# Oriental Invisibility

#### Asian women are historically ignored in the fight for justice – expressions of solidarity routinely ignore the plights of Asian women. Yamada ’79

Invisibility Is an Unnatural Disaster: Reflections of an Asian American Woman. Yamada, Mitsuye *Bridge, An Asian American Perspective*, v7 n1 p11-13 Spr 1979

Last year for the Asian segment of the Ethnic American Literature course I was teaching, I selected a new anthology entitled Aiiieeeee! compiled by a group of outspoken Asian American writers. During the discussion of the long but thought-provoking introduction to this anthology, one of my students blurted out that she was offended by its militant tone and that as a white person she was tired of always being blamed for the oppression of all the minorities. I noticed several of her classmates' eyes nodding in tacit agreement. A discussion of the "militant" voices in some of the other writings we had read in the course ensued. Surely, I pointed out, some of these other writings have been just as, if not more, militant as the words in this introduction? Had they been offended by those also but failed to express their feelings about them? To my surprise**, they said they were not offended by any of the Black American, Chicano or American Indian writings, but were hard-pressed to explain why when I asked for an explanation**. A little further discussion revealed **that they "understood" the anger expressed by the Black and Chicanos and they "empathized" with the frustrations and sorrow expressed by the American Indian. But the Asian Americans?**? Then finally, one student said it for all of them**: "It made me angry. Their anger made me angry, because I didn't even know the Asian Americans felt oppressed. I didn't expect their anger.”** In this age when women are clearly making themselves visible on all fronts, I, an **Asian American woman,** am **still functioning as a "front for those feminists" and therefore invisible**. The realization of this sinks in slowly. **Asian Americans as a whole are finally coming to claim their own, demanding that they be included in the multicultural history of our country**. I like to think, in spite of my administrator's myopia, that the most stereotyped minority of them all, **the Asian American woman, is just now emerging to become part of that group**. It took forever. Perhaps it is important to ask ourselves why it took so long. We should ask ourselves this question just when we think we are emerging as a viable minority in the fabric of our society. I should add to my student's words, "**because I didn't even know they felt oppressed," that it took this long because we Asian American women have not admitted to ourselves that we were oppressed. We, the visible minority that is invisible.**

#### The political movement is literally inaccessible to Asian women because of cross-cultural tension. The aff’s logic and worldview is not reachable by Asian women. They’re left behind – Chow ‘87

Chow, Esther Ngan-Ling. “The Development of Feminist Consciousness among Asian American Women.” Gender and Society, vol. 1, no. 3, Sage Publications, Inc., 1987, pp. 284–99, http://www.jstor.org/stable/189565.

Asiatic and U.S. cultures alike tend to relegate women to subordinate status and to work in a gendered division of labor. Although **Asiatic values emphasizing education, achievement, and diligence** no doubt **have accounted for the high aspirations and achievements of some Asian American woman**, certain Asiatic values, **especially when they are in conflict with American ideas, have discouraged Asian women from actively participating in the** feminist movement (Chow 1982, 1985). **Adherence to Asiatic values of obedience, familial interest,** fatalism, **and self-control may foster submissiveness, passivity**, pessimism, timidness, inhibition, **and adaptiveness, rather than rebelliousness or political activism. Acceptance of the American values of independence, individualism, mastery of one's environment through change, and self-expression may generate self-interest, aggressiveness, initiative, and expressive spontaneity that tend to encourage political activism; but these are, to a large extent, incompatible with the upbringing of Asian American women**

#### The psychological violence performed on Asian women has real political impacts – that’s why you don’t see Asian female participation in political movements. The Civil Rights Movement proves. -Chow ’87

Chow, Esther Ngan-Ling. “The Development of Feminist Consciousness among Asian American Women.” Gender and Society, vol. 1, no. 3, Sage Publications, Inc., 1987, pp. 284–99, http://www.jstor.org/stable/189565.

**In the wake of the civil rights movement in the** early **1960s and the feminist movement in the mid-1960s, Asian American women**, following the leads of black and Hispanic women, **began to organize** (Chow forthcoming; Ling and Mazumdar 1983; Lott and Pian 1979; G. Wong 1980). Initially, some better educated Asian American women formed women's groups to meet personal and family needs and to provide services to their respective organizations and ethnic communities. These groups, **few in number and with little institutionalized leadership, were traditional and informal in nature, and usually supported philanthropic concern**s (G. Wong 1980**). While there had been a few sporadic efforts to organize Asian American women around specific issues and concerns that did not pertain to women** (e.g., the unavailability or high cost of basic food, Angel Island, the World War II interment of Japanese Americans), **these attempts generally lacked continuity and support, and the organization of Asian American women was limited as a political force**. Nevertheless, these activities, as stepping stones for future political activism, allowed Asian American women to cultivate their gender consciousness, to acquire leadership skills, and to increase their political visibility.

#### Asian American Women are in a double bind which renders them as invisible to society -Lee ‘14

Lee, Emily S. “The Ambiguous Practices of the Inauthentic Asian American Woman.” Hypatia, vol. 29, no. 1, 2014, pp. 146–163, www.cambridge.org/core/journals/hypatia/article/abs/ambiguous-practices-of-the-inauthentic-asian-american-woman/4404F724545260C0B097455FCFC31FCC, 10.1111/hypa.12070. Accessed 18 Nov. 2021.

‌First, the identification of the Asian American community as the model minority applauds their ability to climb the economic ladder and to harness the opportunities of capitalism. Such ascendance in class requires cultural assimilation. Minority populations regard assimilation with suspicion because assimilation does not simply mean djusting well to the culture of the United States, but covertly entails neglecting, if not abandoning, the practices of one’s cultures of origin and conforming to the practices of the majority culture. In the United States, this is the culture of whites. As such, Sarah Ahmed writes, “you can move up only by approximating the habitus of the white bourgeois body” (Ahmed 2007, 138). Climbing the economic ladder constitutes the definition of success in the United States. Hence the depiction of Asian Americans as successful immigrants for economically advancing—for assimilating— implies applauding them for giving up their ethnic cultural practices in order to survive if not thrive in this new country. Essentially, Asian Americans sell out. The assimilation demanded for economic upward mobility results in the invisibility of Asian Americans. Arisaka writes, “[i]f they are assimilated, they are invisible as a group in the dominant culture as well as to the oppositional, ‘racial minority’ cultures” (Arisaka 2000, 214).11 Scholars of Asian American studies have written extensively on invisibility as a regularly occurring phenomenon specifically of the Asian American community as a minority community in the United States (Yamada 1983). The possibility of achieving a sense of authenticity appears dim among these model minority but cultural “sellouts” in this condition of invisibility. Alternatively, the Asian American community is identified with persisting strong ties to their cultures of origin, so much so that they face accusations of insular, isolationist practices. Under this identification, because of their isolationist practices, Asian Americans lag behind in political participation in the United States. The insularity of the Asian American community has been pointed to as ultimately one of the reasons, if not the main reason, for inter-minority conflict, particularly in the analyses of the Los Angeles riots of 1992. So, in contrast to the invisibility of the assimilationist Asian Americans, the isolationist Asian Americans facilitate their own exoticism and their own hyper-visibility. Who are these isolationist Asian Americans? If the assimilated Asian Americans are economically upwardly mobile, then the isolationist Asian Americans must be the less economically mobile—those likely to live in poverty. For after all, within these circumstances, if economic mobility requires assimilation, those who do not assimilate cannot participate in upward mobility. Here I want to point out that **because women** (especially women with hyphenated identities or from immigrant communities) **are perceived as responsible for keeping alive their culture and so are more often burdened with continuing the practices of their cultures of origin, these isolationist poor Asian Americans are likely to comprise a specific gender—wome**n.12 In failing as a model minority, these isolationist, poor Asian American women, also face dim prospects of achieving a sense of authenticity. **These two close identifications and over-determinations of the Asian American community lead to a dichotomous framework—a false dichotomy. Asian Americans who do not assimilate and who live in poverty closely align with authenticity through their group identity in the sense of culture, but the isolated and poor Asian American affiliates less with authenticity in the class criterion as a model minority. The assimilated Asian American, however, more authentically follows the group identity as a model minority, but less closely coheres with the cultural practices associated with the group.** The false dichotomy invites ambivalent responses to the Asian American identity. **The Asian American woman whose group identity is** dichotomously over-determined—as **either assimilating and successfully** **climbing up the economic ladder or persisting in practicing her culture of origin with the consequences of isolation and poverty—faces a scenario in which all the available choices trouble her relation to her group identity, and to her ultimately developing a sense of personal authenticity.** Is the poor Asian American woman’s sense of self structured through the understanding of the temporariness of her condition of poverty such that she will eventually conform to the majority culture’s practices? Or, in realizing, through recognizing the dismal statistics on class mobility, that poverty is not temporary, does her sense of self become significantly damaged in facing the likelihood of failing as a model minority? Without poor Asian Americans, will the cultural significance of the Asian American identity disappear as an identifying feature of the group? What is the sense of self for the economically successful Asian American woman who conforms to the majority culture and lets go of her original cultural practices? Women carry the primary burden of culture, and women earn less than men; so are Asian American women more likely to be poor, tradition-bound, and isolated? If both practicing one’s culture of origin and economically climbing is impossible, considering that succeeding as a model minority promotes the invisibility of one’s identity, must one choose poverty and hyper-visibility to strengthen one’s group identity? For the Asian American woman endeavoring toward an authentic sense of self in both its class and cultural ascriptions, **neither option allows for developing a coherent identification with one’s group identity. If the social empowerment of the group identity relies upon individuals identifying and participating in the formation of their group identity, the series of compromised choices within the group identity’s class and cultural over-determinations clearly have disenfranchising political implications.** Recall that the condition of minority identities is that their individual identities are undistinguished if not reductively collapsed to their group identities. With such intimate associations, the solution to escaping the false dichotomy of the group identity cannot only consist of distancing oneself from one’s group identity. Instead, for the minority individual, for the Asian American woman to develop a sense of self true to herself—a sense of authenticity—she must work with and on the group identity to encourage and to develop understanding of the group identity.

#### Thus: the alt is active education and solidarity among Asian Americans to promote a sense of individuality and awareness which allows them to come together to create change. - Osajima ’07.

Osajima, Keith. “Replenishing the Ranks: Raising Critical Consciousness among Asian Americans.” Journal of Asian American Studies, vol. 10, no. 1, 2007, pp. 59–83, muse.jhu.edu/article/213033/summary, 10.1353/jaas.2007.0006. Accessed 18 Nov. 2021.

For the vast majority of respondents, developing an Asian American critical consciousness involved a process that was transformative, where knowledge of and commitment to Asian American concerns represented a significant change from earlier views they had held in their lives. Most had paid little attention of being Asian or to racism against Asians while growing up. With the exception of two respondents, all were “first-generation” Asian American activists, in that they were the first in their family to develop a critical awareness of issues. David Chan,17 for example, had grown up in a predominantly white neighborhood in Southern California. He had thought of himself as an “ultra-American” while growing up. In high school, he had clowned around, done drugs, dropped out, and dove heavily into the graffiti art scene. After a less than illustrious academic start, David had found his way to a community college, then to a university, and had ended up getting a master’s degree in Asian American Studies. Margaret Eu also had grown up in Southern California, in a traditional middle-class household where her Korean immigrant father worked in various entrepreneurial enterprises while her mother stayed home to raise the children. Through the seventh grade, the most significant influence in Margaret’s life had been the Christian church. Later, she had been a “super-active high school student,” involved in activities like cheerleading, student government, mock trial, and drama. She had gone to college with little awareness of Asian American issues. She now has a master’s degree in student development and is working in Asian American student affairs. Pearl Cruz, raised in affluent Marin County, California, described herself as “mega-apolitical” and “very, very, very apathetic” while growing up. She had been “very into my own little Marin lifestyle.” She had gone to a private elementary school and later to a private high school. Pearl had attended an Ivy League university for two years, where she got involved in feminist student activities, and then had transferred to the University of California where she majored in Asian American Studies. Raj Kapur was born and raised in the Washington D.C. area. Growing up, Raj described himself as shy and quiet. In high school, he had felt that he “had a real low self-esteem problem at the time, so that kind of caused some degree of low achievement.” He was not active in extra-curricular activities and pretty much stayed to himself. In college, Raj had become actively involved in Asian American student organizations and was one of the most articulate and outspoken members of the community. The fact that these young Asian Americans, from widely varying class, geographic, political, and ethnic backgrounds, could find their way to Asian American activism speaks to the real possibility that young people can become critically conscious and politically active. Their active involvement is especially noteworthy given the post-Civil Rights climate that surrounds them, where the political momentum has shifted to the right and hopes for student activism are often drowned in a sea of apathy or hopelessness. These **Asian Americans had gone against the grain and had become politically involved.** They had realized what Cornell West calls the “politics of conversion,” where the tendency toward nihilism is countered by “a chance for people to believe that there is hope for the future and a meaning to struggle.”18 So, what had happened to change and shape their views? What had contributed to the development of their critical consciousness? Analysis of the interviews reveals common patterns of factors and conditions that contribute to the development of an Asian American critical consciousness. **The Importance of a “Meaningful Education” In talking about how they had become interested in Asian American issues**, respondents invariably pointed to moments when **new information and perspectives** profoundly **affected their thinking by helping them to see how their lives**, as Asian Americans**, were shaped by larger historical and social forces.** In this way, the information had carried significant meaning and relevance, helping them to understand their lives in new ways. For Brian Kim, for example, conscientization had begun in an Asian American history course. It “really changed my view on how this society works and where we fit in.” He said, “I just never thought of what our history is here or what my, say our ancestors came here for, the first generation. I just never knew.” That first class had inspired Brian to switch out of his pre-med studies and declare a major in Asian American Studies. Echoing Cornell West’s notion of conversion, Brian says, “So that’s where I am now. So you see I’m a converted Asian.” An Asian American psychology class had exerted a transformative impact on Margaret Eu’s thinking. Information about the Asian American experience was meaningful because it had helped her to make sense of experiences in her life and family. It had offered language and concepts that explained why and how racism and sexism operated: That was the first time that academically I was reading something that was so relevant to my experience and my identity. . . .[E]verything made so much sense. It was like somebody was explaining my life history, my life pattern on paper, and in theory and in literature.19 David Tan echoes Margaret’s comments. Like many of his peers, David Tan had not been interested in political activism when he graduated from high school. He was “all about having fun.” When he had entered college, he said, “I was paying attention more to the women than to the professors.” But, information in an Asian American Studies class had resonated deeply with David; his professor had offered insights that not only helped him to understand his life experiences, but also inspired him to learn more: He went into the issues of family relations, generational conflicts, the model minority, anti-Asian violence. Just everything that happened in my life, he explained it. That’s when I realized, this is what I want to do. I need to learn more.20 While formal Asian American courses had played pivotal roles in conscientization, the classroom was not the only place where respondents had been exposed to life-altering perspectives and information. David Tan’s critical consciousness had deepened through his participation in a student group. The group had showed the movie, “Who Killed Vincent Chin,” about the 1982 slaying of a Chinese American man by two unemployed, white auto workers. It had struck a deep nerve. As David had watched Vincent Chin’s mother fight to win justice for her son, David had thought of his grandmother and the struggles she faced as an immigrant, non-English-speaker woman. Here, the content of the movie and articles had intersected with David’s life and led him to make new connections: That’s an example of that sort of connection, of seeing things and knowing how race played a part and seeing how those kinds of elements played itself out in my life and my family’s life, especially for my grandmother.21 Pearl Cruz had begun to change when a friend invited her to attend a meeting to organize a campus protest. Watching and listening to powerful and articulate women of color speak out about racism and sexism had inspired Pearl: I went home that summer and devoured every piece of feminist literature I could get my hands on. So I’m just sitting there reading like a maniac all summer long, just digesting what had happened that year. . . . It was really something, it hit me all at once.22 Ryan Suzuki’s interest in issues of oppression had first been piqued in diversity training workshops he took as a resident advisor. Later, in graduate school, a key mentor, Ricardo Munoz, had helped Ryan to develop his conceptual and analytic understanding. Munoz had pushed Ryan to do more reading about the systematic nature of oppression in the United States. Ryan describes Munoz’s influence as follows: He really put a much more intellectual analysis to things. . . . It was more about the systematic things that were going on, about changing structures, about resources, those kinds of things, rather than just that a person needs to be sensitized.23 In these cases, we begin to see more precisely what it means to have a “relevant” and “meaningful” education. For Joe, Ryan, and David**, conscientization meant being able to see themselves in larger social structural** **contexts**, not simply as individuals but as people whose lives intersect with and are shaped by race and racism. For Brian, **information about the history of** **Asian Americans had prompted critical reflections** on two levels. First, because he had never known about the history of Asian Americans, the class had given him new information that had helped him to understand his family history. Second, it had led him to critically reflect upon his previous education. He questioned why he hadn’t learned any of this before? Why was his experience absent from U.S. history courses? This process had led him to think more critically about the racism embedded in his educational experiences. Margaret had experienced a similar reaction. She had realized that her education had only taught her about European American history, prompting her to ask, “how many students were out there who never would take this class. . . and would never really know more than one version of history?” Her Asian American courses had provided the analytic tools and language needed to see the reason and logic of racism, sexism, and heterosexism. **Conscientization for these respondents meant being able to “name their world.”** That is, a meaningful **education had helped them to recognize and understand the impact that societal conditions and forces of** **oppression have on their lives and the lives of others**. As Freire writes, the process of conscientization, or education for critical consciousness, **“involves a** **constant clarification of what remains hidden within us while we move about in the world**,” and it provokes “recognition of the world, not as a ‘given’ world, but as a world dynamically ‘in the making.”**24 Such recognition often inspires people to work against that oppression, thus beginning their active efforts to transform the world**.25 Naming the world was an important step toward actively changing it.Conscientization as Social Process - Breaking Isolation While the respondents identified “relevant” information as a key to their development, exposure to information on racism and Asian Americans is not the only element of an education for critical consciousness. The interviews reveal that conscientization is a social process, where connections, support and encouragement from others play a critical facilitative role. For many respondents, the development of their critical consciousness had not happened in isolation, working or studying on their own. Instead, relationships with other people had contributed to their growth in a variety of ways. First, **contact and conversation with others had helped respondents to break a sense of isolation in their lives.** The chance to talk to other Asians about their lives and experiences with discrimination had helped respondents to see that their individual experiences were not unique. As they had seen similarities and patterns, it was easier for them to see how broader forces, like racism, shaped their individual lives. Their descriptions of this process were quite consistent and similar. Joe Yamamoto, a third-generation Japanese American, had grown up in central California. In high school, Joe had liked to party and had come close to not graduating. After working a series of jobs, he had decided to head back into school, first at a community college and then at a University of California campus, to pursue his interest in math. Joe had not identified as a Japanese American. He had been aware that things happened to him, perhaps because he was Japanese, but did not make any connections to racial discrimination. At the University of California, Joe had enrolled in an Asian American Studies course, mainly because it fulfilled a general education requirement. During the class, interactions with fellow Asian students, along with information on racism against Asians in the United States, had led Joe to realize, for the first time, that he was treated differently because of his race. Describing an in-class interactive activity where students were put in pairs and asked to interview each other about their lives, Joe articulated this process of self-discovery: We found a lot of similarities between ourselves. . . . That was the first time I got a chance to hear other people say the exact same things that I had gone through. . . it’s because I’m Asian, because I’m Japanese that I run into different kinds of experiences than my Caucasian friends do. And it’s because of my race. It’s not because I wear blue jeans or anything else, it’s because of how I look.26 Pearl Cruz’s understanding of Asian American women’s issues had been formed largely in conversation with other women in an Asian American Studies class: It was like therapy, group therapy to sit around and swap stories about when I was growing up. So that was great, sharing things that everybody had experienced and thought they were the only ones who had experienced.27 Soon Park had developed a stronger understanding of racism through her interactions with others in an Asian American student organization. I asked her what it was about being in the student group or being in classes that had helped her to develop a commitment to working in the Asian American community, Soon offered the following response: I think more understanding how other Asians have the same experiences as I do, and I’m not the only one. I remember going to one of my first meetings and there’s maybe 10 people, and it was more like a rap session. I remember people talking about their experiences about racism, what happened to them and thinking that’s really awful. I can’t believe that’s happened to that person and thinking all these things happened to me. We’re all in the situation where we all share this common kind of pain and experience.28 In the context of American society, it is understandable how **breaking through the sense of isolation can facilitate the development of critical consciousness.** Isolation is closely tied to the powerful ideological emphasis on individualism in the United States. Andrew Barlow notes that Americans “are told that their well-being is up to them, that people must fend for themselves as far as their personal welfare is concerned.”29 A consequence of growing up with this view is implicit in the interviews. Respondents had interpreted their experiences, good and bad, through individual lenses, as events that happened, in isolation, only to them. **Through interactions with other Asian Americans, they had realized they were not alone**, that others had similar family and cultural experiences, and experiences with racial discrimination**. This discovery had led them to question their individualistic interpretations and had opened the possibility that their lives could be understood as part of an Asian American experience**. Given the profound change that conscientization had effected in the lives of respondents, it is not surprising that many of them wanted to be in positions where they could help to create for others the educational experiences that were so meaningful to them. **They took leadership positions in student organizations;** they helped to organize and put on educational programs; they worked in community organizations; they pursued graduate studies; and they took positions in student affairs to work closely with new cohorts of Asian American students. Pamela Kim, who wanted to become a professor of Asian American studies, best expresses their desire: One of the reasons why I want to be a professor of Asian American Studies is because I want to help these kids who are going through the same things that I did. I want to help them figure things out, to help educate them about these issues because I had no idea about them while I was growing up. I could see what these kids are all going through in college, and it helps to be where you can pop those bubbles that they have around themselves.37 As they go about the task of trying to replenish the ranks by raising critical consciousness amongst new groups of Asians, a number of lessons learned from their collective experiences may provide helpful guides. From the interviews, we can identify critical elements that contribute to conscientization. While these elements do not guarantee that conscientization will follow, incorporating them into one’s practice may enhance the possibility that efforts will be successful. First, respondents described the importance of obtaining information and conceptual tools that helped them to cognitively understand how their lives and the lives of others are shaped by larger historical and social- structural forces. An Asian American Studies course on a college campus was the most common source of relevant information, but as we have seen exposure can take place in many venues. People can learn from reading on their own, from student groups, and from multimedia sources. Second, breaking through isolation and interrupting the tendency to explain their life experiences solely in individual terms reflects a social dimension to conscientization. Contact and conversation with other Asian Americans was often the most effective way to help respondents make connections between their lives, the experiences of others, and information on the Asian American experience. Connections to key mentors and peers provided a safe environment in which to think and question further. Third, respondents described important affective aspects of conscientization. When respondents talked about important moments in their education or key social support that made a difference, invariably they referred to how they felt about these experiences. They were angered by the realization that their schooling had not taught them about racism or the Asian American experience. They felt inspired by the experiences of other Asian Americans who struggled to overcome harsh conditions. They were excited to learn more. Fourth, **respondents’ commitment** to Asian American issues **was deepened when they transformed understanding into action. Involvement in protests, organizing,** programming, teaching, **and research gave respondents a chance to extend their knowledge and learn from efforts to make change.** Finally, the study indicates that **conscientization occurs when the discrete elements work in combination.** No respondent described his or her conscientization in terms of a single element. It was not a purely intellectual or cognitive experience in a classroom, absent of social or affective elements. Nor was it a purely social or affective experience without information and conceptual tools. Instead, respondents described multifaceted and interrelated experiences that reinforced each other, inspiring further thinking and commitment to action. For activists seeking to raise the critical consciousness of Asian Americans, the study’s findings carry implications for practice. For some, combining elements in a single venue, like an introductory course or a training program, will be the main focus. In these cases, the study suggests that the course or program should offer substantive content and concepts to lay the cognitive foundation needed for people to see themselves in relation to the world. It also should include social activities to break isolation and opportunities for people to share stories with each other in a non-judgmental, safe environment. On a broader level, the study suggests that there is a value in and need to offer a range of experiences across campus and community to increase the likelihood that students will combine, on their own, elements that contribute to conscientization. Pressure to have one person, course, or program that single-handedly transforms students’ lives subsides when we recognize that the interrelated process of conscientization benefits from contributions across diverse segments of the community. The importance of combining influences also casts new light on how different parts of the campus and community can work collaboratively to raise critical consciousness. Breaking from binary constructions that often pit academic programs against student life activities, or divide academe from community, the study shows how conscientization arises when people are exposed to and combine lessons learned from a variety of sources. This process implies that increased appreciation for the work done across campus and community, along with greater coordination of influences, is an important dimension of conscientization.]

#### Thus the ROB Should be to endorse the team that gives Asian American Women a means to recognize themselves as individuals in society. Without, the self-recognition of Asian women, they will always be seen as invisible in society. Therefore, the unconditional right to strike cannot even apply to them, if they aren’t seen as workers.

#### The right to strike means nothing for Asian women when they’re historically excluded from political movements and self-isolate due to psychological violence in a male-dominated culture. -Chow ’87

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As Asian American women became active in their communities, they encountered sexism. Even though many Asian American women realized that they usually occupied subservient positions in the male- dominated organizations within Asian communities, their ethnic pride and loyalty frequently kept them from public revolt (Woo 1971). More recently, some **Asian American women have recognized that these organizations have not been particularly responsive to their needs and concerns as women**. They also protested that **their intense involvement did not and will not result in equal participation as long as the traditional dominance by men and the gendered division of labor remain** (G. Wong 1980). **Their protests have sensitized some men and have resulted in changes of attitudes and treatment of women**, but other Asians, both women and men, perceived them as moving toward separatism of their protests: **weakening of the male ego, dilution of effort and resources in Asian American communities, destruction of working relationships between Asian men and women, setbacks for the Asian American cause, cooptation into the larger society, and eventual loss of ethnic identity for Asian Americans as a whole.** In short, affiliation with the feminist movement is perceived as a threat to solidarity within their own community**. All these forces have restricted the development of feminist consciousness among Asian American women and their active participation in the** feminist **movement**. (For the similar experience of black women, see Hooks 1984

#### [link] the right to strike doesn’t pertain to Asian women because of patriarchal standards in the family. Asian women fall into a hierarchy and are forced into silence. The aff’s posturing of worker rights does nothing for Asian women when they see no possibility to strike in the first place. -Chow ’87 (The affirmative’s stance of progress and worker’s rights ignores Asian women because it does nothing to promote Asian female inclusion)

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Gender consciousness is an awareness of one's self as having certain gender characteristics and an identification with others who occupy a similar position in the sex-gender structure. In the case of women, an awareness of femaleness and an identification with other women can lead to an understanding of gender power relations and the institutional pressures and socialization processes that create and maintain these power relations (Weitz 1982). Ultimately, gender consciousness can bring about the development of feminist conscious ness and the formation of group solidarity necessary for collective action in the struggle for gender equality (Christiansen-Ruffman 1982; Green 1979; Houston 1982). Being female, awareness of gender roles, and identification with other women are the major ingredients in building gender conscious- ness. However, it is necessary to understand the social contexts in which the gender consciousness of Asian American women has developed. Domination by men is a commonly shared oppression for Asian American women. These women have been socialized to accept their devaluation, restricted roles for women, psychological reinforcement of gender stereotypes, and a subordinate position within Asian communities as well as in the society at large (Chow 1985). Within Asian communities, the Asian family (especially the immigrant one) is characterized by a hierarchy of authority based on sex, age, and generation, with young women at the lowest level, subordinate to father-husband-brother-son. The Asian family is also characterized by well-defined family roles, with father as a breadwinner and decision maker and mother as a compliant wife and homemaker. While they are well protected by the family because of their filial piety and obedience, women are socially alienated from their Asian sisters. Such alienation may limit the development of gender and feminist consciousness and render Asian women politically powerless in achieving effective communication and organization, and in building bonds with other women of color and white feminists.

#### Asian American Women will not be able to strike and create change if they aren’t able to recognize themselves as individuals in the first place -Lee ‘14

Lee, Emily S. “The Ambiguous Practices of the Inauthentic Asian American Woman.” Hypatia, vol. 29, no. 1, 2014, pp. 146–163, www.cambridge.org/core/journals/hypatia/article/abs/ambiguous-practices-of-the-inauthentic-asian-american-woman/4404F724545260C0B097455FCFC31FCC, 10.1111/hypa.12070. Accessed 18 Nov. 2021.

Feminist theory has advanced from speaking about subjects as essences or following a substance ontology toward theorizing subjects as in process—as socially constructed through practices that condition and make subjectivity possible (Young 1997, 32). With the understanding that historico-material circumstances condition subjectivity, feminist theorists recognize the fluidity of identities and subjects as situated within contexts and relations. The framework shifts away from static conceptions toward temporal conceptions (Alcoff 2006, 151).13 I think too much recent work stops here on context and ambiguity. Earlier feminist work had already explored contexts in terms of margins as both a place of oppression (in the sense of marginalization and not receiving central attention) and a place of possibilities (in the sense of the plurality of choices available in the margins) (hooks 1990; Bar On 1993). Ambiguity and open-endedness are valuable, but absolute open-endedness does not exist for socially constructed subjects. Moreover, absolute open-endedness does not in itself free but can feel daunting. I am suspicious about whether the emphasis on context and ambguity suffices to actually change identities, especially over-determined identities. Upon recognizing that historico-material circumstances condition identity but that identity can dynamically develop, the theoretical work cannot stop with the emphasis on context and ambiguity; rather the difficult work for over-determined women of color now lies in determining which actions, and eventually practices, are available, effective, or transformative of the group identity. For Asian American women’s identities to break out of the ambivalence of isolationist, poor, hyper-visible, exotic, and inauthentic or assimilationist, upwardly mobile, invisible, and still inauthentic, Asian American women need to engage in actions that change their group identity. Surely if identities/subjectivities change, actions to defy the over-determinations and to change group identities are already occurring! Nevertheless, it has been quite difficult to change over-determinations about any racialized minorities. To understand this difficulty, I list three especially prominent problems with changing one’s group identity. A structural reason exists for the difficulty of changing the group identity, or at least complicating the group identity enough to see the diversity and complexity in the lives of Asian Americans. First, with the postmodern clarification of the social constructedness of identity and subjectivity, agency becomes difficult. Historico-material circumstances not only construct identity and subjectivity, but these conditions also make available only certain actions. Young explains the very real weight of the historico-material conditions of society that admit a specific set of actions. She writes, “[t]he milieu is the already-there set of material things and collectivized habits against the background of which any particular action occurs” (Young 1997, 25).14 Any act from such positions cannot derive solely from some internal force of will and intent, but must also be conditioned by the situation from which one acts. Within these available actions, Judith Butler famously clarified the demand that such actions be repeated and the force of repeated actions.15 In light of the social forces that make available only specific actions and hence force repeating such actions, the social construction of identities and subjects does not immediately open numerous venues for Asian American women to change their dichotomously over-determined group identity. Although the present understanding of identities as socially constructed recognizes identities as fluid, these changes cannot be absolutely novel or revolutionary. Second, a psychological reason prohibits engaging in actions to change one’s group identity. The depth of the social constructedness of the subject lies in the subject’s internalization of the existing meanings and stigmas about one’s group identity. Actions born from positions of less power, if not a place of oppression, often have been described as defensive, petty, cunning, passive-aggressive, and born from jealousy. 16 Friedrich Nietzsche comes first to my mind for references to the cunning woman. In phrases like, “[w]hat inspires respect for woman, and often enough even fear, is her nature, which is more ‘natural’ than man’s, the genuine, cunning suppleness of a beast of prey” (Nietzsche 1966, 269). Nietzsche refers to the ways in which women—because society conditions them to be slaves—act from places of insecurity and defensiveness. As a result, if women act at all, they act tentatively and cautiously, never quite trusting their decisions and actions. Women’s actions occur in stealth; their actions are hidden to prevent foreclosure from acting at all. Such covert actions have been characterized as passive aggressive. Social conditions restrain their actions to those that irk and poke their opponents, but never openly exhibit their challenge of the system, the masters, the men with whom women have complicated relations of care, dependence, and resistance. Their slave mentality and slave morality prevent women from forthrightly articulating clearly outlined positions. Nietzsche writes with contempt that women are “cunning,” not really intelligent, not truly moral, and not completely sincere. The social constructedness of subjects affects the very psychology of subjects.17 Such internalization of slave mentality and slave morality appears unavoidable for poor Asian American women living in relation to Asian American men within the dominant white culture and not meeting the challenges of capitalism. Not only are Asian American women’s actions limited within the historico-material milieu, but also they are not likely to be transformative. Third, because of the group identity’s relational status with members of society, a difficulty external to the self exists.