**CP Text: the aff should enter into a prior binding and genuine consultation with Asians on whether we should do the aff.**

**Historical analysis excludes the Asian identity from general union discussions, leaving us to fend for ourselves in societies that never cared about us anyways.**

**Kim [Asian]:**

Kim, Marlene. “Organizing Asian Americans into Labor Unions.” Trajectory\_Ch11.Pdf, <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/resources/policyreports/Trajectory_Civic_Political_Engagement/Trajectory_Ch11.pdf>. Valley Mini

**Historically, Asians have faced** the same **difficulty of a hostile political** and legal **climate impeding their efforts to improve** their wages and **working conditions by organizing into unions.** The consequence is that, like those of white workers, the vast majority of their strikes failed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. **But Asians also faced the additional obstacle of racism. Like other racial minorities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Asians were relegated to the jobs that no one else wanted** - those that were the lowest-paying and that had the worst working conditions.iv Moreover, throughout this history of trying to improve the lot of workers, organized labor largely neglected to organize Asian Americans and, at their worst, participated in excluding them from the more lucrative jobs. **Shut out of labor unions and placed in the worst jobs** in the U.S.- in agriculture, building railroads, and working in mines - **Asians organized themselves into independent labor organizations** that existed outside of the mainstream labor movement. Though stereotyped as unlikely to join labor unions and take militant action, in fact, Asians participated in and led numerous strikes. **The earliest strikes occurred while building the transcontinental railroads under dangerous and brutal conditions. In 1867, two thousandv Chinese railroad workers struck against the Central Pacific Railroad for higher wages, equal pay and hours (compared to white workers), an end to corporal punishment and for the ability to leave their jobs if they chose. Chinese workers also struck against the Houston and Texas Central Railroad in 1870 over their wages and failure of the company to comply with their contract. The Chinese workers lost both of these strikes due to brutal labor tactics by employers.** With low pay and oppressive working conditions, the agricultural sector experienced numerous organizing drives and strikes by Asian workers. In Hawaii, dissatisfaction over the exploitative conditions on the plantations, including segregated housing and jobs, low wages, and abusive overseers, led to many strikes. These included: 1,200 Japanese cane cutters and loaders in Wailua who struck in 1904 for higher wages; 7,000 Japanese workers who struck the major plantations in Oahu in 1909 for receiving lower wages than Portuguese and Puerto Rican workers; and 2,000 Filipino workers who struck in 1924 for higher pay, an eight-hour day, and better housing. Strikes by Japanese workers over abusive actions by overseers also occurred in Maui in 1904 and in Waipahu in 1906. Perhaps the most notable strike on the islands was the six-month strike in 1919 when Japanese and Filipino workers banded their separate labor organizations together into a combined multiethnic labor organization, the Hawaii Laborers' Association. The union's 8,000 Japanese, Filipino, Puerto Rican and Spanish workers demanded higher pay and an eight-hour day. Although this strike, like all the 248 Trajectory of Civic and Political Engagement others on the islands, was lost by the workers, it is notable for uniting workers of many diverse nationalities. Strikes in agriculture penetrated the mainland as well. As early as 1880, Chinese fruit pickers in Santa Clara, California, struck for higher wages (Takaki 1993). In 1903, Japanese and Mexican farm workers in Oxnard, California, joined together into the multiracial organization the Japanese-Mexican Labor Association, as 1,200 workers struck for higher wages. Like many strikes before the Wagner Act was passed in 1935, this strike was marred by violence. When strikers demonstrated in front of labor camps that housed strikebreakers, shots were fired, killing one Mexican worker and wounding two Japanese and two Mexican workers. Blame for the violence fell on the labor union, resulting in the jailing of the leaders of the JapaneseMexican Labor Association (Chan 1991). Violence was common during other strikes, as well. In 1933, 700 Filipino lettuce pickers struck in Salinas Valley, California. This union grew to 2,000 workers and joined the 1934 strike in Monterey with an AFL affiliate union, the Vegetable Packers Association. During this latter strike, labor leaders were arrested, two workers were shot, and the labor camp where hundreds of Filipino farm workers lived was burned to the ground (Chan 1991). Notably, strikes by Asian workers were not limited to white owners or employers. In 1875, Chinese garment workers struck a Chinese sweatshop owner in San Francisco for higher wages. In Hawaii, 300 plantation workers struck in 1891 to protest a Chinese labor contractor who allegedly cheated them (Chan 1991). Asian workers, in other words, are similar to other workers: they organize for the same reasons other workers organize- for higher wages, better working conditions, fairness, and respect. Despite their low pay, abusive working conditions, and demonstrated commitment to union organizing, **Asian workers remained outside of organized labor. In part, this was because of the outright refusal of organized labor to include Asian workers.** When the Hawaii Laborers' Association applied for membership into the AFL in 1920, theAFLnever took up the matter (Chan 1991). When the Filipino lettuce pickers asked the AFL to form a union for them, the AFL refused, leaving the workers no choice but to form their own independent union (Chan 1991). During the 1903 strike by the JapaneseMexican Labor Association, the AFL mediated an agreement between workers and growers, after the murder and wounding of workers. But after the strike when the union applied for membership, the AFL stated that it would admit the union only if Chinese and Japanese workers were excluded from membership (it was willing to accept Mexican workers). The Mexican secretary of the union refused this condition and thus membership into the AFL, aptly stating: Our Japanese here were the first to recognize the importance of cooperating and uniting in demanding a fair wage scale ... We have fought and lived on very short rations with our Japanese brothers, and toiled with them in the fields ... We would be false to them and to ourselves and to the cause of unionism if we now accepted privileges for ourselves which are not accorded to them (Chan 1991, 87). **Unions also ventured** into the political realm **to broaden their exclusion of Asians. The Seaman's International Union, an AFL affiliate, pressured Congress to forbid foreign sailors from working on U.S. ships and asked immigration officials to arrest and deport Chinese sailors (Chan 1991 ). Even the inclusive Knights of Labor, whose strategy was to organize every person in a community and included African Americans, excluded Chinese workers (the Chinese were the only Asians on the U.S. mainland at that time) along with liquor store owners, professional gamblers, stockbrokers, lawyers, bankers, and other "economic parasites."** Moreover, the leadership of the Knights of Labor pushed for the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and its extensions, excluding Chinese laborers from immigrating to the United States. After its passage, the union leadership tried to extend this law to exclude Japanese and Koreans as well, but this attempt failed. It was only in 1936 that the AFL accepted into its fold the Field Workers Union, a Mexican and Filipino union of farm workers (Chan 1991). Later, in 1940, the AFL admitted the Federated Agricultural Laborers Association, a Filipino union, after it successfully represented thousands of farm laborers in a series of strikes in central California (Chan 1991). By the 1960s, when Filipino and Mexican farm 250 Trajectory of Civic and Political Engagement worker organizations joined forces to form the United Farm Workers Union, the AFL admitted them as well.

**The 1AC lacks acknowledgement to the experiences of Asian. Centering the discussion is key to change.**

**Hwang 20 [Asian]:**

Hwang, Aimee. “Breaking down Barriers: Legal and Political Advocacy for AAPI Communities.” Asian American Policy Review, 5 Oct. 2020, <https://aapr.hkspublications.org/2020/10/04/breaking-down-barriers-legal-and-political-advocacy-for-aapi-communities/>. Valley Mini

* John Yang is an experienced attorney with over two decades of policy, litigation, and corporate expertise and has been a leader in the Asian American and Pacific Islander and broader civic community. At Advancing Justice | AAJC, John leads the organization’s efforts to fight for civil rights and empower Asian Americans to create a more just America for all through public policy advocacy, education, and litigation. His extensive legal background enables Advancing Justice | AAJC to address systemic policies, programs, and legislative attempts to discriminate against and marginalize Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) and other minority communities. John graduated with honors from George Washington University Law School. Chambers USA recognized John as one of “America’s Leading Business Lawyers” and as a Washington, D.C. “Super Lawyer” by Law & Politics. Aimee Hwang is the Co-Partnerships Director for the Asian American Policy Review. She is a first-year Master of Public Policy student at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. She received her B.A. in Public Policy and a minor in Human Rights from the University of Chicago in 2019.

I’m proud of the fact that in some ways my own background is a microcosm of the complexity of the Asian American experience. AAPR: Can you briefly introduce yourself and your organization? YANG: My name is John Yang. I am the President and Executive Director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC in Washington, DC. AAPR: What are the most pressing issues for the AAPI communities and other communities of color today that you see? YANG: Certainly over the past couple of years and looking into 2020, I would characterize the following issues as being my top priority: immigration, census, voting rights, and what I characterize as discrimination generally along with racial profiling. Some other issues that would be up there would be tech and telecoms equity and health equity. AAPR: AAJC is experiencing a resurgence in the telecommunications and technology area. What brought that about, and what is AAJC working on in that issue? YANG: It’s an interesting issue because that’s an issue where the first reaction that people have is why is a civil rights organization like AAJC involved in telecoms as it sounds like a much more technical issue. And the reason is simple. **Just as housing, employment, and banking has a civil rights component, technology has a clear civil rights component. Especially now given that people find jobs, find houses, get lines of credit, get loans through technology and the internet.** So, **making sure that Asian Americans are a part of** that conversation **and have equity in that**

**space is critical. Otherwise, we are getting left behind when it comes to these**

**issues.** In terms of what we at Advancing Justice | AAJC are doing in this space, it is really making sure that the Asian American perspective is represented, with respect to making sure that our community has access to that technology in an equitable manner. We are making sure that our community is being considered with respect to privacy, artificial intelligence algorithms, when it comes to how people see ads, how people see job ads, and to make sure that people understand that the Asian American community is a very diverse community. I think one of the very common misperceptions is that Asian Americans are already very technologically savvy and that we don’t have issues in this area. And although it is true that a segment of the Asian American community does have access to technology and that are the what we would call “early adopters” of new technology, there’s another huge segment of our population that is getting left behind. We want to make sure that we don’t fall into the “model minority stereotype,” which is a very rudimentary understanding of our community. I think that’s one of the things that certainly technology companies and policymakers are often surprised by is how complex our community actually is. Another aspect of this is oftentimes when we think of technology companies, it is true that there is a large number of Asian Americans working on the technical side of these companies and engineering side. But whether that translates to making sure that these products are appropriate, friendly, or usable for Asian Americans, there’s still definitely a lag there. That’s part of what we seek to address with respect to this particular program. AAPR: So, you mention how incredibly diverse the AAPI community is. How does AAJC reconcile with that? YANG: Part of it is just making sure that people have the data. That’s why census work is critical to us. That’s literally about making sure that our community gets counted and the complexities and nuances of our community gets counted. I always describe the Asian American community as like a barbell. On one end of the spectrum, you have a large number of community members that from a median income point of view and from an education point of view are doing quite well. But then you have another segment of our population, particularly the Southeast Asian community, from an education, poverty, and health care standpoint are lagging quite far behind. For us at Advancing Justice | AAJC, it’s really about making sure those stories get lifted up as well so that the narrative isn’t only about the successes of Asian Americans, which certainly we are proud of, but to elevate the needs that are out there that have yet to be addressed. AAPR: I know that AAJC often partners with other organizations that aren’t necessarily representing AAPIs specifically. How does AAJC balance supporting AAPI issues while also being a supportive ally for other people of color? YANG: Advancing Justice | AAJC lifts up and protects and advances the interests of those in our community generally that are vulnerable. There’s two aspects of that. One aspect, which we started talking a little bit about, is with respect to the Southeast Asian community, but then just more generally immigrant communities. Immigrant communities, regardless of wealth, are a vulnerable community because of language issues and because of unfamiliarity with our basic democracy. And so in those particular areas, oftentimes we align ourselves with Latino organizations because they share many of the same issues, concerns, and outlook that we do. It makes sense for us to work together to provide an even broader narrative with respect to what immigrant communities look like and what immigrant communities think, so a quite a bit of our work does include partners and allies that are not in the Asian American space. I think it’s also important to recognize that Asian Americans are probably about 6.5% of the American population, and it’s the fastest growing community in the United States. We’ve grown by 42% between the 2000 and 2010 Census, and certainly we’ve probably grown by a somewhat similar rate, but perhaps a little bit less, between 2010 and now. But because we are only 6.5%, it’s important to work with the Latino communities and the African American communities to make sure that all of us as communities of color and all of us as vulnerable communities are protected. **Certainly in this day and age, with the politics that we face, there are people who try to divide us and people that try to use Asian**

**Americans as a wedge and I think that’s the other aspect of why we are very intentional about working with partners that are outside of the Asian American space.** AAPR: What kinds of barriers does AAJC experience in its work? YANG: From an issues standpoint, **the most common barrier is** typically **ignorance of the Asian American community.** It is always surprising to me the number of people that don’t know that approximately two million Asian Americans are undocumented in the United States and that when we talk about Dreamers, there are approximately 30,000 Dreamers that are Asian. Justifiably, understandably immigration is often seen through a Latino lens and I don’t take anything away from that because whether you talk about undocumented immigrants or Dreamers, that is the largest population. But at the same time, **there is a robust community of Asians such that whenever you talk about immigration as an example, you should be talking about Asian issues as well. So the first barrier I would definitely say is ignorance, the lack of understanding of Asian American communities [eg].** Along those lines, certainly, would be the notion of the model minority stereotype. **Oftentimes, especially right now with the Harvard case, when it comes to affirmative action there’s a very big misunderstanding about where Asian Americans stand. Yes, there is a local group of Asians that does not support affirmative action, but all the polling that has been done has said that that group is in the minority.** Rather, **Asian Americans support affirmative action, typically around a 65% rate**. And that is surprising to people. **So, making sure that people understand where Asian Americans stand on** certain types of **issues** and the complexity of it in terms of barriers, that’s definitely **[is] a starting point**. But what that also means is that in terms of resources that the Asian American community has is oftentimes an afterthought, whether that’s funding for many of our grassroots organizations, how policymakers think about laws that are being crafted, and which stories that are being told. Again, we’ve talked about stories around hate crimes. **Rightfully, many of the stories revolve around African Americans and I do not take anything away from that. But the number of Asian Americans**, particularly South Asian Americans and Muslim Americans **facing hate crimes and racial profiling is significant. And making sure that people see those stories as well that would be the other barrier that I see, making sure that Asian Americans are not rendered invisible.** AAPR: How is AAJC working towards overcoming those barriers? YANG: Certainly a lot of our work I would put into a couple of different buckets. First, it’s defending the interests of Asian Americans whether through discussions and conversations with policymakers to enact policies that take into account the Asian American experience, whether it is through lawsuits that protect Asian Americans, or whether it is through community activism to show the Asian American experience. That would be one bucket. The second bucket would certainly just be lifting up Asian Americans more generally. That is through Census work, that is through data that we try to gather on our hate crimes database, that is through reports that we put out on immigration and how immigration policy affects Asian Americans. That information alone is helpful in making sure that the community at large, not just the Asian American community, but the overall community sees Asian Americans and Asian American issues. The last bucket is advancing the interests of Asian Americans. Again, that could take these different forms that we’ve talked about in terms of advocacy and community engagement, but it’s also about making the lives of Asian Americans better. Take voting rights as an example. We’re making sure that we have policies in place that address language barriers. After all, certainly someone is not less of a citizen because English is not their first language just as someone is not less of a citizen because they have a disability. So we are making sure that we have policies in place that allow our communities to overcome those barriers. Obviously, we try to engage with the media and we try to engage with corporations as well. We do make a deliberate effort to try to talk to as many people as we can to engage in that dialogue and through that we advance the interests that are important to our community. AAPR: How can policymakers, advocates, researchers, communities support the AAPI movement? YANG: If you are Asian American/Pacific Islander yourself, certainly it’s about getting engaged with your identity and informing yourself and then just trying to play a role, and it could be any number of roles. One of the things I always say is that that we need all types in this movement. Certainly, we need organizations like mine that are filing lawsuits, that are educating lawmakers, that are trying to draw attention to rallies and to issues affecting our community. But at the same time, we need more Asian Americans that are running for office so they are actually part of the hallways of power or Asian Americans who are staff members to members of Congress. But we also need more Asian Americans in the corporate world. I always tell people, especially students, that it’s ok to work for a corporation. I’m a lawyer by training – it’s ok to work at a law firm as long as you remember your roots. We need Asian American advocates in all of those professions. Asian Americans are still underrepresented in corporate America, and they are still underrepresented in terms of equity partners at law firms. And if you use those positions to make sure that issues affecting our communities get lifted up, don’t forget that you’re accomplishing something. Don’t think that anything is too small. There are so many different ways to help the community that you shouldn’t feel that you have to take one path or another. Rather, even if you are a programmer working for Microsoft or Facebook or Google, remember that when you’re programming, these algorithms you’re creating, how you’re creating them, how you’re using data will have an effect on the community and be sensitive to whether that data is flawed going in because it will have an effect on what people see coming at them with respect to advertisements, job listings, bank loans, or mortgages. I think there’s so many ways to help. And the other thing is that our community is still a very young community. Certainly, there are the Chinese Americans who came over to work on the Trans-Continental Railroad, there are Japanese American and Filipino Americans that also came over to work on farms from very early on. But it wasn’t really until the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 that you saw a large number of Asian Americans come to the United States and have a path to citizenship because prior to that there were racial quotas for each country. And so, in that sense, our community is just coming of age right now. The possibilities are limitless and in that I also think that our community should not think of themselves as having to fit into one box or another. AAPR: As part of the journal we try to get our edition into the hands of policymakers and Congresspeople if possible. What do you think they should be doing? YANG: Number one would be visibility. **For policymakers at a very base level, they should work to give voice or give visibility to the Asian American community. So often, I have seen polls that are conducted – it’s getting a little bit better now I suppose – but so often I have seen polls that are conducted on any number of topics, on commercial issues or political issues, that will then break it down into what do White Americans think? What do African Americans think? What do Latino Americans think? And then there’s an “Other.” Just simply acknowledging and giving statistics to the Asian American experience is critical as a starting point.** Obviously for us, we would want to delve deeper into disaggregating the Asian American/Pacific Islander community into all of our different sub-parts. But having members of Congress giving voice to the Asian American experience is critical. In Congress, not only do they write laws, they actually produce a lot of studies. Through their budgeting process, they give grants or federal disbursements to different agencies that then produce data on the American experience. That **data should include Asian Americans.** Number two would be **mak[e]**ing **sure that Asian Americans are included at the table at all of these discussions. And not just as a token, but really so that our voice is heard. Then they must think about what** piece of **policy would** really **have a[n]** disproportionate **effect on Asian Americans.** I think those are just some of the things that legislators could do. Legislators and policymakers definitely can do a better job of helping us set that narrative because they have the power of the podium and they can use that podium to give voice to our communities and other vulnerable communities. That’s some of what we’re seeing right now in the immigration debate is there’s this anti-immigration rhetoric out there and part of this rhetoric is created by a false narrative of immigrants as a drain on society, immigrants as being criminals, immigrants taking resources that belong to other so-called more deserving Americans. But those are all false narratives. We don’t need to go into it here, but if you go into the studies behind it, studies show that crime rates among immigrants are lower than the native-born population. The economic contribution of immigrants is huge and really is helping to ensure that America is still growing. Having policymakers and opinion leaders make sure that they voice those opinions and push back against false narratives that seem to criminalize, marginalize, minimize immigrants and communities of color is so important. Because we are already fighting an uphill battle to get that need filled, the more people that already have the ability to shine light on these problems, it’s just critical. AAPR: How has your background and identity informed your own approach to your work and how you want to guide AAJC into the future? YANG: I’m proud of the fact that in some ways my own background is a microcosm of the complexity of the Asian American experience. I have been very privileged in that before this job, I had served as a political appointee during the Obama Administration. I was a partner at a very large law firm. So, I had the benefit of privileges being at those types of positions. And recognizing that I’m Chinese American, which brings with it a certain amount of privilege when compared to other Asian populations. At the same time, I was once an undocumented immigrant. For a period of about eight or nine years we were here without papers. And that experience and watching my parents navigate that experience and not having a path to citizenship myself, I think has given me a deep appreciation of what it means to protect this community, what it means to advance this community and all the things that we need to do. I think also having lived in China for six years as an adult, as a practicing lawyer, informs how our Asian American experience is even changing that with respect to newer immigrants who are coming to the United States. So, I feel very blessed and privileged to bring all these different experiences to bear in terms of our at work at Advancing Justice | AAJC and to be really thoughtful about what issues are important to the Asian American community and how to address them in a thoughtful way. Our organization prides ourselves on being constructive with everyone and trying to build bridges within the Asian American community, within communities of color, as well as communities that don’t even necessarily think the same way we do or hold the same beliefs. And keeping that in mind, especially as the world is continuing to become more polarized, especially as with social media it becomes easier to just go into your own bubble or your own silo. AAPR:  Moving forward, what do you see as AAJC’s role in the advocacy space? What are you targeting towards? What’s the goal in this next couple years? YANG: Some of it will depend on the 2020 election. Up and down, the ballot will inform what we need to do in the next couple of years. Right now, we’re just trying to defend Asian Americans and protect Asian Americans and the issues that we care about, whether they are immigration, voting, ensuring that we are fully counted in the Census, or protecting Asian Americans from racial profiling, especially as this trade war with China lingers on. Depending on the elections in 2020, we may be looking two years from now at trying to undo some of the damage that has been done with respect to the anti-immigrant rhetoric and this othering of these vulnerable communities. Certainly, we are trying to build a more inclusive society, as our mission statement says, “fair and equitable for all.” That’s obviously a long-term goal and that’s obviously a goal that will take a lot of work in getting towards. But that’s our goal. In some ways, my goal is to put myself out of a job. It would be wonderful to have a day and age where organizations like mine are not really necessary because Asian Americans are already fully and equitably included in all of society and talking about the Asian American experience is already fully integrated into any discussions that are happening whether they are about policies, storytelling, etc. But obviously we are not there, and it will take a long time to get there, but that’s the goal.

SOLVES THE AFF. FAILING TO ACCOUNT FOR ASIANS IGNORES OUR POSITION IN RELATION TO WORKER UNIONS AND STRIKES. OUR UNIONS ARE SILENCED WHEN CONVENIENT. Only thru the CP is the aff possible, otherwise the aff misses a link

Competes

* Net benefits - only the neg absorbs impacts of consulting Asian, rather than assuming and speaking for them. Perms are a form of a) taking Asian ideas as one's own, which is a form of scholarship stealing, taking every last tool Asians have left to fight with, and b) being shifty when discussing with Asians, which isn’t genuine consultation
* Mutually exclusive - you can’t not include Asians and include them in discussion at the same time.

***K***

**DISCUSSION AROUND UNIONS AND STRIKES ARE ANTI ASIAN  
Vote neg is I win the topic is anti-asian – a] you should reject discussions on the topic if its racist b] endorses valuable education on the way language discourse shapes the way we view the world.**

**1] Asian Exclusion was fundamental to the US labor movement.**

**Freeman 14** [Bradley M. Freeman, Doctor of Philosophy , 2014, " Asian American Radical Literature: Marxism, Revolution, and the Politics of Form ," Ohio State University, <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/apexprod/rws_etd/send_file/send?accession=osu1405525061&disposition=inline> [accessed: 10-24-21] Lydia

Unfortunately, London and Norris were not anomalies within the broader movements that brought together union organizers and left-leaning politicians. Drawing on the work of Alexander Saxton, Lye claims, “[A]n Asian exclusion movement arose alongside the U.S. labor movement and was very likely foundational to it” (19). Initially, major union organizations included Asian exclusion as standard policy. In an effort to create cultural capital that would counter their own exploitation and marginalization, the white working class galvanized around these racist strategies. Lye continues, “The Asian exclusion question magnifies the centrality of nationalist rhetoric to a strategy of legitimation which sought to make ‘unionism’ synonymous with ‘Americanism’” (19). Similarly, Robert G. Lee writes, “Irish immigrants who were in the process of consolidating their own claim to Americanness and a white racial identity led the popular anti-Chinese movement” (9). Ultimately, this rhetoric worked to embed unions and labor organizing within a broader narrative of American nativism. This rhetoric also undercut many efforts to organize pan-ethnic coalitions. Redirecting critiques of class inequality away from white capitalists, then, anti-Asian anxiety only fractured the working-class community and undermined many attempts at cross-racial solidarity. While Lye’s work reveals an Anglo American literary tradition thoroughly entrenched in racism and anti-Asian anxiety, this project shows the way in which Asian American writers began to enact and envision pan-ethnic solidarity despite these nativist tensions. Tsiang, for instance, brings together racialized and immigrant workers in the strikes that punctuate each of his novels and reveals racialization to be part and parcel of their exploitation. Murayama, too, critiques ethnic divisions among the working class in Hawai‘i by evincing the way in which Filipino and Japanese laborers only perpetuate their own exploitation when they “scab” against one another. Deeply critical of the racist, exclusionist sentiments of this white working class, the Asian American writers in question refuse to fall back on exceptionalist narratives. In this regard, these writers differ from many of their Anglo American counterparts. Rather than tie monopoly capitalism to Asia, they reveal the ways in which race, gender, and class suture American empire and oppress Asian immigrants especially. In Bulosan’s America Is in the Heart and Murayama’s All I Asking for Is My Body, these writers foreground the deleterious effects of American empire on Allos’s childhood in the Philippines and Kiyo’s adolescence on the Hawaiian sugar plantations. Allos’s family struggles to “get by” in the rural countryside because of absentee landlords, and Kiyo goes to work on the plantation at a young age because of the family’s overwhelming debt to the plantation. During the Depression, then, this Marxist lens became integral to Asian American literature precisely because these authors foreground the way in which the exploits of American capital depend on racialized and gendered labor. The Depression was especially brutal for immigrant workers who were targeted by the American government and a white working class desperate for cultural capital.

**2] Chinese Restaurant Strikes prove**

**Chow 17** [Kat Chow, 6-16-2017, "How The White Establishment Waged A 'War' On Chinese Restaurants In The U.S. ," NPR.org, <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/06/16/532697303/how-american-unions-tried-to-wage-a-war-against-chinese-restaurants-in-the-u-s> [accessed 10-24-21] lydia

In most American cities these days, it seems like there's a Chinese restaurant on every other street corner. But in the late 1800s, that ubiquity was exactly what certain white establishment figures feared,according to a [new study](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2948030) co-written by Gabriel "Jack" Chin, a law professor at the University of California, Davis. Chin examined how white union workers and lawmakers waged a nationwide "war" on Chinese restaurants in America from 1890 to 1920. "It shows this tradition of an expectation on the part of some white Americans that public policy should be organized for the benefit of their employment," says Chin, who adds that he sees parallels with anti-immigrant policies being put forth today. In 1882, Congress passed the [Chinese Exclusion Act](http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/05/05/527091890/the-135-year-bridge-between-the-chinese-exclusion-act-and-a-proposed-travel-ban), which barred Chinese immigrants from entering the U.S. for decades. Some white Americans worried that Chinese laborers would steal their jobs and hijack their opportunity. And this xenophobic fear carried over to the restaurant industry. Chinese restaurants — known by some at the time as "chop suey houses" — were understood to be a good value, offering inexpensive meals in an exotic setting. "The economic menace [of Chinese restaurants] was twofold," says Chin. "First, if Chinese people had the opportunity to earn a living, then they might stay. And their communities would continue to exist, and the Chinese presence, which many objected to, would continue." The second thing, says Chin, is that "if Chinese restaurants made Chinese food available at a relatively low price and then American restaurants wouldn't be able to compete, either the wage scales for American restaurants would have to go down or they would close." And then, there was the pervasive idea that Chinese men were lecherous threats to white women. Chinese restaurants were considered "dens of vice," Chin says, where white women were at risk of moral corruption by way of sex, opium and alcohol. I talked with Chin about his research and how anti-immigrant sentiment can manifest itself in even the most "creative" of methods. He told me about six different ways that Chinese restaurants were targeted: **1. Race riots** There were Chinese communities expelled from Western and Mountain States through race riots, Chin says, where Chinese restaurateurs or miners were beaten or quite literally burned from their homes. **2. Boycotts** Unions representing cooks, waiters and bartenders organized largely unsuccessful boycotts against Chinese restaurants in many places, including Massachusetts, Arizona, California, Montana, Minnesota and Ohio. The unions imposed fines on union members who ate at Chinese restaurants, Chin says, but couldn't keep their members from eating there: "Individual members of the public had incentives to cheat because the food was understood to be a good value at the time." And, Chin points out, for the most part, these unions weren't trying to enlist Chinese restaurant workers to join their ranks. Instead, they were vying for Chinese employees to be replaced by white workers. **3. A peculiar law** When boycotts were largely unsuccessful, the unions turned to the legal system. At the American Federation of Labor's 1913 convention, organizers proposed that all states should pass laws that barred white women from working or patronizing Chinese or Japanese restaurants for both moral and economic reasons, Chin says. (A similar law had been enacted in Saskatchewan, Canada, and upheld by Canada's Supreme Court.) States including Montana, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Washington and Oregon saw versions of the bill, which were ultimately unsuccessful. In Massachusetts, for example, the state Supreme Judicial Court struck down the law on the grounds that it was discriminatory. **4. Government agencies and licenses** Chin points to old newspaper reports that show that government agencies refused to issue business or restaurant licenses to Chinese restaurateurs, citing various reasons: Some officials claimed they had already issued enough licenses. Others said they would not issue licenses to people who were not citizens. And since Chinese people couldn't naturalize, this targeted them. **5. Policing** While the proposed white women's labor law was never officially enacted, some police officers began patrolling the restaurants of their own volition, Chin says. "We see newspaper reports," he explains, "where the police in the first decades of the 20th century believed they had the authority, and exercised it, simply to issue orders in the public interest." For example, he adds, "when there were concerns about white women patronizing Chinese restaurants and when the police thought this was prejudicial to the safety of white women, they would simply order white women out." In 1909, the murder of a [prominent white union leader's daughter by a Chinese restaurant worker](https://tenement.org/blog/where-miss-sigel-met-her-slayer/) inflamed tensions. In June of that year, Leon Ling reportedly strangled Elsie Sigel in a jealous rage and stuffed her body into a trunk in his bedroom. Sigel had met Ling when she worked in Manhattan's Chinatown as a missionary, and her death and the subsequent manhunt for her killer sparked a wave of racial profiling across the country. Newspapers hyped the story, with headlines like "Was Strangled By Her Chinese Lover: Granddaughter of General Sigel Slain in the Slums of New York." The case seemed to justify the fears that union workers had of all the misfortunes that would spring from Chinese restaurants. "To be a Chinaman these days," one Connecticut newspaper wrote, "is to be at least a suspect in the murder of Elsie Sigel."

**Asian Americans subject formation is never complete – there is an ontological gap between the real and symbolic which is characterized by incomplete assimilation. Asian bodies are not our own but rather tools of society.**

**Kim 1 [Asian]** (Chang-Hee Kim, The Fantasy of Asian America: Identity, Ideology, and Desire) 2009 klmd recut/tagged Nato

Fantasy of Asian American Identity The question of how Asian Americans are perceived as ‘permanent aliens’ in the U.S. is a common topic in Asian American studies. Frank H. Wu states that “where are you from” is a question anyone with an Asian face is continuously asked in the U.S. In his essay “Where Are You Really From,” he mentions that Asian Americans’ being mistaken for a foreigner has become their routine experience to the extent that they cannot be a real American. In everyday life in the United States, such awkward situations happen casually and regularly, and affect Asians and Asian Americans deeply, **placing them in the status of permanent, yet never complete assimilation**. Due to the popular circulation of knowledge informed by postcolonial studies in academia, the misrecognition of the Other has become a constant point of reference to support oppositional positions of “minoritized” in opposition to so-called epistemic violence9; our identities are constituted, exchanged, and recognized by the hegemonic social order justifying the legitimacy of existing arbitrary social structures. Given how the cognitive knowledge of ‘who we are’ is predetermined, we are subject to the pre-existing system 8 Who Killed Vincent Chin? is a 1987 documentary film directed by Christine Choy and produced by Renee Tajima-Pena about the death of Vincent Chin. It was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Documentary Feature. 9 Gayatri C. Spivak theorizes the notion of “epistemic violence” in her renowned article “Can the Subaltern Speak?” 31 of signs that creates a kind of epistemological gap between our knowledge of ourselves and how we are referred to. The recognition of ones’ identity as Asian, for instance, takes place when the public eye sees something in them that does not fully belong to them. It ascribes to their being a kind of fantasy that makes them “typical” Asians in terms of racial identification. Parts of their bodily appearances become determinants of their racial identity, functioning as an abstract sign that automatically refers to some concept of “Asian,” and their ontological being has its meaning only in relation to the conceptualized. Their subjectivity thus becomes regulated by, and subject to, the pre established system of racial identification insofar as it certifies “who they are.” It refers to the way in which any Asian American happens to be recognized as Charlie Chan. “Who they are,” in this sense, indicates, as Louis Althusser might put it, an ideological subject that the contingent and arbitrary rule of social agreements, however biased, constitutes. It is no wonder that Michael Omi and Howard Winant define racial formation as a “sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed” (RFUS 55). It is interesting to see the way in which particular parts of “what they are made of”—hair color, the shape of eyes, facial features—become the universal referent of “who they are.” They not only represent but also substitute for the imagined totality of their ontological being. In other words, their identitarian self has its ontological meaning reduced to the conceptual formality of what it means to be Asian American. The process of racial identification, as a result, occurs beyond their control and will in figuring out their self-identity. It keeps escaping and defying their basic desire to 32 differentiate their individual self from that of others. Essential to an understanding of how racial identification takes place is obviously such an uncontrollability of representations. Asian American identity exists as an abstract sign that makes sense in the context of the conceptual Asian like Charlie Chan—for example, the imagined as well as hegemonic system of Asian stereotypes. Within the discursive formality of the identity are imaginary elements that seem both extraneous and intrinsic to Asian American ontology. This epistemological difference in their self-identity stands for the gap. Fundamentally, the gap emerges when **the hegemonic authority of public gaze defines “who they are” as typical of Asian Americans.** That is, it comes out of the ontological inconsistency and contradiction of the representational system of Asian American identity vis-à-vis the totalitarian authority to recognize them “as such” in accordance with the pre-ontological formality of the conceptual Asian American. Nonetheless, Asian Americans’ bodies superfluously signify something excessive, more than “who they are,” an elusive meaning that is not always clear and definable vis-à-vis their racial identity. The discrepancy between the formalistic meaning of Asian American identity and the self-reflective or self-referential meaning of their subjective self consists in an indefinable dimension, or an ontological gap, within the identity. Metaphorically, it works as Charlie Chan’s apparitional power encompassing Asian Americans’ distinctive individualities within themselves. This apparition keeps haunting them, evoking others’ temptation to recognize the former as symbolic of the conceptual Asian. Given this, that Asian Americans’ distinctive subjectivity negates any given identity in terms of, say, race, can be seen as an antagonistic gesture of political resistance to U.S. culture, i.e., the public eye that 33 produces the stereotype of Asians as a fixed form of truth. Constituted as a cognitive system of knowledge that falls within the realm of common sense, stereotype rather turns Asian Americans into an appendix to the symbolic apparition or uncanny double that reifies their identity in the typical formality of “Asian”—that is, racial fantasy. Asian Americans become a puppet-like agent of Charlie Chan’s apparitional power evoking something in themselves more than themselves, which is projected upon their identity. It creates a division within the system of “commonsensical” representation—the conceptual (fantasy) vs. the original (imagination). The apparitional power of fantasy—invisible but effective to the public eye—is what combines the two for the sake of the communicative exchange of their identity as a cognitive sign. At the same time, the apparitional fantasy remains elusive and unidentifiable, making the gap between “who they are” and “who they are seen as.” Simply put, the former is the real of them whose subjectivity remains neither fully symbolized nor properly interpellated, an unfathomable dimension of Asian American identity that resists their being completely identified as a typical Asian as a whole. On the contrary, the latter refers to the symbolic figure of the Asian American that the public eye recognizes as one of Charlie Chan Asians. Although it is our fate to be social subjects dictated by the representational system that constitutes our identitarian position, **the gap of the subject between real and symbolic never comes to a closure**. The identitarian system of representation can maintain itself through social agreements for the communication between self and other. At stake in the system is the uncontrollability of representations intrinsic to the nature of the agreements making for the idealistic achievement of universal communication in 34 totality, yet it always remains incomplete. W. J. T. Mitchell observes, “Representation is that by which we make our will known and, simultaneously, that which alienates our will from ourselves in both the aesthetic and political spheres” (21). The system of representation, such as languages and bodily appearances, is a social construct making possible the communicative process of identification and, simultaneously, creating an epistemological void that prevents the communication from being fully accomplished. This gap is where fantasy with a spectral power operates in the process of identification and fills up the gap, and thus secures the discursive certainty of a community in which the ideological transparency of a hegemonic discourse comes true.

**Debate is a communicative activity which forces coercive mimetism which gauges successful assimilation that excludes Asian bodies. Language marks impossible social compliance for the Asian and separates them from the rest of the students.**

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﻿MIMICRY; OR, THE MELANCHOLIC MACHINE **Racial melancholia as psychic splitting and national dis-ease opens on the interconnected terrains of mimicry, ambivalence, and the stereotype**. In his seminal essay “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” Homi Bhabha describes the ways in which a colonial regime compels the colonized subject to mimic Western ideals of whiteness. At the same time, this mimicry is also condemned to failure. Bhabha writes, “Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, **mimicry must continually reproduce its slippage, its excess, its difference.… Almost the same but not white**.”28 Bhabha locates and labels the social imperative to assimilate as the colonial structure of mimicry. He highlights not only the social performance but also its inevitable, built-in failure. **This doubling of difference that is almost the same but not quite, almost the same but not white, results in ambivalence, which comes to define the failure of mimicry.** Here we elaborate on Bhabha’s observations of mimicry with its intrasubjective internalization into the psychic domain through the logic of racial melancholia. It is important to remember that, as with Bhabha’s analysis of mimicry in the colony, Freud marks ambivalence as one of melancholia’s defining characteristics. In describing the genealogy of ambivalence in melancholia, Freud himself moves from the domain of the social to the realm of the psychic. He notes that the “conflict due to ambivalence, which sometimes arises from real experiences, sometimes more from constitutional factors, must not be overlooked among the preconditions of melancholia.”29 According to Freud, melancholia not only traces an internalized pathological identification with what was once an external but now lost ideal. In this moving from outside to inside, we also get a strong sense of how social injunctions of mimicry configure individual psychic structures as split and dis-eased. The ambivalence that comes to define Freud’s concept of melancholia is one that finds its origins and routes in social history—in colonial and racial structures impelling performative displays of mimicry and man. It is crucial to extend Bhabha’s theories on colonial mimicry to the domestic landscape of race relations in the United States—a postcolonial nation itself—in order to consider how we might usefully explore this concept for Asian Americans. One potential site of investigation is the racial stereotype discussed above—the model minority myth. In an earlier essay titled “The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism,” Bhabha aligns ambivalence and splitting with the stereotype, suggesting that the performance of mimicry and the phenomenon of the stereotype be considered together. The stereotype, Bhabha writes, “is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always ‘in place,’ already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated … for it is the force of ambivalence that gives the colonial stereotype its currency.”30 If we conceptualize the model minority myth as a privileged stereotype through which Asian Americans appear as subjects in the contemporary social domain, then we gain a better understanding of how mimicry specifically functions as a material practice in racial melancholia. That is, **Asian Americans are forced to mimic the model minority stereotype in order to be recognized by mainstream society—in order to be, in order to be seen at all**. However, to the extent that this mimicry of the model minority stereotype functions only to estrange Asian Americans from mainstream norms and ideals (as well as from their own histories), mimicry can operate only as a melancholic process**. As both a social and a psychic malady, mimicry and the model minority myth distance Asian Americans from the mimetic ideals of the nation. For Asian Americans, mimicry is always a partial success as well as a partial failure to assimilate into regimes of whiteness.** Let us analyze this dynamic from yet another angle. Although Asian Americans are now largely thought of as model minorities exemplifying the “American dream,” this stereotype of material success is partial because it is configured primarily as economic achievement (in spite of extreme poverty in various Asian American communities) rather than social or cultural belonging. The putative success of the model minority subject comes to mask the limits of his political representation and agency. It covers over her inability to gain “full” and “well-rounded” subjectivities—to be politicians, athletes, artists, and activists, for example—to be recognized as a “typical American,” to invoke the exact title of Gish Jen’s novel from 1991. To occupy the model minority position, Asian American subjects must therefore submit to a model of economic rather than political and cultural legitimation. To this day, widespread social and parental pressures often dictate that Asian American students must opt for “safe”professional and upwardly mobile careers— doctor, engineer, lawyer— often at the expense of individual desires and psychic well-being—“doing well versus feeling well.”31They must not contest the dominant order of things; they must not “rock the boat”or draw attention to themselves. It is often difficult for our Asian American patients and students to articulate or to acknowledge their desires, as the model minority stereotype demands not only an enclosed but also a passive self-sufficiency and compliance. Drawing from Jacques Lacan’s idea of the subject as a desiring subject, Antonio Viego has described a similar prioritizing of needs over desires in the context of Latino immigration. He describes this process as the psychic production of a “dead subject,”the creation of a subject dead to his or her desires.32 Insofar as both social and parental pressures emphasize needs over desires— necessity over extravagance in Sau-ling W ong’s elegant formulation— melancholia and the death drive cannot be far behind.33 The model minority stereotype also delineates Asian Americans as academically successful but rarely well-rounded—well-rounded in tacit comparison to a normative white student body. Here is another example of Bhabha’s concept of mimicry as nearly successful imitation. This not quite successful performance attempts to cover over that gap—the failure of well­ roundedness— as well as that unavoidable ambivalence resulting from this tacit comparison in which the Asian American student is seen as lacking and not fully assimilated. This social failure incites a psychic ambivalence that characterizes the racialized subject’s identifications with dominant ideals of whiteness as pathological. This is an ambivalence that opens upon the landscape of melancholia and depression for many Asian American students. Those Asian Americans who do not fit into the model minority stereotype are altogether erased from—are not recognized by—mainstream society. Like Kingston’s grandfather in China Men, they are often rejected by their own families as well. The difficulty of negotiating this unwieldy stereotype is that, unlike most negative stereotypes of African Americans, the model minority myth is considered to be a “positive”representation— a model of social achievement and exceptionalism. In this regard, not only mainstream society but also Asian Americans themselves become attached to, and divided by, its seemingly admirable qualities without sufficiendy recognizing its liabilities—what the political theorist Wendy Brown describes as a “wounded attachment.”34 According to Bhabha, in its doubleness the stereotype, like mimicry, creates a gap embedded in an unrecognized structure of ambivalence. In Jen’s Typical American, for instance, we encounter Ralph Chang, who chases the American dream through his attempts to build a fried-chicken empire, the “Chicken Palace.”Eventually, the franchise fails, and the first “a”falls off the “Chicken Palace”sign which becomes “Chicken P\_lace.”This falling off is the linguistic corollary to the gap in the American dream that Ralph unsuccessfully mimes. Perhaps it is in this gap—in this emptiness—that melancholia emerges and comes to inhabit. It is also where the negotiation between mourning and melancholia is staged. MOURNING/MELANCHOLIA/IMMIGRATION The structure of mimicry gestures to the partial success and partial failure to mourn our identifications with whiteness. Moreover, it also gestures to our partial success and partial failure to mourn our identifications and affiliations with Asian cultures. Thus far, we have been focusing on the loss of whiteness as an ideal structuring the assimilation and racialization processes of second- generation Asian Americans. However, the lost object can be multifaceted. Since the reformation of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, demographically there are more first-generation Asian American immigrants living in the United States today than any other generations of Asian Americans (these patterns are shifting noticeably under globalization today, a topic of further discussion in part II). Examining Asian American experiences of exclusion from the mid-1990s, this chapter focuses on the second-generation offspring of these first-generation immigrants who at that time filled our classrooms and clinics. Hence, it focuses on the psychic dynamics of mourning and melancholia in relation to problems of immigration and intergenerational losses between first- and second-generation Asian Americans. Generationally, racial melancholia delineates a psychic process by which an intersubjective subject-subject relationship between mainstream and minority groups as well as between the first- and the second-generation Asian American parents and children becomes configured as an intrasubjective psychic predicament of loss and exclusion. The experience of immigration itself is based on a structure of mourning. When one leaves one’s country of origin—voluntarily or involuntarily—one must mourn a host of losses both concrete and abstract. These include homeland, family, language, identity, property, status in community—the list goes on. In Freud’s theory of mourning, one works through and finds closure to these losses by investing in new objects— in the American dream, for example. Our attention to the problematics of mimicry, performance, ambivalence, and the stereotype, as well as our earlier analysis of the legal history of exclusion and bars to naturalization and citizenship for Asian Americans, reveals a social structure that prevents the immigrant from fully assimilating into the American melting pot. From another perspective, it denies him or her the capacity to invest in new objects. The inability to invest in new objects, we must remember, is part of Freud’s definition of melancholia. Given the ways in which Asian American immigrants are foreclosed from fully assimilating into mainstream culture, are they consigned to a perpetually melancholic status? If so, how do we begin to address Freud’s notion of melancholia as pathological? Clearly not all Asian Americans are consigned to melancholy or depression. If this is the case, how do first-generation immigrants negotiate and mitigate their losses? How do their second-generation offspring inherit and inhabit these losses? If the losses suffered by first-generation immigrants are not resolved and mourned in the process of assimilation—if libido is not replenished by the investment in new objects, new communities, and new ideals—then the melancholia that ensues can be traumatically passed down to the second generation. At the same time, can the hope of assimilation and pursuit of the American dream also be transferred? If so, we might say that mourning and melancholia are reenacted and lived out by second-generation children in their own attempts to assimilate and to negotiate the American dream. Here, immigration and assimilation characterize a process involving not just mourning or melancholia but the intergenerational negotiation between mourning and melancholia. Configured as such, this notion begins to depathologize melancholia by situating it as the intersubjective unfolding and outcome of the mourning process that underwrites the various psychic investments and losses connected to the immigration experience. CASE HISTORY: ELAINE Let us turn to a clinical example. Elaine, a US-born Korean American female college student, grew up in Texas. Her father is a professor, and her mother is a homemaker. An academic dean referred Elaine to me (Dr. Han) in 1997 because she was at risk of failing her first year in college. In a tearful presentation, Elaine reported, “My parents have sacrificed everything to raise me here. If my parents had stayed in Korea, my mom would be so much happier and not depressed. She would have friends to speak Korean with, my father would be a famous professor, and we would be better off socially and economically. I wouldn’t be so pressured to succeed. They sacrificed everything for me, and now it’s up to me to please them, and to do well in school.”When asked the reasons for her academic probation, she responded, “I didn’t do well because at a certain point, I didn’t care anymore, about myself or anything else.” Elaine’s case is an illustration of an intergenerational transference between immigrant parents and a child that might be usefully described through the logic of racial melancholia. The loss experienced by the parents’failure to achieve the American dream—to achieve a standard of living and a level of social acceptance greater than what they could have putatively achieved in Korea— is a loss transferred onto and incorporated by Elaine for her to work out and to repair. In particular, Elaine reenacts these losses through her relationship with her mother. Elaine’s depression is a result of internalized guilt and residual anger that she not only feels toward but also identifies with in her mother. Through this incorporation, she also functions as the placeholder of her mother’s depression. This mother-daughter predicament has been widely debated in feminist circles.35 Here, the question is how race intersects and reconfigures what is considered a strongly gendered dynamic. This intersection of sexual and racial difference in first- and second- generation intersubjective conflict is a common narrative in Asian American literature as well. Numerous stories portray the first generation (and often the second generation) as being a lost generation—bereft, traumatized, with few material or psychic resources.36Is it, however, only at the moment in which the first generation acknowledges its disappointments and failure to achieve the American dream that this theme of first-generation sacrifice then emerges to be retroactively projected onto the second generation? In other words, are Asian American parents as completely selfless as the theme of sacrifice and ideals of Confucian filial tradition suggest, or is this idea a compensatory gesture that attaches itself to the losses, disappointments, and failures associated with immigration? Could the ambitions of Elaine’s father to become a professor in an American university have motivated the family’s immigration, or was it perhaps his inability to succeed in Korea—especially because of constraints on opportunities connected to various military conflicts during World War II and the ensuing Cold War? Sacrifice, it is important to remember, is built on the assumption of nonequivalence and the melancholic notion that what is forfeited and lost can never be recuperated. In turn, do children of immigrants “repay” this sacrifice only by repeating and perpetuating its melancholic logic—by berating and sacrificing themselves? But could sacrifice also be considered the displaced residue of hope— a hope for the repairing of melancholia, of achieving the American dream? Can hope, too, be transferred from parent to child, or from child to parent? Elaine’s case evokes Rea Tajiri’s moving documentary film History and Memory (1991).37 History and Memory is about a young Japanese American girl whose parents endure internment during World War II. Whereas the girl’s mother has repressed all memories of the internment experience, the daughter has nightmares that she cannot explain—recurring images of a young woman at a watering well. The daughter is depressed, and the parents argue over the etiology of her depression. Eventually, the daughter discovers that these nightmares are reenactments of the mother’s histories in camp. Ironically, the mother has history but no memory, while the daughter has memory but no history. For both mother and daughter, history and memory do not come together until the daughter visits the former site of the internment camp, Poston. There she realizes that it is her mother’s history that she remembers. Tajiri’s film is an eloquent disquisition on racial melancholia. It is a compelling example of the ways in which historical traumas of loss, grief, and forgetting are passed down from one generation to another unconsciously— how, as Freud remarks in his essay “The Unconscious”(1915), “the unconscious of one human being can react upon that of another, without passing through the conscious.”38The daughter’s psychic predicament illustrates Freud’s observation that the most difficult losses suffered in melancholia are unconscious ones, psychic forfeitures that cannot be properly grieved and for which Freud could offer no simple solution or remedy. Yet, at the same time, it also diverges from Freud’s conception of the disease insofar as it posits a theory of melancholia that is not individual but that is intergenerationally shared among members of a social group, Japanese American internees. It also departs from Freud’s definition of melancholia as pathology and permanence. Here, the hope for psychic health is stitched into the fabric of melancholia but only as an optative gesture that must be redeemed by subsequent generations. In contrast to Freud’s contention that melancholia is a classic intrasubjective psychic condition, Tajiri’s version of melancholia approaches this condition from a different perspective. It refines our theory of racial melancholia as a psychic state focused on bonds of displaced love and hate among a collective—an intersubjective collective— that might be addressed and resolved across generations. Indeed, in History and Memory the daughter’s return to Poston initiates an incipient healing process in her mother. In melancholia, the subject’s turning from outside (intersubjective) to inside (intrapsychic) threatens to render social history invisible. What is striking in both these examples, of Elaine and of History and Memory, is the manner in which the daughters’bodies and voices become substitutes for those of the mothers— not just the mothers’bodies and voices but also something that is unconsciously lost in them. To return to Freud, the melancholic “knows whom [s]he has lost but not what [s]he has lost in [her].”39Elaine’s narrative and the Japanese American daughter’s nightmares are not their own histories. These daughters have absorbed and been saturated by their mothers’losses. The mothers’voices haunt the daughters. These losses and voices are melancholically displaced from the external world of the social into the internal world of the psyche. The anger that these daughters feel toward the loved object is internalized as depression and anger toward the self. Freud’s essay reminds us that the reproaches against the self are, in fact, displaced reproaches against the loved object that have been shifted onto the individual’s own ego.40 In this respect, racial melancholia highlights a particular subject-object confusion, as it traces a trajectory from love to hate of the lost object, indeed orienting the production of racial hatred over love. In the course of moving from the outside world into the domain of the psyche, this hate is brought into the shelter of the ego, identified with the self, and subsequently transformed into self-hate. As such, the internal monologue that the daughters direct toward themselves should rightly be an external dialogue between daughter and mother —indeed, toward the larger social world around them. If racial melancholia traces the social exclusions of immigration, assimilation, and racialization as form of self-hate, how might we address the problem as a subject-subject relation, a subject-subject (com)plaint? In the Psychic Life of Power, Judith Butler writes, “The melancholic would have saidsomething, if he or she could, but did not, and now believes in the sustaining power of the voice. Vainly, the melancholic now says what he or she would have said, addressed only to himself, as one who is already split off from himself, but whose power of self-address depends upon this self-forfeiture. The melancholic thus burrows in a direction opposite to that in which he might find a fresher trace of the lost other, attempting to resolve the loss through psychic substitutions and compounding the loss as he goes.”41This turning from outside to inside threatens to erase the political bases of melancholia, and to obscure the history of the melancholic (racial) subject in relation to the subject of (racial) history, precisely as it configures hate as a displaced residue of love. To approach this dynamic from another angle, when Asian American students seek therapy, their mental health issues are overwhelmingly perceived as intergenerational familial conflicts. That is, they are often diagnosed as being exclusively symptomatic of cultural rather than social or political conflicts. By configuring Asian values and Confucian filial tradition as the exclusive source of all intergenerational dis-ease, a pathologized Asian culture comes to serve as an alibi for a panoply of mental health issues and symptoms.42 These predicaments may in fact trace their etiology not to questions of Asian cultural difference but rather to historical forms of institutionalized racism and economic exploitation—to the subject of (racial) history. The segregation of Asian American mental health issues into the domain of cultural difference covers over structural questions of institutional violence and inequality, as well as histories of whiteness as property, as they circulate both inside and outside the therapeutic space of the clinic. For instance, not to account for a history of Japanese internment and indefinite detention when analyzing Tajiri’s mother- daughter family conflict serves not only to repress and to deny this history but also to redouble and to intensify the source of the daughter’s melancholia and depression. Lowe writes in Immigrant Acts, “Interpreting Asian American culture exclusively in terms of the master narratives of generational conflict and filial relation essentializes Asian American culture, obscuring the particularities and incommensurabilities of class, gender, and national diversities among Asians. The reduction of the cultural politics of racialized ethnic groups, like Asian Americans, to first-generation/second-generation struggles displaces social differences into a privatized familial opposition. Such reductions contribute to the aestheticizing commodification of Asian American cultural differences, while denying the immigrant histories of material exclusion and differentiation.”43 A therapeutic process that solely attributes Asian cultural differences to intergenerational conflict may result in the failure to cure; even more, it may also serve to endanger further the mental health of the patient. CASE HISTORY: NELSON This discussion on intergenerational dilemmas of immigration and assimilation brings us to the related issue of mourning, melancholia, and language. Nelson, a first-generation Japanese American student who emigrated from Osaka to New Jersey when he was five, sought therapy with me (Dr. Han) in 1996, presenting chronic struggles with depression associated with racial conflict. Nelson is the eldest child and has two siblings, a brother and a sister, both of whom were born in the United States. Before Nelson entered school, his mother spoke only Japanese to the children. When Nelson started kindergarten, his teacher admonished his mother to replace Japanese with English at home if she wanted her children to assimilate and to become successful students. Despite the mother’s broken English, she followed the teacher’s instructions assiduously, speaking only English to her children. Nelson recounts a story that took place later in grade school. During a reading lesson, he mispronounced “crooked” as “crookd”(one syllable). His teacher shamed him publicly for his failed speech act—his failed act of mimicry —and demanded to know where he learned to mispronounce such a simple word. Nelson reluctantly replied that he learned this pronunciation from his mother. Nelson remembers, in particular, feelings of social embarrassment and shame from the ridicule of his teacher and classmates. What we learn about Nelson’s case history is that, although his original connection to the primary object (the mother) was through the Japanese language, this connection was interrupted by a foreign property, English. The mother’s poor mimicry of English severed and revised the earliest mother-child attachment, one brokered in Japanese. As such, Nelson could no longer mirror himself from his mother, in Japanese or in English. This estrangement from language, both native and foreign, is a double loss. Although acquiring a new language (English) should be perceived as a positive cognitive development, what is often not acknowledged sufficiently is the concomitant psychic trauma triggered by the loss of what had once been a safe, nurturing, and familiar language to the young child (Japanese). The loss of Japanese as a safe and nurturing object reveals another way to think about racial melancholia in relation to processes of immigration and assimilation. In Nelson’s case history, melancholia results not only from a thwarted identification with a dominant ideal of unattainable whiteness but also a vexed relationship to a compromised Japaneseness. Nelson’s situation reveals how on two fronts ideals of whiteness and ideals of Japaneseness are lost and unresolved. Here the problem of accent marks an impossible social compliance. In both instances, language is the privileged vehicle— the privileged property— by which standards of successful assimilation and failed integration are measured. In this sense, **language itself might be thought of as a kind of property right and stereotype, demanding a flawless mimicry on the part of the young Nelson, whose failed performance leads him to shame and self-abasement at a crucial moment of social and psychic development.** Nelson’s transition from Japanese to English is another example of the negotiation between mourning and melancholia in the immigration and assimilation process. That is, although he suffers a loss and revaluation of his mother tongue, his transition into the adopted ideal of the English language is anything but smooth. **We need to emphasize that the shaming ritual to which the grade-school teacher subjected Nelson—one all too common in the Darwinian space of the classroom— is one that not merely makes his transition into English difficult but also demonizes and repudiates the mother** (and the mother tongue and accent) at the same time. What was once a loved and safe object is retroactively transformed into an object of shame and insecurity. To the extent that the figure of the mother originally represents safe notions of “home,” Nelson’s estrangement from his mother, and from his mother tongue, renders her unheimlich— unhomely, unfamiliar, uncanny— a topic that critical race scholar Mari Matsuda has explored in her legal analyses of accent discrimination.44 **The relationship between language, pedagogy, and assimilation into a mainstream national citizenry is examined also in a short story by Monique T. D. Truong**. “Kelly”(1991) is about a young Vietnamese refugee, Thuy-Mai, who finds herself in the improbable space of a North Carolina classroom of 1975. Truong’s narrator composes a distressing epistolary monologue to her one and only (and now absent) friend from that dark period of her life, Kelly. In doing so, she reenacts the melancholic logic discussed above. That is, an intersubjective external dialogue meant for two parties is melancholically internalized and transformed into an intrasubjective monologue of one remarkable for its anger and solipsism. What is an epistolary, after all, other than an impassioned (but not necessarily answered) plea to the other? Truong’s narrator recalls their grade-school teacher: Kelly, remember how Mrs. Hammerick talked about Veteran’s Day? How about the Day of Infamy when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor? Mrs. Hammerick, you know, the mayor’s wife always had a sweet something surrounding her like she had spent too much time pulling taffy.... Kelly, you only knew that she liked the Beths and the Susans cause they wore pink and never bulged and buckled out of their shirt plackets. I was scared of her like no dark corners could ever scare me. You have to know that all the while she was teaching us history she was telling, with her language for the deaf, blind, and dumb; she was telling all the boys in our class that I was Pearl and my last name was Harbor. They understood her like she was speaking French and their names were all Claude and Pierre.45 Truong’s story expands our discussion of language and its performative effects on the constitution of good and bad national subjects. Here, Mrs. Hammerick’s common language for the “deaf, blind, and dumb”—a language from which Thuy-Mai is emphatically excluded—is used to create and then separate good students from bad students within the institutionalized space of the classroom. The Susans and the Beths, the Claudes and the Pierres, are all, as Louis Althusser would put it, “interpellated”by the mayor’s wife as good citizen- subjects of the classroom and nation-state.46 **Truong emphasizes how education is a primary site through which narratives of national identity and belonging are established and reinforced through pedagogical compliance.** At the same time, the Vietnamese refugee, Thuy-Mai, is pathologized as Asian enemy, dismissively labeled “Pearl Harbor,”erroneously conflated with the Japanese, and implicitly rendered a menace to the coherence and integrity of the US nation-state. Mrs. Hammerick is, of course, not literally speaking French (though Vietnam was of course colonized earlier by France), but **Truong’s attention to language underscores the ways in which an unconscious discourse of colonialism and race, of national inclusion and exclusion, is circulated in the classroom.** Furthermore, as Lowe points out, Mrs. Hammerick’s nationalizing tract is simultaneously a gendered discourse: “The narrator’s observations that the teacher’s history lesson addresses ‘all the boys’further instantiates how the American nationalist narrative recognizes, recruits, and incorporates male subjects, while ‘feminizing’and silencing the students who do not conform to that notion of patriotic subjectivity.”47 Racialized subjects, such as Nelson and Thuy-Mai, become “good”citizens when they identify with the paternal state and accept, as Lowe summarizes, “the terms of this identification by subordinating [their] racial difference and denying [their] ties with the feminized and racialized ‘motherland.’”48 In the following section, we turn to Melanie Klein’s theories of good and bad objects, of good and bad mothers and motherlands, to explore the politics of aggression and destructiveness, of guilt and reparation, as they configure the psychic limits of racial melancholia and expand on Freud’s account of loss and interminable mourning.

**Learning spaces are built to exclude Asian Bodies. Collective forgetting of the space acts to deconstruct the psychological impacts. This is not a request, we demand that Asian violence and exclusion be recognized. Thus the ROB is to reject every instance of anti-asianness in the classroom – anything else normalizes violence**

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NATIONAL MELANCHOLIA For Asian Americans and other people of color, suspended assimilation into mainstream culture may involve not only debilitating personal consequences; ultimately, it also constitutes the foundation for a type of national melancholia, a collective national haunting, with destructive effects. In Caucasia, the ambivalence characterizing the narrator’s passing into whiteness leaves her with the constant and eerie feeling of “contamination.”13 Writing about the nature of collective identifications, Freud notes in “Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego” (1921), “In a group every sentiment and act is contagious, and contagious to such a degree that an individual readily sacrifices his personal interest to the collective interest. This is an aptitude very contrary to his nature, and of which a man is scarcely capable, except when he makes part of a group.”14 Our analysis insists on a consideration of what happens when the demand to sacrifice the personal to collective interest is accompanied not by inclusion in—but rather exclusion from—the larger group. *It reorients psychic problems of racial melancholia toward social problems concerning legal histories of whiteness as property and, in particular, exclusion laws and bars to naturalization and citizenship for Asian Americans as a type of property right.* As we know, ***the formation of the US nation-state*** *entailed—and* ***continues to entail****—a history of* ***institutionalized exclusions,*** *legal and otherwise*. Part of our introduction focused on the transatlantic slave trade and indigenous dispossession. Here, it is vital to consider the long history of legalized exclusion **of Asian American** immigrants andcitizens alike—from Japanese internment and indefinite detention during World War II to earlier **exclusion acts** legislated by Congress, brokered by the executive, and upheld by the judiciary against every Asian immigrant group.15 For example, from 1882 to 1943, *Chinese immigrants experienced the longest legalized history of exclusion and* ***bars to*** *naturalization and* ***citizenship****—the first raced-based exclusions in US history.* To cite but one specific instance, in 1888 the US Congress retroactively terminated the legal right of some twenty thousand Chinese residents to reenter the United States after visiting China. Those excluded from reentry were also barred from recovering their personal property remaining in the country, underscoring the ways in which *race, citizenship, and property were simultaneously* ***managed by the state to control*** *and restrict* ***flows of*** *both* ***Asian labor and capital****.* This law was followed by a series of further exclusion laws, as well as accompanied by legislative **acts** against miscegenation and the ownership of private property, culminating in the National Origins Act (1924) and the Tydings-McDuffie Act (1934), which effectively **halted all immigration from Asia** for an indefinite period. As Teemu Ruskola notes, at the very historical moment when “the United States was pleased to refer to its China policy as Open Door … it hardly escaped the Chinese that the door swung one way only.”16 Yet, in our multicultural and colorblind age, *few people remember this history of racially motivated discrimination against Asian Americans that laid the legal foundation for the emergence of the figure of the “illegal immigrant” and of* ***“alien citizenship”*** *preoccupying so much of political debate concerning immigration today. This history of exclusion is* ***barely taught in*** *US universities or high* ***schools****—indeed, colorblindness and the model minority myth demand a forgetting of these events of group discrimination in the name of abstract equality and individual meritocracy.* A return to this history thus expands our prior analyses of race as relation and whiteness as property to consider how *the legal mechanisms of citizenship have broadly functioned as a kind of restricted property right. For Asian immigrants, these mechanisms have mediated a long history of social exclusion and inclusion in US law and society. Racial melancholia can be seen as one profound psychic effect marking these histories of legal exclusion from the nation-state and prohibitions from national belonging. Today, discourses of American exceptionalism and democratic myths of abstract equality and individualism demand a forgetting of these formative losses and exclusions, an enforced psychic amnesia that can return only as a type of repetitive national haunting—a type of negative or absent presence*.17 The contemporary model minority stereotype that defines Asian Americans is both a product of—and productive of—this negative or absent presence.18 Asian American model minority discourse emerged in the postwar period after the lifting of legalized exclusion—in the wake of Cold War conflict, the US civil rights movements, and the reformation of the Immigration and Nationality Act (Hart-Celler Act) of 1965. The Hart-Celler Act abolished the earlier immigration quotas based on national origins at the heart of US immigration policy for nearly half a century, replacing it with a system of preferences focused on the technical skills of immigrants and on family reunification. *It dramatically shifted immigration patterns to the United States and spurred a “brain drain” of settlers from Asia (and Latin America).* At the same time, Hart-Celler also created a vast and largely unacknowledged force of low-income and undocumented migrants from South Asia, new areas of China, particularly Fujian province, and Southeast Asia. *This* ***“yellowing” of the US*** *nation-state* ***reversed*** *a long history of* ***anti-Asian exclusion*** *precisely under the banner of model minority citizenship* ***and*** *the* ***collective forgetting*** *of this history of exclusion and its unauthorized subjects.* The model minority myth identifies the academic success of second-generation Asian American immigrant children as dispositive of the United States as a land of equal opportunity free of racial discrimination or distress. Thereby, it functions as a national tool that manages and erases a long history of institutionalized exclusion by characterizing Asian American success precisely as the result—rather than something that occurred despite the lack—of equal opportunity in the United States. In turn, the deployment of the model minority myth configures the unequal status of African Americans in US culture and society as a self-inflicted injury. Resisting the invidious political juxtaposition of Asian American “success” with African American “failure,” comparative race scholars have sought to reformulate this regulatory dialectic. Over a hundred years ago, W. E. B. Du Bois asked African Americans in The Souls of Black Folk (1903), “How does it feel to be a problem?”19 Today, comparative race scholars have revised Du Bois’s earlier inquiry, asking Asian Americans, “How does it feel to be a solution?”20 (We return to this dynamic in detail is chapter 3 on parachute children and psychic nowhere.) Put in terms of comparative race relations, Ellen Wu observes that during the prewar era of exclusion and yellow peril, Asians were defined as definitely not white. However, *following the postwar era of inclusion, citizenship, and the emergence of model minority stereotype, Asians were defined as definitely not black.*21 Understanding this triangulation is key to apprehending the ways in which racial binaries of black and white mask complex social relations of race while preventing political coalitions and alliances. Effacing unequal histories of racial discrimination, this divide and conquer strategy emerges most forcefully today in contemporary debates about affirmative action that seek to pit the interests of African Americans and Asian Americans against one another. The model minority stereotype is a myth because it homogenizes widely disparate Asian American and Asian immigrant groups by generalizing them all as academically and economically successful, with no social problems to speak of. In this manner, the stereotype works to deny, in Lisa Lowe’s words, the “heterogeneity, hybridity, and multiplicity” of various Asian American individuals and groups who do not fit its ideals of model citizenry.22 *The pervasiveness of the model minority stereotype in our contemporary national imagination thus works as one important melancholic mechanism facilitating the erasure and loss of repressed Asian American identities as well as histories of discrimination and exclusion. These identities and histories can return only as a type of ghostly presence.* In this sense, *the* ***Asian American*** *model minority* ***subject*** *also* ***endures in the US historical imaginary*** *as a melancholic national object—****as a haunting*** *specter to democratic ideals of inclusion that cannot quite get over these legislated histories of loss.* The psychic consequences that this model of national melancholia has exacted on the Asian American psyche are extensively explored and interrogated in Asian American cultural productions. One compelling example comes from Maxine Hong Kingston’s China Men (1980). In Kingston’s historical novel, an imaginary chronicle of several successive generations of male ancestors in the United States, the narrator speculates about the disappearance of the “Grandfather of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.” After he helps to complete the transcontinental railroad, the greatest technological feat of ﻿the nineteenth century, Ah Goong vanishes. Kingston writes, “Maybe he hadn’t died in San Francisco, it was just his papers that burned; it was just that his existence was outlawed by Chinese Exclusion Acts. The family called him Fleaman. They did not understand his accomplishments as an American ancestor, a holding, homing ancestor of this place.”23 *Kingston understands that the law’s refusal to recognize Chinese immigrants as citizens “outlaws” their existence, subjecting them to legal erasure as well as institutional violence*: “It was dangerous to stay,” she observes in the context of the “Golden Spike” ceremony commemorating the railroad’s completion. “The Driving Out had begun. Ah Goong does not appear in railroad photographs.”24 At the same time, Kingston also underscores how this historical repudiation of the Asian laborer gains its psychic efficacy through a simultaneous internalization of its interdictions on the part of those excluded themselves. That is, the grandfather’s own family members refuse to recognize him as “an American ancestor, a holding, homing ancestor of this place.” *They cannot perceive the “Fleaman’s” accomplishments building the transcontinental railroad as legitimizing his membership in the American nation.* How, in turn, can it be possible to see themselves as legitimate members of this society? In this regard, racial melancholia can be described as splitting the Asian American psyche. This cleaving of the psyche can be productively thought about in terms of an altered, racialized model of classic Freudian fetishism.25 That is, assimilation into the national fabric demands a psychic splitting on the part of the Asian American subject who knows and does not know, at once, that she or he is part of the larger social body. In the same breath, fetishism also describes mainstream society’s disavowal and projection of otherness onto a disparaged group that is then homogenized and reduced to a stereotype. In this manner, racial fetishism delineates a psychic process by which difference is assumed and projected and then negated and denied, returning us to social dynamics of Myrdal’s “American dilemma.”

Thus, the advocacy refuse Asian subject formation. Signifiers will always fail to bridge the gap between the real and symbolic, but self-negation makes the subject unfathomable in ideological edifice.

Kim 2 [Asian] (Chang-Hee Kim, The Fantasy of Asian America: Identity, Ideology, and Desire) 2009 //Nato

In Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit, Georg Hegel concentrates on the concept of struggle in the dialectical formation of subjectivity. His well-known dialectical division, the master vs. slave, is clearly indicative of their uneven relation. In Hegel, the freedom to gain the true sense of self is not the subject’s recognizing the objectified other in self-reflectivity; rather, that is its eliminating the other from itself to consolidate its hegemonic—whether master or slave—position and thus to become independent of the other permanently. Nonetheless, the Hegelian subject is aware that its dialectical positionality as either master or slave relies on the other, without which it cannot survive, realizing its ontological limitation as such. This is a critical moment when the ontological gap of the subject erupts, separating its becoming from its being. That is, the 44 subject as either master or slave can never be the other, for their relationship always remains ontologically distanced in the perpetual process of becoming. Yet the relationship between master and slave is different from that of the Adornian model in which both subject and other are objectively distinct in self-reflectivity. In Hegel, their distanced relationship is rather what evokes the desire and struggle for mutual identification not only to remove one from the other but also to become a free independent subject. Moreover, Hegel insists that the relationship take on one’s desire to dominate the other for the sake of its self-reliance, which nevertheless ends up impossible and incomplete in that it is suicidal. In the Hegelian dialectic, the master’s position is indebted to that of the slave insofar as the latter, i.e., the enemy, is what makes the former ontologically consistent in itself. In other words, the true sense of freedom for the subject in Hegel is to either become the enemy or eliminate it, either of which means the death of the subject. The Hegelian subject essentially attempts to carry out the “absolute negation” of the selves in a fashion to negate their own otherness in themselves and to “raise their self-certainty (about existing for-self) to truth in the ‘other’ as well as in themselves” (Hegel 55). Rather than pretend to remain objective and distanced in treating the other, the Hegelian subject strives to secure its identitarian position in light of the life-death struggle between master and slave. The eventual way to obtain freedom from its own ontological limitation that the subject cannot be in-andfor itself as a whole is paradoxically negating its positive being dependent on that of the other. This illustrates the subject’s death instinct towards “nothingness,” which makes our knowledge on the subject inexorably entangled in inconsistencies and contradictions. 45 In Hegel, the subject’s death instinct, an ontological abyss that remains unfathomable in its ideological edifice, is the only way to realize its “pure existence-for-self” (Hegel 55) Identity is apparitional in nature, for as discussed earlier, we all can become a/the “real Asian American” but never will be, and the resulting gap between our being and becoming is where the subject endlessly strives to secure its identitarian position in light of the life-death struggle against the other in-and-for itself. The realization of identity is its purist objectification in that, in neoliberal capitalism, identity is equivalent to a commodity imbued with a cultural capital of dual meanings: an owned property of the subject feeling happy (with no more work) and an alienated property of the subject feeling miserable (with endless work) as Karl Marx teaches us.16 In Race and Resistance, Viet T. Nguyen describes Asian American identity as the cultural capital of both accommodation and resistance in U.S. society, and it well explains the point I am making here (143-44): on the one hand, Asian Americans make a good relationship with the society that praises them as a model minority, as a civil subject fully assimilable to the mainstream; on the other hand, they make a bad relationship with the society that stereotypes their identity as a yellow peril, viciously alienating them from the mainstream. Asian American identity has its multiple meanings with an apparitional effect that changes the ontological meaning of its referent and at the same time, reduces them back to their archetype: Charlie Chan or the gook. While the identity acts as a conduit that connects Asian Americans with the society for their mutual understanding, this communicative sign always signifies itself as inconsistent, contradictory, and, as Nguyen puts it, “hypocritical” in representing Asian Americans as a whole. It is no wonder Nguyen observes that Asian Americans are facing the “crisis of representation over ideological diversity” in identity politics (9). Identity works as a vanishing mediator that connects the hegemonic system of ideological reality with the identitarian subject as the constituent of the former. Such a vanishing mediator as identity, through its apparitional as well as self-effacing effect, plays a role in maintaining the systematic order of the reality by transforming the preontological chaotic multitude, namely, individuals with identities, into, as Slavoj Žižek puts it, “the semblance of a positive objective order of reality” (Ticklish 158). The Hegelian dialectic shows that the subject comes to have its identity rendered apparitional and thus precarious. Simultaneously, the identity never completely sits itself apart from its proprietor because of its dialectical relationship with it, the subject, in terms of the life/death struggle, which makes the mutual gap never closed. This gap can be translated as a minimal void that prevents the subject from being, that is, fully getting identified with, its identitarian self, which potentially gives rise to the totalitarian racist subject: being fully identified as white, “the kind of men” who can kill Vincent Chin, or anyone with a darker skin, with impunity.

ON CASE