From the Yellow Peril to the Model Minority: A History of Asian American Immigration

Annabelle Jefferies
University of San Diego

Ben Police
University of San Diego

Jack Evenson
University of San Diego

Sam Stiker
University of San Diego

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From the Yellow Peril to the Model Minority: A History of Asian American Immigration

Annabelle Jefferies, Ben Police, Jack Evenson, Sam Stiker
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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the past semester, our group has read books, interpreted art and propaganda, and grappled with ideas from scholars on the topic of Asian American immigration and assimilation into the society of the United States. The zines that were created in response to these different forms of media discuss this process of immigration and inclusion as a slow, ongoing process that began with Chinese immigrants in the late 19th century. They also investigate this historical process through a lens of prejudice and racism in our country as a result of global geopolitical events, such as the Vietnam War or the Philippine War. From these zines, we hope that you, as the reader, will have not only more context with which to understand these issues, but a familiarity with them so that, if you encounter this same form of prejudice in your life, you can educate others to stop its spread.

We, as a group, want our readers to, as a main takeaway, have a deeper understanding of the historical framework for Asian American immigration and the corresponding attitudes and obstacles that these people encountered upon immigrating into the US. From this understanding, we want the reader to recognize how it began, why it has persisted, and that it is still a problem within our communities. Even though, today, the Asian, as a stereotype, has become a “model minority,” there are many people who see these immigrants and citizens on the outskirts of mainstream society where they should be left. Through interacting with the information presented in our zines and by learning from it, our readers should have a level of understanding that makes them capable of combating these harmful ideas.

In the current geopolitical climate, the education of people on racism, prejudice, and exclusion of ethnic minority groups is more important than ever. In the wake of the BLM movement within the United States and the global pandemic, there is tension and anger coursing
through communities everywhere. Friends have turned against friends, groups within our country now stand against each other. Many people blame the Asian countries and their people for the start and spread of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, and with this blame, they have also attached anger and also fear. Sadly, these ideas have reached and affected people as powerful as the President of the United States. Clearly, this is an issue worth investigating and correcting.

We must now work harder than ever to overcome these hurdles, as a nation, and recognize our fellow Americans as such: our neighbors, our friends, and our family rather than as an “other” who we should fear and hold at an arm’s distance. We cannot stand idly by as racism has resurfaced in our cities and resulted in the targeting of people who are in the most need of help, as they have already been pushed to the margins and fringes of society. It is up to each of us to mend the break in sympathy and empathy and begin to include everyone equally. We hope, as a group, that the information presented within this portfolio will help give its reader a platform from which to educate themselves and others on how to accomplish this ever-important task of equity, respect, and inclusion for all people.
In her written piece "The Chinese Must Go!: The Anti-Chinese Movement," Erika Lee discusses the prevalent racist movements plaguing the Chinese in the 19th and 20th centuries. She explains not only the legislative efforts made by the United States government and its citizens, but also, she explains why these feelings originated and why they remained for such a long period of time.

Beginning in the 1850's, anti-Chinese sentiment began growing, and this culminated in a series of physical outlashes and scenarios that played out in the Western United States during the 1870's. Incidents occurred along the western coast from Los Angeles up to Washington. On October 24, 1871, 500 citizens of the city lynched 17 Chinese citizens, and on November 3, 1885, 500 armed men in the city of Tacoma, Washington forced 800 to 900 Chinese members of the town to leave. These are two key examples that are illustrative of the growing sentiment in the US at that time, and at the same time, legislative efforts reflected the ill-will of the people. In the 1860's, legislation that placed restrictions on the Chinese population was being set in motion. In 1862, the Coolie Trade Act banned Coolie labor, in 1875, the Page Act barred Chinese women suspected of prostitution and coolie laborers from entering the country. The biggest reform took place in 1882 on May 6 in the form of the Chinese Exclusion Act. This act prevented any immigration from China for a period of 10 years except in select scenarios like merchants, students, and teachers, to name a couple, and this act banned all Chinese from gaining naturalized citizenship. Following the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Scott Act was passed in 1888 which extended the restrictions for another 10 years. On top of this, any already-naturalized Chinese in the country who left were not welcome to re-enter unless they had family or property in the states. The main goal of these acts was very clear: Chinese could enter the country, but they were not welcome to settle or join mainstream society. Following the Scott Act, the Geary Act was passed in 1892 accomplishing the same thing. These laws were renewed in 1902 and finally made permanent in 1904. A key example of how these acts were carried out in extreme detail is given by the horrors of Angel Island in the San Francisco Bay.
Positively No Filipinos Allowed

Summary: In Positively No Filipinos Allowed, author Nerissa Balce discusses the mistreatment of Filipinos by white Filipinos second largest Asian immigrant population in the US as a result of the Philippine-American War and labor migration history.

Language of Empire and DuBios

1900: Darkwater is published by W.E.B. DuBois and it is an autobiography informed by two twentieth-century African American political formations: liberalism and Pro-Africanist Marxism.

Counter in ideas to Tarzan of the Apes

1914: Tarzan of the Apes is published by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Main character is a white man raised by apes who is actually an icon of white empire seen through his title of "killer of beasts and many Black men."

The narrative implicitly argues that it is a testament to Tarzan’s “racially superior masculinity” and a good thing that he kills and conquers black people.

Tarzan represents white supremacist ideas.
**TIMELINE**

Aug 13 1898: US troops took over city of Manila (Beat out the Filipinos) Philippines supported US in hopes that they would be freed under US control

Feb 4 1899: Beginning of Philippine-American War Split public opinion between two sides whose ideas are seen through the books of Tarzan and the Apes and Darkwater which were later published in the early 20th century

1914: Tarzan of the Apes is published by Edgar Rice Burroughs Tarzan represents white supremacist ideas The narrative implicitly argues that it is a testament to Tarzan’s “racially-superior masculinity” and a good thing that he kills and conquers black people

Dec 10 1898: Peace treaty signed between Spain and US (ceded Philippines, Guam and Puerto Rico to US-20$ million) Becomes very apparent that the US was not on the side of the Filipino people, actually wanted to colonize the islands as an economic gain and rule the people

1920: Darkwater is published by W.E.B DuBois autobiography "Informed by two twentieth-century African American political formations liberalism, and Pro-Africanist Marxism" fights the idea that all Filipinos, Blacks, Hispanics, and other minorities are "half-dog" groups of people that need to be civilized
Social & Political Significance

The political significance of this piece also ties into contemporary issues that we face in society. In the most recent months and weeks, movements for racial equality such as Black Lives Matter have been brought into the spotlight of communities because of racial discrimination from members of society, and especially, recent actions of police officers.

Looking at Balce's implicit argument that the war in the Philippines was an excuse to gain the islands as an economic gain and that the US viewed the people as lesser and unequal, there is a tie to political issues today. Many minority groups are still viewed by people as lesser or are targeted purely based on the color of their skin. With the upcoming election, many of these issues will be brought up when discussing electoral candidates and what their stance is as racism in the United States is a very hot topic currently.

This matters because more people in our society should educate themselves by learning of previous atrocities such as the War in the Philippines to better understand what is going on, how to see past political propaganda, and evaluate what real issues exist and what needs to be done to address them. If many people in the time of the Philippine War had done this, the Filipino people would not have undergone such horrific treatment. We must all learn to see and treat each other as equal.

Happening Today

Balce's article, "Positively no Filipinos Allowed" sheds light on various social and political issues that we have been faced with throughout history and in our current society. The context of the texts allows readers to understand the background of a more recent incident that took place January 23, 2019 of Juan Guaido, President of the National Assembly of Venezuela, declared himself as the President of the country, with Nicolas Maduro's presidency being disputed. This sparked significant controversy between Maduro's government, who claimed that the U.S. was involved in this overtaking with the goal of controlling the country's oil reserves, and Guaidó, who claimed that he engaged with nothing but peaceful initiatives. In April, Mike Pence U.S. VP, made the statement that the U.S was going to take any and all measures to remove Maduro from his role, while Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, claimed that the U.S would take necessary action as well. However, in later months, Pompeo informed the public that the U.S. has learned from history and the risks of using military forces.
The main point Onishi is trying to make is how a group of diverse activists were able to begin to come together and form Afro-Asian solidarities against imperialism and white supremacy in the 20th century. Black and Japanese activists, along with others who supported Afro-Asian solidarity, began to develop a better sense and understanding of race at the time, which helped them to make positive change in each of their societies. Dusk of Dawn—Communicated the global dynamic of racial struggles created by anti-imperialist/nationalist.
Social & Intellectual Significance of Piece

Intellectual Significance = Through shared experiences of discrimination and oppression at the hands of powerful, anglo-saxon countries in both the eastern and western parts of the world, the groups of the African diaspora and the Asian diaspora came together. Through this bond, the exchange of culture and knowledge was facilitated. Both sides of the connection, as a result, gained knowledge and insight about how to better spread and support the notion of human liberation as opposed to certain racial or political group-centered freedom ideologies. (Echoes DuBois’ challenge)

Social Significance = The social significance of the events and ideas represented through Onishi’s piece are centered around the shift in global perspective in regards to the power and dominance of the United States and European countries. After Japan stood up to these countries and refused to simply accept their demands or let them continue in their plans uninterrupted, it sent a message to the downtrodden groups of societies that their fight was not meaningless. The message embodied in this piece is that through solidarity and a common understanding among diverse groups of people, major change can be achieved. In addition, through the work done by different activists and intellectuals, these people became important agents of social change.
Two Sides
Japanese Imperialism & Expansionism
As An Ally

1) On the positive end, DuBois saw Japan interfering with anglo-saxon countries of Europe's conquest of Africa as a non-white country standing up to white politics and ideas -> source of inspiration and hope for African-Americans and the African diaspora at large.

2) On the negative end of things, though, the Japanese's expansion throughout Asia wasn't necessarily freeing or standing up for non-whites -> it was also seen that Japan was acting ruthlessly and through acts of violence and militarism.

This downside to using Japanese movements as an ally discredited DuBois' stance on a trans-continental allegiance because many saw the Japanese as a ruthless group -> Black communists in the US denounced the Japanese as an ally, and by extension, denounced their fellow African Americans that supported the Japanese.
Asian Americans were villainized in the 19th and early 20th centuries, which is similar to that experience of the discrimination endured by African Americans. This created a sense of solidarity with the black community. Similarly according to a recent Pew Research Center Survey, “About four-in-ten Black and Asian adults say people have acted as if they were uncomfortable around them because of their race or ethnicity since the beginning of the outbreak, and similar shares say they worry that other people might be suspicious of them if they wear a mask when out in public.” Given the COVID-19 pandemic, both African American and Asian American groups have faced a type of discrimination. Although the repercussions of this pandemic have been very negative, one may argue that this discrimination has renewed the Afro-Asian solidarity amongst the groups.
HEARTBEAT OF STRUGGLE TIMELINE
1942: FEARS OF JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY BEGAN.

FEBRUARY 19TH OF 1942
EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066 WAS SIGNED INTO ACTION

FALL OF 1942
~120,000 JAPANESE AMERICANS HAD BEEN RELOCATED FROM THE WEST COAST

AUGUST OF 1942
POLICE RAID OCCURS AT THE SANTA ANITA ASSEMBLY CENTER

1944 THE REINSTATEMENT OF THE DRAFT FOR THE NISEI POPULATION IN THE CAMPS CREATED A DIVIDE IN THE JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

FEBRUARY 27TH OF 1942
TERMINAL ISLAND RELOCATION OCCURRED

APRIL 3RD OF 1942
YURI AND HER FAMILY LEFT HOME IN SAN PEDRO FOR THE ‘ASSEMBLY CENTER’ AT SANTA ANITA

- WHILE AT SANTA ANITA, YURI FOUNDED THE FIRST ‘CRUSADER’ GROUP AT THE ASSEMBLY CENTER

MID-OCTOBER OF 1942
YURI AND HER MOTHER AND BROTHER ARRIVE AT THE CONCENTRATION CAMP IN JEROME, ARKANSAS
Maturation Timeline of Yuri Kochiyama

Paralleling the chronological progression of relocations and events in those times of Yuri’s life, there is a constant progression of maturity within Yuri. She left her home in San Pedro at the age of 20 years old, a naive and positive girl. Yet, Yuri, by the time the piece ends, is a woman who has had a serious shift in her view of the world around her. Where she began as a girl who always made the best of her situation and focused on the world within her bubble of the Crusaders and her family, at the end, she is an influential leader within her community who has had to grapple with and accommodate into her life the racial disparity surrounding her. This shift within her came through interaction with the outside world of meeting older, more jaded Japanese Americans who shared their experiences with her. This compromised her previously “rose-tinted” view of her community. She saw the uphill battle her people had to fight due to their race, and the author describes this as a conflict between a “color-blind” view of the world versus a more “racialized” one. Even beyond this, Yuri serves as an excellent microcosm of her generation, the Nisei Japanese Americans.

Initially, the generation started out with a supermajority supporting the view of the JACL: the US government knows what is best as the governing body, and we should follow their orders to illustrate our allegiance and patriotism. However, as time progressed, many members of the Nisei generation became disillusioned, and they began to fight back as they sensed that they were becoming more racially marginalized in society, especially as they were allowed back in society following a WRA form. In this form, two infamous questions, numbers 27 and 28, asked Japanese Americans if they still held allegiance to the Japanese emperor and if they would renounce it, and it also asked if they would be willing to be drafted when necessary. If the Japanese Americans said yes to both questions, they would be allowed back into society, but this was only the beginning of their struggles because this is where they would face wide-spread discrimination at the hands of the general public. Due to constant trials such as this, there was a rapid jading of these people and a rise in contention between the two philosophies within the Nisei generation on how to act in regard to the US government.
ALOHA, VIETNAM: RACE AND EMPIRE IN HAWAII’S VIETNAM WAR

Within the text, Crystal Mun-hye Baik discusses how the impacts of the Korean War and the subsequent US involvement within it displaced and affected the lives of thousands of Korean citizens through their “militarized migrations.” She provides a bulk of her evidence and source texts from the first-hand accounts of such immigrants. The main two oral accounts were drawn from a video entitled “Memory of a Forgotten War.” One account was from a refugee who successfully assimilated into US society along with her parents who came from South Korea, while the other came from a man who immigrated from North Korea and his experience living in the extreme anti-communist environment of the United States during that era. Although both accounts are unique, they share similarities that Baik uses to criticize the role that the United States played in Korea. She continues to then make the argument that our actions were not as justified as we thought, they were not as benign as we thought, and that, in actuality, the US was the one gaining from its actions in the Korean Peninsula.
FROM THIS IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THERE WAS AN ISSUE THAT WAS LARGELY BEING IGNORED BY THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY. THROUGH THE TWO PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS OF THE PROCESS THAT MANY MIGRANTS UNDERWENT, THE TRUTH WAS EXPOSED AND REALIZED BY MANY PEOPLE. IN ACTUALITY, MANY PEOPLE WHO CAME HERE IN SEARCH OF A BETTER, CALMER, AND SAFER LIFE WERE INSTEAD FACED WITH DISCRIMINATION AND RELEGATION TO THE BOTTOM RUNGS OF SOCIETY. FOR INSTANCE, ONE OF THE INTERVIEWEES FROM MEMORY OF A FORGOTTEN WAR’S FATHER WAS A DOCTOR IN KOREA, BUT HAD TO BECOME A CASHIER AT A GAS STATION UNTIL HE SAVED UP ENOUGH TO START HIS OWN BUSINESS, ALL THE WHILE FACING ADVERSITY WITHIN SOCIETY.
The United States was advancing its own agenda in fighting the spread of communism through Southeast Asia by claiming its assistance of the South Korean people was necessary, when in reality, it was simply an excuse to gain a foothold in the geopolitical region. Not only were the people of Korea assimilated into the machine of a society that is the United States culture, but they underwent many challenges in doing so while becoming a “little brother” to the United States. Where many people think that we stepped in and supported Korea in their time of need, we took advantage of a tragic scenario to gain more influence in the global geopolitical sphere.
The article by Crystal Mun-Hye Baik essentially describes two different waves of Korean immigration to the United States. The first of these takes place between 1945 and 1964, and the second is from 1965 and beyond.
FIRST WAVE

During the Korean War, the first wave of Korean immigrants moved to America. As Korea became divided into two entities each supported by massive superpowers in the US and Soviet Union, fifteen thousand Koreans immigrated to the United States. This was aided by the McCarran and Walter Act of 1952, which made Asian immigrants able to become citizens. This group mostly consisted of military or war brides, war orphans, and other students and businessmen. The war brides especially had a tough time upon arriving in the United States, as many were forced to be away from other Korean communities and stay on military bases.

However, the group of students and businessmen actually assimilated decently well, although not totally free from segregation or racism. Many of the people in this group actually became very successful doctors, lawyers, or professors.
The second wave took off when the 1965 Immigration Act revoked the nationwide quota system, allowing Koreans to move into the United States and reunite with family members. In fact, the US government decided to recruit experts from Asia in different fields to fill needed professional positions. In many cases, their families accompanied these professionals in their journey to America. During one period in the late 20th century, Koreans made up the third largest immigrant group, behind only the Mexican and Filipino communities. The biggest difference between this group and the previous one was that while the first group had no choice but to immigrate due to the Korean War, many of these new Korean immigrants were simply workers who wanted to look for new opportunities in the United States.
Crystal Mun-Hye Baik's text sheds light to various social and political occurrences that have taken place in society and/or our individual communities. Generally speaking, the text allows US citizens to have a more in-depth understanding of the impact of the Korean War and how it affected a large portion of the Korean population through "Militarized Migrations." A CNN article explains how...

"It's the war that never really ended....that separated thousands of families, and created the world's most heavily fortified border. It also drew the alliances that exist today."

So the text provides readers with greater empathy for the true impact of this war. The United States involvement was seen to have a positive influence on the Korean population, however, the decision to intervene was made to gain the "upper hand" and control over the Korean land. The agreement that ended this way is a truce, not a peace treaty, so there are still loose ends to this historical event that are still being resolved today, that have had a lasting impact on our society and the lives of many.
Aloha, Vietnam: Race and Empire in Hawai‘i’s Vietnam War

Simeon Man
Simeon Man’s “Aloha, Vietnam,” is a piece that looks at the formation of Hawai‘i as a military island in the years leading up to, and the years in the Vietnam War. He begins by describing the influx of military operations and spending, and he discusses the implications of this influx on the culture and politics of the island. He emphasizes the consequences faced by the native peoples who lived on the island previously. Following this brief synopsis of the island’s transformation, Man discusses how the training on the island altered the views of the American soldiers in relation to not only the Hawai‘ians they were coming into contact with, but also how to view the Vietnamese soldiers and villagers they would soon become familiar with overseas.

The chapter moves into the actual violence seen in the Vietnam war, the reaction from the public upon seeing media covering the atrocities, and the resulting backlash, anti-war movement within the United States. Man then, to finish his chapter, ties the beginning into a conclusion relating the anti-war and anti-colonization sentiments of Hawai‘ian natives during the US’s takeover of the islands to the anti-war protests that many Americans took part in with the Vietnam war. This tie-in allows him to draw larger ideas and themes together concerning the value of native cultures, and the need for these voices to be heard and respected.
“Aloha, Vietnam” sheds light on a variety of social and political occurrences throughout history and in today’s society.
In this week’s reading, we saw how the US military occupation of Hawaii during the Vietnam War impacted the culture of native Hawaiians. However, this is not the only thing that has disrupted Hawaiian culture over the years, as tourism and infrastructure have continued to chip away at sacred lands and traditions of the Hawaiian people. One example of this is the Thirty Meter Telescope, which has sparked massive protests over the last few years.

Scientists decided that Mauna Kea, a site in Hawaii, would be the best spot to place this massive telescope. However, to many native Hawaiians, this is the most sacred spot on the islands, and they were outraged at the decision. As a result, protests and demonstrations have been occurring since 2014 in order to try and stop the telescope from being built.
Another example of this occurred just earlier this year, during the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, when thousands of tourists decided to take advantage of the cheap airfare and hotel rates and book vacations to Hawaii. Many of them did not follow the then-two week mandatory quarantine period, and as a result, cases in Hawaii began to spike.

This came much to the dismay of the locals, who had been following the strict quarantine guidelines. Many locals expressed the feeling that tourists were using the islands as their playground, and potentially endangering the lives of people that call Hawaii home.
Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refugees

Espiritu’s “militarized Refugees” encompasses a broad view of their evacuation from Vietnam to the United States, as a result of the Vietnam war. The objective was to provide a safe and healthy environment for these individuals. This process was fraught with difficulties, facing severe challenges and overcoming them with resolve. The journey for the Vietnamese evacuees was not just physically arduous, but also culturally complex, as they sought refuge in a foreign land.

The experience of the evacuees varied greatly. Some were fortunate to be resettled in the United States with assistance from organizations like the Vietnam Veterans of America and the American Red Cross. Others faced obstacles such as language barriers, cultural differences, and social isolation. The refugees often struggled to find employment and integrate into American society, leading to feelings of alienation and, at times, discrimination.

The Vietnamese community in the United States faced significant challenges in the initial years. The lack of support from the government and the societal resistance to their integration exacerbated the difficulties. The Vietnam War left a lasting impact on the Vietnamese population, not only physically but also psychologically. The experience of the refugee resettlement programs illustrates the complexities of international migration and the impact of conflict on people's lives.

The consequences of the Vietnam War on the Vietnamese people and the United States are multifaceted. The war had a profound impact on the Vietnamese society, affecting their culture, economy, and political landscape. For the United States, the war and its aftermath raised questions about its role in the global community and the ethics of intervening in foreign conflicts.
Social/Political Implications at Home and Abroad

In addition, for the most part, the refugees leaving Vietnam did not experience the safe haven they were likely expecting when they arrived in the United States. They’d essentially just lost their home for good, an extremely difficult thing to deal with on its own, and were then thrust into new challenges. The harsh conditions they faced during their flights to the United States and stays on different military bases were very uncomfortable and difficult in many cases, and some experienced racial prejudices upon arriving as well.

Many families were also torn apart upon arriving due to sketchy or incomplete paperwork in many cases. During Operation Babylift alone, of 2,242 children that arrived in the United States, 1,511 were ineligible for adoption and only 12 were reunited with their Vietnamese parents.
THIS WEEK IN THE NEWS:

Military Refugees] mentions the idea of a “good refuge” as well as the idea of “good refugees.” As one of the most powerful countries in the world, we believe that it’s important for the United States to act as a good refuge for people across the globe that may need it, especially due to our long history as a country that is built on immigration. However, just last week, the Trump administration advised Congress that they do not want to accept any more than 15,000 refugees next year in 2021, a record low. For comparison, Ronald Reagan accepted more than 159,000, George H.W. Bush more than 132,000, and even Barack Obama around 85,000.

This decision could have global implications, as people seeking refuge from different conflicts could be abandoned in their home countries without ways to escape. In addition, this decision comes as the number of worldwide refugees has increased in massive numbers over the last decade, reaching nearly 80 million globally. Although a majority of this decision is likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and worry about the safety of Americans first, this could potentially put the lives of many others around the world in jeopardy.
Say yes. Say yes anyway.

i

In the shower, sweating under cold water, I scrubbed & scrubbed.

In the life before this one, you could tell two people were in love because when they drove the pickup over the bridge, their wings would grow back just in time.

Some days I am still inside the pickup. Some days I keep waiting.
SUMMARY

Ocean Vuong’s On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous follows the coming of age story of a Vietnamese immigrant and his immediate family in Hartford, Connecticut. The main character of the narrative’s name is Little Dog, and he lives with his mother, Rose, and his grandmother, Lan, both play major roles in the upbringing of him. They both play major roles in the formation of Little Dog’s identity and the way that he reacts and interacts with the intimate setting he grows up in. As a consequence of his mother and grandmothers’ lives during the Vietnam War, this upbringing is objectively volatile and intense, but subjectively, it is a close and loving one at its core. The love and care that Little Dog exemplifies for his mother is expressed throughout the book even in light of her abusive and dominating presence in their household. Similarly, Little Dog takes care of his grandmother and cares for her extremely deeply.

However, because of the setting he grew up and developed in, he has a hard time expressing these emotions, and, as a result, harbors many feelings and internalizes them. This lifestyle for Little Dog exists until he meets Trevor, a farmer boy, within Hartford and the two share a romantic relationship. However, this relationship must be kept a secret by Little Dog due to the standards that Rose has set for him in his childhood. When Little Dog does eventually come out to his mother, she reacts by vomiting and commenting that she thought she raised a “normal boy.” Later in the book, Trevor eventually passes from an opioid overdose, and Lan passes as well. Due to these deaths driving him and his mother from Hartford, Little dog and Rose go to Vietnam to spread his grandmother’s ashes and the novel ends with what is likely a dream of Little Dog. The experiences and the way that he was raised causes Little Dog to write paralleling the migration of a Monarch Butterfly escaping what is their home and going south to escape. This reinforces the point that Little Dog views his life as a migration away from a darker home towards something bright and meaningful, although there are dark pitfalls along the way.

Additionally, the PTSD suffered by his mother and grandmother before her passing serve to tie in commentary and reflection of the damage caused by the war on the surface, but also commentary on the scars and damage that never heals from trauma beneath the skin. The third, and arguably most important theme within the text concerns the tie that people feel from birth to certain people and places. Little Dog feels trapped by the place he was born, the people he was raised by, and the setting he was raised in as he feels he will never be able to escape or distance himself from this trauma. It is a dark, but very rich text that revolves around experiences that anyone can relate to while also staying individualistic with insight from Little Dog on things that many people will never have to experience, and it can serve to teach the reader valuable lessons about life.
Social/Political Significance

Ocean Vuong’s On Earth We’re Briefly Gorgeous contains a variety of social and political significance. The story sheds light on the hardships that may be experienced as Vietnamese immigrant, as well as the physical, mental and emotional toll that certain hardships can have on oneself. This text provides the audience with a deeper understanding of how white supremacy influenced certain racial groups and how pervasive it really is. It seems that people in our society often reject the issues that are correlated to race, thinking that they do not exist in the current day. It is important to acknowledge the racism that is integrated throughout and within our social construct and economic systems.
Modern Tie

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PTSD, is a mental health condition formed by experiencing some sort of traumatic event, commonly found in places of abuse or extreme violence. The condition was largely unknown until 1980, when it was finally recognized as a mental disorder. As time has gone on and science and modern medicine has dramatically gotten better, more has been learned about PTSD. Symptoms can range greatly based on the experience, but can include physical reactions such as nightmares and trouble sleeping, being easily startled or scared, angry or unwarranted outbursts, or mental reactions such as guilt, shame, detachment, hopelessness, or numbness.

In On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous, Little Dog’s mother Rose suffers from PTSD from her experiences in the Vietnam War, one such instance being when her schoolhouse was hit by a napalm attack, burning it to the ground. Because of this disorder, it causes her to sometimes lash out and hit or verbally abuse Little Dog, both common side effects and likely her way of coping. Her mother Lam also suffers from the condition, likely due from her years as a prostitute during the war, as well as the constant bombings and explosions.

One of the most famous PTSD cases was nearly seven years ago in 2013, when a former Navy SEAL and advocate for veteran's mental health named Chris Kyle was tragically shot and killed by a soldier suffering from extreme PTSD. The incident finally shed light on the fact that over 20% of soldiers come back from Afghanistan and Iraq suffer from the condition, proving further that those suffering from PTSD need ample support and care after their traumatic events.
Model Minority Myth

Robert Lee's text about the formation of a “Model Minority” as the Asian American diaspora of the United States evaluates how it served as a tool for the country to achieve economic gain abroad, contain racial issues domestically, and to keep racial minorities subdued in a sense. Lee moves from each of these topics to the others arguing that the myth not only doesn't exist, but it did not actually praise the minorities as it purports. Instead, it was a way for the white, male power system in place to make gains globally, and maintain the power structure of that time.

Beginning with the economic gains acquired by the US through the use of the model minority myth, Lee discusses that the United States utilized the public opinion of support for Asian Americans to secure a foothold in the Pacific Rim’s economies. What this means is that, by convincing the public that the Asian American population should be seen as model immigrants, they were persuaded into support action taken with Asian countries abroad as we valued them in our own country. Through this, the United States could interact with nations in the Pacific region without consequence and shape their economies to model our own, simultaneously creating a strong bond between us and those nations.
Moving on from here, Lee also asserts that by using the model minority myth, the United States illustrated submissiveness and assimilation as valuable in immigrants. Because of this implicit bias for subservience in minority populations, the United States was hoping to persuade groups, especially the African American population, to submit to the white, male power structures in place. If this was achieved, the traditional power structures would not be threatened.

Lastly, but most importantly, we must recognize that the “myth” part of the model minority is the most important part of the phrase. In reality, even though the United States wanted it to seem that immigrants were seen as valued members of society, they were seen as an “other” who was not to be incorporated wholesale into the general public. The value that was placed upon the Asian immigrants in our country was only in name, but in practice, they were seen as being the same as all other minorities and marginalized similarly. There was no actual model minority, we, as a country, did not value Asian immigrants as we said, rather, we only valued the fact that they were “subservient.” In practice, we were only highlighting the fact that they were easily assimilating into society and doing as they were told, rather than respecting their identities and cultures.
Robert Lee’s text explaining the “Model Minority Myth” sheds light on a variety of historic issues in communities throughout the country, and provides some clarity to the current social and political environment that we find ourselves living in today. The idea of a Model Minority is very much still active today through the continued use of stereotypes within our society. Asian American children across the country are still expected in many cases to be smarter and more musically inclined than other students, just due to the fact they’re Asian.

In an article on Tolerance.org, Sarah-Soonling Blackburn outlined an instance of this, stating: “my pre-calculus teacher pulled me out into the hallway. He wanted to talk about my latest test. “You can do better than this,” he said. “I’m so surprised by grades like this from someone like you.” This is a clear example of the misconceptions and myths that Asian Americans are frequently associated with.

Another part of the Model Minority myth is the idea of a “Tiger Parent.” The term Tiger Parent first came about in the book Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother, by Amy Chua. In the book, Chua outlined many of her controversial parenting choices, including not letting her kids get any grade lower than an A or watch TV at all. People reacted differently to the book, some liking and agreeing with Chua’s extremely strict and controlling style of parenting, as it produced great results, while others strongly disagreed, saying it was too much for the kids to endure.

This book and the following stigma surrounding Tiger Parents contributed to the list of offensive stigmas that Asian Americans have had to endure throughout the past decades and in current society. It is important to make a conscious effort to be aware of these myths associated with the model minority and take necessary steps to prevent them. Robert Lee’s text is very important because it provides the historical background to the current issues and implications of the Model Minority Myth.
Volpp breaks down the post-September 11th racial profiling activities of the United States into subcategories to better understand the basis for them and our country’s shameful justification of them. The piece, as a whole, serves to underscore how misplaced our emotions were and how an event like September 11th can quickly reveal that there are still racial issues and stereotyping rooted in our culture as a society.
SUMMARY

One of Volpp’s major points comes with the first section of the piece headed as “On Racial Profiling,” wherein she analyzes the shift in America’s relation to the action casued by September 11th. Before the terrorist attacks, Volpp argues that mainstream society in America was steadfast in disavowing the practice of racial profiling as it was backwards, inefficient, and has no value; however, after the attacks, Volpp asserts that many Americans then felt racial profiling was a means of defense of their country. Many people seemed to see racial profiling as an essential tool in “defending” the fabric of the United States, so to speak. This idea that overtook many people led to actions like hate crimes, verbal harassment, and exclusion of groups thought to be of “Middle Eastern” origin. Sadly enough, actions like this can only take place when people view a subset of different cultures and races as being one homogenous entity, and that is exactly what occurred. Eventually, many immigrants were forced to take extra measures to identify themselves as unrelated to Muslim cultures or make continual, excessive action to try and prove their allegiance to our country. Many of the immigrants taking these actions, from our current point of view, would be seen as silly to think that they would have to do such things; however, with Americans such as the killer of Balbir Singh Sodhi shouting “I stand with America,” it only makes sense.
SUMMARY

Moving on from this point, Volpp discusses how the aftermath of the September 11th attacks reinvigorated the ideas of Orientalism in America. By beginning to view people of Middle Eastern descent as a like-minded and single group, many of the memories of America's actions taken against Japanese Americans in early decades come forth again. People were once again entertaining ideas of internment and the like as solutions to the issue they felt was surrounding them. The widespread grouping of immigrants from the Middle East as being the same allowed Americans to discriminate widely without thought, and it reinforced the superficial distinction between the “civilized” West and the “barbaric” East. It reignited the ideas within the American populace that we must “save” the people who come from the East.

Only this time, the people we felt like saving previously such as women and children were not given the chance. They were simply grouped into the side of the men that were already targets in the eyes of America. While there are differences between the era of Japanese internment and what happened in the aftermath of September 11th, Volpp argues that there are also clear links between the two.

In a conclusion to the piece, Volpp investigates the idea of citizenship, and what this truly means in relation to viewing people around you truly as neighbors. Through this lens, even though there are legal criteria for determining citizenship, those are valueless if not supported by a welcoming environment after. If someone is granted legal citizenship but faces solely discrimination upon arrival, there clearly is not much value inherent in the process of naturalization. Continuing, Volpp writes about this fact and the rationale that even if someone is granted access to our nation, they can still be seen as antagonistic to our success and consequently excluded through extralegal action.
Volpp's text showcases examples of clear social and political significance through the explanation of the domino effect that took place as a result of the 9/11 terrorist attack. This historical event not only created a divide between white caucasians and the Muslim community, but also affected other ethnic groups living in United States. With the fearful and hostile climate created at the time, negative perspectives towards Japanese Americans in the past became issues for the present. The idea of orientalism in America took a new meaning following the terrorist attack, and it had a significant and lasting impact on the Japanese population. So, it is important to understand and embrace the history of denigration and discrimination towards Japanese Americans, because their hardships have defined their experiences in the United States.

Volpp's text provides readers with a deeper analysis of the discriminatory repercussions faced by ethnic groups, specifically Asian Americans, as a result of 9/11.
In recent years, social media has grown to be such a large presence in our world, allowing people across the globe to stay more connected than ever thought possible. While there are obviously so many advantages to social media, it is not without disadvantages, one of those being our seemingly never-ending access to news and information. Part of why the 9/11 attacks were so shocking was that millions of people were tuned in on their TV's, watching the events unfold live. Without a doubt, that live television coverage and subsequent media coverages likely contributed to the sense of collective trauma many people faced post-9/11, in turn having a larger impact on the future attitudes of those people towards perceived threats to the US (which many people associated with the Middle East). And as technology has advanced, this phenomenon has likely intensified for similar events - an example being the more recent Boston Marathon bombing. For days, people tuned into their phones and TV’s for updates on the manhunt for the suspects, who happened to be Middle Eastern, likely driving home a very similar attitude that many felt post 9/11.
In the introductory section of her book, Robyn Rodriguez analyzes the ways in which the concept of neoliberalism has created a migrant worker state within the Philippines. Rodriguez believes that this phenomenon is not to the fault of the Philippines themselves, but rather it originated in their history of colonization at the hands of countries such as the United States. Originally, the Filipino was seen as a backwards, savage person who needed to be civilized by countries like the US, and this is, essentially, what occurred upon the meeting of the two nations. The people of the Philippines were educated and raised through the methods and ideas of developed nations, and as a result, these people are at the forefront of the migrant labor force in the contemporary world. The increase in demand for Filipino workers has had a domino effect on the country and its work and labor force. This epidemic of the "migrant worker" has led to millions of Filipinos leaving their countries on work contracts globally to send back remittances, and upon completion of these contracts, return home only to receive another. However, it is not all bad. The concept of a migrant worker helps to stimulate the global economy's flow and benefit many nations.

In fact, the Philippines is a "model system" in this way, and it is championed by global economic agencies as it is doing a service to the world's economy. "Guest workers" are seen as a bridge between global labor demand and immigration policies/restrictions as it opens up both markets. By allowing the immigration of these technically undocumented workers, countries are forced to reevaluate their strict immigration laws and update them to today's standards to accommodate the disparity which benefits a large portion of migrant regardless of employment. Although there are two sides to this phenomenon, one bad and one good, it is a somewhat necessary one as it benefits both immigration and economic stimulus. It will be interesting to see where this leads countries to fix immigration regulation, but it is worth noting that this delay in reform should not come at the expense of a nation of people and their culture.
Robyn Rodriguez’s text provides context to a variety of social and political issues that exist in today’s society. She presents readers with detailed insight that explains the two-sided phenomenon of Neoliberalism in the Philippines and its impact on both immigration regulations and economic stimulus. Evidence of the Filipino population being forced to the forefront of the migrant labor force has shown up in the past two decades. In 2003, the president of the Philippines said the following, “Not only am I the head of state responsible for a nation of 80 million people. I’m also the CEO of a global Philippine enterprise of 8 million Filipinos who live and work abroad and generate billions of dollars a year in revenue for our country.” This leaves a negative impression on readers as the head of a state is essentially qualifying her citizens as a labor source rather than a diaspora of scattered workers. The actions of the country’s leadership is just one example of the social and political significance of this phenomenon explained by Rodriguez. This text allows readers to become more aware of the impacts of this phenomenon. While many people in the Philippines may strive to find work outside of their country, it is important to be aware of the Filipino natives and the impact of removing them from their culture.
Health workers, especially during this recent pandemic, are absolutely essential to the well-being of our country as a whole. Many first-world countries have used migrant workers in healthcare areas for many years to work long hours in hospitals, health centers, clinics, and more. And with a real need for more helping hands right now, many migrant healthcare workers have served on the front lines. As a result, the World Health Organization recently reported that 1 in 6 cases of COVID-19 are in fact health workers, and unfortunately migrant health workers make up many of those cases. However, their increased risk of exposure is not a coincidence, instead stemming from years of poverty, poor workplace conditions, and other systems that put them at a disadvantage. And because of their position as migrant workers, many are worried about voicing their concerns for risk of discrimination or even deportation.