like half the people there were ABCs [American-born Chinese] which is fine and the other half were like FOBs, FOBs like I literally didn't understand them…There's a language barrier. I didn't see myself wanting to spend that much time there because it's too much of a struggle by both language and culturally, like you had these two competing ideologies and goals.

Russell did not understand the FOB students in the Asian Student Union, one of the reasons why he left the student group. The people in the club are unusual and "just weird." The difficulty in communicating in English with FOBs is such a barrier, that it is not worth it for him to stay active in the group. He dissociates from the FOBs and to a lesser extent ABCs. Even though the ABCs in the group are "fine," they were not much of an influence for him to stay. The group is symbolic of his pulling away from ABCs and FOBs.

Russell instead finds solace with Whites in the same degree program.

> The other predominant group I hung out with was with…people that all study the same major as I. They're mostly White, like WASPs, White Anglo Saxon Protestant. The one guy I studied a lot with and did a lot of projects with, he was [a] straight White guy, joined ROTC…[Rooming with me] It was a good eye-opening experience because he used to talk to me about all of his conceptions about Asians. He always looked at me like, "You don't strike me as all those stereotypes that I've come across." I was like, "It's okay. You're not just disappointing as a White guy to me, too."

Russell's college roommate, a White Anglo Saxon Protestant (WASP), is in the same degree program. He is honest with his roommate about culture, race, and ethnicity. His roommate has stereotypical views of Asians. His roommate views all Asians the same:

as foreigners. The roommate has difficulty distinguishing the nuances of individual ethnic and national identities. The stereotypes are less prominent when individuals go beyond the signifiers of the racial body—Chinese as opposed to Asian, second generation as opposed to recent immigrants. The act of sharing space (i.e., a dormitory room) gave them opportunity to discuss their racial ethnic differences and similarities. He is not able to have the same conversations with the individuals in the student Asian club.

Russell and his life partner, Lucy, participated in the interview together. Lucy explains that even though she self-ascribed as Whitewashed she and her husband know that on some level they had to, "brush away your Asian culture and embrace the American culture to prove you're as American as the next person." Russell agrees with Lucy's remark by responding, "You had to work twice as hard to be considered just as American as the White guy next to you." Their desire by the dominant culture to consider them American is one of several reasons for their performativity, beliefs, and ideology of Whiteness. The lack of obvious acceptance of their race and ethnicity in the United States frames their views of American-born Asians and recent immigrants. Russell explains that when he was younger,

> I think a part of me felt ashamed and embarrassed when I came across F-O-Bs because it's kind of like, "Why don't you speak English like the rest of us?" or "Why do you have to embarrass us with your weird cultural practices of eating odd foods for lunch? Why can't you just eat a turkey sandwich like the rest of us?" I know that deep down that was wrong on certain levels but as a kid you don't think twice about it; you're just being like: "What a weirdo! I can't believe I look like you guys…"

As in the previous chapter, Russell's words fit with racial melancholia, the mourning over both society and the self. On the one hand, FOBs trigger a sense of shame and

embarrassment towards his racial-ethnic identification. He sees their actions and English abilities as a reflection of the dominant perception of Asians and therefore himself. He knew that his feelings of shame and embarrassment are not justified—he *should* love and accept the background and socialization of FOBs, but part of that was self-loathing. He wanted to push away FOBs for acceptance into mainstream United States society. By participating with Whites and acknowledging he is Whitewashed, he becomes free from the perceived shackles of being an Other. As he grows older, he can reflect on these mixed emotions. He has accepted his choice of emulating perceptions of White behavior and beliefs. On the other hand, he mourns over the loss of this shedding and transformation into Whiteness. He knows that the shame and embarrassment is par for the course.

Even though Justin was born in the United States, he considers himself more of a 1.5-generation Korean American. Some of his friends are FOBs. He notices a range of FOB individuals: "Some of them are the FOBs that they're so FOB that you call them a FOB and they get mad about it. Some of them are a FOB but they know that's just a joke and [are] just like, 'Yeah, yeah whatever.'" The degree of FOB is in relation to their reaction to being called a FOB. When FOB labeling is a joke, these individuals know they are merely displaying certain behaviors of recent immigrants. When the individual is a "spot on FOB," the FOBbish person would be offended by the term as a pejorative. An example of someone of this range of joking and teasing of FOB behaviors is Ian.

Ian who was born and raised in Oklahoma has a different value toward FOBs. His American-born/raised Asian friends associate him with the term FOB. He mentions,

"People call me like, 'so FOBBy,' but those people are usually my friends that are Asian that understand that word. But nothing like serious…teasing." Individuals who call him FOBby *understand* the complexity of the term, as in they are not calling him as a person with awkward behaviors or lack of English ability. Those that call him FOBby understand that he embraces the behaviors of people from Taiwan and other East Asian ideas *by choice*. He publicly embraces the term through his social networking page. His tie toward East Asia is so strong that he is not as close to American-born and/or raised Asians he calls Whitewashed:

> I think initially it's not a big deal [to be friends with certain Asian Americans]. It's just when it comes down to after awhile you get to know them for a long time, you realize your interests are very different. They have no interest at looking at a Chinese drama. They've no interest in talking about it; no interest in talking about a new song that came out by a certain Chinese artist…Initially I don't think it's a problem as far as initial friendships and stuff like that.

"Them" refers to "Whitewashed Asians" mentioned earlier in the conversation. He enjoys watching television shows and listening to music from Taiwan, mainland China, and South Korea. Most of the other Asian Americans he meets do not watch or listen to the same things. Despite this, he can initiate friendships with them. He insinuates that stronger relationships may be difficult to maintain due to the lack of mutual interests and entertainment. American-born and/or raised Asians such as Ian can *choose* to exhibit characteristics similar to FOBs or other groups. Unlike the other participants, Ian disassociates himself from Whitewashed Asian behaviors and associates with FOBby ones.

Evan was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. Evan first began using the term in high school. He rarely meets or observes people that fit his definition of FOBs anymore. He later explains that the term is, "mainly a term used for the youth, not

the adult population…Back then [in high school] they had an affinity to certain attire, black and leather was in." He defines a FOB as:

> [S]omeone who is an Asian immigrant, particularly Asian, South East Asian. I've always used the term to refer to the males, but I suppose you could also refer to female as well. We, meaning my friends and I, have always associated those of whom we could attach this term to as those who do illicit activities and are part of the seedy underworld; Asian gangsters or those who would want to emulate them. Us native-born, non-Anglo Saxon Americans tend to distance ourselves from them: they tend to have thick accents and many are without etiquette or morals.

Evan equates FOBs with those with limited English proficiency, those that do not share his etiquette or morals, and Asian gangs. The definition is similar to Asian gang behavior presented in the Hollywood movies starring Jackie Chan and Chris Tucker, *Rush Hour 1 and 2* (Ratner, 1998, 2001) in reference to organized crime in both the United States and East Asia. Evan normally reserves the term for men, though he is unsure why that is the case. Evan provides one avenue to view FOBs: recent immigrants who for a variety of reasons embark in organized crime. During Evan's formative years, many newspapers and academics published articles expressing the growing "problem" of Asian gangs in San Francisco (e.g., Joe, 1994; Toy, 1992). Law enforcement and policy makers promoted that Asian gangs in the United States have ties to international crime syndicates, drug trafficking, and violence (Tsunokai & Kposowa, 2002). Most of these gang accounts whether empirically or anecdotally based are sensationalized (Tsunokai & Kposowa, 2002). Regardless of the dominant culture's portrayal of Asian gangs, Evan's group of friends equate FOBs with criminal behaviors.

Evan's primary group of friends is American-born Chinese (ABCs). He comments on the ways American-born Chinese are different and *better* than FOBs: "American-born Chinese: we tend to have whiter, straight teeth. We tend not to have

long pinky nails...not to pick our noses and behave in a vulgar manner. We are far less likely to spit in the street. We are also less likely to break the law and cheat on the government [and] taxes. Remember the lack of morals aspect!" Evan and his American-born Chinese friends disassociate from FOBs, distancing themselves in terms of spatial, linguistic, and performative ways. He notes that ABCs have white teeth, signifying that recent immigrants have yellow teeth presumably from smoking and participating in illicit activities. FOBs have long nails on their pinky fingers. Evan thinks the long nails are for picking noses and drug use, which is "vulgar." Evan believes FOBs behave in an unsanitary manner by spitting on the street either from smoking too much or taking drugs. What accompanies this behavior is dishonesty, such as not reporting income on U.S. taxes or by breaking the law. His description of FOBs refers to FOBs as part of the lower echelon of society and far from the model minority stereotype.

On one side, FOB is an affectionate, endearing term for many participants. The participants may not want to be associated with FOBs but they reference the term as something they wish they respected more. On the other end, like for Evan, FOB has a devious and deeply criminal undertone. Regardless of the range of FOB beliefs, the perception of FOBs often works in how participants view themselves and other Asian/Americans.

Lucy, Russell's life partner and a second-generation Chinese American, lived in Texas until middle school age. When she moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, she states, "I didn't find Asian men very attractive. I think because maybe in San Francisco there were a lot of FOBBish Asian men…They don't speak English clearly and…I didn't think I could relate to them. I think that was hard. But…it turned out alright." She

at first did not find Asian men attractive because the Asian men she met were mostly FOBs. Like Russell, it was difficult to understand culturally and linguistically FOBs. As she expanded her understanding of Asian men, she eventually married another second-generation Chinese American who also refers to himself as Whitewashed.

Chinesey

Chinesey references those individuals from primarily Chinese descent who are not FOBs or Banana/Twinkie. In the interviews, participants who are not Chinese did not use their equivalents (e.g., Vietnamesey, Indianese/y, Koreanese/y). At first glance, descriptions of Chinesey individuals are similar to FOBs. For instance, Audrey, a participant who was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, would describe people who are Chinesey or too Asian. She says they are Chinesey, "when they're not open to different cultures because they only want to eat at Asian restaurants or Chinese restaurants or they're not open to anything else, but their own culture and they discriminate against everything but their own culture." Chinesey individuals' primary concern is to maintain cultural practices such as eating at Chinese restaurants.

Teresa who was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area to Chinese immigrant parents recalls her Chinesey friends in high school:

> I made new friends in high school and they were all ABCs, too, and some were a little more Chinesey because their family backgrounds were more traditional…They still knew a lot about the Chinese cultural practices. Sometimes they would break out speaking in Chinese…Chinesey as in that they spoke Chinese at home while outside of home they spoke English.

Chinesey also implies not only an ability to speak the languages of their parents and grandparents, but a preference to speak it with other Asian Americans that speak the same language.

Chinesey individuals choose not to completely assimilate into the United States and pick only what they perceive as positive American attributes. Even though Audrey finds the behaviors of Chinesey individuals somewhat uncomfortable, she knows that they are making choices that she has no right to judge. The choice of resisting aspects of assimilation is not limited to Chinese or Asians.

> I would describe that for any other culture that's not willing to assimilate or open up or they're not trusting of anything, so I can't really label it as Asian because you get that everywhere. Unfortunately, it's whoever you're around, if you mostly around Asians and you would think of it as Asian quality [Laughs]. It's not! If you situate yourself with everybody else, you do see that it's all the same everywhere. It's just how far are you willing to go.

In this excerpt from the interview, calling someone too Asian or Chinesey is a way of describing group behavior of *any* race or ethnicity. The essentialist view of identity is that based on the race and ethnicity of individuals, their behaviors and beliefs become associated with the race and ethnicity. If a group of White people acts and desires a few things, then that act and desire become White. The same goes with Asian individuals. If a group of Chinese gets together, the dominant culture and even Asian/Americans suddenly view their actions as Chinesey.

For Rachel, a second-generation Chinese American raised in San Francisco, Chinesey references a choice to be closer to one's parents as opposed to the culture surrounding them.

> When you're growing up you're just kind of ashamed of your family because you feel like, "Oh my gosh, they're speaking Chinese," or "They are so Chinesey. Why can't we be cool like those other ABCs ?" We're kind of in a bridge. We're stuck in between. We're trying to figure out who we are…Then being able to connect with people who are kind of like us…I'm kind of drawn to those types people just because they have the same background as me.

During her early teens, Rachel felt shame toward the lack of assimilation of her parents. Her parents desired a Cantonese speaking home. The cool ABCs are "Americanized" in that they freely speak English and feel comfortable with dominant culture practices. Those that were similar to her, stuck between Chinesey and Americanized ABCs, became her friends. Rachel reasons part of the shame is from the conflicting messages received by the family, community, and the popular "cooler" ABCs in school.

> I wasn't sure if I was Chinese or if I was American. I think I was just stuck in between that. When you go home, my parents would say, "Only speak Chinese. You are not allowed to speak English because we are Chinese; you are Chinese." But then when you are in the school system, we are told that we're Americans. It's those kind of conflicting messages…And I still feel very Americanized but Chinese, I feel like I'm half and half. Before I think I was mostly waffling, like am I American or am I Chinese. You go home and they say that you're too Americanized, you're not Chinese. Then you go with your group of friends, [they say] you're too Chinesey, you're not American. So you think who am I?

Rachel felt she had to choose between her family (Chinesey) and the outside world (American). When she was younger, these choices were mutually exclusive. One could not be Chinesey *and* American. She saw the popular ABCs as embracing completely the American side, not Chinesey. At home, her family commented that if she behaved and spoke in an American way, she could not be Chinese. At school, her group of friends would say she was too traditional, too Chinesey. She did not know who she was. Chinesey signifies the dissonance between family desires and assimilation to American dominant culture.

Evan labels individuals Chinesey who are recent immigrants but do not participate in criminal behaviors. He describes his former college girlfriend's predilections as Chinesey.

Evan: I actually dated some chick that was pretty religious back when I was in college.

Anna: That didn't go well?

Evan: Not because she was religious…Partly because she was a Hong Kong chick, and I was ABC, and we had nothing in common. Her English was grammatically shot to pieces and I was just an anal prick who didn't like anybody who couldn't speak English decently well. And then culturally she liked stuff that was Chinesey and I'm a baseball and football kind of meat and potatoes [guy]…[She liked] the Asian music, Asian celebrities…they make jokes…[in] Cantonese. It's the mother of all Asian slang languages. There's no formality to it. We end up mix matching and scrambling words and phrases together. It's not like the proper formal Mandarin which is force fed on all Chinese citizens in China. But [Laughing]…a lot of times she would say stuff and I hadn't the clue what the hell she was talking about. Because I couldn't read or write my own name in Chinese let alone follow through. I couldn't understand Chinese [Cantonese] music on Channel 26 [Cantonese language Chinese network in the Bay Area] every night unless I saw the picture behind the lady's back.

Evan's description of his Chinesey former girlfriend is similar to other participant's description of FOBs. However, because the person is a woman and is highly religious, Evan believes she is Chinesey, not a FOB. Remember he distinguishes between FOBs and Chinesey based on gender and participation in criminal activity. Evan's relationship with the college girlfriend did not go well because she was more Chinesey, spoke English that was "grammatically shot to pieces" and he did not have the capability of being understanding. Her interests included listening to music from Hong Kong, catching up on celebrities popular in East Asia and joking in Cantonese, "the mother of all Asian slang languages." She would watch Channel 26, a Cantonese language channel in the San Francisco Bay Area (http://www.ktsf.com/cn/index.html). Channel 26 features local San Francisco Bay Area news in Cantonese as well as talent shows,

television dramas, and films popular in Hong Kong and mainland China. He could not understand the daily news unless he received visual cues of the day's events pictured behind the anchor. His acknowledgement about being "an anal prick" shows recognition of his lack of understanding of cultural differences and appreciation for her interests.

Azians

Two interview participants referred to the lifestyle of a cultural group of American-born Asians, referred to by one participant as Azians, purposely with the Z. Azians is reflective of hip-hop culture, street racing, aesthetic statements and symbols of Asianness on clothes and cars, a way of moving and talking, and in some cases breakdancing. One participant references it as specifically American raised Asians who embody a unique presentation of self and lifestyle. In informal interviews, ABAs describe Azians as having spiky or gelled hair usually dyed in bright colors (e.g., orange, yellow). They wear clothes that represent hip-hop culture. In popular internet rhetoric, Azians do not like to be associated with any other racial-ethnic group. There is an underlying assumption of "Asian pride" or alternatively, "Azian pride." Socially, Azians bring forth Asian awareness and the public embrace of pan-Asian cultural norms. Azian pride tries to resist dominant culture's representation of Asian passiveness. When I was younger living in the San Francisco Bay Area, I was aware of Azians, who were not FOBs, Chinesey, or bananas/Twinkies. Instead, they had their own culture and performativity, primarily speaking English, and preferred the company of Asian Americans much like them.

Avery, a second-generation Filipino American, grew up in Southern California and moved to the San Francisco Bay Area for her college degree and subsequent

employment. Her closest friends in high school were four American-born Asian women of Chinese and Vietnamese descent. They were all in the honors program and found solace in their similarities. When I asked Avery about common Asian stereotypes, Avery discusses her encounters with Azians as a starting point.

> [W]hen my good friend, who was Chinese, in high school went to summer school at <Ivy League University>…she had this little Asian crew, and a lot of them came from L.A. so we called them the L.A. Azians. I'm sure you've seen that, A-Z-I-A-N…they're up with the Asian Culture Club or whatever. We're [My Asian friends and I from high school] like, "We're Asian but we don't like the things that Azians do," which makes you think of more stereotypes. They are from high school—not now. Rice Rockets…are souped up [modified]…Honda[s] or Acura[s]…I guess I just didn't about these stereotypes cause they were from when we were younger. 'Cause now we're more working people and I don't [see] anyone in their late twenties, early thirties driving Rice Rockets anymore [both laugh] or calling it "my Rice Rocket." …And then there's still the hair.

Avery pinpoints that Azians is a geographically specific construct. Though the internet boasts tremendous Azian activity, many communities and norms of Azians emerge from similar individuals in areas with high concentration of Asian Americans such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York. Azians are "up with the Asian Culture Club" in that they exhibit Asian pride, creating and embracing their own cultural norms.

Avery claims "Rice Rockets" to be a colloquial term for cars driven by Asian/Americans. Rice as previously noted in Chapter VI is a signifier of Asians through food (Currarino, 2007; Mannur, 2006). Rocket signifies a fast small car. Rice Rockets usually are compact, fuel-efficient cars made in Japan by Toyota, Honda, and Acura. Owners of these cars modify them with spoilers attached to the trunk, lowered for speed enhancement, and decked out with complex speaker systems and/or under carriage lights. The car does not necessarily need to have these embellishments to be a Rice Rocket. The term can refer to any Asian/American's vehicle. For the Azians, a

specific style accompanies their car. Avery assumes I have seen and know about Azians, and she is right. My boyfriend in high school was an upper middle-class Azian, driving a two-door red Acura Integra, lowered, a seven speaker sound system, PIAA brand lights, and a black leather interior. He did not participate in street racing though his vehicle could easily fit in with street racing crowds. He had the spiky, gelled hair popular in that age and social-cultural group. A different group of Azians attended the same high school with me as well. This group of Azians consisted of a combination of American-born Asians and some FOBs. They drove Rice Rockets.

Avery insists that Azians is most likely a term reserved for the younger generations who exhibit these behaviors. Presumably, Azians grow out of this stage. They eventually lead "normal" lives, either assimilating into the dominant culture or avoiding aesthetic markers and signifiers of their Azian youth. She rarely sees people around her age, late 20's or early 30's, who proudly refer to their cars as Rice Rockets, or gel and dye their hair in the same way.

Avery says how her group of American-born Asian friends in high school disassociated from Azians, "We're Asian but we don't like the things that Azians do." Instead, her group of American-born Asian girls proudly associated with Twinkies (terminology discussed in Chapter VI).

> Being in <Southern California> and being more exposed to White culture, we always thought we were Twinkies. We're like, "We *are* Twinkies." I don't think anyone called us that. I think we called ourselves that...I remember in college when the Twinkie-banana thing came up then my friend who's Mexican said, "Oh yeah, we had something like that. They called us coconuts." [Laughs]…She said her cousin would be like, "You guys are like a coconut." I'm like, "That's a funny one." So we started to think of other fruits and stuff that we could come up for other cultures that are [whispered] White on the inside, but I don't know if we came up with any more…I don't know why for some reason: do people get offended for some reason or do they just find them funny?...They're just like

> fruits or food. So strange…They don't really offend me. Maybe because I am one, or like we thought we were one…There was a difference at least in high school that we thought: Oh, the ones that thought they were more Asian were like hanging out with only Asian friends. Yeah, like the little sporty cars with the spoilers, the boys had that. I think it was just like being [in] an Asian clique, like: Oh, we Asian, we hang out together kind-of-thing in high school…Even though a lot of us were Asian hanging out together, we never thought we were this Asian clique trying to be exclusive…Now, I don't think we feel that way. We feel just as Asian as anyone else.

After her discussion on Azians she asserts her connection with White culture. No one outside of the group called them Twinkie, but within their group they repeatedly noted, "We *are* Twinkies" (emphasis in interview). She knows some individuals find bananas/Twinkie terminology offensive. She found it hilarious, finding other food products that represented similar metaphors. She whispered "White on the inside." I interviewed her on the patio outside a small café. Many groups of people of a broad spectrum of race and ethnicity sat near us, often leaving after a few minutes. Avery and I stayed on the patio talking for quite some time. At first, I thought she whispered White because of the people sitting around us. Several pairs of men, who appeared racially White, occasionally sat near us. She asks me immediately if Twinkie or banana is offensive to the other participants and Asian friends. She recognizes that these statements could be offensive to others, and this could be the reason for whispering "White on the inside." She reasons the lack of personal offense related to her openly being a banana or Twinkie. Avery's group of friends believed they were different among other Asians. They were not FOBs or Azians. She recognizes, "Now I don't think we feel that way. We feel just as Asian as anyone else." Her experiences are common among her newly acquainted American-born Asians.

Many participants describe the distinction between FOBs, Chinesey, Azians, and bananas/Twinkies. These terms range in definitions, and provide a complex look at emergent ethnicity. Most participants describe who they are as an Asian/American by associating or disassociating from these terms. A central element is that most of these distinctions occur during prominent ethnic-racial socialization years, such as in middle school and high school. Their ethnic-racial identity faces challenges in college, where some no longer associate with for instance Azian characteristics, choose another set, or embrace pan-Asian identity. The dominant culture, however, portrays these all under the Asian rubric.

When discussing common Asian stereotypes, Brooke provides one way dominant culture perceives Asians. Brooke, a Korean American undergraduate student, notes Asian Americans on campus:

> In the <College Student Union>… I saw Asians break dancing in front of <a fast food chain>. I didn't know they do that like at 1:00 in the morning! Like what the hell? This is why they're [non-Asians] making fun of us probably…There's a MTV show called something break dancers and there's actually an Asian group on there…They're really good…but other than that I don't like to go to campus related activities that are involved [with] stuff like that…I'm really not into that. Or the karaoke. Oh my God, what is up with that? Growing up, my dad had a karaoke machine…What is up with the Asians? Asians have the karaoke and my dad bought the disco ball—like, "Oh my God! Dad, take that down!"... He even mounted it on the ceiling one time. Me and my brother one day literally got on a ladder and took it off. "This is messed up!" This is bad but no offense to you I like to say chan-keh because it makes fun of us too but it's even saying like Chinese dad is so chan-keh, it's a word saying that is so Asian…I know because the [Karoke] rooms are kind of weird. I just I don't do that stuff. My friends who are White, they don't do stuff like that…That was another reason why I can't call myself Asian because I don't do things like that [Laughs] … [Asians go to] Coffee shops and the library on the weekends …Two weeks ago I had to write a paper or I had to study for [a] midterm, and I was studying like [on] a Saturday which I never do...I wanted to go and sit at a quiet place…but they're [Asians] everywhere in the [university] library. Oh my God, I was there until like 10 [p.m.] on Saturday cause that's what time they close and then like

> 1:00 [p.m.] the next day and Asians, they just study all the time. I'm like, "Go relax and have fun!"

Brooke openly calls herself Whitewashed, and "can't call myself Asian because I don't do things like" other Asians do. She observes Asians around campus through the lens of what she perceives as a White person would. Even though she may be well aware of the terminology of FOBs, Azians, and the like, she instead places all of the Asians into one large rubric during the interview. Non-Asians probably make fun of Asians because of these behaviors. For instance, she notes a group of Asians break dancing in the Student Union after midnight. Normally, participants would describe these as Azians, however, she does not label them that way. She then discusses Karaoke as an Asian characteristic, that many participants might note as Chinesey or FOBby (depending on contextual cues). "What is up with the Asians?" she says humorously. Her father, an immigrant from South Korea, enjoyed Karaoke so much, he bought a Karaoke machine and attached a disco ball to the living room ceiling, mimicking Karaoke rooms in South Korea. Brooke and her older brother (both born and raised in the United States) were so embarrassed about the disco ball; they took the effort to take it down without their father's permission. Brooke also provides the perception of the studious Asian. She disassociates from studious behavior when describing her studying for a midterm at the university library. She sees Asians studying in the library until closing on a weekend, seeing them again the next day. She believes these Asians never take a break from their studies. The studious Asian is part of the model minority stereotype.

Lastly, Brooke provides a slur term for Asian behavior and products, chan-keh. After the interview, I began correspondence with Brooke about chan-keh. Brooke and her brother use the term, "when some things are too 'Asian.'" Brooke provides one

example, “My aunt wearing tight pants to a point where you can see all the rolls on her and wearing clothes that don't match is pretty chan-keh, aka [also known as] pretty freaking Asian.” Another example is “taking piano or violin lessons…since practically all Asians have taken either one or both instruments in their lifetime.” Brooke further elaborates by stating, “Basically we're just stereotyping what Asian Americans would do/ say to the ‘REAL’ Asian,” which she defines as FOBs. Chan-keh is one way Brooke and her brother create terms to label others as FOBby.

Conclusion

The prevailing theme in Asian American scholarship is that words like FOB are denigrating, and a form of internalized racism (Pyke & Dang, 2003). For instance, those who disassociate from FOBs denote a resistance to learning norms, behaviors, and language(s) of the participants’ immigrant parents. This is supported by Jeon (2007) in her auto-ethnographic look at teaching the Korean language to the children of immigrants in Canada. The participants in this study support the literature that the words are a form of intra-racial differentiation. The joking about FOBs is one indicator of intra-racial differentiation. Like the joking about “the Whiteman” among Western Apache (Basso, 1979), the humor is intelligible only to insiders, Asian Americans. White strangers cannot distinguish between FOBs, Azians, and Chinesey; however, Asian Americans in this study can, and further joke about it. The objects of the joke; however, are other Asians seen through “White” eyes. FOBs signify the perpetual and unassimilable foreigner—recent immigrants with linguistic weaknesses and undesirable characteristics. Another interpretation is that the joking is a form of in-group bonding.

Individuals who are not FOBs bond with each other by placing recent immigrants as objects of the jokes.

Chinesey, however, is not always denigrating. Chinesey means an individual has some specific qualities, behaviors, and beliefs that are closer to the lifestyle and teachings of their parents. Chinesey can be a positive term denoting a respect of the ethnicity and culture. It can also signify a differentiation from other Asian Americans. Terms like this are not in the scholarly literature as FOBs. The reason being Chinesey is specific to one ethnic group, Chinese, and is not as popular in daily usage as FOBs.

Azians is a unique representation of a subgroup of Asian Americans. Even though some Azians are break-dancers, they are not a break-dancing culture or directly associated with it. Azians explore aesthetics and material representations such as the Rice Rockets. They are neither Twinkies nor FOBs. Azians are an interesting development of a pan-Asian ethnic formulation that in some respects resist the model minority stereotype of the passive, invisible racial group.

Unlike the previous results chapters, participants from both interview locations do not exhibit as many similarities. Interviews with participants from San Francisco Bay Area frequently talk about FOBs, Chinesey, and Azians than participants from the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area. Though some participants in Oklahoma bring up FOBs in relation to Whitewash, they do not discuss it in as much as detail as participants living in the San Francisco Bay Area.

CHAPTER VIII

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the ways in which forty 1.5- and second-generation Asian Americans residing in the San Francisco Bay Area or Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area perceived, communicated, and related to Whiteness and their identities. For the participants, the significance of understanding how discourse on Whiteness intersects, merges, and disassociates from Asianness provides a picture to their identity. Specifically, this dissertation addressed three main findings derived from the research questions.

Asian Americans in this study perceive, communicate, and perform their racial-ethnic identity in varied ways based on with whom they associate and disassociate. Surprisingly, most participants have never heard of the term "model minority." Informants who recognize the phrase, "model minority," took a class specifically on Asian Americans, or actively sought out materials on this topic. On some level, participants are aware of the stereotype. This is evident in their responses to questions regarding common Asian American stereotypes in the media or in daily life. Most participants refer to Asians as studious, good at math, overachievers, and economically stable. Participants mention that they know Asian Americans who represent the model minority stereotype.

Participants who learned about the model minority stereotype in an academic setting have a range of views about the stereotype. A few participants view it as a compliment or rejoice in their perception of Asian/American success. Chloe from Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area believes she is the epitome of the stereotype. Even though she is a high achiever herself, she compares herself to her siblings. Yet she openly says, "I *am* the model minority stereotype." Another participant, Stephanie from

the San Francisco Bay Area, sees the complexity of the model minority stereotype in her line of work with advocacy for marginalized groups of color. She tries to resist those stereotypes; however, she and other participants notice that certain Asian/American ethnics do better in California-wide achievement tests. Some participants living in California explain that Vietnamese and Hmong in California, for instance, do not score as well as Japanese and Chinese ethnics. Even though these participants offer comments on the model minority stereotype, the majority of the participants living in both locations do not recognize the term, and when the definition is explained, they do not comment upon it either positively or negatively.

Asian Americans describe the performativity of their identity through Twinkie/Banana, Whitewash, Chinesey, Azian, and FOBs. Informants equate Twinkie, banana, and Whitewash as "yellow on the outside, White on the inside." In other words, one is a phenotypical Asian but acts, behaves, and embraces dominant White American society. Whitewash is a pejorative descriptor, whereas Twinkie/banana, depending on their usage, could be an endearing way to describe others/self or a pejorative. Informants who assign the label of Whitewash, Twinkie, or banana to himself or herself offer complex reasons. In one aspect, these participants have racial melancholia, shedding the essential, cultural, and ethnic self of Asianness and mourning over the consumption of the Other and/or Asianness. They embrace Whiteness as a form of grief. Negotiating between the terrain of public stereotypes and intraethnic perceptions of them (as White or assimilated) creates a sadness.

On the other hand, these informants are engaging in reframing a public view of racialized ethnics, opting to choose what aspect of their race and what aspect of their

ethnicity is more important to their self-identity (e.g., Tuan, 1998, 2002). A few of the participants do not exhibit grief or apologize for their embracing of Whiteness. They recognize that being Whitewashed or labeled as such is not necessarily pejorative. Brooke, for instance, finds it to be a humorous tie with her White friends. She is *choosing* to be White despite all other discussions, which is common for participants in other studies (e.g., Tuan, 1998). Choice signifies that she is either knowingly consenting to a dominant racialized, hegemonic discourse, or she is resisting ethnic perceptions she needs to act, behave, and believe in a specific unassimilated or unique racial-ethnic identity. In the eyes of the participants, this is a natural process of assimilation despite the "grief" or "melancholia" of the initial pains of moving towards idealized Whiteness. Even though participants may choose to act White, the participants perpetuate the White hegemony, the yardstick of excellence. They agree to some extent that their choices are consensual, agreeable, and desirable.

My initial protocol specifically questioned participants' perceptions of the model minority stereotype and Asian Americans who act White. From the interview transcriptions, surprisingly, consistent patterns emerged regarding FOBs, Chinesey, and Azians. Azians form their own cultural nuances, which consist of Azian pride, a way of dress, and street racing. Chinesey are behaviors that are unique to Chinese culture that point to either a conscious or a subconscious tie toward immigrant parents or ethnic heritage. A FOB is a humorous or pejorative way of describing a recent immigrant from Asia. These discourses resist the dominant culture, as these terms predominantly preside within the racial-ethnic community.

For the most part, the participants' sense of Asian identity oscillated between a foreign Asianness and an assimilated view of American Whiteness. This is similar to the findings of Pyke and Dang (2003) in which second-generation Korean and Vietnamese American participants preferred a bicultural middle identity between highly Asian (represented by FOBs) and assimilated Asian American (represented by Whitewashed Asians). The bicultural middle was different for each person in the study; there was not an absolute description of the middle. Other studies also support the idea of bicultural identity (Garrod & Kilkenny, 2007; Min & Kim, 2000).

Many of the participants in this study acknowledge they are in the bicultural middle, between Asian and White. The bicultural middle though is problematic, and not always a perfect fit to explain the complexities of identity. It assumes that identity exists on a continuum. In this case, on one end are traditional ethnic and cultural claims to the self, and on the other the mimicry of Whiteness in the United States. Even though the details of this continuum vary from participant to participant, the assumption is that identity has perceivable similarities. The continuum view of identity does not allow for multiplicity of seemingly contradictory feelings. For example, I may feel happy and at the same time sad. They promote identity between assimilation and resistance when some participants may identity with both assimilation and resistance simultaneously.

The continuum perspective on identity also relates to Asian American racial identity developmental models such as Asian American Identity Development Theory (AAID) by Jean Kim (2001). Many scholars focus specifically on race rather than just ethnicity because individuals go through life in the United States racialized despite a unique sense of self. In this case, individuals start in stage one of ethnic identification

with a superficial knowledge of their Asian identity based on familial group identification and experiences within their race. The second stage, as described in Chapter I, is passive and/or active White identification once the individual entered school with other racial and ethnic individuals and/or the individual encounters the world outside the racial family home. In the third stage, the awakening to social political consciousness, persons become aware of injustices and inequalities living in a predominantly White nation. The fourth stage redirects persons to an Asian American consciousness. They feel more secure in their racial-ethnic background, which eventually leads to the confidence exhibited in the fifth and final stage of incorporation.

Many stage models like this one begin in the first stage with racial and ethnic naivety, or a false sense of safety (if White). Through experiences and learning, individuals reach self-actualization, acceptance, and integration with others regardless of race and ethnicity (e.g., Hardiman, 2001; Helms, 1990; Jackson III, 2001; Perry, Vance, & Helms, 2009). These complexities of identity magnify the gross simplification of identity development theories. Even though the stages of these models are not mutually exclusive (Jean Kim, 2001), the assumption is that the previous stage is not always as advanced or mature as the latter stages. The voices of the participants acknowledge this. The bicultural middle exists for the participants, yet according to the models, they would never achieve the advanced stages.

Another interpretation is that identity is layered and ethereal, and exists in embodied discourse. This allows identity to move beyond continuum and developmental models. The results of this study highlight one performance of embodied discourse. The participants' identities are in constant flux, however, that flux changes in

conversation with others. Over time, that changes the self. In the beginning of Chapter II, I outlined key components of identity that ring true among the participants. Conversation is more than a relational marker of differences. In the section on identity, identity is who we are not. Conversation is, according to Hans-Georg Gadamer (2004), "a fusion of horizons" (p. 304). My knowledge is all that I can see within my line of vision. I have a limit, and finite amount of knowledge but my horizon is open. When I partake in conversation, those present allow our horizons to fuse, enlarging, and enriching our understanding horizon (Bernstein, 1983). By studying difficult interactions or texts and languages that are markedly different, it changes me through fusion. In this sense, I am a horizon, and others' horizons threaten my boundaries. The fusion changes me. Thus, when we interact, we have a set of expectations of the text or other or the "we." Each individual brings into the conversation a horizon and by communing, we do more than bridge the difference; we couple with the other. The hermeneutic circle begins—when reading a text, for instance, we bring to it our expectations and our historical and cultural baggage. As we read, we interpret and become an enriched or enlarged horizon. That horizon in one sense is the understanding of ourselves, our identity(ies).

For the participants, they begin acknowledging the self through conversation with individuals within their racial-ethnic group. The emergent topics include a tacit understanding of FOBs, Azians, Chinesey, Twinkies/Bananas, and Whitewashed. Their interaction to dominant culture in the United States further provides relational differences and variants. The dialogue associated with those interactions is identity.

Identity is deeply embedded in history including the life experiences before the individual, creating the world s/he lives. FOBs, Azians, Chinesey, Twinkies, and Whitewashed did not appear out of a vacuum. The concepts existed before the participants encountered them. Each participant decontextualized the words and recontextualized them in the context of the interview. These words, emerging from past history, replay themselves in present conversations with others. They signify years of behaviors and conversations dealing with assimilation into the United States and the difficulties with maintaining ethnic, national, and cultural ideology. Even though the participants may not be conscious of the history of Asian American immigration, that history affects the ways strangers employ interactions with them, or in the ways spaces exist for them.

The San Francisco Bay Area is the site where the history of Asian American immigration is most prominent. The multiple Chinatowns in San Francisco City and Oakland exist because Asians chose or were forced to live, work, and be together. The Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area is the site of a more recent history of Asian American immigration, though the number and influence of Asian Americans is less than in California. The immigration pattern provides an impetus for racial and ethnic relations. Who immigrates provides a context for interracial, interethnic, and international relationships between the new and lately arrived. The main difference between individuals living in the two areas concerns access to intra-racial individuals. Individuals living in the San Francisco Bay Area had greater access to 1.5 and second generation Asian American groups; they report close friends within their race and ethnicity. In addition, they are more likely to work and live close to people of their own

race and ethnicity. Participants living in Oklahoma also have friends within their race and ethnicity; however, it takes greater effort to find those relationships. Most of the participants in the Oklahoma area do not always work or take classes with people of their same race and ethnicity. Walking down the street, participants may occasionally encounter someone of the same race or ethnicity, but very rarely. When San Franciscan participants walk in the towns further north, south, or east of the city, they may encounter fewer Asian/American strangers, if we consider population reports available from the U.S. Census 2000.

The differences between individuals from the two locations are evident in the interviews. The participants in the San Francisco Bay Area more frequently express information regarding FOBs,Chinesey, and Azian, than participants in the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area. For instance, Bruce from the San Francisco area states FOBs have, “heavy Chinese accents, or they really love Asian stuff, culture, food, or anything.” Many participants such as Russell from that area provide similar details. The participants from the Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area refer more to the recent immigrant status of individuals. For instance, Jordan talks about international students as FOBs, and Blake describes FOBs as having limited use of technology. The reason for the greater frequency of discussion of FOBs in the San Francisco Bay Area could be due to its gateway city status and its high population of Asian/Americans. Ian from Oklahoma; however, provides an interesting departure: he has self-proclaimed FOBby behaviors unlike participants from San Francisco Bay Area. Instead of distancing himself from FOBs, he associates with them. Brooke also from Oklahoma describes FOBs similarly to Russell and Bruce. Seen this way, while participants living in the Bay

Area reference FOBs more frequently than participants in central Oklahoma, in both sites participants share in the same discourse by demonstrating familiarity with the term, FOBs. It is through this shared awareness that participation in a common, albeit geographically separated, community emerges.

Even though these concepts are prominent in the participant interviews from the San Francisco Bay Area and not from those living in Oklahoma City Metropolitan Area, this is not to say that these terms do not exist in Oklahoma. In fact, they are apparent in participant-observations and field notes from that area, but not as apparent in the interviews. When observing participants in Oklahoma, they frequently remark how an Asian exhibits FOBby behaviors or a person is a FOB. When describing who they are in the interviews, only a few Oklahoman participants reference FOBs as a yardstick. Again, this could be due to the availability and interactions with Asian/Americans who fit the characteristics of Chinesey, Azians, and FOBs. My argument is they *know* FOB, Chinesey, Azians, but they do not usually position this in relation to FOBs, Chinesey, Azians during self-reflective interviews. Instead, the differences indicate that the participants provide varied and broader conceptualizations of FOBs, Azians, and Chinesey.

There are similarities between participants from both locations. Participants from each location are well aware of identity, especially the characteristics of being an American and Asian. For instance, when asked if they prefer the labels American, Asian, Asian American or a combination of their ethnicity and American (e.g., Korean or Korean American), participants from both locations have similar varied perspectives. At least one participant from each location chose an ethnic label (e.g., Chinese) over an

ethnic American combination (e.g., Chinese American) for similar reasons of a stronger ethnic identification over an American one. Participants who choose an Asian American racial label as opposed to an ethnic American combination label held similar reasons for doing so regardless of location. They reason that pan-Asian racialized experiences bind 1.5 generation and 2nd generation Asian ethnics together. In this way, identity connects participants in similar ways.

The main similarity between participants from both locations concerns the conceptualizations of Whitewashed, banana, and Twinkie, and the model minority stereotype. Those individuals in both locations who took courses in Asian American history and immigration were more likely to recognize the phrase, "model minority" than those who did not take courses. Participants from both locations also recognize Whitewashed, Twinkie, and banana in its definition, performance, and embodiment. Whitewashed individuals may prefer certain ideologies of the world and present themselves accordingly.

Dialogue and identification are embodied—reified in the body. The informants choose to act, talk, and dress in ways that ritualize the chosen discourse. If they believe they are Whitewashed, they dress, talk, and self-label accordingly. Apparently, participants from both locations may initially act or choose to be one way; eventually the discourse naturalizes in the body, much as we see happened to Lily's sister, a banana discussed in Chapter VI. The informants and their friends may not necessarily *know* that the mannerisms equivocate to the specific label, but they have a tacit understanding and knowledge of the concepts. Strangers and friends alike perceive the mannerisms as FOB, Azian, Twinkie, Chinesey, or indicative of Asianness. They may

not always address FOB, Azian, or Chinesey, but the informants from both locations are aware of these terms. In this way, they participate in the larger discourse of Asianness through this knowledge.

Identity situates in webs of power. A web of power is the persuasive Ethnic/Other perception of Asian Americans, a model minority but an alien group who is never truly American (Lowe, 1996). Asian Americans in this study present conflicts and associations with Ethnic/Other. Racial melancholia as described in Chapter VI represents the ramifications of being perceived as Ethnic/Other. They do not want to be an unassimilable foreigner. For this reason, participants such as Russell from San Francisco and Brooke from central Oklahoma self-identify as Whitewashed.

A second web of power is *choice* of the participants, a prevalent theme in Asian American studies (Kibria, 2000; Lien, Conway, & Wong, 2003; Purkayastha, 2005; Song, 2003; Tuan, 1998). The participants have options and at some point in the interview, they choose to act, behave in a prescribed and co-constructed way. It is evident that their interactions with racial-ethnic others creates conundrums in identity. The conundrum is between the daily interactions with others and the sense of self. They intersect to aggravate a need to choose. The participants may consider themselves in one way but the dominant culture may not. They may embrace their Chinesey attitudes or their banana self but when strangers interact and fuse with their horizon, they must negotiate these terms. For instance, when Tuyen meets Vietnamese in the Oklahoma City area who question her ethnic ties, she must negotiate her identity. When a White roommate is honest about formerly stereotyping Russell as a typical Asian, Russell also must learn to settle this realization in his racial-ethnic identity. They perceive a need to

either assimilate to the host nation of United States, or resist assimilation. Simultaneously, they must negotiate racial-ethnic acceptance or rejection by strangers.

Individuals living in Taiwan, Korea, or India do not encounter identities of Whitewashing, FOB, or Azian. Once they cross the border into the United States, these identities manifest themselves. The dominant cultural milieu in the U.S. does not see the conundrum or the identities. The dominant culture does not recognize Banana, Chinesey, FOB, or Azian. The acceptance and perpetuation of the model minority stereotype by Asian Americans is hegemonic in this way. When the participants believe or agree with the myth, they consent to it. It is their choice. Despite taking a class on Asian American identity and understanding the ramifications of the model minority stereotype, she states, "I *am* the model minority." She is choosing to associate with the term. Participants have the power to self-identify. Regardless of how strangers label or interact with them, they can choose to identify with being Whitewashed, FOBby, Azian, or Chinesey.

Although this study provides an understanding of the complex identification of Asian American participants, further work would aid in providing even a richer and deeper perspective. In future studies, multiple interviews of each participant over several years would provide a stronger analysis of the experiences of Asian Americans. Secondly, interviewing Asian Americans from other racial-ethnic groups would be beneficial to comprehending the pan-Asian racial identity. Other future work could shed light on the online communities and publications available to Asian Americans. For instance, blogs by *Angry Asian Man* (http://www.angryasianman.com) are fascinating and shed light on Asian/American activism and experiences. Many blogs and websites

are gateways to the unique perspectives of Asian Americans grappling and negotiating their place and sense of self in the United States. In addition, this work would benefit from multiple focus groups based on gender and ethnicity to see the complexities between and among Asian American groups and subgroups. In future work, I would specifically address FOBs and Azians as Asian American scholarship rarely explores these topics in detail these topics. Further studies also would benefit from a semiotic analysis of dress and behavior of Asian Americans. The analysis would provide an avenue to illustrate performativity in visual as opposed to merely an audio mean.

Even though one of the interview questions regarded Asians as acting White, over half the informants referenced Whitewashing and Banana/Twinkie *before* I specifically asked the question. In this way, Whiteness especially when referencing racial-ethnic identity is integral. While observing a pan-Asian group, one participant exclaimed to a couple, "You two are like White on rice!" The phrase struck a chord—*like White on rice*, signifies that to discuss Asianness, we must talk about Whiteness Like many participants in this study, Asian American identity yields itself to relational values; oftentimes an elusive and dynamic perception of Whiteness is a yardstick for comparison. The dominant culture positions Asian/Americans as honorary Whites or unassimilable foreigners. Dominant White culture in the United States created the model minority myth to displace people of color fighting for civil rights and liberties. Unlike Whites who create their own racial and ethnic discourses, Asian/Americans must compete and negotiate between the dominant racialized rhetoric and emergent ethnic discourse. If the dominant majority is creating the public perceptions of Asianness, it is impossible *not* to talk about Whiteness when analyzing Asianness in the United States.

Just as Russell's email prompted me to question self-acknowledgement of being Whitewashed, Asian Americans living in a predominantly White populated area or areas with a high concentration of Asian/Americans have to negotiate Asianness and Whiteness.

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APPENDIX A

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE: GENERAL

1. What year were you born? _____
2. Where were you born? _____
3. Where was your mother born? _____
4. What year was your mother born? (if unsure, write unsure with approximate years, e.g., 1920s)
   _____
5. Where was your father born? _____
6. What year was your father born? (if unsure, write unsure with approximate years, e.g., 1920s)
   _____
7. What place do you consider your hometown? _____
8. What language do you use the most? _____
9. What other language(s) do you speak (if any)? _____
10. What language(s) do(es) your mother speak? _____
11. What language(s) do(es) your father speak? _____
12. What is the highest level of education for each of your parents?

    Mother: _____

    Father: _____

13. What is the highest level of education you have received?
14. If you received an associates degree, technical degree or college degree, what was your major? (If question does not apply, please write N/A)
15. If you received a graduate degree, what was it in? (If no graduate degree, please write N/A)

APPENDIX B

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE: COLLEGE STUDENT

1. What year were you born? _____
2. Where were you born? _____
3. Where was your mother born? _____
4. What year was your mother born? (if unsure, write unsure with approximate years, e.g., 1920s)
   _____
5. Where was your father born? _____
6. What year was your father born? (if unsure, write unsure with approximate years, e.g., 1920s)
   _____
7. What place do you consider your hometown? _____
8. What language do you use the most? _____
9. What other language(s) do you speak (if any)? _____
10. What language(s) do(es) your mother speak? _____
11. What language(s) do(es) your father speak? _____
12. What is the highest level of education for each of your parents?

    Mother: _____

    Father: _____
13. How many years have you been in college? _____
14. What year and semester do you expect to graduate? _____
15. What is your major? _____

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

*Not every question in this protocol will be addressed during the interview. Roughly two questions may be asked from each category.

I. Background Questions

A. Hometown and Pre-College Schooling

1. What place do you consider your hometown? How come?
2. How was your experience growing up?
3. How would your characterize the town (e.g., Cosmopolitan, Diverse, Upscale, Poor)?
4. What was the hardest thing about growing up in your home town or neighborhood? What was the best thing about growing up in your home town or neighborhood?
5. Do you plan on staying in Oklahoma City/San Francisco Bay Area? How come? What draws you to stay [or leave]?

B. Pre-College Education

1. How would you characterize your experience in high school? What was the most memorable experience in high school?
2. How would you characterize your group of friends in high school? Were they lower, middle, or upperclass? What was their race(s)? What were they like academically? Were you and your friends known and called a certain name by others? [Asians, nerds, etc.] Did you call yourselves this name? Or something different?
3. What about your experiences in junior high? How were they different from high school?
4. What was the best/worst thing about elementary school? What about it do you remember? What was your most memorable experience in elementary school?

B. Family

1. What do your parents do for a living?
2. When did they immigrate to the United States (if applicable)? Why did they move here? What stories did they tell you of their immigration experiences?
3. How is your relationship with your parents? How are old are they?
4. Do you think your experiences with your parents are similar to other Asian Americans? How so?
5. How are you different from your parents?
6. How many brothers/sisters do you have? What are their ages?
7. If you have siblings, how is your relationship with them? What makes you different than your siblings?

8. Are you close to any other family members? Grandparents? Aunts/Uncles? Cousins?
9. [If yes to 8, ask] How old are your grandparents [or other family members]? How are they involved in your life? (Or How are you involved in their lives?)
10. Is your family involved in the racial/ethnic community? Do they attend a racial/ethnic church, society, and/or organization?
11. Is there anything about your family that you would describe as "Asian"?
12. What cultural practices does you family celebrate?
13. Do you have any family obligations?
14. Outside of family and friends, who has had the most influence in your life?

*If interviewee is a parent ask:

15. How many kids do you have?
16. How do you share with your children about their culture/race?
17. How do you negotiate language and culture to children?
18. How do you feel your child(ren) is/are different from you?
19. How are their (or his/her) experiences different from yours?

C. Peers

1. Who are your closest friends? How did you meet them?
2. What makes them your closest friends?
3. What activities do you do together?
4. What are their racial/ethnic backgrounds?
5. Do you discuss race and culture with each other? In what ways?
6. Do you and your close friends get called a certain name [Asians, Chinese] by others? By yourselves? If yes, what is that name? How do you feel about it?
7. Do you have other friends who aren't in this group? Do they get called a certain name? [Americans, whites]

D. Education

1. What are your views on education?
2. How did you get this view?
3. How would you describe you academic success?
4. College Education [Skip if person did not attend college] How was your experience in college? What classes did you take?
5. Have you ever taken a class on race? How about a class that focuses on Asians (such as a Chinese course, honors course, etc.) In your education, what classes did you take that concerned Asian American history?

E. Work [Skip if person is still in college or is not working full-time]

1. Do you work full-time? What is your job? How did you hear about your job?
2. How would you describe your work environment?
3. What do you do on a daily basis?
4. What social activities do you do with your co-workers?
5. What are the racial/ethnic background of those you work with?

F. Socioeconomic Considerations

1. Do you own a house? If not, do you plan on owning a house?
2. When did you make the purchase?
3. Why did you purchase a home? [Or Why have you not purchased a home? Or Why do you rent?]
4. Describe your neighborhood—race, class, family, retirement community, etc.
5. How would you describe your current economic status: upper class, middle class, lower class? How come? How do you know?

II. Race and Culture Questions

A. Culture

1. What cultural practices do you maintain that you feel is Asian?
2. What about you do you feel is "Asian"?
3. What about you is not? How do you know?
4. What behaviors do you think is "Asian"?
5. What racial/ethnic organizations are you part of?
6. What racial/ethnic events do you attend?
7. Some people they learned a lot about their culture after college, what about

B. Racial Awareness/Consciousness

1. What stereotypes of Asians do you know of? Where did you hear about these stereotypes?
2. Have you heard of the "model minority stereotype"? What are your thoughts on this?
3. What are you favorite Asian American celebrities?
4. Was there ever a moment or period in your life when you "realized" your race? If so, can you describe this? Was it something that happened? Or someone who helped you realize your race?
5. What moments current or in the past do you recall of negative perceptions of Asians in the media?
6. How about positive perceptions of Asians in the media?

C. Language

1. Do you speak [specific racial ethnic language]? Do you talk "Chinglish" or mix languages together when talking with family and friends? How would you rate your ability to speak this language?
2. To whom do you normally speak your ethnic/racial language?
3. [If English is primary language] How do you feel your language changes from situation to situation?
4. From your personal experiences, do you think someone is more Asian if they speak this language?

D. Race Labels

1. What term best describes you from the following: American, Asian American,

Chinese/Vietnamese/Korean/Filipino/Taiwanese/Malaysian/Pacific Islander (specific race will depend on participant's background. If participant is Vietnamese, the interviewer will ask if that is the term s/he prefers), Chinese/Vietnamese/Korean/Filipino/Taiwanese/Malaysian/Pacific Islander American?
2. How does this term best describe you?
3. What term do you prefer to be called?

E. Racial Isolation, Experiences with Racial Prejudice and Discrimination

1. What situations have you been where you realized you were the only Asian in the room? How did you feel about it?
2. What is the most memorable experience in which you feel you were pointed out for being Asian?
3. Have you ever been teased for being Asian? If so, what happened? When did this happen? How did you get through this?
4. Some say there's a backlash against successful Asians. Have you heard of this? What are your thoughts on that?
5. What statements have you heard that you find offensive toward Asians?
6. Do you feel the stereotypes of Asian women are different from Asian men? How so?

F. Whiteness and Other Races

1. What does it mean to be a White American?
   Do you feel closer to your Americaness or Asianness? How do you know? Can you give me an example?
2. Some people say Asians act white. Is this true? How so? How do Asians act white?
3. Some people say Asians are white-washed. How do you feel about this? Have you experienced this? What have you observed?
4. ****Some people feel that Asians are the new whites, just as Jews are considered now. The history is that Jews are perceived White because they worked hard, value education and hard work. How do you feel about this? Have you heard about this before? If so when and where?
5. How do you think your experiences differ from a white American? How about Black? Hispanic? Native American?
6. How do you think your life would have been different if you've been born white?
7. How do you think your race differs from other races? Probing: What differences are there between Asians and Blacks? How about Asians and Hispanics? How about Asians and Native Americans?
8. What are some things that Whites/Blacks/Hispanics say about Asians that aren't true? Are there things they don't know that you wish they did know?

For those born before 1970:

1. How do you feel your experiences are different from your children (or for the next generation)?

2. Were you aware of the San Francisco State Protests in the 1960s?
3. How were your friends involved for Asian Civil Rights?

Conclusion

1. What advice would you give another Asian American 10 years younger than you?
2. What questions would you have liked to be asked?
3. Is there anything else you would like to say?