An Artistic Exploration of Asian American Studies

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An Artistic Exploration of Asian American Studies

Eileen Rhatigan, Alanah Winston, Myah Pace, & Tristan Brown
Anti Asian sentiment arises in the United States as there is an increase of Asian immigration to the US to seek better life opportunities created by the gold rush.

US becomes dominant power in Hawaii. Use power to spread anti Asian sentiment and deliberately prevent the social progression of Asians in the US.

United States Congress extends the exclusion put in place by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 with the Geary Act. Chinese immigration the US made permanently illegal leading to a sharp decline in the US Chinese population.

Anti Asian violence became prevalent in the West including violent mobs, assaults and murders directed towards the Asian community. On October 24, 1871, seventeen Chinese people were lynched in Los Angeles.

Angel Island becomes the main immigration station for Chinese immigrants trying to enter the United States. Known for its gruesome examinations, interrogations, and holding policies, it became known as the "Ellis Island of the West".

Congress extends the Chinese exclusion laws in response to the Chinese government’s efforts to leverage better conditions for Chinese travelers to the United States by repealing earlier treaties.

Canada follows suit of the United States and banned all Chinese people from entering the country with the passing of their own Chinese Exclusion Act. The day that it passed is known as "Humiliation Day."

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1850s

1870s

1875

1892

1902

1904

1910

1923

1943

1943

1965

THE HISTORY OF: THE IMMIGRATION OF ASIANS INTO THE US

Congress passes a measure to repeal the discriminatory exclusion laws against Chinese immigrants and to establish an immigration quota for China of around 105 visas per year.

All restrictions on immigration are lifted and the Chinese begin arriving in America in large numbers.

The United States Congress passed the first measure to repeal the exclusion laws of 1882 and established a quota for the number of Chinese immigrants allowed into the country.

Canada passes the Exclusion Act. It prohibited all people from China or of Chinese descent from entering the country. Excluded from this law were “consular officials, children born in Canada, merchants, and students,” (Lee). Despite citizenship status, all Chinese people have to register with the Canadian government and get a certificate of registration from the U.S.

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When analyzing the experience of the Filipino immigration process to the United States along with the effects of U.S. imperialistic ideologies on the Philippines, one will see that it was couched with violence, hatred, and discrimination. These characteristics resemble that of the Asian American experience attempting to immigrate into the U.S. Although, this time the spark that ignited the flame to the anti-Filipino attitudes held by many Americans wasn’t the Gold Rush, but the beginning of the Great Depression. Propaganda and other means of public scrutiny were also used to maintain these feelings within society. Cartoons, drawings, and other forms of entertainment portrayed inaccurate and offensive characteristics and details to Filipino people in order to convince the public of the danger of having them a part of the United States.

The individualistic mindset and culture within the United States could be seen as an accelerant in the spark of the social issues with Filipinos within the United States. The reasoning behind this statement comes from the fact that the United States and its people have a culture that is oriented around the self, being independent instead of identifying with a group. As a result, they could only see how the immigration of Filipino’s affected them in a negative way without taking into account the positive effects that it could have on the Filipino people.
I hope you’re happy. You’ve stolen what little possessions we held close.
You have stripped us of our dignity, language, and culture.
For what?
Were you that desperate to prove to the world that you are powerful
by taking advantage of the powerless?
Our homes have been torn apart, blasted by hatred, bombed by self-interest.
You say we have to reform now, straighten up.
You have claimed our language, our clothes, and now you want our futures.
Of course, your story began with a famous fight for freedom.
You broke away from tyrannical rule.
It is only natural for you to assume we want the same.
But why were we deemed the savages? Why was Hawaii targeted? Or Puerto Rico? Cuba? Panama?
What did we do to deserve this treatment?
You twisted the narrative. You didn’t wage a war on our people, our culture... no.
You rescued us from our oppressors and taught us how to speak. How to breathe. How to live.
You united us as one nation, under God, indivisible. And yet we are broken.
Strange Fruit gone bad in a whole new way,
Hang low in dark colors, they treat us all the same.
Not black like their property but brown nonetheless,
A new land to invade, more people to suppress.

To them we are young, we are dumb, we need saving,
To us, we messed up, cannot trust what they’re saying.
Promised prosperity, freedom, a chance at life without rule,
But instead they built railroads, and schools,
Convinced themselves we’re a nation of fools.

Does it help them all sleep to picture us in this light,
Does it make it possible for them to justify the cause of the fight,
Black bodies, look in mirrors, and see us in their sight.

How did this reality come to be?
How did cultures erase, be obscured by their greed,
As I write this poem I make a final decree,
America without color is a sight that has never to be seen.
The presence of white supremacy and racism are not only felt throughout the United States by African Americans, but it also expanded into other continents due to colonization and imperial efforts of the French, British and United States. What sparked the interest of intellectuals such as W.E.B Du Bois and C.L.R James was the emergence of Japan as a global player and their strong opposition to white supremacy and the imperial expansion taking place throughout the world. James and Du Bois immersed themselves in the topic of transpacific race contact and were able to come to the conclusion that African Americans were not alone in the struggles with white supremacy and racial justice. The two intellectuals recognized the importance of making those transpacific contacts and relationships in order to unite in an effort against racial injustices and discrimination.
The initial idea of imperialism stems from white, European nations. It brought a sense of “otherness,” and introduced a power-structure, where the white man and his ways were seen as superior to the savagery of African and Asian cultures. Japan made a stand to end white imperialism by instating nationalist, anti-imperialist sentiment which provoked Black Americans to hope that they, too, could fight against white imperialism. Japan's stand against imperialism opened the doors for black scholars like W.E.B. DuBois to formulate a new racial philosophy of human emancipation. Today, African Americans are still experiencing racial discrimination. Police brutality plagues America, but we fight back with peaceful protests and sit-ins. We spread awareness through social media platforms of the injustice happening in our country. We come together as one.

"During the second half of the twentieth century, the same currents of resistance, now exceeding beyond the Black counterpublic sphere in the United States and gaining strength in the African diaspora and the Third World, offered Japanese scholars, Okinawan intellectual-activists, antiwar Black and white GIs, and peace activists from mainland Japan and the United States essential intellectual resources and creative energies to help organize political projects at the grassroots," (Onishi 7).
"Engaging with the politics of culture in a society where daily reminders of racial subordination crippled one's self-worth, they took seriously the utopian appeal that the image of a defiant Japan had on and could have in Black America," (Onishi 5).

"Du Bois and C.L.R. James hope in exploring this transpacific relationship between Japan and African Americans in the US largely appeals to black consciousness. Standing in opposition to the way in which American society promoted black subordination in every way imaginable at the time; Japan’s defiance was capable of providing both literal and ideological hope for black Americans. Du Bois, as a black intellectual, had the power to push and further shape the narrative, using Japan as an ideal archetype for darker, non-white nations of people to demonstrate a real possibility for steps towards liberation on a global and national scale."
September 20, 2020

To Anyone Who Will Listen,

I wake up every morning and question how exactly I got where I am. What began as a journey for better days has brought me and my family new suffering in ways we never imagined. My mother cries nearly every day thinking about how much we need and miss our father. What’s worse is that it seems there is nothing we can do about the situation we are in. Along with the other migrants in here, my family was working with a group of activists to get our stories and experiences in here to the public. But the private owners of this place have blocked all communication. Now we suffer in silence, shut off from the world, a distant afterthought of life in the United States. The conditions in this facility are what are most unbearable, after the loss of our freedom and agency as human beings. The cells and holding rooms are overcrowded with people of all ages. The amount of space that there is between myself and my brother is space smaller than our bedroom at home. We know there is a virus that we need to be cautious of, but there are no tests, no sanitation procedures, not even medicine for when we feel unwell. We also know that a nurse from another facility recently came forward and exposed the Department of Homeland Security for sanctioned forced hysterectomies in detention centers. They aren’t only trying to erase our struggles, they want to erase us all together. I know one day people are going to look back on what we are all going through and feel nothing but shame. They will ask, “How did they let that happen?” “How could Americans sleep knowing what is happening within their borders, in the ‘land of the free’?” But by then will it be too late? I do not know what the future holds, but I do know that action is what we need, both by politicians and American citizens. Nothing was achieved in policy without resistance and revolution first. Our struggle merits outrage, our pain deserves compensation, and our stories deserve to be included in the American conversation of progress.

Publish this letter wherever it can be. Make our voices heard.

~Maria
Dear Sarah,

Our whole lives were uprooted when the 108 Civilian Exclusion Order gave us one week to pack our belongings and leave our house. Mama and Papa sat Mikio and me down and told us that the U.S. government felt it necessary for those of Japanese descent to be rounded up and kept in one place. Our possible associations with our motherland made us dangerous and untrustworthy. I asked them, "What about the people here from other countries in the war, the Germans and the Italians, why don't they have to leave too?" Mama and Papa looked at us with sadness in their eyes. I would later come to understand why their eyes seemed so sad in that moment... They couldn't explain to their young children why they were being treated so poorly, in a country we thought would protect us when we became citizens and love us like their own. There was no time for feeling down, however, we had to get ready to go and quickly. I listened to Mama and Papa, packed up quickly, and we left before it was too late. But here we are.

Trapped under the American government's great magnifying glass. Since then, our family has tried to adjust to our new living situation. Mama continued her job as a seamstress, working out of our small room. While she had to leave her prized sewing machine in the care of our neighbors at home, she was able to keep her needles and thread. Papa and Mikio found work as construction workers. We are doing the best we can with what we have, and I try to stay positive. With me, I brought things that make me happy - pictures of my friends and the memories from before this became our reality. However, my good memories often feel overshadowed by more bad news, uncertainty and worry. Today, while I was waiting in line in the bathhouse, I heard women talk about their relatives who had been moved to concentration camps in Wyoming. Would we, too, have to pick up our lives once again? Would Mama and Papa be separated from us? These questions swirl in my head as I close my eyes at night.

Please write back soon, as your letters are my only source of comfort the last couple of weeks.

~ Keiko
PEARSON HISTORY PRESENTS:

A HOME THAT'S NOT MY OWN: THE HISTORY OF MILITARIZED KOREAN MIGRATION

Learn the history of Korean migration influenced by U.S. military intervention
Synopsis

“I do not know why my sister got involved with that American soldier... I told her nothing good was going to come from their relationship.” This is an excerpt from an interview conducted with members of families who were affected by the militarized immigration caused by the long-term stay of American soldiers in South Korea during World War II. The content within this history book will look at the effects that the presence of American military soldiers had on migration of Koreans into the United States as well as how their stay impacted the surrounding Korean communities. This will include the journey of women who made the switch to American life, related political legislation and how people are living through it in South Korea.
OUR STORY: KOREAN CITIZENS' ACCOUNTS OF THE WAR

Understanding Korean citizens and their accounts of a divided country and how the war shaped their lives.
Synopsis

Where there was once unity and co-existence, is now riddled with division, malice, and pain. The content of this textbook will explain how U.S. interference in Korean affairs permanently severed the ties of one land that is now two. This will include a historical overview of how the United States demonized economic structures that differed from their capitalistic endeavors and personal Korean narratives from those who were both immediately & generationally impacted by the war. The text will be supplemented with images of propaganda used by the U.S. to justify their imperialist motives and archival photos of the U.S. occupation of Korean Land. Additionally, there will be explanations of how U.S. involvement created avenues for sex work, exploitation, and forced migration to the U.S. for capitalist benefit.
KOOREAN MILITARY BRIDES ARE MORE THAN CHARACTERS FEATURED ON SCREEN OR IN MAGAZINES. THEY ARE WOMEN WHO CONSCIOUSLY CHOSE TO MARRY, IMMIGRATE, AND THEN SURVIVE IN THEIR NEWFOUND LIVES. EAGER TO SEEK A LIFE DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF THEIR MOTHERS, MANY KOOREAN MILITARY BRIDES CONSIDERED MARRIAGE TO U.S. G.I.S AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO ESCAPE THE POVERTY AND VIOLENCE IN THEIR WAR-TORN COUNTRY AND OPPRESSIVE HOMES.

BEYOND THE SHADOW OF CAMPTOWN
BY JI-YEON YUH
Our home is more than a vacation destination

Come explore the real Hawai'i through the natives' eyes

"Hawai'i, our ancient and erotic land, is the female object of degraded and victimized value. Our 'aina, or lands, are no longer the source of food and shelter, but the source of money. Land is now called "real estate," rather than Pāpahānaumoku, "she who gives birth to islands"
Our pristine beaches and mountain hikes are seen as tourist attractions, but they mean so much more to us. Our farmlands have been destroyed to make way for condominiums and beachside hotels. The U.S. claimed our islands for their military, bombing, wreaking havoc and creating destruction.

In particular, Mauna Kea, the volcano standing at 13,796 feet, has a strong presence with our people. We, the proud natives of Hawai‘i, are trying to maintain protection of this landmark from the University of Hawai‘i. This land was not meant for telescopes, this land was meant to be used to respect our deities, honor our ancestors buried there, and house the summit temple of the Supreme Being. These are our lands, and they mean more to us than a simple getaway vacation. All we ask is that what little sacred lands we have left, remain off-limits to further development. It is important to maintain these connections to our people and our culture through the land.

Family lū‘au’s have historically been most popularly celebrated on the date of a native child’s first birthday. The tradition began after foreign disease entered the islands and led to a sharp decline of the Hawaiian population.

If a baby overcame the disease and made it to his or her first birthday, celebration ensued and the lū‘au was born. Lū‘au’s represent familial pride and generational perseverance of native peoples.

For local’s today, the celebration remains an important part of life; party planning begins months in advance and generations of family, neighbors, distant relatives, and close friends come together to celebrate family and community.

We are known for our value of family, togetherness and respect. Although, a clear understanding of the Hawaiian people has faded because of the transformative period also known as the Renaissance Period in Hawai‘i. Despite the common perception, there are a variety of ethnic identities present including Chinese, Japanese, Puerto Rican, Portuguese and Filipino heritages. What sets tourhis people apart from many others in the world is their level of openness and care for the community. Your ethnic heritage isn’t what makes you Hawaiian— it's the values and customs that you choose to uphold and carry one that make you a part of the community.
May Day Is Lei Day!

On May 1st of every year, Lei day is celebrated as an annual tribute to a culturally iconic symbol, "The Lei". Each year, locals dress in traditional Aloha attire, performances take place, cultural food is shared, and Hawaii’s natural tropical flowers are honored in the crafting and wearing of Lei’s all over the islands. The passing and receiving of the lei is a tradition practiced throughout Polynesia and remained a custom carried to the islands by original Hawaiian settlers.

Today, all Hawaiian locals continue to wear and exchange lei on occasions like graduations, funerals, birthdays and weddings. Although commonly and commercially made from flowers, lei are often crafted with leaves, nuts, shells, feathers or ribbon. The holiday became official on May 1, 1927 - but the lei itself holds ancient powerful meaning and tradition, essential to the values connecting native Hawaiian people to each other and the land they share.
THE SAD TALE OF

MILITARIZED REFUGEES

The Vietnamese Diaspora
Making a Refugee

diaspora
did they ask us
if we ever wanted
to be wanderers

if we wanted to drown
in their useless seas
then arrive on stolen
white encrusted beaches

did they ask us
if we wanted to be leeches
or did they just decide
that our skin was full of lies

why wonder
after the wanderers
when you are the ones
who made us
diaspora?
Finding Refuge in Hostile Lands

The United States waged war upon the Vietnamese people. We felt it our duty to impose upon their war and innocent civilians paid the price in blood. They were forced to flee their homelands, becoming evacuees. Where to go? Vietnam's lush landscape had been blasted by mortar, their villages destroyed by soldiers, their families torn apart. These newly minted vagabonds were shepherded to the Philippines, another land that America had coveted and dominated. Espiritu perfectly captures the emotions and tumultuous aftereffects of the Vietnamese war. This diaspora displaced the Vietnamese into various U.S. territories, before finally landing in America where they were not wanted. How can you not take responsibility for these people's pain and suffering? Espiritu exposes how America, coined a "refuge", is a lie. It ignores how America caused this mass exodus in the first place, and paints them as the benevolent Good Samaritan. At the end of the piece, Espiritu drives home the fact that the Vietnam was not a war over land, rather, of body count. The amount of bombs dropped on Vietnam show that the Americans did not care for the Vietnamese people, which makes it even more despicable that they wanted to be seen as accommodating to Vietnamese refugees.
Throughout Vyng’s text thus far, the ability to provoke emotion from and truly move the reader was most successful when there were instances of self-reflection, aiding in understanding the individuals that we are. The following are passages from the text that prove most significant from our eyes. It is then compared to personal instances from our lives that connect and resonate uniquely. With an analysis like this, we are able to see the struggles present in every person’s life, which truly adds a powerful perspective.
“I drank so much of that cold milk it grew tasteless on my numbed tongue. Each morning after that, we’d repeat this ritual: the milk poured with a thick white braid, I’d drink it down, gulping, making sure you could see, both of us hoping the whiteness vanishing into me would make me more of a yellow boy...” (Vuong, 27)

Dear my Cold glass of Milk,

It’s weird writing to you now, so far removed from my belief in your powers. I prayed for you to work every evening before I went to school the next day, and it never truly occurred to me that what I really needed, more desperately than anything was for your powers to fail me, again and again until I didn’t want them anymore. My glass of milk, you are my mother’s fingers running through the nappy and full abundance of dark brown afro on top of my head. I remember she pulled and yanked, pressed and combed, until the mess I despised finally bent at her will. I cried and yelped as I gulped down the idea that on the other side of my pain there lay acceptance and light. My glass of milk, you are the chemical from the recurring perm that burned every inch of my scalp every 6-8 weeks. In hopes that, with your help, I could change the natural way my textured hair made me feel unwanted, unseen, and unloved. I would learn to rejoice in the little victories, such as third period English class in the 6th grade when Taylor, the pretty blonde girl that everyone loved, scrolled through my photos that I had carefully considered posting on Facebook as if I had her gaze in mind when I chose them. I remember watching as her eyes stopped on my “school picture day” photo and right away I could feel my mom combing and yanking, pressing and taming my hair into a neat and suitable perm straight the night before that picture day. My attention jolted back to English class. Taylor sitting inches away from me was about to prove my efforts worthy. I held on to every breath she took before speaking, hoping that her judgement of my straightened hair would make all the pain worthwhile because in that moment, my glass of milk would save me. I breathed deep... “This picture of you is really pretty myah, you don’t even look that black in it, just really tan”. Her words slipped and fell from her mouth almost as carelessly as I caught them. I felt glee, and shame all in the same breath. I questioned my slight feeling of glee but did not understand it. Just like Ocean Vuong, drinking you made me feel lighter each time, better even, but never whole. In the end, you too, my glass of milk, made me feel monstrous.
"There was nothing to eat," you went on, your chin still cupped over the table. A man on his way to the restroom asked to get by. Without looking up, you scooted over. "People were putting sawdust in the rice to stretch it. You were lucky if you had rats to eat." You spoke carefully, as if the story was a flame in your hands in the wind. The children were finally gone-- only an elderly couple was left, two puffs of white hair behind their newspapers. "Unlike your brother," you said, "you were not born until we knew you'd live." (Vuong 133-134).

To whomever it may concern,
You left me, days old, in a box in front of the police station. My parents, when recounting this story, always assured me how much you loved me. You wanted me to be found safely, and brought to a refuge. You must have been poor and desperate. The Chinese government did not allow more than one child per family. I was surplus. I was the one that had to be given up. After all, a woman cannot take care of her parents, provide for her parents, serve her parents. I would have been a burden for you. Another mouth to feed, another person who had needs to be met. You wanted me to have a better life than the one that would have unfurled, so you left me curled up in a box outside a police station. You gave me a fighting chance at life. You gave me the opportunity to reach for the stars, or at least beyond the boundaries that were set in place for me. How hard it must have been to leave your child behind, leave her destiny to the gods. I used to be obsessed with the story of my adoption. I wanted to hear the stories, see the pictures, know the people who left me. The people who loved me. Loved me enough to leave me there, curled up in a box outside a police station. I think of you often, and give thanks for your sacrifice and allowing me to live.
"All freedom is relative—you know to well—and sometimes it’s no freedom at all, simply the cage widening far away from you, the bars abstracted with distance but still there as when they “free” wild animals into nature preserves only to contain them yet again by larger borders." (Voung, 216)

Hello again Cage,

It seems as though no matter how much I may grow, or how wide the world may seem, your walls remain tightly snug to my designated inferiorities. To be Black, and Queer, and Woman, is to be born into you like everyone else, but to have added surveillance, to have the ropes bound slightly tighter, to have what seems like the ultimate goal of the universe be keeping me inside you for all eternity.

I was unaware of my captivity inside of you Cage, until I was around the age of eleven. The coolness of your capture would brush me in passing as I was excluded from birthday parties and given report cards that said I talk far too much. But on that day, as I felt most free in the pages of fiction, two white boys as pale as the paper in front of me charged me in a blaze. While one bound me in a chokehold and the other whispered, “white power” in my ear, I realized I was trapped by more than his fixed arm, but also by you. Books have never been able to make me feel quite as free since I met you, Cage. I wish I knew where to run to find that feeling.

I thought I was freed from you when I escaped the turmoil that is being Black in the Midwest. I thought the promise of neighbors that look like me and the legends of The Castro would free me from your bars. But as you already know—I was of course wrong. I was excited by the flood of newness until I realized that being trapped inside you meant no escape, that it meant inevitably drowning. The tides changed when the most popular girl in school popped a water balloon over the hair that I had spent two hours that morning straightening to a T. That was long before you began reminding me that my sexuality neededstraightening as well. The waves crashed as “Coloreds” and “Whites” appeared over the urinals at school. I sank as messages that read “No Niggers Allowed!” appeared on walls that previously made me feel invincible, powerful, maybe even free.

Do you remember? Right as I tilted my head to see past the lines of a town where my presence was no longer permissible, and to take one final breath before the water soiled my straightened hair one final time, you expanded. I arrived at university, where the breeze of opportunity filled my lungs, and my loneliness was but a brief reminder that I was one of the lucky ones.

It feels like each time I flee from your bondage, I arrive at a newer, stronger border lying in wait. Cage, do you remember how you materialized each time? When my parents read my diary and realized they may not want to attend my wedding, when I was distracted from your barriers by his hands restraining me instead as he ignored my pleas, when videos of my brothers and sisters dying in the street flooded every waking minute, much like you did all those years ago, Cage. Does everyone have their very own you? Or, do you only incarcerate those you who fear, who you envy, who you cannot seem to want to understand?

I seek to understand you Cage. I’ve spent years observing you, studying you, remembering you, and most of all—knowing you. The extra security you employed has told me that no matter how much I scrutinize you, I will never find my way to break free. So I’ve stopped running from you Cage, I have stopped treading the water you pour in each time you remind me who I am. Instead, I have resigned to burying myself in you, Cage, so you, and your fear, and your hatred die with me. In that death, both mine and yours, I will at least be truly free. Like a vessel being led to the slaughter. And daughters and sons of tomorrow will be born free of you too, all the while your constraints decompose with me, as the seeds of progress are planted, and a new tomorrow sprouts in our wake.
MAIN THEMES

Throughout the novel, Vuong discusses in detail, aspects of his identity shaped and also mangled by his own experiences and those of his mom and grandmother. In my particular case, Vuong uses metaphoric language to explore the troublesome relationship between his skin tone, his Vietnamese heritage, his mother’s trauma, and his experience in America. Vuong helps readers to understand the complex ways in which his young mind is obstructed and harmed by acts of racism he faces from school bullies at a young age. Milk symbolizes the harmful effects of colorism as an intrinsic self-hate that stems from the racism he faces. His yearn to approximate whiteness/light comes from his desire to be accepted. Additionally his mother’s wholehearted encouragement to drink his milk, demonstrates the complex and multigenerational effects of US racism and the standardization of ‘whiteness’.

COLORISM

In my own words, I interpret Vuong’s quote to tell the story of my struggle as a young black girl, with high hopes that I too, may be able to approximate whiteness. Not because I wanted to be white, but because I grew up in environments that seemed to praise whiteness and all its characteristics. I did not understand the reasons why my kinky, natural hair texture wasn’t praised in the same way, but I did not have to. I grew to hate it anyway. I grew to understand the way that my mom and aunts discussed their own blackness as if they weren’t entirely convinced of its beauty, and therefore, I learned to carry on this generational self-disdain. I thought of expensive perms, hair straighteners and hair manipulation as my ‘glass of milk’, drawing me closer and closer to desirability and acceptability.

SACRIFICE

There are many consequences that the Vietnam War presented. The people and culture were at war, their home was being blown apart. They were bombarded by mortar and blasted by bullets. The people were starving, their homeland no longer a safe haven, their families torn apart by war, and finding themselves starving. War brings starvation, and the pang of hunger is difficult to dismiss. Unfortunately, in those times, a child is not a gift of life but a burden. They are another mouth to feed, another being to keep alive. The child would be fighting for their life before they took their first breath. As Vuong’s mother told him about the child she lost, I could understand she lost. I could understand the pain that she experienced, how torn she must have felt. The brief ecstasy of the idea of bringing life and goodness into the world, then the immediate fear. How could she possibly care for her child? I felt particularly connected to this part of the story, and can understand the swirl of emotions that Vuong’s mother had experienced.

OCEAN

Ocean Vuong covers numerous themes throughout his novel. He tells stories that rest on concepts of life, death, existence, disappearance, love, war, and being he or she trapped inside of it all. Whether pinned to a bus window, or the barnyard floor, or the back of his mother’s hand. Vuong discusses choices of submission, how he succumbed to the powers that be in hopes to overcome them—or maybe just survive them. In the quote that I chose, Vuong is drawing a parallel between us and humans and animals (which he does multiple times throughout the novel), in a cage awaiting imminent mortality and death. Specifically, he is questioning how different we are—if at all—from the way that Trevor had sworn never to eat. He uses this quote to set readers by closing the gap between the beings we exploit and devour and us as human beings, some of whom are exploited and devoured every day. Women like Lan and Rose and Mai, addicts like Trevor and Vuong’s unnamed friend, or the various community members that pop up from his writing, revives in his writing are those who are bound by this “cage” just a little bit tighter. I chose to write a letter to my cage. In my letter I wrote of how it tricked me each time into thinking that it no longer existed, and how harshly I was reminded each time of my limitations in white America as a queer Black woman. I attempted to articulate what I might say to the embodiment of white supremacy, homophobia, and sexism, if they actually existed. I concluded my letter by describing what I think truly is the answer to Vuong’s questions that he posed. Asking in this quote, I have decided that, much like the veal, and Vuong’s family, and all of my ancestors, I may never actually be truly free from my cage. But I believe that sacrifice, perseverance, and resistance are the ways to liberation. If I can just remain steadfast in those values, I may not see the disappearance of my cage, but the world may know itself without cages at all.
A BOOK OF HOW TO'S

(For Dummies)

In our text, Cold War Origins of the 'Model Minority Myth', Author Robert Lee explains the historical influence that the Cold War has on the crafting and shaping of minority relations in the US. Coinciding with civil rights efforts across America's landscape, the minority myth arose from US central fears of blackness, communism, and queerness. Further exposing the racism embedded in this process, we produce a "How To" guide for dummies, demonstrating the way racism inevitably abides in the US leading narrative.
Making the Model Minority Recipe

A LOOK INTO HOW THE US CRAFTED ASIAN AMERICANS AS THE 'MODEL MINORITY'

Ingredients
1/2 cup stoic patience
2 cups political obedience
4 tbsp of Self-Improvement
3/4 oz. of ethnic virtue

(1) Robert B. Park Theory of Race Relations Cycle
(1) Report on The Black Family published by Assistant Sec. of Labor Moynihan

Directions

Making the myth

Step 1. Report on Black Family
create the illusion that black families are highly susceptible to poverty because of dysfunctional family structures

Step 2. Craft Your Desired Narrative
Utilize mass media through magazine, tv, and news coverage to push the image of the Asian American success story.

Step 3. Ignore the Real Problem
Respond to protest from black communities across the country by continuing to push the model Minority myth

Making the Silence

Politically Silence Asian Americans
a. Capitalize on the underutilization of welfare programs in Asian communities and present in juxtaposition to the black reality.

b. Create the narrative that self-reliance and family cohesion lead Asian American Families to be less reliant on government assistant programs
HOW TO TELL THE CHINESE FROM THE 'JAPS'

(FOR DUMMIES)

A Life Magazine Post. Pearl Harbor Publication

Enemy japs
Betrays aboriginal antecedents
Earthy yellow complexion
Less frequent epicanthic fold
Flatter nose
Somewhat rosy cheeks
Heavy beard
Broader, shorter face
Massive cheek/jawbone
Short and squat
Humorless intensity of ruthless mystics

Friendly chinese
Parchment yellow
Epicanthic fold
Higher bridge
No rosey cheeks
Lighter facial bones
Long narrower face
Scant beard
Tall and slender
Wear the rational calm of tolerant realists
TERRORISM REDEFINED

How the racialization of terror distracts discourse from those terrorizing the nation.
INTRODUCTION

The tragic event that took place on September 11, 2001 made an everlasting impact on the entirety of the United States. Not only was that specific day branded with that moment in time for the rest of our history, but it also escalated a wave of hate acts of violence throughout the U.S. It’s essential to understand the reasoning behind this uprising against specific Middle Eastern, Arab and Muslim communities within the country to identify where, when and how preconceived judgments about a community form and affect a culture’s societal progression.

This article written by Leti Volpp explores the idea that, “September 11 facilitated the consolidation of a new identity category that groups together persons who appear ‘Middle Eastern, Arab, or Muslim,’ whereby members of this group are identified as terrorists and disidentified as citizens.” Even though, prior to September 11th, there was already the association of the Arab community with violence and terrorism, there were now multiple groups being lumped into this comparison. This text explores Volpp’s idea’s regarding the multiple dimensions forming this racialization.
STATE TERRORISM THROUGH POLICE BRUTALITY

According to Richard A. Couto in his article titled, *The Politics of Terrorism*, "terrorism by the state indicates its own powerlessness, specifically the inadequacy of the state's civil power to curb violence that is waged against it without criminalizing and restricting some previously legal and permitted conduct" (Couto, 2010, 76). Racism, misconduct, and corruption have lined the fabric of law enforcement since its founding as an institution. This year, police departments across the country were publicly held accountable for their patterns of targeted, excessive violence. Protests extended globally, calling for an end to state sanctioned violence against Black people in America. Instead of heeding the critiques and meeting the demands of the people, police violence and state terrorism only increased and intensified. Peaceful protest was criminalized nation-wide despite it being a constitutional right. Police continue to criminalize and brutalize communities and behaviors that they deem inferior and dangerous.
THE DOMESTIC TERRORISTS OF 2020: ANTI-MASKERS

Masks have turned into a political statement. Ever since states have issued mask mandates, a group of people known as “Anti-Maskers” have come out refusing to wear masks. Anti-maskers claim their First Amendment right to freedom of expression as the reason to not don a mask. Customers have walked into stores, demanding service despite signs that politely, but firmly state, “No mask, no service”. Masks not only protect us, but they protect people around us. Strangers could be immuno-compromised or have pre-existing conditions which would put them at higher risk. Wearing a mask is a sign of courtesy, and shows others that you are taking a global pandemic seriously. Regardless, anti-maskers flat out refuse to cooperate. Videos of disgruntled anti-maskers have been surfacing. They scream at people wearing masks, “My body, my choice!” In some higher-quality videos, you can see spittle flying through the air.

Anti-maskers have banded together via Facebook groups and organized rallies in opposition of wearing masks. People wave their “Don’t Tread on Me” flags, as they march. Many mask-protesters carry firearms with them in open-carry states. The New Yorker has dubbed these groups, “The Militias Against Masks”. For anyone remotely concerned about COVID precautions, these groups pose a real issue. When anti-maskers brought guns onto the scene, they became a threat.

The New Yorker focused on Michigan, and described a woman wearing a jacket emblazoned with Trump’s name as she offered support to the anti-mask movement. What was a health concern, has seemingly turned into a political topic, a highly-polarized one at that.

These same people, I am sure, would be quick to call an innocent Muslim man or woman a terrorist. Yet, these people are using their power to strike fear into people's hearts, and push their anti-mask agenda. In her article, Volpp discusses hate crimes against people from the Middle East, Muslims, and Arabs simply because of their skin color or religion. These people were dubbed terrorists by proxy, and the word became muddled. The connotation of the very word “terrorist” changed after 9/11. Yet the denotation remains, “a person who uses unlawful violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims”. The anti-maskers check these boxes, and you know what they say-- if the mask fits, wear it.
How Labor Brokerage Harms
The Worker and The World

THE DANGERS
OF
NEOLIBERALISM

THE ACTUAL
VALUE OF
FILIPINX WORKERS
BOTH AT HOME
AND ABROAD
How Labor Brokerage Effects the Migrant Worker

Not only does this neoliberal strategy commodify human beings in the spirit of Western capitalism, but it also displaces migrant workers globally. These workers may live, work, and socialize in the countries that require their labor, however, they have restricted rights that do not do an adequate job of protecting workers from the daily abuses and dangers that they face.

Additionally, the temporary residency in other countries can often displace these migrant workers, creating feelings of belonging nowhere and being wanted nowhere.

Labor brokerage also depends on the framing of migrant workers as cheap, it is their main indicator of value in the global economy. This positioning makes it nearly impossible for the migrant worker to navigate global capitalism and rising living costs.
How Exploitation of Migrant Workers Helps No One

Despite Neo-liberalism's promise to better the global economy, there are several ways that its strategies actually harm the countries involved and their respective economies. For example, in the Philippines, labor brokerage actually reduced income in the country and devalued its currency.

In addition to the negative economic outcomes that this strategy has on exporting countries, labor brokerage maintains the global hegemony that positions countries like the United States at the top of the hierarchy. While exporting migrants for labor may temporarily alleviate debt concerns or revenue troubles, it ultimately does not allow for much upward mobility for the country as a whole in the global economy.
Filipinx Workers Are More Than Capitalism Says They Are

As previously mentioned, labor brokerage prioritizes a migrant worker's ability to be low-cost, efficient labor to another country. For this reason, Filipinx workers are often celebrated only for their ability to perform, which dehumanizes them and erases their complexity. As told in the stories written by Mia Alvar, Filipinx culture is rich and diverse and strong. Migrant workers bring with them a powerful self-determination and commitment to provide. More than this, migrant workers enrich the lives and cultures of the residents who live in the exploiting countries. Due to the fact that a majority of Filipinx workers are domestic, they tend to leave lasting impacts on the homes they upkeep, the children they help raise, and the society that they inevitably contribute to.