Table Of Contents

Table Of Contents

Acknowledgments **2**

Introduction **3**

Background and Literature Review **9**

Background 9

Literature Review 12

Theory **17**

Analysis Chapter **23**

Conclusion **34**

Works Cited **36**

Acknowledgments

I cannot put into words how much my family, friends, and professors have helped me throughout the entire process of not only my senior comprehensive project but also my four years here at Allegheny. I owe everything to these people and I will never forget the sacrifices they have made for me and I will take the life lessons they have instilled in me to help shape my future. Thank you to everyone, this would not have been possible without your love, dedication, and belief in me.

Introduction

When I was born, I had no voice or say on the matter of what my ethnicity or heritage was going to be. When I was conceived and brought into this world, my parents were already unconsciously priming me as a baby to fit into a specific cultural and ideological mold. Expanding upon this point, I am conveying the idea that the socioeconomic and cultural lifestyle my parents were living before I was born was in turn actively conditioning and priming my parents to teach me how to act, speak, and live in a certain manner. This, in turn, would have an everlasting effect on my existence and lifestyle because before I can even have my first thought or inclination about my own life and what I want it to be, I was told this is what it must be. As newborns, we are placed according to our race and ethnicity into specific subgroups of society and are expected to conform to predetermined ideologies that are attributed to the specific identity group we are affiliated with. Moving forward and positioning this point of view within an American lifestyle it seems to me that the traditional 'American way of life' is more concerned with the process of assimilating 'foreigners' rather than integrating them. These cultures should be welcomed into American society and recognized for their uniqueness and cultural significance as a subgroup of people that try to positively influence the ever-evolving image of what it means to be 'American'. I was born as half Italian and half Filipino. As a member of a multicultural family, growing up, I spent the majority of my life absorbing and learning about the Italian side of my family. Holidays, traditions, and major events were always centered around one half of my ethnic identity. I struggled with being able to properly express and convey my Asian ethnicity because I felt as though I did not belong or fit into what I perceived to be the definition of an Asian American identity and what that entails.

The reason why I have chosen to write about the current debate regarding how Asian Americans vs Asians 'fit' into American culture is that through a subversive form exploration, I am reflecting and writing about my own struggles with conflicting ideas of Asian-ness and American-ness. Until I came to Allegheny College, finding ways to 'properly' express both sides of my mixed ethnic heritage were beyond my comprehension and I felt trapped in this state of

racial ambiguity. However, going through college, the more classes I took, specifically in communication arts, I more I was able to slowly start to understand and appreciate the complexities of the intersectionality that goes into constructing what we call our personal identity. Angelo N. Ancheta, a professor at the Santa Clara University School of Law, tells us in his paper, "Law and Racial Hierarchy.","The representation of Asian Americans is especially elusive and often shifts, depending on context, between black and white" (Ancheta). This quote is setting the foundation of my project as a whole because it is informing us, scholars that Asian Americans are at the whim of Black & White race relations and are unable to formulate meaningful change without going through these two racial entities.

To have a proper understanding of what it means to be Asian-American, a person must first understand that being Asian-American is not one thing. Within that broad category, an individual can be Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indian, just to name a few possibilities given the vast diversity of Asian countries that are accommodated under "Asian American". People need to see that each of these ethnic groups are very different in terms of their histories, traditions, religious affiliations, values, beliefs, and representational politics. Going even further, the individuals who associate themselves as being Asian and Asian American are all different from one another and should be deciding how they can represent the diversity of what it means to be Asian (American) in media and popular culture narratives. However, the individuality and uniqueness within each of these ethnic groups is lost once they are positioned as categories within media discourses. As I stated earlier, America is more concerned with the assimilation of foreigners rather than the embracing of foreigners, and this is a major problem.

The media examples that I will be addressing in later chapters concern a racially charged incident that took place at Duke University in 2019 and the ensuing public controversy surrounding it. This incident involved a professor at Duke University Meghan Neely, a handful of other faculty members, and the Asian students in Duke University biostatistics department. Neely was supposedly approached by two faculty members within the biostatistics department, who had an issue with the fact that certain Asian students within the department had been talking loudly in Chinese in the hallways of the department. These faculty members allegedly asked

Neely to show them pictures of the students in question so that they could “remember them if the students ever interviewed for an internship or asked to work with them for a master's project” (USA Today). The faculty members in this scenario acted in a racially discriminatory manner and specifically targeted the Asian students within the department because the latter’s foreignness was presented as a ‘professional problem’ with the implication that one must speak English at all times in public spaces in America, in order to be accepted .

I want to look at this specific media controversy because it captures the current state of Asian Americans in America nicely and shows how those of Asian descent are still being overtly discriminated against, not just behind closed doors, but in some of the most prestigious academic institutions in the country. At the same time, the discrimination against non-native Asians versus Asian Americans differs significantly.

For Instance, In September 2018, the U.S. Justice and Education Departments conducted an investigation into both Yale and Harvard Universities’ admissions processes, based on issues that these universities been “suppressing the number of Asian-Americans who attend the school to make room for less-qualified students of other races” (Benner and Green). Abhorrently, Harvard University’s dean of admissions confirmed that the school uses “different SAT score standards to prospective students based on factors such as race, but insisted the practice is not discriminatory.” The screening of about 40,000 applicants results in just two-thousand acceptance letters that are issued every admissions year. Certain minority groups such as, African-Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic high schoolers with average SAT scores of 1100 out of a possible 1600 combined math and verbal, are accepted, whereas Asian-Americans need to do exceptional “at least 250 points higher – 1350 for women and 1380 for men.” (Parke). What the investigations at Harvard and Yale, is telling us scholars, is that a different type of discrimination that targets Asian Americans for being the model minority is persisting below the surface. The positive stereotype associated with Asian Americans as being academically motivated, smart, and hard-working, is, it seems, being used *against* them since the expectation is that an average SAT score for American born Asians is not good enough to get them through

the Ivy League gates, even though it gets other American minorities in, and even foreign-born Asians:

> Harvard senior Thang Diep, a refugee from Vietnam, released his marked-up Harvard application to testify in support of the Ivy League school, saying his SAT scores were below Harvard's average, but the interviewer was impressed by his personality, as well as his essay, which helped him. (Parke)

This distinction between non-native Asians who are simultaneously discriminated against for their foreignness as well as sought for their 'diversity', versus Asian American citizens who are being held to a higher standard because they are supposedly at a greater advantage for being smarter, shows the racial profiling of both groups by a hegemonic "white gaze" that decides how racial diversity is selected, represented, and policed, in elite American academic institutions of higher learning.

Black literary scholar Maurice O. Wallace has discussed how the "sociovisibility" of black masculinity enables the white gaze's to fixate or "frame" the black male body through "the doubly signifying ur trope of black masculine spectacularity" (135). Wallace is helping us to visualize how photographic images of black men are socially framed so they are viewed through a 'moral' lens that is backed by existing stereotypes within American society. Similarly, I argue, an *internalized* white gaze that we see culminate in discriminatory cases like the Duke Chinese language controversy or the Ivy League University admissions examples, uses the stereotypes of racial and sexual minorities to dictate and control 'diversity' within their midst, as represented by minority groups. In my mind this is the new form of subtle racism in the post-racial Trump era. Both foreigners and domestic minority groups are posed as a 'threat' to the American economy, and by extension, to 'real' (white) Americans. As psychologist Brenda Major and her colleagues explain Trump's success in the 2016 U.S. elections,

> … reminding White Americans high in ethnic identification that non-White racial groups will outnumber Whites in the United States by 2042 caused them to become more concerned about the declining status and influence of White Americans as a group (i.e., experience

> group status threat), and caused them to report increased support for Trump and anti-immigrant policies, as well as greater opposition to political correctness. (931)

There are a number of political scientists who believe that Trump's victory was because of economic discontent, specifically among working-class White Americans. Others suggest that support for Trump and his policies originates in anger against the existing political establishment and rejection of traditional politics (De Jonge). Further along many White Americans in the U.S. regard race relations as "zero-sum," in which attributes gains and social mobility for minorities, while at the same time means a loss for Whites (Wilkins & Kaiser) and a decrease in prejudice against minorities means increased discrimination against Whites (Norton & Sommers). Against this backdrop, therefore, President Trump's strong-arming of China and Japan on trade restrictions, and the sharp decline in immigration visas being granted to workers from South Asian countries, reflects the administration's belief that these moves will open up foreign markets to U.S. farmers and businesses, while also protecting U.S. jobs at home ("The Guardian View on Trump in Asia"; Hauslohner and Ba Tran). We can also start to understand therefore, how in the alleged "Asian century" (The Guardian view on Trump in Asia"), the mood of mainstream America is to reclaim its whiteness and "Make America Great Again."

My research question and the main focus of my comprehensive project is therefore to look at how Asians as undesirable "foreigners" have become the new targets of a "white gaze" that sees them as both un-American as proven by the fact that they speak languages other than English, and because they are potential threats to American jobs (as the future model minority). They are also a threat to American national identity that was once multicultural but is now leaning towards defining itself through whiteness.

I believe these misrepresentations persist in our day and age because of systemic racism and institutions that are predicated on a model of exclusion and do not prioritize equality. As communication scholars, this topic is particularly interesting because it deals mainly with the complex nature of interpellation and how racial ideologies hail or summon us as subjects so that we are both constituted as subjects and also subjected to these ideologies over the course of time. In the following chapters, I will provide the background of the case study I will be examining,

Althusser's theory of interpellation that I will use to analyze the case, and the realizations that we arrive at through the analysis.

Background and Literature Review

I. Background

At the start of this chapter, we will be discussing a recent racial incident that occurred on January 26th, 2019 at Duke University. After this, This chapter going to highlight three historical immigration acts, to help us understand why it is we still see a multitude of xenophobic and discriminatory representations of Asian & Asian American populations, in contemporary media texts. Earlier this year, on January 26th, Megan Neely, the director of graduate studies, for Duke University biostatistics department, sent out a racially charged, department-wide email, urging Asian students within the department to only speak English and not their native language when in "professional settings" (Xu NPR) around campus. Further along in Neely's email, she tries to gloss over her blatant racism by stating:

> "I have no idea how hard it has been and still is for you to come to the US and have to learn in a non-native language. As such,p I have the utmost respect for what you are doing. That being said, I encourage you to commit to using English 100% of the time when you are in Hock. (Xu)

Neely claims that her motivation for sending the email out was because of a handful of professors within the biostatistics department, who had expressed their discomfort with the behavior of Asian students when in department lounges. These anonymous faculty members found it rude that these Asian students were speaking loudly in their native tongue and were being "impolite as to have a conversation that not everyone on the floor could understand."(Xu NPR). The most abhorrent and shocking aspect of the whole Duke controversy is not the fact that Meghan Neely sent out the email, initially refused guilt, or saw anything wrong with her email, what should be most shocking is the fact that the faculty members of the biostatistics department who complained in the first place got away, essentially got away "scot-free". The previously mentioned controversy is telling us that this racial incident was not caused solely by Meghan Neely but is reflective of a larger systemic issue concerning racial integration at Duke University.

However, the general public decided to not stand for this blatant form of racism to take

place in 2019. As Meghan Neely's email started to catch traction and make its rounds around Duke University, it went viral and started to trend on social media platforms, such as Twitter and Weibo, (China's equivalent to Twitter). Neely's email started to catch wind on social media and wasted no time in developing into a race-relations controversy. Neely stepped down from her graduate director position at Duke University, as reported by Mary E. Klotman, the dean of Duke's biostatistics department. The following day after Kneely's email was sent out, Klotman sent out her email to the biostatistics department in response to Kneely's email, explaining Duke's stance on the issue, trying to mend the damages already caused by Meghan Kneely's discriminatory email. Klotman opens up her email by expressing sympathy for those afflicted by Kneely's email and states:

> "I understand that many of you felt hurt and angered by this message. To be clear: there is absolutely no restriction or limitation on the language you use to converse and communicate with each other. Your career opportunities and recommendations will not in any way be influenced by the language you use outside the classroom. And your privacy will always be protected."(Klotman)

Klotman ends her email by saying, "Sadly, this matter demonstrates that we must continue to work on overcoming deep-seated concerns about our cultural awareness and understanding."(Klotman). Juxtaposing both of these emails with one another, scholars can start to understand that more is at play below the surface of this controversy, and Kneely's email was only the tip of a much larger systemic racial issue plaguing American society.

With this in mind, this leads us to believe that Meghan Neely is not the primary person to blame here. In the end, she was merely the scapegoat for Duke University. Neely's resignation was the beginning of a broader social, cultural, and ideological discussion about to take hold. Neely's email wasted no time in sparking online debates on both American and Chinese social media platforms, garnering 130 million views on Weibo. The hashtag, "Duke University professor who forbid students speaking Chinese, resigned," went viral and started an international and national debate, surrounding the nature of college and how diverse and accepting these institutions are in reality. Racial ideologies are deeply ingrained in American discursive practices, and institutional values, and in turn are materialized as daily patterns of discrimination, affecting the Asian American demographic. The concept of race constantly shifts from being an abstract concept to becoming a material reality that influences human

representation. The positive side of race-as-a-social-construct is the fact that ideologies attached to race are malleable and can change with time; however, this is a "double-edged sword." What is meant by a "double-edged sword" is that, If no political action occurs, negative representations, and stereotypes will continue to persist and refuse to change, as long as the systemic elite are unchallenged and left unchecked by the American people.

Interpellation theory plays a big part in clouding people's racial judgment, and this leads to the formulation of racial misrepresentations to persist within American media and cultural practices. Asian and Asian Americans are not the only minority group afflicted by systemic discrimination and misrepresentation, for example, African Americans would be the next closest minority group that parallels the struggles of Asian Americans, particularly in the media. To back up the previous claim, Angelo N. Ancheta, a well-published legal scholar, states that "Asian Americans and African Americans share similar histories and experiences with racial subordination in the United States."(Ancheta 22). Following this trend of interracial discrimination, African Americans are perpetuated in the news as gangsters and thugs which after enough time is going lead the general American populace to view African Americans as such, while Asian Americans are perceived as socially conformant and model minorities. These claims can be backed by Interpellation theory because Interpellation theory makes an

> "important contribution to understanding the processes whereby people are recruited into identity positions thus bringing together the inner world of unconscious processes and external representations that occupy the public terrain of ideas, symbols, images, and myths."(Woodward)

This quote is helping us as scholars to understand the complex dynamic of decades of unchecked American racial conditioning and how this has caused people to internalize racialized norms and become conservative in regards to the construction of these norms. The characteristics of a particular race are malleable and are changeable over time, but before we can get into that discussion, it would first be very beneficial to have a grounded understanding of how racial ideology persists throughout time. A race has no inherent or natural meaning attached to it. What is meant by this, is that biologically there is no difference in a White, Black, or Asian male? However, what makes race feel like a genuine component of life is humanity. Humans can mold narratives and formulate ideologies too, in turn, make these metaphysical ideas about race feel very real and ultimately impact an individual's life. An

excellent way to visualize this idea can be through the white community. This chapter is not insinuating that white people are all hyper, rampaging racists with a death wish for every other race. Instead, this chapter is acknowledging the fact that white supremacy has and still positions "white" people in a superior role in contemporary American society. Several factors contribute to socially constructed hierarchies of power, privilege, and difference. To relate to the historical struggles of African Americans, slavery and the formation of racist ideologies in the 1600s as a way to justify the enslavement of Africans, which played a major role in establishing white people as the dominant cultural group within America, which in turn lead to the degradation of other minority groups. At the same time, decades of Imperialistic conquest fueled by Western nations did no favors in establishing a system of equal inclusion among all other "races."

The notion of race is not based on some form of natural law. The construction and contemporary understanding about the ideologies of race are reflective of the historical point in time they happen to be situated within, directly controlled and impacted by those who happen to be in power at the time. For the sake of this discussion and study, those with the power to dictate and formulate a racial ideology is the American government. The American government has political resources and power to pass bills and laws that are reflective of historical and contemporary times, for example, If you want to trace the formation of the African-American ideology in America then you can look at genuine and factual events such as Bacon's rebellion, the three-fifths compromise, and the Jim Crow South. All of which are actual events that helped to shape the current model of mass incarceration, inequality, and mistreatment within the black community today.

Literature Review

Within the literature review portion of this chapter I am going to be reflecting upon not only historic policies, such as the "The Immigration Act of 1924" , "the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952", and "The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965", but also what

scholars have written and reported about these important immigration acts. The purpose of this exploration is to guide the conversation in a way that offers scholars insight into how traditional American immigration policies have constructed the current status of Asian and Asian American misrepresentation within America society today. “The Immigration Act of 1924” effectively:

> “limited the number of immigrants allowed entry into the United States through a national origins quota. The quota provided immigration visas to two percent of the total number of people of each nationality in the United States as of the 1890 national census. It completely excluded immigrants from Asia”.(U.S. Department of State)

“The Immigration Act of 1924” was one of the first nationally sanctioned actions taken to combat earlier immigration policies such as the

“Page Act of 1875 and the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1884, which were the first effective pieces of American restrictive immigration legislation”. (Boyd 511)

The “Page Act of 1875” and the “Chinese Exclusion Act of 1884” were even more restrictive to Asain immigrants than “The Immigration act of 1924” and fully restricted the growth of a sizeable Asain American populace to take hold within American society. “In all of its parts, the most basic purpose of the 1924 Immigration Act was to preserve the ideal of U.S. homogeneity.”(U.S. Department of State). Although complex and fraught with controversy the main takeaway from these early immigration policies is the idea that Asain and Asain Americans are to be viewed extensively as perpetual foreigners that lack the proper racial makeup to integrate into American culture properly. As we will see this is just the beginning of a long history of exclusion and debate, regarding the acceptance of Asian and Asian American people into American culture. Next, will be highlighting “The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, the next major immigration policy put forward in the ongoing debate concerning Asian and Asian American integration, at this point. “The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 upheld the national origins quota system established by the Immigration Act of 1924, reinforcing this controversial system of immigrant selection.”(U.S. Department of State). “The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952” at this point was met with a more liberal political approach and sparked debate over the moral position America found itself in, regarding the acceptance of “less desirable” immigrants from Asianic

countries.

> "individuals like Democrat Congressman...Emanuel Celler, favored the liberalization of immigration laws. Celler expressed concerns that the restrictive quota system heavily favored immigration from Northern and Western Europe and therefore created resentment against the United States in other parts of the world. He felt the law created the sense that Americans thought people from Eastern Europe as less desirable and people from Asia inferior to those of European descent."(U.S. Department of State).

Although the general attitude towards Asain and Asain American immigrants is starting to shift and become more normalized in mainstream American culture, America as a whole is still a long ways away from becoming accepting and open to Asianic nations. Symbolically, yes, this was a win for Asian and Asian Americans but by no means was this going to put an end to the inevitable discrimination and oppression felt by Asian and Asian Americans during this time, or in contemporary society. Finally, we will be looking at the "The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965". What makes the "The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965" the most influential political initiative up to this point in time, is the fact that it abolished the national quota origins system. No longer were immigrants either being rejected or accepted into America based on racial characteristics, but are now judged by their professional skill sets and family relations to Asian Americans currently living in America. After the national quota system was thrown out, America as a whole saw a sudden cultural shift and influx of ethnic and cultural groups not seen before on American soil. Monica Boyd, a migration studies professor, goes in-depth into "The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965" in her journal article, "The Changing Nature of Central and Southeast Asian Immigration to the United States: 1961-1972." Boyd presents the idea that:

> "immigration data for India, Korea, and the Philippines are compared to immigration trends for the countries of Japan, China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, it is clear that the historical movement of manpower that characterized immigration from Japan and China between 1860-1924 has been replaced by manpower movement from India, Korea, and the Philippines. However, in keeping with the changing workforce requirements of the United States, this recent occupational immigration from the latter three countries consists primarily of professionals. Thus it contrasts with the previous recruitment of unskilled laborers which characterized nineteenth and early twentieth century Chinese and Japanese immigration".(Boyd 513)

In this passage, we can see how America is beginning to shift its mentality towards certain Asianic countries to fit a preconstructed hierarchical mold. From 1860 to 1924 America

mainly sought after Chinese and Japanese immigrants to fill America's need for cheap expendable labor during this time. During the years of 1860 to 1924, this was considered the height of American industrialization, which was reliant on the blood, sweat, and drive of underrepresented Asian and Asian American immigrants. Boyd then goes on to talk about the:

> "Increased immigration from Asia and from China, India, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines affects the growth, the extent, and nature of residential segregation, and the degree of economic absorption of the Asian-American populations. Altered relations between diverse ethnic or nativity groups are also likely to emerge when the immigrant groups are highly skilled and are eligible for occupational positions of decision making".(Boyd 518)

Boyd is arguing in this passage that, the sudden influx of Asian immigrants into American cities and towns is going to shift the very nature of what the citizens of America consider to be American. However, as we see time and time again, there is still going to be resentment and resistance attributed to these newly skilled, professional, "foreigners" from the homogenized American population. Shifting from 1965 to present day America we now have a better picture of why misrepresentations within the media and America still plague Asian and Asian American populations. The three previously mentioned immigration acts all happened in relatively recent history. There are people alive today who were born when these policies got put into place. People born during these periods all grew up in an era that was much different from contemporary America. It takes time to dispell the events of the past, and becoming socially aware of these policies is the best way to find a proper solution for the future. The main point I am trying to communicate throughout this entire chapter is the idea that Asian and Asian Americans have just recently gained a meaningful foothold into American society, only now are Asian and Asian Americans able to partially influence social, cultural, and political practices within American society. However, there are still plenty of contemporary examples of Asian and Asian American people facing discrimination for no valid reason. For example, the previously mentioned Duke University controversy at the beginning of the chapter is reflective of the derogatory environment Asian and Asian American people find themselves in within contemporary America. It is the goal of this chapter, in the end, to argue that Asian and Asian Americans, are disproportionately misrepresented within American society but this does not mean that there is no hope. All of the previously listed examples have worked together to

trace a pattern of Asian and Asian American activism, from 1860 to 1965 Asian and Asian Americans have ascended from the depths of exclusion and overt racism into a contemporary world that although is still discriminatory, it does show that meaningful progress is possible, it just takes time to come into fruition.

Theory

The main theory that is fueling not only this chapter but my entire senior comprehensive project is going to be Interpellation theory:

> "Interpellation derives from the work of the French social philosopher Louis Althusser who sought to provide a non-reductionist explanation for the operation of ideological processes through which people, as individuals or as members of groups, including social classes, took up identity positions and were recruited into ideologies".(Woodward)

I am going to be using Interpellation theory throughout my research in hopes to reveal how certain characteristics, widely attributed as the cultural indicators of Asians are simply just misrepresentations, actively discrediting and whitewashing the individuality and diversity of what it truly means to be Asian in contemporary America. When I am using the terms "true" or "proper" to describe Asian American representation In my research I am trying to dispel the image of Asian Americans being viewed, solely as model minorities. "The term "model minority," refers to minority groups that have rates of socioeconomic assimilation and ostensibly achieved a high level of success intermarriage with non-Hispanic whites in contemporary US society".

Asian and Asian American populations do not neatly fit and adhere to one ideological standpoint and the fact of the matter is that Asian and Asian Americans can come in all "shapes and sizes". For example, there are a number ways in which Filipino and Korean people vary ethnically and culturally, but if you were to ask the average American to meaningfully acknowledge and distinguish between these differences, this is a near impossible feat. I am not trying to imply that this miscommunication, is only unique to the Asian and Asian American experience. Every minority group within American society today is either under or over represented on media and social media platforms, minority groups are plagued by living in a culture that does not truly value diversity. The point that I am attempting to fleshing out is that, cultural confusion in America seems to stem from a lack of interest and desire from the general American public, whom dispel any racial differences in American population, in the first place. American culture is more interested in processes of white washing when our focus should be on

the celebration and embracing of Asian American culture.

I will be using a more general application of interpellation theory and using it as a reference to a target demographic, in this case Asian and Asian Americans. A target demographic is based on the grounds of one's race, ethnicity, or religion. On the surface, Asian Americans, but this does not mean the Asian American demographic is devoid of modern-day prejudice and wrongful representation. Interpellation theory highlights the unseen hurdles put before Asian Americans and how this is just another form of subjugation and a way that systemic racism in America still subjugate and keep Asian and Asian American groups voiceless within American society.

With this in mind, I would like to shift the focus of the paper to focus on interpellation theory and how scholars are using this theory to fuel their perspectives and how this leads us to going to be overall influencing and supporting my analysis of the current state of Asian Americans in America. What I mean by this is that interpellation theory is priming us as individuals to associate a fundamental difference between Asian and Asian Americans within America. Asians are seen as foreigners that are unassimilated, while Asian Americans are seen as adopting American ideals over anything else, but must still live up to “model minority” assumptions.

Interpellation and the Model Minority theory is a fairly widespread theory that comes up in many well-cited and predominantly Asian American texts. The first example I wish to discuss, that mentions the “model minority” stereotype in the Asian American context, is Stacy J. Lee’s book, “Unraveling the “Model Minority” Stereotype.” Lee is mainly concerned with how the “model minority” framework can and does affect students within a high school environment. For example, Lee concludes at the end of her book, “My fieldwork at Academic High School confirmed my initial assumption that the identification process is influenced by interracial contact. As I argued throughout this paper Interpellation theory negatively influences race relations between Asians and non-Asians. Earlier in her book, Lee points out that within a high school environment, whether Asian Americans like it or not, they are forced to adopt stereotypical ideologies such as education being the best route for economic and social success. This shared assumption about Asian Americans using education as a way to social mobility is

where much of the conflict surrounding the discourse of ethnic diversity in relation to Asians and Non-Asians starts to become apparent.

In Charles R. Taylor and Barabara B. Stern's article, "Asian Americans: Television Advertising and the "Model Minority" Stereotype," the authors address how Asian Americans have been represented and targeted by American marketing and advertising practices. Taylor and Stern go on in this piece to talk about the "Model Minority" stereotype and how "Asian Americans are considered to be a 'model minority' (Cohen 1992; Delener and Neelankavil 1990) whose premium demographic profile (Fisher 1994)- affluence, high education, and managerial/professional occupations-and rapid growth in number make them an attractive market". This quote is working to be the general attitude directed at Asian Americans because statistically, as Taylor & Stern mention, Asian Americans are among the most educated, affluent, and hold a sizeable number of managerial and professional job occupations within America today. This is a fascinating statistic because the Asian American "rate of immigration [has] outpaced that of any other group. It increased 108% from 1980 to 1990 and is … 11 times the rate of increase of the general U.S. population and twice that of the Hispanic population." Moreover, the "number of Asian-Americans in the U.S population is predicted to jump … to 20 million (8%) in 2020" (Taylor & Stern 47). What this data tells us is that even though Asian Americans are the fastest growing demographic within America in recent decades, this does not mean life for Asian and Asian Americans will change for them. Asian Americans historically have faced some of the most brutal and oppressive immigration laws in 20th century American History, effectively making it almost impossible for entire families to immigrate to America because American society is only interested in Asian males to come to America for the purposes of exploitation and not racial inclusion. America during the 20th century was open about its suspicions surrounding Asian American discourse and not until there was significant pushback from Asian American communities did we as a country see a new wave of Asian American activism.

Okiyoshi Takeda's journal article, "A Model Minority? The Misrepresentation and Underrepresentation of Asian Pacific Americans in Introductory American Government

Textbooks" states that "proper representation" means that Asian Pacific Americans are depicted without bias in textbooks in factually accurate ways. Proper representation also means that Asian Pacific Americans appear to the degree that reflects their contribution to U.S. society" (Takeda 388). Takeda argues that within America's systems of higher education, Asian Americans are in both inadequate and underrepresented environments. For example, college level history textbooks provide faulty historical events surrounding Asians and Asian Americans that come up in college level courses. We live in a world and time where the majority of the population observes racial inequality within America as only a Black and White conversation. This previous statement is not the case and understanding this will fuel my analysis chapter and how I am going to approach and add to this conversation of proper Asian American representation.

In Qin Zhang's journal article "Asian Americans Beyond the Model Minority: The Nerdy and the Left Out." Zhang brings up not only the model minority stereotype, but goes further in trying to answer the question of whether people believe in the Model Minority framework. Interpellation theory is priming people to see a certain image or representation replicated within popular media the more those people are going to internalize those images as an accurate representation of that targeted ethnic or cultural group. Zhang goes on to state that:

> [i]mages of Asian Americans in the media sometimes evolve over time (Suzuki, 1989). The media representations of Asian Americans have transformed from the traditionally blatantly negative yellow peril, coolie, good, and deviant stereotypes to the current seemingly positive model minority stereotype to suit the changing political, social, cultural, and economic circumstances (Kawai, 2005; R. Lee, 1999). (Qin Zhang 21)

I find the previous statement about "Images of Asian Americans in the media sometimes evolve over time" (Suzuki, 1989) to be an excellent way to segue into the modern-day activist icon I will be analyzing in my analysis chapter. I wholeheartedly believe in the process of changing misrepresented racial ideologies and how nothing, especially within American culture, is ever permanent. All it takes to bring about change is first to understand

what the issue is and then finding a way to come together as a people and enact policy change on the macro level to finally see positive change. I plan on understanding the historical implications and use of the Model Minority theory as presented by many Asian American scholars to fuel my chapter.

I plan on focusing my study on an actual Asian American doctor, actor, comedian, director, and activist who concerns himself with the positive representation of Asian Americans both on and off the screen. Ken Jeong, like many young aspiring Asian American actors within the film industry, got his big break by playing an outdated and over-sensationalized Asian stereotype. Jeong played "Leslie Chow," in the widely successful 2008 summer blockbuster, *The Hangover*. Being the dedicated and committed Asian American actor that Ken Jeong is, he understood that his voice or power at this point was not impactful enough to bargain for a more complex role. However, despite the demeaning role of Leslie Chow, Jeong decided to persist and not let this outdated stereotype limit him in his rise to fame. Jeong decided to fully embrace the effeminate Asian male role, who happens to have a tiny penis and a whiney high-pitched voice. Sure, Jeong could have turned down the role because it was demeaning and beneath him, but he chose to see it differently. Jeong understood that there was little to no, proper Asian American representation, let alone accurate portrayals of this diverse ethnic group, within Hollywood, and he wanted that to change. Jeong decided to forge his path and form his own identity within the film industry.

Before Jeong decided to pursue his acting career, he was what every stereotypical Asian "Tiger mom" wishes their child to be, a doctor. Jeong worked for many years as a dedicated general practitioner for *Kaiser Permanente*, one of the largest non-profit healthcare providers in the nation. However, Being the defiant Model Minority that Jeong is, he decided to shed his white coat and step out onto the stage. Jeong decided to test the capabilities and real-life aspirations of what Asian Americans are capable of achieving within American culture but do not see any monumental strides for proper Asian American representation at that time. Everywhere Asian Americans go they are told you must fall into this category of American society because you are broadly generalized by an outdated

misrepresentation. Fortunately for us, we are no longer living in 2008, and Ken Jeong has made many strides for the Korean American community on and off the screen. Jeong has appeared in many shows, movies and now is in a place where his brand is recognizable enough for him to start forging his own artistic Asian American expression. For example, what I mean by this is that Ken Jeong is now able to have desirable movie roles that do not solely cast him for his slanted eyes and perceived foreignness. Jeong was asked by Asian American director, Jon M. Chu, to help produce the recent hit movie, *Crazy Rich Asians*, which besides being an international success in the box offices, was also, just as importantly, the first all Asian cast in a big budget film since *The Joy Luck Club* back in 1993. Since *Crazy Rich Asians*, Jeong has just recently filmed and performed in his stand-up comedy special, *You Complete Me Ho*, on Netflix. Jeong took the stage in his comedy special and hysterically highlights many aspects of Asian American life in America and even joke about being a "good Model Minority." I mentioned earlier in the chapter how Ken Jeong is a man dedicated to the Asian American struggle and want to find a way to generate positive change and activism surrounding Asian American culture. Well, Jeong did just that, being one of the few influential Asian American entertainers and stand-ups in mainstream entertainment today, Jeong choose to take the stage to entertain the American population and change people's mindsets about what it means to be an Asian American and how the "Model Minority" paradigm is something to be left in the past.

Analysis Chapter

As we have already discussed in previous chapters Asian Americans are one of the smallest minority groups within America, and we understand this to be because of decades of unfair and discriminatory immigration policies, as we have seen discussed in previous chapters. If Asian Americans are one of the smallest minority groups within America, then why is there such an unbalanced ratio of representation regarding Asians and Asian Americans within American culture and media. Yoonsun Choi, who teaches race, politics, and culture at the University of Chicago, offers us this view of the Asian American experience within America. Choi states that;

> "people often think of Asian Americans as sharing the same values and having similar experiences, she says. An important part of that stereotype is an admiration among other Americans for Asian American children, who are seen as doing well in school, obeying their parents, and behaving well in society." (Choi)

This seems to imply that American culture is infatuated with Asian culture but *not* with Asian people, particularly as the latter has come to be seen as posing a threat to white Americans getting into elite universities and also to white jobs in white collar jobs especially in the technology, medical, legal, and financial fields. Even as both Asians and Asian Americans are feeling the brunt of Trump's anger against the growing strength of Asian economies abroad, their discrimination within the U.S. is being used against them. At the trial brought against Harvard University for demanding higher SAT entrance scores for Asian students:

> … trial testimony suggests the school gives a special leg up to whites in sparsely populated states at the expense of Asian-American applicants — which is ironic, because the suit was bankrolled by Edward Blum, the white conservative activist behind Abigail Fisher's Supreme Court case. "I feel that the Asian-American student population and community is being used as a pawn in a chess game," Prudence Carter, a sociologist at Berkeley, told *The New Yorker*. Blum's goal is to eliminate race altogether as a factor in deciding college admissions. Should his case reach the Supreme Court — where it would face a

> friendly conservative majority — it could reveal promising legal avenues for accomplishing just that. It would also be one of the great racial cons of our time. (Cheney-Rice)

In other words, by having a minority group (Asian Americans) protest against affirmative action, helps Whites dismantle a system that for many marginalized groups, is the only way to get a shot at a decent education. Even as affirmative action in higher education has failed to reduce the income gap between Blacks and Whites in America, cases like the one brought forward by white student Abigail Fisher in 2015, have claimed bias *against* Whites during the admissions process. The Supreme Court's decision in Fisher v. University of Texas, No. 14-981 upheld that universities and colleges can use affirmative action with "race as one factor among many in ensuring a diverse student body" (Liptak). However, in today's racially charged climate, "[affirmative action's] very name has become a slur connoting unearned advantage. As with many initiatives seen as helping nonwhites, it is viewed as an entitlement rather than an investment" (Cheney-Rice).

A detailed piece in the *New Yorker* shows, historically, white people have been "affirmative action's first and greatest beneficiaries. And now, many of them are trying to destroy it before others can reap the benefits" (Cheney-Rice). Historian Ira Katznelson's book, *When Affirmative Action Was White* demonstrates how President Roosevelt's New Deal was deeply segregationist even as it "created unemployment benefits and Social Security and gave military veterans resources to attend college, find work, and buy homes, to name some of its banner accomplishments" (Cheney-Rice). To get approved by Congress, northern Democrats catered to the racist sentiments of their southern counterparts. Southern Democrats felt that improving the lives of black people would turn the racial order in their region upside-down. they insisted black people be excluded from the laws' bounties. Therefore, they made sure that legally, there were no anti-discrimination measures, then added language that made blacks ineligible for many of its benefits. In the 1930s, sixty percent of the black workforce nationally and seventy-five percent in the South were either maids or farmworkers. Under the conditions laid down by the Southern Democrats, neither group could unionize, negotiate its work hours,

demand a minimum wage, or — until the 1950s — receive Social Security benefits under the New Deal (Katznelson).

Northern Democrats conceded to these terms. The New Deal's broad-based reforms were especially meant to help the nation's sixteen million veterans. An incredible fifty percent of black men in their twenties and thirties served in the nation's armed forces during the Second World War, despite being disproportionately rejected due to their race when they tried to enlist. Benefits promised under the G.I. Bill of Rights included money for college and government-insured home and business loans (Katznelson). However, as Kathleen J. Frydl's book *The G.I. Bill*, points out, because southern Democrats feared the G.I. Bill could dismantle segregation by allowing black veterans social and economic mobility, they insisted many of these benefits be distributed at the discretion of local clerks. Consequently, black veterans — especially in the South, where seventy-seven percent of black people still lived in the early 1940s — were routinely denied the promises of the G.I. Bill despite having paid the price of military service. Government-insured mortgages covered nearly five million new homes for veterans nationwide, but just one hundred of the sixty-seven thousand in New York and the northern New Jersey suburbs benefitted black borrowers. Black veterans across thirteen Mississippi cities received just two of the 3,229 local home, business, and farm loans made in 1947 (Frydl).

As WWII ended, the New Deal was setting up an entire generation of white Americans to benefit from programs and policies that upheld institutional racism. Black people were wiped out economically with Jim Crow segregation and northern redlining and poverty. During the 1930s, black Southerners lived in such abject poverty that *poor* white people could afford to hire them as housekeepers. New Deal policies that could have dramatically reduced the gap between Blacks and Whites accomplished just the opposite, while millions of white families were automatically elevated into a growing middle class (Frydl). As Zak Cheney-Rice writes in the *New York* "Intelligencer", "The equivalent of a blank check was written to white Americans by the same government that told black Americans to dig through their couch for loose change."

Today, by pitting minority group against minority group, as the Harvard University affirmative action lawsuit demonstrates, Asian Americans may unwittingly be helping White Americans maintain their privilege, by taking away the few remaining means by which

historically marginalized groups like African Americans and Latinos can attempt to improve their social condition. Instead, by championing a false idea of meritocracy, and therefore the claim that Whites have worked hard to get where they are versus minorities who are underserved beneficiaries of affirmative action, White conservative lawyers like Edward Blum — who fought against affirmative action in the case of Abigail Fisher in 2015, and who also supported the case brought forward by Asian American students against Harvard University — can forward a "white grievance crusade" that maintains historical white privilege (Cheney-Rice).

There is a difference between native-born Asians and Asian Americans. Asian Americans find themselves judged by the American ideals that hold them as 'equal' citizens within the U.S. On the other hand, Asians who are immigrants are regarded as foreigners and outsiders who must, therefore, earn American rights by first getting their citizenship. Increasingly, immigrants are required to assimilate into Americanness, chiefly by learning to and speaking only in English, and celebrating their Asian cultural roots only on special holidays, or through entrepreneurial efforts that are considered culturally appropriate. For example, Americans are happy to go down to their local Chinese restaurant and get an order of General Tso's chicken for lunch, without bothering to realize that the menu is Americanized Chinese food. As a metaphor of the immigrant experience, this example of Chinese-American food shows how all incoming cultures are processed through the lens of American White cultural ideologies, in order to be judged as being acceptably American. This, in turn, allows the general population to hold on to "[p]reconceived notions" about the outsider status "within American culture about Asian immigrant families" (Choi).

Ariel Dorfman tells us in her book, *Homeland Security Ate My Speech*, that "Donald Trump has built his campaign around the threat posed to the United States by the 'aliens' who have swarmed across the border from Mexico and who are, according to his tirades, a bunch of 'bad hombres,' rapists, criminals, and drug dealers" (Dorfman 29). The rhetorical interpellation or ideological summoning of Mexican immigrants as criminals is matched on the other front by representing Asian immigrants as waiting to take away education placements in higher education, and jobs that rightfully belong to middle-class Americans. Right-wing political

commentator and former Trump advisor Steve Bannon in a CNN interview in 2018, told Fareed Zakaria that while he had no problem with Asian Americans who were legal citizens, he was strongly opposed to Asian immigrants who were in America on work visas:

> "These HB-1 (sic) visas where you come here... basically to take the jobs of American citizens is just not acceptable. And that's not racist," Bannon said. "The central beating heart of this is that Hispanics and blacks have to get into the high valued tech jobs; we're never going to do that as long as they have unfair competition." (Yam)

By skillfully seeming to defend the interests of domestic minorities (African Americans and Latinos), Mr. Bannon attempts to start an internal war between Asian immigrant minority groups and domestic ethnic and racial minorities. To do so, he interpellated Asian Americans in particular, such as the students who sued Harvard University to dismantle 'discriminatory' affirmative action policies, to see themselves as 'victimized' in the same way as Whites are being targeted in post-Obama's post-racial America. Bannon further claimed that he was advocating "economic nationalism," which, he argued, "has nothing to do with race, ethnicity, religion or gender, but concerns American citizenship" (Yam). In other words, Asian Americans by virtue of their U.S. citizenship are encouraged to see themselves as being closer to Whites in the racial hierarchy than to Asian immigrants, who may look like the former, but who lack the essential rights allegedly guaranteed and protected by American birthright.

The vast majority of H-1B work visas go to Asian immigrants, specifically those from India and China. These immigrants typically have advanced degrees and work in fields that require highly specialized knowledge. John C. Yang, executive director of Washington-based Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC), told *HuffPost* that Bannon's comments on Asian immigrants are based off a collection of stereotypes, "particularly the model minority myth — or the belief that *all* Asians are better off and better educated than other minorities." And he added, "I think what Mr. Bannon is clearly trying to do is race-bait. He is trying to drive a wedge between races. … What he's really doing is trying to limit opportunities for all minorities." The more important point Yang argues is, "If he [Bannon] really believed that he wanted to get more opportunities for minorities … then he should be talking about increasing educational opportunities for minorities. He should not be talking about how one race is supposedly taking

from another race. That's just not the reality here" (qtd. in Yam). By using "economic nationalism" as a unifying factor, Bannon interpellates or summons Asian Americans to see themselves as citizens first and Asian second. In so doing, he distracts them from looking more critically at historical and institutional forms of racism that keep Asian Americans *and* Asians fixed as cultural Others within the cultural white gaze. Instead, through what I would call *pseudo-interpellation* or a false ideological summoning, he urges Asian Americans *to unite with Whites* against foreign immigrants (including Asians) and other domestic minorities (African Americans and Latinos). Asian Americans, eager to erase the Otherness from their identity, are easily influenced to align themselves with hegemonic Whiteness.

Iris Kuo, writing for *The Atlantic*, mentions a case from 2018 where a white male engineer James Damore,

sued his former employer Google for discrimination on the basis of his race and gender, alleging

> the company institutes illegal hiring quotas, the results of which, according to his lawsuit, was that "Caucasian and Asian males were not being selected for jobs and promotions due solely to their status as non-females or non-favored minorities." (Kuo)

In another lawsuit brought forward in January of 2018, a former *YouTube* white male employee, Arne Wilburg, also sued *YouTube*'s parent company, *Google*, claiming that its discriminatory hiring practices hurt not only white men, but Asian men as well. Such claims put corporations on the defensive and make them more watchful when hiring minority candidates. A *Google* spokeswoman said, "We have a clear policy to hire candidates based on their merit, not their identity. At the same time, we unapologetically try to find a diverse pool of qualified candidates for open roles, as this helps us hire the best people, improve our culture, and build better products" (Kuo). Again, by cleverly tying a claim of "anti-white discrimination" with a legitimate minority claim of under-representation and profiling, the lawsuits make white privilege invisible. Instead of asking why, when "at 6 percent of the population in 2017, Asians are statistical minorities, and at nearly 61 percent, whites are not," such legal suits pretend to be about "race-blind equal opportunity. But in reality, they are making a case that, in the elite echelons of society, Asians are, like white people, a privileged class that is being brought down as other racial groups rise" (Kuo). Journalist Iris Kuo alerts us that Asians may be the

highest-earning racial and ethnic group in the United States,[1] but, "income inequality is also the highest among Asians, who have displaced blacks as the most economically divided racial or ethnic group in the U.S., according to a recent analysis from the Pew Research Center." The *Google* and Harvard cases specifically interpellate Asians who have "high educational, socioeconomic, or employment statuses, intimating that the fate of this stratum of Asians is intertwined with that of whites" (Kuo).

We saw this same pseudo-interpellation unfold with the success of the 2018 summer romantic comedy *Crazy Rich Asians* and its all-Asian cast. The film is adapted from the 2013 novel by Kevin Kwan and focuses on a Chinese American professor Rachel Chu (played by Constance Wu) as she takes off for a holiday with her boyfriend Nick Young (Henry Golding). Nick, it turns out is a billionaire, and Chu is thrust into the world of Singapore's moneyed elite when she meets his family and friends. The film awes audiences with "money shots" of the lifestyle of the super-rich. While the film dances around issues of privilege, immigrant aspirations, and the psychological distance between Asians and Asian Americans—it settles for the more neoliberal idea that a good marriage like social and economic status, requires hard work which is affirmed by the spectacle of "affluence-porn" throughout the film (Tseng-Putterman). The tremendous success of the movie was confirmed by the $34 million it made in the first five days of its opening. But as critics have made the case that even as it marks a milestone in terms of an Asian created, directed, and actor-focused story that has put Asian Americans in the Hollywood spotlight, *Crazy Rich Asians* also demonstrates a disturbing form of in-group racism: In one notable scene, Goh Wye Mun (Ken Jeong) plays up an affected Chinese accent, repeating

> Rachel's surname until it devolves into a parody of the "ching-chong" stereotypes of Hollywood's past. Then, the payoff: "Just kidding," Wye Mun says in an assuredly American accent: "I went to Cal State Fullerton." The scene stands in for the prevailing spirit of the film: *We're not* those *kinds of Asians*. Gone are the "Oriental" accents and broken English, replaced with the sophisticated air of Golding's British tongue, Wye Mun's familiar all-American vernacular, and Goh Peik Lin's (Nora Lum a.k.a. Awkwafina) contrived "blaccent." (Tseng-Putterman)

[1] The median annual income in 2016, for Asian Americans, was $51,288 (Kuo).

The elevation of Asians, in this case, comes through a distinction being made between globalized Asians (who are portrayed as Americanized and therefore, closer to Asian Americans and White Americans) versus the foreignness and lack of class elevation of regional Asians. As film critic Mark Tseng-Putterman points out, the operation of the white gaze is very much in place within the film. As Asian audiences, we are interpellated "not only … [in terms of] how [we as] Asian Americans see ourselves, but also *how others see us*". The "others" in this case is white-dominated Hollywood and the desirable mainstream white American viewers.

Aneesh Chaganty, the co-writer, and director of the upcoming film *Searching*, addresses the ambition of Asian American storytelling that can overcome the need to link itself to an Asian American 'authenticity'. In his words:

"For so long, identity has to be justified in a narrative. You always have to explain why, especially when you're casting anybody who isn't white in a movie. There has to be this element explaining what the Asian American hook is. In our movie, there's no justifying it. We are trying to not make it an issue. That's the victory to us." (Qtd. in Tseng-Putterman)

But, of course, such storytelling is also accompanied by the risk of "expanding whiteness as the default by expecting Asian Americans and other people of color to abide by its cultural norms so as to not make race 'an issue'." In fact, as Mark Tseng-Putterman argues, *Crazy Rich Asians* "embraces a message of white-Asian equivalence by distancing itself from the 'wrong' kind of Asians." Interestingly despite the large population of South Asians living in Singapore,

… the only South Asians that viewers can glimpse are in the roles of servants and guards. The scene in which Rachel and Peik Lin drive up to the Youngs' remote estate and are shocked by the sight of two turbaned, South Asian guards—armed with what appear to be bayonets, no less—seems a particularly apt metaphor for the brand of Asian American representation *Crazy Rich Asians* provides: one in which too many are left on the outside, looking in. (Tseng-Putterman)

It is no coincidence that *Crazy Rich Asians* has been made when fears among white Americans "about a coming 'majority-minority' country" are on the rise. The film captures the current Asian American "identity crisis in which Asian Americans figure in a liminal position:

both perpetual foreigners and 'honorary whites'." So, despite the diversity of the pan-Asian team involved in making of *Crazy Rich Asians* in terms of ethnicity and class, the larger message that the film uses to interpellate Asians across the world is that money is the great equalizer and it is what will place Asians on the same footing as White elites everywhere.

What the above discussions illustrate is the growing racial divide between the current Asian and Asian American populations. As we have seen, the logic of an "economic nationalism" can make Asian Americans see themselves pseudo-interpellated or falsely allied with White Americans in claiming citizenship rights that they perceive are being threatened by other domestic minorities and by foreigners, including Asians. As visual scholar Lisa Lowe sees it, there is "a persistent motif in American culture, the notion that Asian Americans are 'perpetual immigrants' or 'foreigners within'" (qtd. in Daniels 15). This also explains why Asian Americans, in the age of Trump, wish to distance themselves from less desirable Others and assimilate into White mainstream American society. The in-group racism that has been used to pit Asian Americans against Asians has not gone unnoticed. As Moriah Balingit observes in her essay in *The Washington Post*, the lawsuit filed by "Students for Fair Admissions," against Harvard University in 2014, focused on a young man who, according to the lawsuit, deserves a seat at the university. He is the son of Chinese immigrants, attended one of the nation's top high schools, was captain of the tennis team and got a perfect score on the ACT. By contrast, Hmong students at Burbank come from a community with a childhood poverty rate of about 40 percent statewide. (Balingit)

In other words, the in-group racism is also very much class-based. According to a Pew Research Center report:

> Asian Americans are now the most economically divided racial group in the country, with the wealthiest 10 percent earning more than 10 times the amount of the poorest 10 percent. (Balingit)

Mai Xi Lee, the director of social-emotional learning for the Sacramento City Unified School District, rightly observes that "When we look at Asian data, it is absolutely misleading." And, she continues, "I don't think that there is great awareness of the tremendous differences even [among Asians] … what it means to be a refugee versus what it means to be an immigrant" (qtd.

in Balingit). Not only this, but Asian Americans, who are now separated by generations and citizenship rights from more recent Asian immigrants/refugees, can be easily aggrieved at the thought that despite having struggled to become legitimate Americans, they may fall down the socio-economic ladder. This is what White conservative lawyer Edward Blum played to when he appealed to members of Students for Fair Admissions through websites like HarvardNotFair.org, which showed an image of a downcast college-aged Asian woman sitting on a college library floor. "Were You Denied Admission to Harvard?" the website asks. "It may be because you're the *wrong race*" (Balingit). By using such race-baiting techniques, Blum successfully recruited followers from "among well-educated and wealthy Chinese Americans in places like Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Bay area, people who had grown suspicious when their high-achieving children were rejected from top-flight schools." These Chinese-Americans, in turn, reached out to form wide networks of supporters through WeChat, a Chinese messaging program. According to Lee, "it is Students for Fair Admissions, not Harvard, that doesn't recognize socioeconomic diversity among Asians. 'It's very specific groups filing this lawsuit, and yet we're all being clumped together,' she said" (qtd. in Balingit).

The color-blind rhetoric that Blum upholds, encourages minorities to look past White privilege and the institutional racism that keeps racial/ethnic groups separate but believing in the myth of equality that can be attained by obtaining class privilege. Blum said,

… he found it worrisome that teenagers would consider their race and ethnicity as central to their identity. "Do we want to elevate our race and our ethnicity to the most existential part of who we are?" he told me. "I think we're at a very bad gateway if that's how 17- and 18- and 19-year-olds are viewing themselves in the greater context of America and this society." (Qtd. in Balingit)

Of course, the naïve assumption that a prospect's socio-economic status can be a neutral criterion by which to consider applications for college, "overlooks the reality that Admissions officers who are considering an applicant's socioeconomic status but not their race might never learn that they don't speak English at home or that they're refugees — barriers to academic success that exist independent of how much money their parents made" (Balingit). Economic nationalism is, therefore, a false front that is being used to persuade minorities to fight against their own best

interests. Sadly, the term "achievement gap" that once alluded to the performance gap between white and black students, has taken on new significance as the gap between poorer Asian immigrant/refugee students and their wealthier Asian counterparts and established Asian American students.

What this chapter has hopefully demonstrated is the manner in which the interpellation of Asians in America either places them as part of the narrative of what will "Make America Great Again," or as what will make America fall apart again.

Conclusion

The main point of emphasis that I feel is important to reflect upon at the end of my Senior comprehensive project, is the notion that through the lens of Interpellation theory, Asian and Asian Americans are currently coexisting in a state of societal and cultural division within America. Asian Americans are being grouped into the 'white' American ideology, while native-born Asians are socially and politically stagnant and have no voice to express their concerns within American media or politics. This is why I stress, future scholars to look at the macro level changes that can be made to ensure America is not just more accepting of Asians but for every marginalized minority group trying to 'cut through the noise'. Future scholars would find it advantageous to look into Macro-level initiatives, concerning the amount of political representation Asian Americans are currently invested in. I find the discourse of politics to be an ideal area for future research to focus upon, especially in regards to the 2020 presidential election. As Americans, we are already seeing a number of Asian American politicians 'stepping up to the plate' and it will be interesting to look at their stances on issues related to not only the Asian Americans experience but experiences of the U.S. as a whole.

What I have learned professionally throughout the process of working on my senior comprehensive project is the importance of time management and learning how to deal with adversity. Never before have I had to work so diligently on a project and truly go in depth into the research, and critical analysis portion. Also, I never have my work seriously critiqued and deal with the slow grind of doing a semester-long project. I will be able to take this newfound sense of professionalism into my future plans and allow me to figure out what it is I am truly passionate about. After graduating from Allegheny, I would like to use my senior comprehensive project as 'the icing on the cake' for my resume. What I mean by this is that throughout my four years of undergraduate studies here at Allegheny, I have participated in a number of career-building extracurricular activities and I feel as though adding the comp to my resume will

only highlight my achievements and make me a more marketable employee for employers. I will be more marketable in a sense because the comp is showing employers that I know what it takes to dedicate myself not just for a week but over the course of a few months to finish a project. Understanding that nothing in the professional world gets accomplished by just one person, the comp has also made me understand the importance of teamwork and collaboration. Without the help of my fellow peers, library services, and comp advisor I surely would have crashed and burned as soon as I 'left the starting gate'. In conclusion, the comp can only help build me up as a poised liberal arts scholar ready to approach the issues of contemporary America with a critical thinking mindset. Allegheny College has conditioned me to find solutions for the numerous 'wicked' problems plaguing the world today and I feel as though the comp is a direct reflection of the precious tools Allegheny has instilled in me throughout my four years here.

Works Cited

Ancheta, Angelo N. “Law and Racial Hierarchy.” In *Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience.* New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2006, pp. 150–171.

De Jonge, Chad Kiewiet. The roots of Trumpismo: Populism and pushback. ABC News. 13 Mar. 2016. Retrieved from http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/roots-trumpismo-populism-pushback-poll/story?id=37602670

Editorial. “The Guardian View on Trump in Asia: Brace Yourselves | Editorial.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 2 Nov. 2017, www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/nov/02/the-guardian-view-on-trump-in-asia-brace-yourselves.

Norton, Michael I., and Samuel R. Sommers. "Whites See Racism as a Zero-Sum Game that they are Now Losing." Perspectives on Psychological Science, vol. 6, no. 3, 2011, pp. 215-218.

Wallace, Maurice O. Constructing the Black Masculine: Identity and Ideality in African American Men's Literature and Culture, 1775-1995. Durham: Duke UP, 2002.

Wilkins, Clara L., and Cheryl R. Kaiser. "Racial Progress as Threat to the Status Hierarchy: Implications for Perceptions of Anti-White Bias." Psychological Science, vol. 25, no. 2, 2014, pp. 439-446.doi:10.1177/0956797613508412

Zhang, Qin. "Asian Americans beyond the model minority stereotype: The nerdy and the left out." Journal of international and intercultural communication 3.1 (2010): 20-37.

Nopper, Tamara K. “The 1992 Los Angeles Riots and the Asian American Abandonment Narrative as Political Fiction.” *Oral History Review*, Oxford University Press, 5 Feb. 2007, muse.jhu.edu/article/209747/pdf.

Feng, Peter. “Redefining Asian American Masculinity: Steven Okazaki's ‘American Sons.’” Cinéaste, vol. 22, no. 3, 1996, pp. 27–29. JSTOR, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41688924

Lee, Joann. “Asian American Actors in Film, Television and Theater, An Ethnographic Case Study.” *Race, Gender & Class*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2001, pp. 176–184. *JSTOR*, JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41675001.

Boyd, Monica. “The Changing Nature of Central and Southeast Asian Immigration to the

United States: 1961-1972." *The International Migration Review*, vol. 8, no. 4, 1974, pp. 507–519. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/3002202.

Woodward, Kath. "Interpellation." *Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture.* Ed. Dale Southerton. Vol. 1. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2011. 810-811. *SAGE Knowledge*. Web. 11 Apr. 2019, doi: 10.4135/9781412994248.n300.

U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of State, history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act.
Cheney-Rice, Zak. "White Americans Got Affirmative Action First. Now Many of Them Want It Gone." *Intelligencer*, Intelligencer, 24 Oct. 2018, nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/10/harvard-affirmative-action-new-deal-racism.html.
Okiyoshi Takeda (2016) A Model Minority? The Misrepresentation and

Underrepresentation of Asian Pacific Americans in Introductory American Government Textbooks, Journal of Political Science Education

Taylor, R, and B Stern. "Asian-Americans: Television Advertising and the 'Model Minority' Stereotype." *Journal of Advertising*26.2 (1997): 47–61. Web.

Lee, Stacey J. *Unraveling the "Model Minority" Stereotype: Listening to Asian American Youth*. Teachers College Press, 2009.

Bascara, Victor. *Model-Minority Imperialism*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006, doi:10.5749/j.ctttsj10.

Hartlep, Nicholas D. *The Model Minority Stereotype: Demystifying Asian American Success.* Charlotte, N.C: Information Age Pub., Inc, 2013.

Halualani, Rona Tamiko, Deanna L. Fassett, Jennifer Huynh Thi Anh Morrison, and Patrick Shaou-Whea Dodge. "Between the Structural and the Personal: Situated Sense-Makings of 'Race'." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 2006, vol. 3, no.1, pp. 70-93, doi:10.1080/14791420500505700

Kawai. Yuko. "Stereotyping Asian Americans: The Dialectic of the Model Minority and the Yellow Peril." *Howard Journal of Communications*, 2005, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 109-130. doi:10.1080/10646170590948974

Leung, Maxwell. "Jeremy Lin's Model Minority Problem." *Contexts*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2013, pp. 52-56.

McElroy, Kathleen. "Basket Case: Framing the Intersection of 'Linsanity' and Blackness." *Howard Journal of Communications*, vol. 25, no. 4, 2014, pp. 431-451.

Mudambi, Anjana. “South Asian American Discourses: Engaging the Yellow Peril-Model Minority Dialectic.” *Howard Journal of Communications*, 2018, pp. 1-15. doi:10.1080/10646175.2018.1491431

Thornton, Michael, and Atushi Tajima. “A ‘Model’ Minority: Japanese Americans as References and Role Models in Black Newspapers, 2000–2010.” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 2014, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 139-57. doi:10.1080/14791420.2014.902086

Wu, Ellen D. *The Color of Success: Asian Americans and the Origins of the Model Minority.* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014.

Wu, Frank H. Yellow: *Race in America Beyond Black and White*. Basic Books, New York, 2002.

Woodward, Kath. "Interpellation." *Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture.* Ed. Dale Southerton. Vol. 1. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2011. 810-811. *SAGE Knowledge*. Web. 11 Apr. 2019, doi: 10.4135/9781412994248.n300.

Fiske, John. *Culture, ideology, interpellation*. na, 1998.

Zhang, Qin. “Asian Americans Beyond the Model Minority Stereotype: The Nerdy and the Left Out.” Journal of International and Intercultural Communication, 2010, vol. 3, no.1, pp. 20-37. doi:10.1080/17513050903428109

Ancheta, Angelo N. “Law and Racial Hierarchy.” In *Race, Rights, and the Asian American Experience.* New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 2006, pp. 150–171.

Cheney-Rice, Zak. “White Americans Got Affirmative Action First. Now Many of Them Want It Gone.” *Intelligencer*, Intelligencer, 24 Oct. 2018, nymag.com/intelligencer/2018/10/harvard-affirmative-action-new-deal-racism.html.

Choi, Yoonsun. “Redefining how People Think about Asian Immigrants *SSA Magazine*, vol. 25, no. 1, Spring 2018, Retrieved from www.ssa.uchicago.edu/ssa_magazine/redefining-how-people-think-about-asian-immigrants.

Dorfman, Ariel. *Homeland Security Ate My Speech: Messages from the End of the World.* New York, NY: OR Books, 2017.

Liptak, Adam. “Supreme Court Upholds Affirmative Action Program at University of Texas.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 23 June 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/06/24/us/politics/supreme-court-affirmative-action-university-of-texas.html.

Stanbrook, Matthew B. “Trump Travel Ban Means Academics Must Strengthen, not Sever, US Ties.” *CMAJ: Canadian Medical Association journal = journal de l'Association medicale canadienne* vol. 189, no.11, 2017, pp. E420-E421. doi:10.1503/cmaj.170247

Winders, Jamie. “Immigration and the 2016 Election.” *Southeastern Geographer*, vol. 56, no. 3, 2016, pp. 291–296.

Yam, Kimberly. “Steve Bannon Blames Asians For Taking Silicon Valley Jobs From Blacks, Latinos.” *HuffPost*, HuffPost, 5 June 2018, www.huffpost.com/entry/steve-bannon-blames-asians-taking-silicon-valley-jobs-blacks-latinos_n_5b1556d8e4b010565aae420a.
Balingit, Moriah “How Low-Income Asian Americans Became the Forgotten Minorities of Higher Education.” *The Washington Post*, WP Company, 18 Mar. 2019, www.washingtonpost.com/news/magazine/wp/2019/03/18/feature/does-affirmative-action-help-or-hurt-asians-who-dont-fit-the-model-minority-stereotype/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.b4686c1dffbf.