September 2023

Issue 13

WHAT WE EXPERIENCE | NOW PART 2

NEWS
TODAY
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Artist Reflection:

Michelle Fung

This is the first issue for which I designed the cover and, with the topic circling back to the first one with recent events, I thought a lot about the growth of our magazine and the changes happening in our lives throughout the process. Since this is a digital magazine, I wanted to incorporate how technology plays a role in our news consumption. Between the computer monitors and the newspapers, the person at the center is surrounded by information, reflecting the amount of things going on right now. Despite all of it, I hope you can sit back and enjoy this issue.

Letter from the Founders

Dear reader,

Welcome to our 13th quarterly issue! We are beyond excited, as always, to present to you our issue. Thank you for taking the time to read our magazine. We are so grateful for all of your support.

If you are new to our magazine, our names are Jeenah Gwak and Hope Yu, and we are two college students from the greater Seattle area, at Stanford University and Carleton College respectively. Our project began as one of our many ideas three years ago. As Asian high schoolers living in American society, we have witnessed countless instances of discrimination and xenophobia against people of Asian descent. Additionally, despite living in a relatively Asian-dense region, we have been exposed to various forms of social injustice against Asian Americans, such as the lack of Asian representation in academic curricula and recent COVID-19 related events. These occurrences galvanized us to take action.

Taking into consideration our abilities, we decided that promoting awareness through written works would be the most appropriate course of action. Through our magazine, we seek to share the untold stories of Asian-American experiences surrounding racism and societal pressures that are often overlooked in society. We hope to educate and inspire you to take action in your own respective way.

Our magazine, *What We Experience*, is released quarterly, on the last Sunday of every March, June, September, and December, covering the experiences of various Asian identities. This issue's topic is recent events. It is a repeat of our very first issue, and we cover the recent events and debates that have taken place in our lives and society. Whether it be big or small, each of our members wrote about a topic that holds significance to them.

We are so honored to present to you the 13th issue of our magazine. Thank you for supporting us in our journey to advocate for the Asian-American community. We hope you enjoy our magazine and feel inspired to share it with others.

Sincerely,
Jeenah Gwak & Hope Yu

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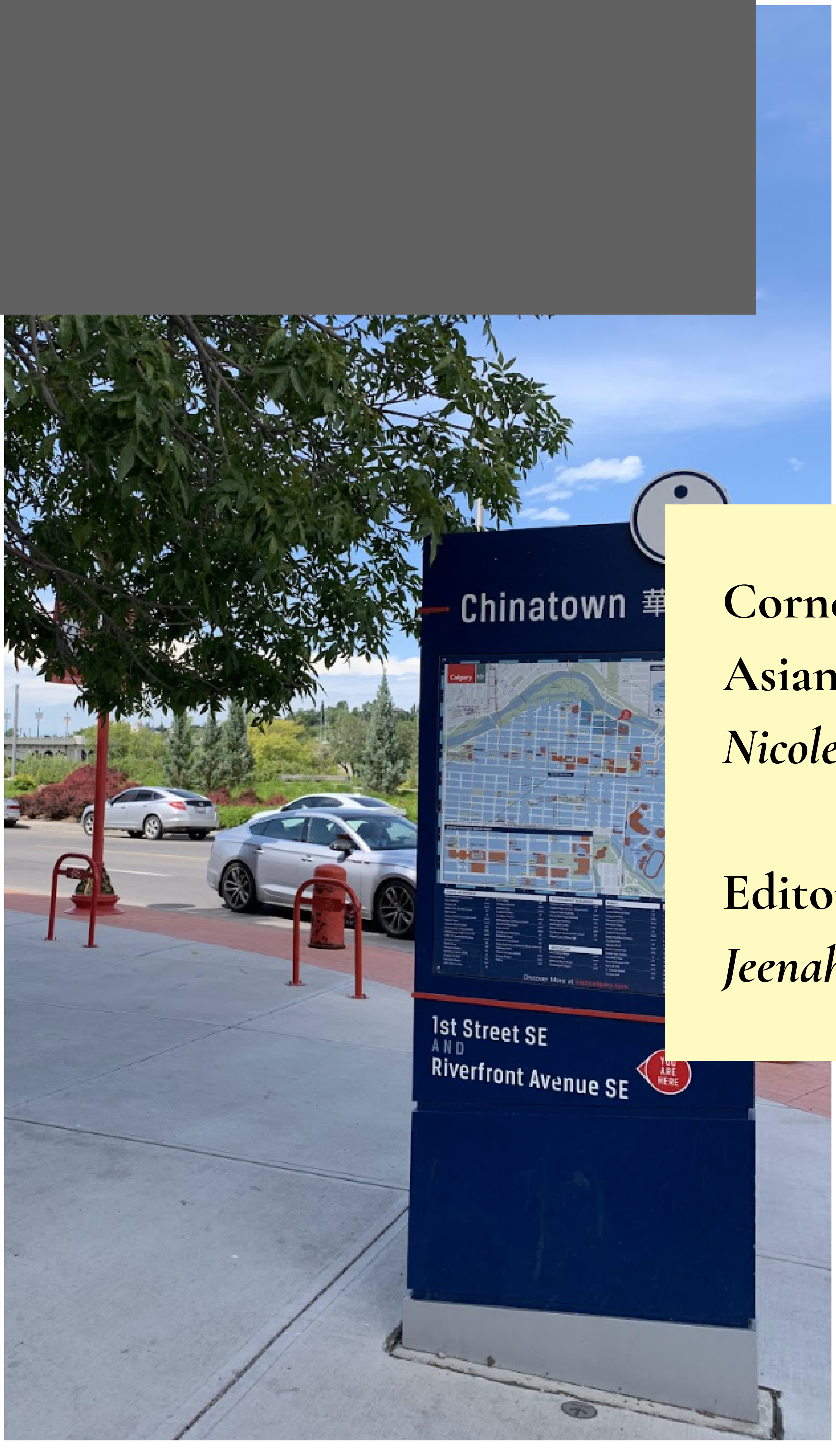
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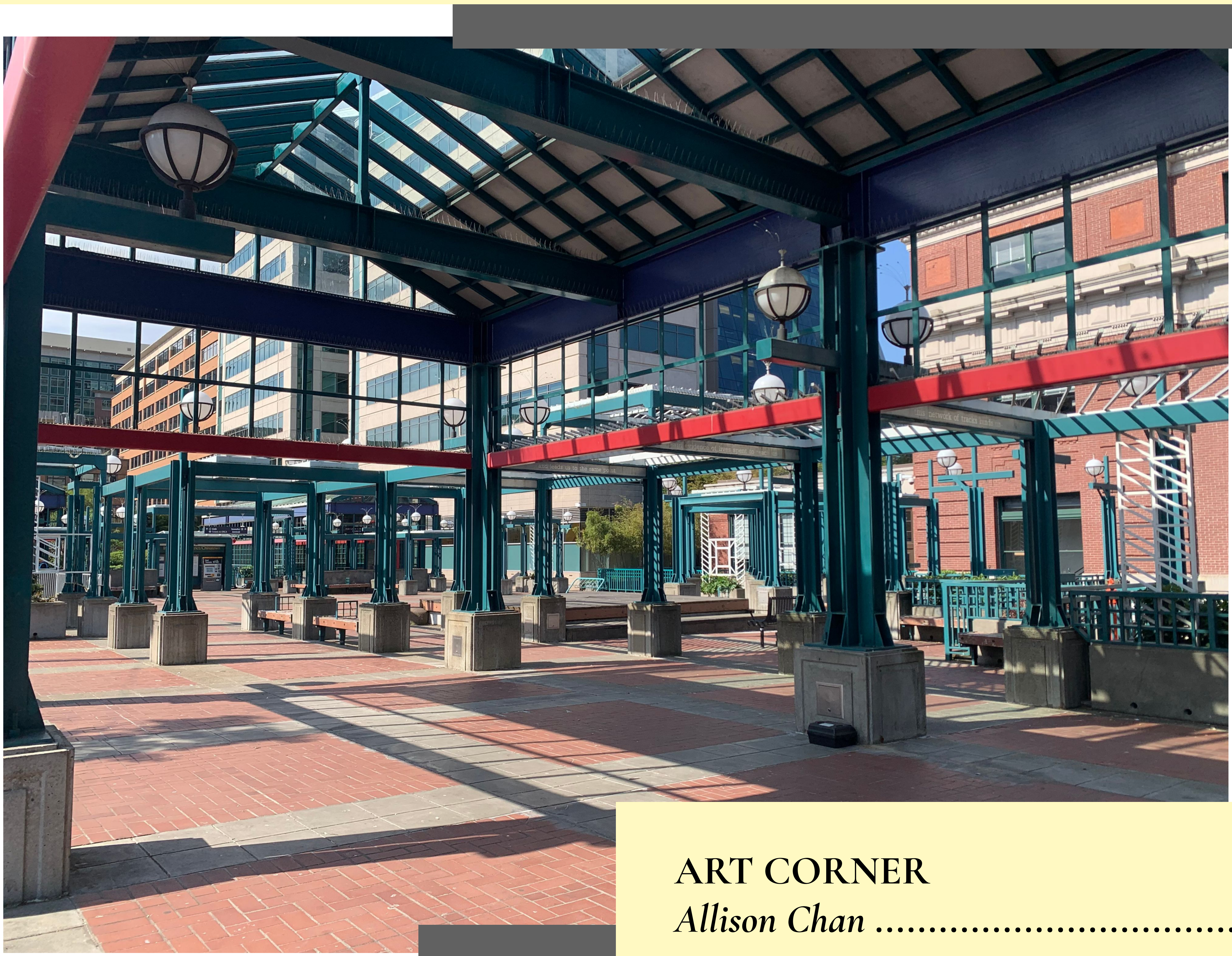

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THE AMERICAN CITIZENSHIP TEST IN 2023: PROPOSED CHANGES

By Michelle Fung

In 2013, my grandparents became U.S. citizens after immigrating from China. Before that was made official, they spent months staring at a packet of questions, desperately memorizing facts about America's founding. I was eight, and I'd spend hours quizzing them in preparation for their naturalization interview, correcting their pronunciation when necessary for their spoken responses.

But if they were to take the citizenship test in a few years, this story might look a little different. Last December, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced their proposed changes for an updated citizenship test. Since then, many have voiced opinions on whether or not such changes should be put into effect and how they might affect immigration in America.

History of the Citizenship Test

The U.S. naturalization process has long included what is known as the civics portion, which tests a citizenship candidate on American government and history. However, what this portion of the test looks like has changed significantly over the past two centuries. Prior to 1906, naturalization was under the jurisdiction of the courts, so citizenship exams were conducted orally in the courtrooms with no restrictions or guidelines for the questions judges could ask. This meant that judges could purposely ask questions that were impossible for candidates to answer correctly or they could ask no questions at all. The fate of an immigrant's citizenship status was then essentially in the hands of the judge, dependent on the judge's personal beliefs regarding immigration policy. Some could gain citizenship without any additional struggle while others never had a chance.

Image from USCIS

In 1906, Congress passed the Basic Naturalization Act, which created the Federal Naturalization Service and expanded the Bureau of Immigration to the Bureau of Immigration of Naturalization. Standardization of the citizenship process began under this agency, moving the jurisdiction of the naturalization process away from local to a more national scale. While there was still no standard set of questions, the trick questions that judges used to deter immigration were gradually phased out in the 1930s as the agency determined which topics judges were approved to ask questions about. A literacy test was also implemented as a part of the Immigration

Act of 1917, requiring all candidates above the age of 16 to pass a test demonstrating basic comprehension skills. Even though this stipulation did not specify English as the language for basic comprehension, many applicants were blocked from citizenship due to education disparities in their home countries.

Image from USCIS

It was not until 1952 that an oral civics test became a mandatory part of the U.S. citizenship test under the Immigration and Naturalization Act, and the first standardized set of 100 questions used for the exam was established in 1986. However, it was determined after the formation of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) in 2003 that the testing procedures at the time were not uniform across all naturalization offices, leading to stricter regulations for testing and grading of applicants. Since then, updates have been made to the questions bank, and the version being used as of today is from 2008.

Current Citizenship Test

Currently, anyone seeking citizenship in the U.S. must go through a naturalization interview with a USCIS officer. There are two parts to this interview: an English test and a civics test. According to the USCIS website, the English test, according to the USCIS website, requires a candidate to "demonstrate an understanding of the English language including the ability to read, write, and speak basic English" (Naturalization). A candidate's ability to speak and understand English is determined by the USCIS officer throughout the interview, as they will ask personal questions that the candidate has already answered on their naturalization forms. As for reading and writing, one must be able to correctly read and write one of the three sentence options provided to them by the officer.

For the civics portion of the interview, there are 100 potential questions that can be asked, ranging from the purpose of the Declaration of Independence to naming U.S. federal holidays. 10 questions will be asked by the USCIS officer, and the candidate must answer 6 questions correctly to pass. All 100 questions are available online, so those seeking citizenship are able to study for their interview.

This civics portion is what I remember the most from my grandparents' naturalization process. It was difficult for my grandparents to memorize all of these seemingly random facts about U.S. history and I was learning all of it alongside them since practically none of the content had been covered in elementary school. Many of the questions asked are not commonly known knowledge of American citizens, which is why nearly my entire eighth-grade social studies class was stumped when asked to name a writer of the Federalist Papers during our civics and citizenship unit. In fact, a study conducted in 2018 by the Institute for Citizens and Scholars reported that only 39% of American citizens were able to pass the civics test in its current format.

Why Switch It Up?

In 2020, under the Trump Administration, changes were made to the civics portion of the citizenship test. Several questions were reworded, and the number of potential questions in the bank increased from 100 to 128. In addition to these changes, candidates were asked 20 of the 128 by the USCIS officer instead of only 10. 12 correct answers were required to pass.

People preparing for their citizenship exams at a class provided by the Immigration Institute of the Bay Area

These changes made the citizenship process longer and more difficult, which aligned with Trump's anti-immigration policies. When the Biden Administration took office, Biden signed an executive order in support of immigration, which included undoing the changes that the Trump administration had made to the naturalization process. As a result, the civics test reverted back to the previous version.

Evidently, changes to the test occur because of USCIS current policy but each presidential administration has input. As of right now, it appears that USCIS proposes a 15-year update period.

Proposed Changes

There are two major changes that USCIS has proposed for the updated citizenship test. The first change affects the speaking portion of the test: instead of asking personal questions, the USCIS officer will hold up a picture depicting common situations such as daily activities or weather. The naturalization candidate will then have to describe the image verbally.

The other change affects the civics portion of the test, replacing the current oral, short-answer format with a multiple-choice exam. The number of questions asked and the pass threshold will not be changed.

Reactions to the Proposed Changes

Opinions on the proposed changes range, both on the difficulty of the new exam and how it may affect immigration. Immigrants have expressed concern over the speaking portion of the proposed exam, noting that a change from personal questions to images may make it harder for applicants to pass. Many immigrants do not fully learn English until after immigrating to the U.S., and the new exam would require applicants to have a decent vocabulary base and understanding of English sentence structure in order to properly describe the images presented to them before they move to America.

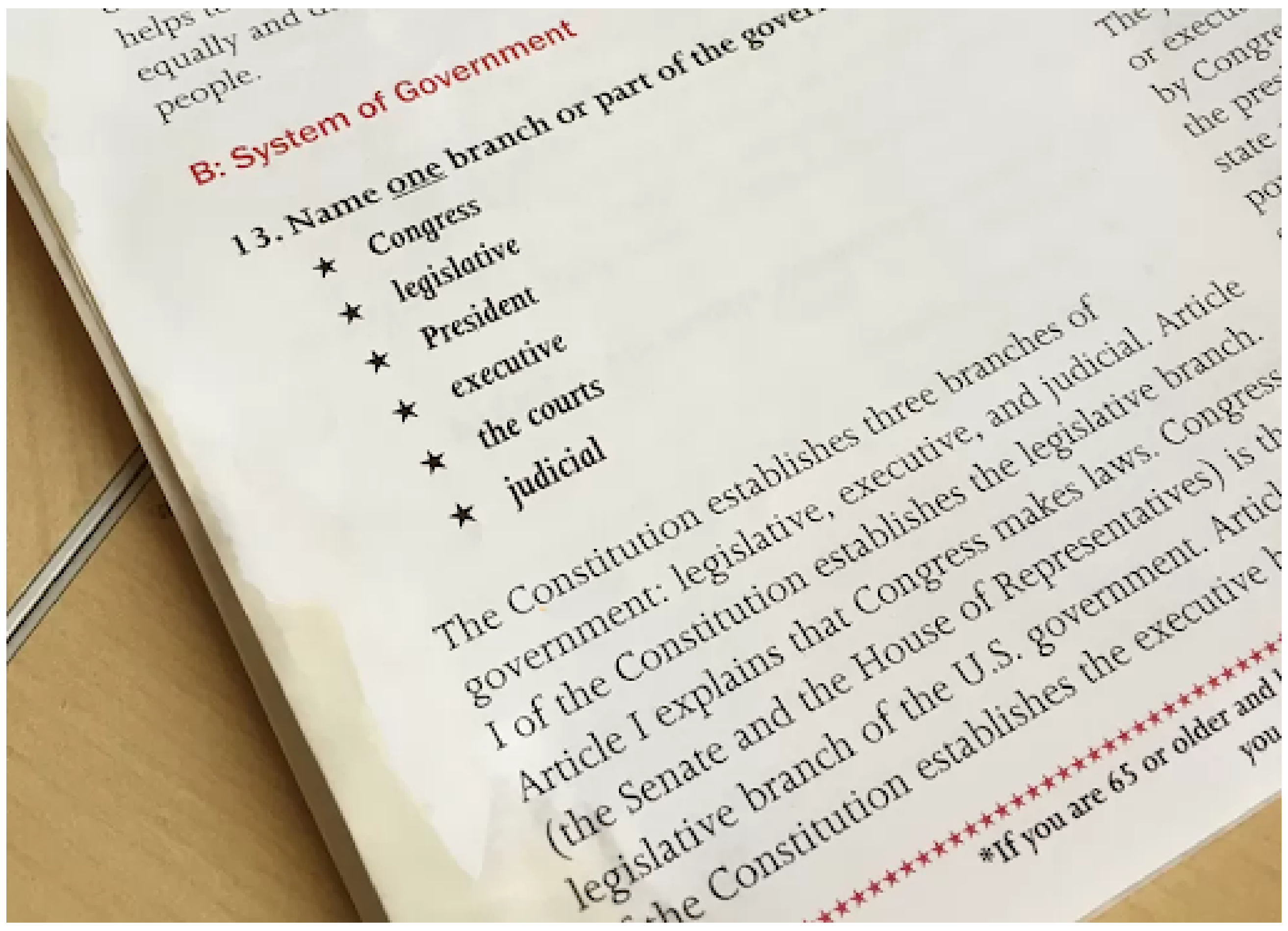
I asked my mom, who immigrated to America from China and became a citizen over two decades ago, for her thoughts on this change to the speaking portion of the naturalization interview. Because I asked her in Cantonese, I do not have direct quotes of her responses, but she said that the new format would be considerably more difficult and she thinks she would not have been able to pass the speaking portion had it been similar to the proposed version despite having taken English classes in China prior to moving.

The new version of the speaking portion may also make the naturalization process more stressful for applicants, which could affect their ability to speak a foreign language even if they know the right words. Shai Avny, an immigrant from Israel who passed the citizenship test last year, said in an interview with the Associated Press that "Sitting next to someone from the federal government, it can be intimidating to talk and speak with them...when it's not your first language, it can be even more difficult" (Ahmed).

When I took my Mandarin biliteracy exam in high school, the speaking portion involved reading a prompt and recording your response on a computer. Even though the stakes were low and you could re-record yourself as many times as you wanted, I was incredibly stressed and tried again and again until my mouth was dry just so I could get my response right. The stakes are significantly higher than high school language credits for a citizenship applicant, and on top of that, they don't have the luxury of repeatedly fumbling their answer in front of the USCIS officer. I can only imagine how much additional pressure an applicant will feel in the naturalization interview if this change is made to the test.

However, some believe that increasing the difficulty of the speaking portion would be an improvement to the current exam and immigration system. For example, the Federation of American Immigration Reform (FAIR) has written that "any reasonable assessment of English aptitude should be welcome" because "low levels of adult literacy cost the U.S. as much as $2.2 trillion a year in reduced productivity" and "America doesn't need any more of that" (Plain). This takes an anti-immigration stance on the issue, which aligns with FAIR's objective of "reduc[ing] overall immigration to a more normal level" in order to "maintain a high quality of life" for American citizens at the expense of immigrants and asylum seekers (About).

The proposed multiple-choice format of the exam may present a roadblock as well. Citizenship civics course author Bill Bliss wrote in a blog post that the new format would make it so that "reading skill would be a key determinant of the applicant's ability to demonstrate the required civics knowledge" instead of simply civics knowledge since the applicant would need to be able to read the questions and answers of the test in order to succeed (Bliss). This could be a significant challenge for naturalization applicants, as the vocabulary used when describing U.S. government processes and history exceeds the difficulty of conversational English. Bliss also noted that the "amount of civics content that applicants need to know to succeed on a multiple-choice test would exceed the current civics knowledge requirement" under the new format.



B: System of Government

13. Name one branch or part of the

★ Congress
★ legislative
★ President
★ executive
★ the courts
★ judicial

The Constitution establishes three branches of government: legislative, executive, and judicial. Article I of the Constitution establishes the legislative branch. Article I explains that Congress makes laws. Congress (the Senate and the House of Representatives) is legislative branch of the U.S. government.

Citizenship test study booklet

In the current version of the test, many of the questions have multiple correct answers. For example, one of the potential questions asks "What is one reason colonists came to America?" There are six correct answers to that question, but an applicant only needs to remember one in order to answer the question correctly. However, if the question is changed to a multiple-choice style format, an applicant may be required to know all six answers in order to correctly select the one that appears on the exam while successfully dodging the distractor options.

On the other hand, some believe that the proposed changes should be rejected not because they would make the test more difficult, but because they would make the test easier. Elizabeth Jacobs, a director at the Center of Immigration Studies, believes that the multiple-choice format eliminates the difficulty of the short-answer response format since the answers are presented instead of having to be pulled from memory. For context, the Center takes a "unique pro-immigrant, low-immigration vision which seeks fewer immigrants but a warmer welcome for those admitted," and contains a staff that is "not predominantly "liberal" or predominantly "conservative"" in terms of political allegiance (Center). It is also worth noting that there are little to no articles from major news outlets that take an anti-immigration approach, be it for the proposed exam or against. In the comments of a Fox News article about the citizenship test from December 2022, many had strong opinions regarding how the changes would make the citizenship process easier, but it is important to consider that the general public as a whole lacks knowledge in test-taking psychology. The average person cannot accurately assess the effectiveness of the proposed exam or its results, so it is difficult to judge the merit of such remarks.

Naturalization ceremony at Princeton University

There is clearly a wide range of viewpoints surrounding the proposed changes to the citizenship test. Personal experiences with and beliefs about immigration play a large role in how many have reacted to this proposal, both in terms of whether they do or do not support the changes and what they believe the projected outcome will be. As for right now though, USCIS is running trials for the proposed format. Trial results will be evaluated by an external group of experts to gauge implementation strategies, and if everything goes as planned, the new test will take effect in late 2024. It remains to be seen how public opinion and the upcoming presidential election will affect this process.

I keep thinking about how my family would be different if the proposed changes were implemented and my parents and grandparents were immigrating in the near future, but it's all hypothetical. My grandparents gained citizenship years ago, and my parents did a long time before that. There could be families outside of the U.S. planning on immigrating to America and reading the news, thinking about what is to come. Talking about whether they need to change the way they prepare for the citizenship test, or those who were beginning to feel prepared now changing their minds. I can't imagine that experience.

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Dissecting BEEF

Class, Race, and Self-Destruction

by Gabriella Ignacio

Photo Courtesy of Netflix

The following contains spoilers for the Netflix show "Beef".

One red truck, one white SUV, and two spiteful LA drivers – the perfect recipe for the opening of Netflix and A24's gritty, darkly comedic Beef. Having been hailed with international acclaim, not limited to 13 Emmy nominations, Beef has rightfully solidified its importance in modern Asian-American media alongside the likes of Bong Joon-Ho's Parasite and the Daniels' Everything Everywhere All at Once. When I first saw trailers, the show appeared to be an off-the-wall dive into the escalating rage of stereotypical "crazy Asian drivers." But upon watching, its underlying themes of class struggle, trauma, and Asian-American identity has led to my sheer amazement of Beef's depth and brutal honesty.

A particularly present theme in the show is class differences, and from the very beginning, stark contrasts between the two lead characters, Danny (Steven Yeun) and Amy (Ali Wong) are demonstrated. Danny drives an old Toyota pickup truck, lives in a motel, and barely gets by through his failing freelance construction work. Amy boasts a pristine Mercedes SUV, lives in a Calabasas home, and owns a thriving plant business. The only tie between these two distinct worlds is their shared road rage – Danny almost backs into Amy's car, to which Amy honks back and flips him off, and a catastrophic car chase ensues. Inspired by creator Lee Sung Jin's own experience on the road, this chase is the foundation of the show's entire premise. But the differences and commonalities between the characters are far more than superficial, with critique on social hierarchy and class differences being explored within most characters and plot points. And what makes this topic even more interesting is that it is told largely as an intersection with race, giving Beef's commentary a distinctly Asian-American nuance.

As previously mentioned, the first encounters with class as a theme are displayed in the dichotomy between Amy and Danny's daily life. This also happens to be a very explicit portrayal -- at one point, Amy even vandalizes Danny's truck by painting it with messages such as

"I AM POOR", exploiting his vulnerability in social status.

The inciting road rage incident (Netflix)

However, Beef's more subtle jabs at social commentary are what make it notable. Writers of the show understand that when talking about Asian-Americans (or any immigrant group, for that matter) and their interaction with class, factors such as ethnicity, upbringing, and assimilation must be considered.

Amy and her husband George, for example, have an ever-present marriage conflict and struggle to see eye-to-eye. Even as an upper-class couple, it is clear that their varied backgrounds is a large reason for their misunderstandings. Amy is the product of financially struggling Chinese and Vietnamese immigrants, while George was raised by wealthy artists and comes from a nicely assimilated family. Despite living comfortably, Amy refuses to believe that she can be successful without constantly burning out and thinking about money – a likely result of the environment she was raised in. Conversely, George's childhood has led him to adopt a more relaxed, nonchalant mindset. He spends his days sculpting vases of questionable taste and concerning himself with "spiritual and emotional connections", a far loftier attitude than his wife's deep ground in reality (Beef). Such differing standpoints could stem from the couple's personal experiences with wealth as second-generation immigrants, and eventually drive the conflict in their marriage as a result.

Of course, the nuances of the couple's relationship are maintained while still noting that they are incredibly privileged, and often turns back to Danny's world to underscore this point. In contrast to Amy and George, the characters that inhabit Danny's circle hardly fit the reserved, intellectual stereotype that Asian-Americans are often cast into. The violent lifestyle of Danny's hustler cousin, Isaac, for instance, displays the underbelly of Asian communities that is often overlooked in mass media. Danny himself, despite attempts to rejoin the Korean church and help out his family, constantly returns to the undisclosed dirty work that Isaac had mastered.

Amy and George attempting couples therapy (Netflix)

But rising above everyone else is Jordan Forster, the white multi-billionaire who is the ultimate manifestation of Western orientalism and ignorance. As an avid collector of ancient tribal headdresses and Japanese chairs, Jordan seems to only place value on foreign cultures if they can offer her something in return. Her relationship with Amy is not at all based on personal connection, but instead on her desire to add Amy's plant company, Koyohaus, to her supermarket chain. To Jordan, Amy is not regarded as a person, and rather acts as a gateway for gaining new, exotic items that can be exploited. And despite resenting Jordan for her obvious manipulation tactics, Amy remains under her thumb, constantly working to please Jordan and close the deal. A similar relationship runs between Jordan and Naomi, her assistant-turned-lover. Like Amy, Naomi is obsessed with pleasing Jordan in order to reap the benefits of her immense wealth, despite being commodified for her value as the exotic, Asian girlfriend of a rich white person. To further emphasize the absurdity of Jordan's behavior, Isaac aggressively confronts Amy and Naomi during the climax of the show, asking, "Why the f*ck do you guys hang out with her? You know you're Asian, right?" (Beef).

Naomi, Jordan, and Amy being held hostage (Netflix)

Despite the nod towards Asian solidarity within Isaac's comment, Beef's writers understand that hostility between Asian groups and people are existent; just because two people are Asian, it does not mean they must share some sort of bond. The relationship between Amy and Naomi only exists due to their Asian identities – they don't have much else in common, and at one point, Naomi even tries to expose Amy's bout of road rage. There is a palpable tension between the two at all times, yet they remain cordial because they're the only Asians in their business circle, and should therefore stick together. According to Lee Sung Jin, the choice of having both Amy and Naomi to be Asian-American was somewhat intentional. "I think a lot of us think, 'Oh hey, we're alike, we should get along. We're a community,'" he says. "And that's a very surface level approach to it. The truth is, humans are humans and ego is ego, and race is not something that can just blindly fix that" (Cardenas). In addition to the Amy and Naomi dynamic, references to conflicts within ethnicities are sprinkled throughout the show. Isaac has a recurring joke that Filipinos from prison are constantly coming after him. The issue of marrying within your race and ethnicity is repeatedly brought up. And Danny's spiteful bathroom revenge was partially motivated by his disdain towards George being Japanese, a sentiment later reciprocated by George and a likely reference to Japanese colonialism in Korea.

Creator Lee Sung Jin and Co-Leads Ali Wong and Steven Yeun (LA Times)

The nuanced observations regarding Asian-American issues, free from overused narratives and blatant in-your-face messages, makes Beef a delightfully refreshing watch. But as noted by Lee Sung Jin, the two leads just happened to be Asian-American; in fact, Amy was originally supposed to be an older white man, reminiscent of a "Stanley Tucci character" (Kubota). For Lee, the emergence of Asian-American themes came as a result of the plot and characters, not the other way around. As he puts it, "the specificities of these people start to organically bring up some Asian-American identity issues", rather than having producers force such issues down the viewer's throat (Blake). By allowing Beef to be influenced by, but not hinge on, Asian-American experiences, the writing shines through as a genuine reflection of real-world experiences.

Overall, Beef is not merely a gripping thriller that features Asian characters; rather, its insight into class, ethnicity, and psychology proves it to be truly unique. In the words of Joseph Lee, who acted as George, "the industry is embarking on this next stage, where it's not only about just showing faces that look like this," pointing to his own face, "but now it's really about extrapolating, and then really dissecting what it means to look like this" (Kubota). The Asian-American experience is far from monolithic, and is an idea that mass media has glossed over until recently. Shows like Beef are important to provide discourse about Asian-American identities, and will cement their significance in Asian media for years to come.

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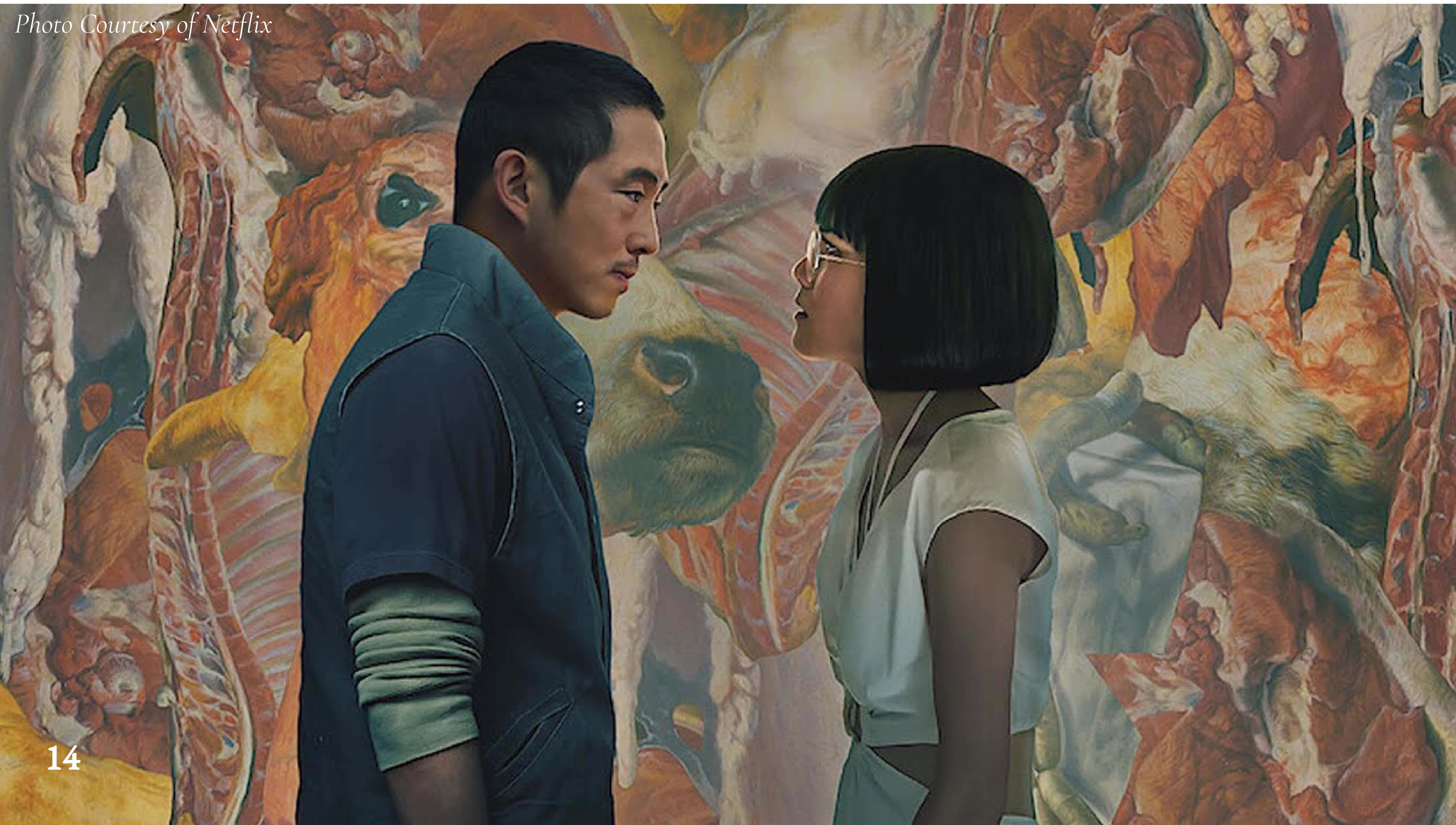
Photo Courtesy of Netflix



Growth in Asian American Affinity Groups in High School

BY NICOLE KIM

Morning announcements over Bellevue High School's speakers went on as usual when suddenly, the announcement reporter raised her tone, elated to share, "Friends of Korea and Indian Student Association will be hosting a potluck on December 12th in the culinary room. Feel free to bring in food that represents your culture. We cannot wait to see you all there!"

The outcome: 75 students, 15 unique dishes, loud chatters from every corner of the room and laughter constantly bursting from here and there. "This was the very first schoolwide potluck we have ever hosted, and it was definitely a huge success," said a member of the Indian Student Association (ISA). Per many students' requests, Friends of Korea (FOK) hosted another potluck at the end of the school year but this time, in the commons, to accommodate the huge volume of RSVPs. High school students are indeed often hungry, but that cannot be the only reason why so many people showed up to FOK's potluck. To find out how the Friends of Korea club — the first Asian-American affinity group at Bellevue High School to gain around 35 consistent members within a year of launching —attracted so many students at school to participate in their school-wide event, I conducted interviews with several members.

Interviewed first was Nate Cha, a senior at Bellevue High School who identifies as Korean American. As the co-founder of FOK at Bellevue High School, Cha explained that he "founded Friends of Korea to spread awareness of Korean culture to bring people together and appreciate Korean culture." Cha mentioned the main purpose of the club revolves around cultural education, however, FOK was not designed to be a serious academic club. The merit of FOK is that club members "celebrate learning by participating in engaging activities such as the Korean Ddakji game". Traditional Korean games are introduced and played during meetings to provide club members an insight on popular childhood games that vary by culture. Cha believes "this is a great way to encourage club members to enjoy their time with friends in a low-stress environment while simultaneously learning more about Korean culture through socialization." Other than the games, FOK provides Korean snacks like Banana Kick from Hmart – a Korean grocery store within walking distance from Bellevue High School.

Friends of Korea at their first schoolwide potluck.

Before mentioning future plans for FOK, Cha elaborated on the structure of each club meeting session. "Informational PowerPoints are used to educate peers on Korean culture and on top of that, one Word of the Day is introduced at every meeting." It sounded like implementing this distinctive language learning system was impactful, especially to club members interested in learning the Korean language. Cha stated, "Having a Word of the Day helps with language learning". This is just one of the many ways how FOK is getting another step closer towards their goal of making cultural education accessible. For the coming years, Cha hopes to arrange "longer club meetings to watch Korean shows, movies, or K-dramas with club members" to highlight the socialization aspect of the club. FOK also plans on expanding their "fundraiser project that was launched last year to support Korean Kids and Orphanage Outreach Mission" which is an organization that improves the lives of Korean orphans through outreach and education.

To get to know more about FOK, Cha was asked why he decided to put the club's focus specifically on Korea. He responded that the other co-founder of FOK, Leo Choi, and himself are "both Koreans who are eager to share [their] knowledge on Korean culture to those who may never have exposure to it elsewhere." Not only is FOK benefiting the school community by sharing an opportunity to gain new perspectives on Korean culture, but also actively establishing "meaningful connections with other affinity groups within the school community" such as the Indian Student Association. From FOK club members' efforts stems high school students' aspirations in championing inclusivity and collaboration at Bellevue High School.

Next up from FOK was Bellevue High School senior Anuka Carr, a consistent club member of FOK who does not identify as Korean or Asian American. Carr decided to join FOK "because of the genuine feelings of friendship and belonging it offered." Ever since Carr signed up, he has been committed to this group to "delve deeper into Korean culture and its captivating history", all of which broaden his understanding of cultural variation. Carr believes FOK's focus on the social aspect "through [the] collaborations with various clubs and the hosting of engaging social gatherings" truly establishes a unique identity of the FOK club.

Another FOK club member Katie Chin, also a senior at Bellevue High School, discussed how "FOK is where [she] feel[s] at home." Chin mentioned that she lived in multiple cities before moving to Bellevue: Seoul, Beijing, Bangkok, New York and Tacoma. Having attended international schools for the most part of her academic career thus far, Chin describes her experience at a public high school in Tacoma as "quite different." According to Chin, international schools are "where students of various cultures, races, backgrounds intermix to form a unique and vibrant community." At Tacoma though, "the lack of diversity in the student body made [her] feel isolated and disconnected." Thankfully, "Bellevue, and especially FOK, offered a change" for her. To Chin, FOK meetings "evoked nostalgic memories from [her] time at international schools" and "provided [her] with a place to freely express [her] identity and connect with others who shared similar experiences." FOK functions as a hub for valuable connections with people, memories, and culture all the while providing a space to share pieces of Korean culture that bring joy, whether that be something as simple as a share-size Korean snack or some recommendations on recently released K-pop songs.

K-pop club posing with their decorated toploaders for photocards.

Speaking of song recommendations, the K-pop club at Bellevue High School specializes in Korean pop culture. K-pop club "is an entirely judgment-free zone for anyone of any identity," according to Bellevue High School senior and K-pop club founder Sean Kim. When asked what K-pop club meetings look like, Kim mentioned that club members have touched on a variety of activities last year, including “song reviews, making bracelets to donate to the Seattle Children’s Hospital, learning Korean, and decorating toploaders for photocards.” Samantha Waterbury, a consistent member of K-pop club added on, “the activities I enjoyed the most are analyzing the [K-pop song] lyrics, enjoying the visuals of the music videos, and discussing how much we each love the [K-pop] idols … I also enjoyed taking in the beautiful sound of the music.” Waterbury showed high interest in rejoining the K-pop club, saying that she is looking forward to “relaxing at K-pop club after stressful classes, and … enjoying good music with friends.” She also described K-pop club as a club that fosters a cheerful, welcoming environment where "one can feel the immediate wave of good energy once they walk in." Many club members felt the same way as Waterbury, but Kim had one more thing to elaborate on: his experience as the founder of K-pop club. “K-pop club represents personal growth.” He explained what he meant by that by talking about the progress in honing his public speaking skills. “Speaking in front of people is not my forte, so every meeting is a challenge for me to talk in front of people.” However, as he gained experience leading the club meetings, Kim has “gotten more comfortable [with] … holding the responsibility of a club which has helped [him] improve [his] thinking and speaking skills.” Like so, clubs also provide opportunities for student leaders to discover their potential as leaders during their high school careers.

In search of another student leader involved in an Asian American affinity group, a brief research on Dear Asian Youth (DAY) club was done. Chelsea Lin, a senior at Bellevue High School who leads DAY, showed interest in sharing about the club. According to Lin, DAY focuses on “conveying accurate representations of Asian cultures to the greater community.” At this club, “members vote on any Asian country that they are interested in

Dear Asian Youth (DAY) club was done. Chelsea Lin, a senior at Bellevue High School who leads DAY, showed interest in sharing about the club. According to Lin, DAY focuses on “conveying accurate representations of Asian cultures to the greater community.” At this club, “members vote on any Asian country that they are interested in

learning about, and then find a student from that country to introduce his or her culture and traditions to the club.” This interactive learning activity is paired with hands-on collaboration projects such as the Chinese Lunar New Year decoration project. For the past two years, DAY collaborated with Bellevue High School’s Art and Design club to craft lanterns and red envelopes that represent the New Year culture of China. These hallway decorations elevate the festivity of the season whilst cueing for a gentle reminder to appreciate and learn more about significant symbols of a particular culture through these easily-recognizable, tangible objects. To further expand cultural education, Lin hopes to organize a “multicultural night to increase awareness of Asian cultures, particularly those that may be misrepresented or misunderstood in the United States.” As explained, many activities hosted by DAY are a catalyst for developing cultural competence and embracing diversity.

It should once again be emphasized that Friends of Korea, K-pop club, and Dear Asian Youth are all high school clubs designed by high school students. Remember that these are just a select few from Bellevue High School; hundreds or even thousands of variations of these Asian American affinity groups in high schools may exist across the country. Noting the prevalence of Asian American affinity groups in high schools is crucial, especially in today’s world where the Asian American student population is increasing in secondary education institutions. This is not the case in every region in the United States, but still, a significant number of Asian parents decide to immigrate from their country of origin to seek optimal educational experience in the United States for their children (Louie, V., 2001). Although this immigration trend has been lasting for a while, the increased participation in Asian American affinity groups is definitely a newer development. Students are currently in an age where they can celebrate diversity without concerns about negative connotations such as being labeled oriental. However, not until recently did schools start supporting Asian American students who are willing to publicly express their passions in educating peers on their distinct cultural backgrounds. Through countless students' efforts to sustain Asian American presence in school communities, Asian American affinity groups have been successfully established and they continue to grow to this day. Many schools recognize particular students' outstanding thoughtfulness and consciousness of the value of cultural education outside a formal academic setting. As schools open up to providing sufficient resources for such students, affinity groups are formed and students rejuvenate the excitement cultural exchange brings.

Whether it is a newfound love for tteokbokki (spicy Korean rice cake, apparently the most popular food from FOK's potluck) or a deep sigh of relief in discovering a family-like community, Asian American affinity groups can make positive changes in high school students from all backgrounds. There is so much that students desire to offer to their peers, and regardless of their leadership positions, high school students involved in affinity groups proudly represent their culture and heritage through the use of a single classroom with a single projector for 30 minutes every week or so. Even with such limitations, these students demonstrate their capabilities in being leaders who hold a common desire to share their stories, to make sure no voices go unheard and no ideas are disregarded.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge Bellevue High School's Friends of Korea Club, K-pop Club, and Dear Asian Youth club, specifically the individuals from these clubs who accepted my interview request without hesitation. Nate, Anuka, Katie, Sean, Samantha, and Chelsea – thank you so much for your contributions to this article!

THE
Wolverine News

A salute to Milkis, a Korean soda with sweet and creamy taste of carbonated water

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Editors' Review:

YELLOWFACE

by R.F. Kuang

"Razor sharp." —Time
YELLOWFACE
R. F. KUANG
#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Hope

Identity and cultural representation by way of personal creation is contorted beyond (or perhaps in adherence with) precedent within RF Kuang's new novel Yellowface. Within a world driven by postmodern anthropological social dynamics, the ethnic, racial, sexual, and gender-based identities of writers are pulled into the spotlight and thrown against the content of their literary creations. Yellowface follows Kuang's White protagonist (or antagonist), June Hayward, through her rise to literary greatness. Part inverted mystery, part publishing industry critique, June's nearly perfect Asian American best friend from Yale, Athena Liu, unexpectedly dies one night. June, through her horror and despair, finds Athena's research and draft for her upcoming novel, The Last Front. Motivated by years living in Athena's shadow, June publishes The Last Front under her own name. She reasons that this publication is doing Athena a posthumous favor; yet, she gives Athena close to no credit. The rest of the novel follows June through her rise to literary fame and her subsequent fall.

I have a great deal of admiration for R.F. Kuang's writing; her world-building capacity is entrancing and she's managed to grasp the skill of writing about extremely relevant topics in engaging, yet easy language. Other (fantasy!!) books of hers have explored the extreme xenophobia and exclusionary practices within elite education institutions, alongside what's described as a "grimdark" fantasy about the politics behind the second Sino-Japanese war but based in a magical Song dynasty China. Evidently, Yellowface is a departure in terms of genre, yet her execution is near perfect.

The whole read of Yellowface I was dually anxious and intrigued. Not in the way of a well-written mystery book but the knowledge that everything is going to crash and burn and you're just going to sit and watch it happen. In this way, I recommend Yellowface to those who enjoy uncomfortable books that confront reality head-on.

Jeenah

The first chapters are unexpected - it wasn't anything like I've read before. It took me a while to realize that the protagonist/antagonist, June, was not of Asian descent. Perhaps I didn't read closely enough to pick up on the clues presented in the first few chapters, but once I realized this, I began to enjoy the novel much more. The title and the plot of it all came together in a neat, yet complicated way.

Each page of the novel is thought-provoking. The inner turmoil that June experiences throughout the novel illustrates both the beauty and vileness of human nature. The unfiltered emotions that Kuang portrays through June's perspective took me by surprise, but in a good way. Some may call June Hayward twisted and conceited. But others may say that she is persistent and did what she needed to survive in the competitive industry. After all, if we think back to Charles Darwin's "survival of the fittest" mindset, that is exactly what June did. She saw the opportunity and took it. June could have handled the situation in a better way by giving Athena credit for the novel, but instead, selfishness and jealousy takes over, and she only describes the piece as "inspired" by Athena.

This is, perhaps, the most significant portrayal of human nature and its flaws. Even after witnessing Athena's death firsthand and taking Athena's draft of The Last Front that same night, June comes to the conclusion that Athena doesn't deserve credit. June convinces herself that because she researched and rewrote many parts of the book, it is hers. But by the standards of plagiarism in the publishing industry, or even by the standards of any literature, this is plagiarism.

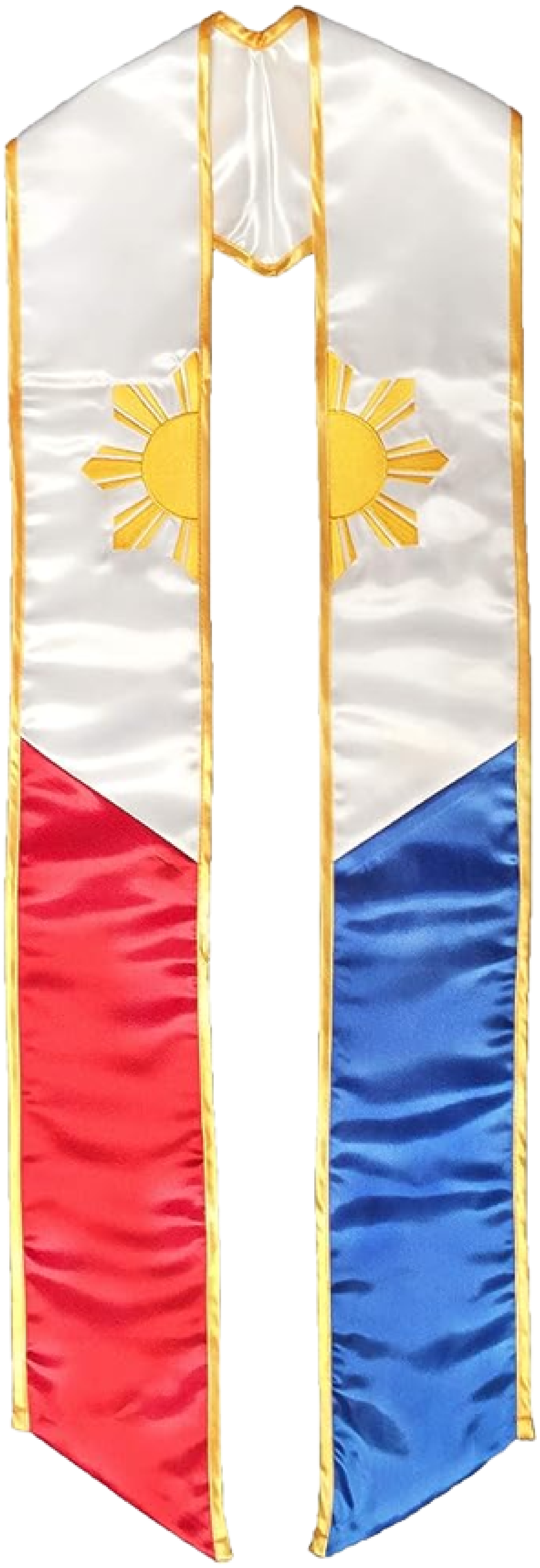
From the first page until the very last, I found myself deeply engaged and wanting more. To say the least, Yellowface is well written. The topic is timely and the writing, including the style and tone of the text, is thought-provoking. I recommend this novel to anyone, especially those who are interested in human nature and its flaws.

THE PHILIPPINES STOLE: A ROOM FOR DISCUSSION

By Rojun Andres

Disclaimer: Due to the nature of available evidence and personal reach, this article contains a generalized standpoint and may not accurately represent any one individual's perspective regarding this topic. While the intention of this article is to educate readers on a recent argument regarding the Philippine stole and related controversy, my perspective as a Filipino-American and my experiences in the community take a central role.

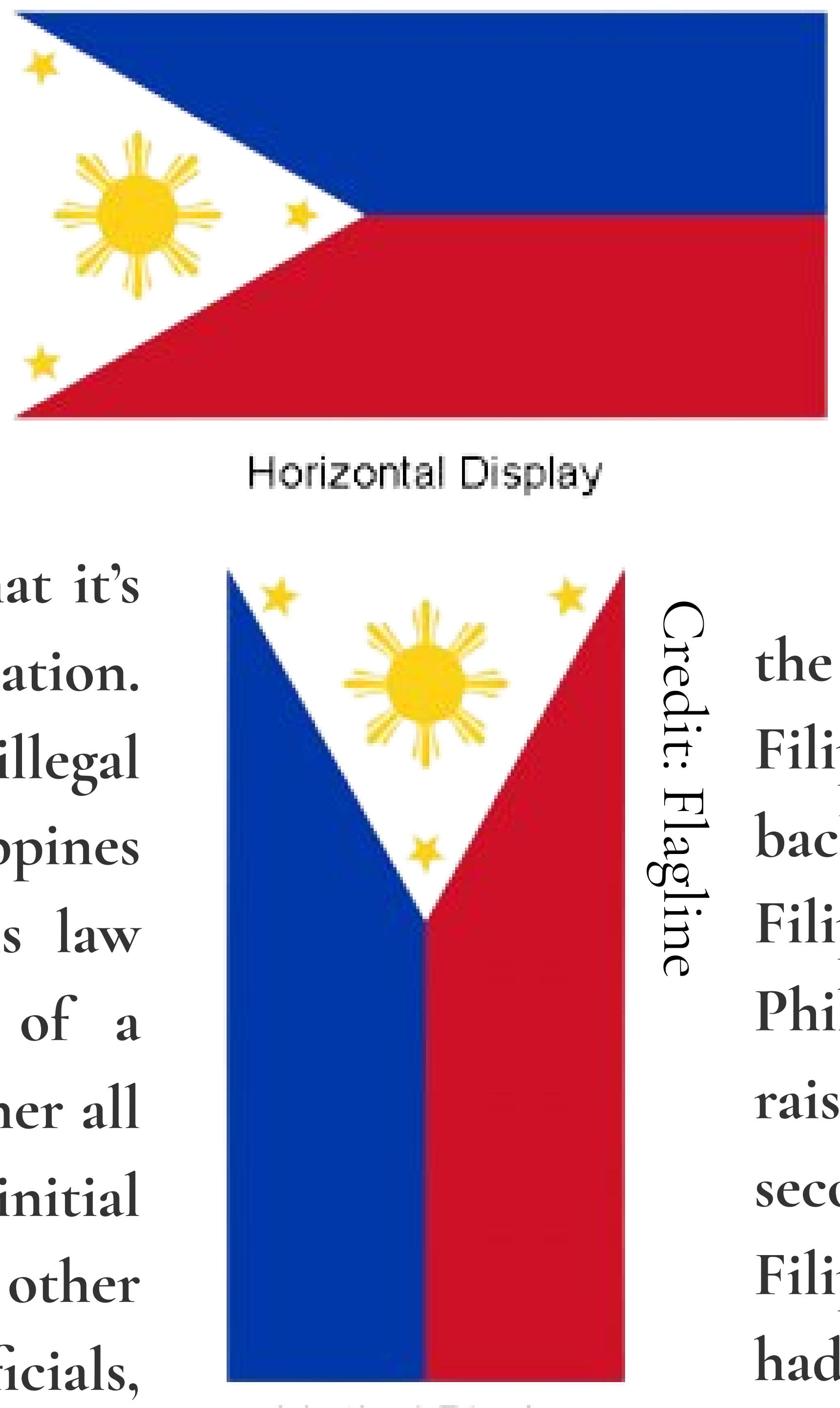
On June 24th, a user by the name of @sansophs (Soph) on TikTok posted her graduation pictures, displaying a Filipino stole. She had sent the picture to her family, and one relative explained their concern that the Filipino stole was being worn wrong. Soph later explained that the orientation of the colors changed the meaning of the flag. This was because the Filipino stole she wore had red on the left and blue on the right. Another user with the handle @sleoin2 (Sleoin) reacted negatively to her video, stating that wearing the Filipino stole was "illegal," disrespectful, and that the only correct way to wear the stole was to not wear it at all.



Stole with wrong orientation (sold on Amazon)

The flag of the Philippines consists of a white triangle with three gold stars, a sun with eight rays, and a blue and red stripe. Each aspect of the flag has its own meaning: the white triangle means equality; the three gold stars signifies Luzon, Visaya, and Mindanao (the 3 island groups); the eight rays represent each region that revolted against the Spanish in 1896 during the Philippine Revolution; blue expresses peace, justice, and truth; and red defines valor and patriotism. It's also the only flag in the world to be flown upside down when the country is in a state of war.

When Soph posted her photos to TikTok, the stole had represented the country in a state of war. Growing up, I have seen the flag in many different ways whether that be in the forms of souvenirs or clothing: as a jacket my grandma in the Philippines gifted to me when I was six, a magnet on the fridge, and now as the Philippines stole. There is a reason many people are fond of the flag, and I for one enjoy the historical value this symbol holds. I have learned to love the rich meaning of the Philippines flag and would often draw it when I was younger. I even decorated the top of my graduation cap with the sun and its eight rays. When I first saw the Filipino stole, I thought it represented a sentiment I needed in my life, especially for graduation. Yet, the debate on whether we should be allowed to wear it or not has caused turmoil for both Mainland Filipinos and Filipino Americans such as myself.


Philippines Flag, Standard (Peace time) version

Horizontal Display

Vertical Display

Credit: Flagline

There are a couple of unique reasons why some Filipinos dislike the use of Philippine stoles. In general, the most common ones I have heard are that it's illegal and considered cultural appropriation. And they aren't entirely wrong — it is illegal to wear it, but only in the Philippines (Republic Act 8941 Sect. 34 (e)). This law prohibits wearing the flag as part of a costume or uniform, regardless of whether all aspects of the flag are used. The initial legislation relating to national flags or other emblems was instituted by American officials, known as the Philippine Commission, in 1907 by Act No. 1696, S. 1907; this law explicitly banned the wearing of the Philippines Flag and was intended to suppress symbols of rebellion and the fight for independence. The Katipunan symbols and flag were also banned. However, come 1919, the usage of the flag was legalized thanks to a decade of intense legislation. In 1998, the Flag and Heraldic Code of the Philippines was enacted to detail the usage of the flag, specifically including the ban on flag based clothing or other wearable items. Many Filipino Americans get away with wearing the Philippines stole as this law is not as enforced as people claim it to be. But if that is the case, why do so many Filipinos feel so strongly about opposing the stole just because it's illegal? The more heinous alternative would be the use of the flag in a disrespectful way, which is usually not the intent of Filipino Americans when wearing the stole.

When the accusations against Filipino-American stole-wearers are not based in legality, then others argue that wearing the flag is a blatant example of cultural appropriation. To me, this is bewildering. From my experience and perspective Filipino-Americans do not approach the wearing of the stole, and thus the flag, with any sense of dishonor or hint of negative demeanor. In fact, the whole point of wearing the stole is to take pride in our ethnicity despite struggling because of our identity in a new country, a sentiment that can be understood by a multitude of ethnic backgrounds. I'd like to believe that the reason why Soph and so many other Filipino Americans faced this kind of backlash is because of our upbringing as a Filipino, while not truly living the Philippines "experience". Because we were raised elsewhere, we have learned rather second-handedly what it means to be Filipino. In many of the comments Sleoin had made, one that had stuck out was the use of the word, "foreigners," when describing Filipino Americans. This being a prime example of Filipinos outside of the Philippines being characterized as less Filipino. While this belief may not be carried by every mainland Filipino, this is still a concept that many feel strongly about.

It is clear from the reaction of some Filipinos that they do not fully support the idea of wearing the stole, with Soph receiving the short end of the stick. Amidst all the internet backlash that she faced, many other Filipinos in the comment section supported her through this mess with congratulations and compliments. One commenter posted, "You graduating is an act of resilience & resistance! Congrats on your accomplishments, don't mind the outside voices." Another said, "Your intentions were good! You are proud to show off your heritage! That's all that matters."

When I wore my Filipino stole to my graduation ceremony, I had made sure that my stole was clear for everyone to see. Not just because it was pretty, but because I carried it with a sense of pride, a common sentiment that can be felt by many other Filipino

Americans. Yet through all the pride and joy of being Filipino, I couldn't help but feel guilty wearing the stole. Not because I am not proud to be Filipino, but because of the divide between Mainland Filipinos and Filipino Americans.

Many Filipinos believe that Filipino Americans are "less Filipino," and that may have been the root of where this debate all stemmed from. But who defines what makes someone truly Filipino? Does my lack of skill in Tagalog make me less Filipino? Or is it that I was born in America instead of the Philippines? I think many Filipino Americans can make a better effort into genuinely learning the Filipino culture, because there is definitely more than just the flag and some popular Filipino cuisine like Adobo or Lumpia. But there should also be the same regard for Mainland Filipinos understanding the struggles of Filipino-Americanss, and not discrediting our experiences as a Filipino. Because of how wide the Filipino diaspora is, it's important to recognize how adaptive culture can be. While Filipino Americans may not truly experience the way Mainland Filipinos identify with their culture, the experiences we have shouldn't lessen our identity as Filipinos.

Newly graduates at CSULB, many of which wearing a Philippines stole (Credit: Press Telegram)

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A Lesson in Gaman

by Camryn Sample

我慢

(gaman)

Gaman — enduring the seemingly unbearable with patience and dignity. This word has been used by my grandmother during challenging times all my life, but I never truly understood its meaning until last summer when I participated in the University of Denver's Amache field school.

Growing up in Los Angeles, my connection to internment was not uncommon within my community. My childhood consisted of playing basketball in an all-Japanese league, spending most weekends in my Grandparents' predominantly Japanese neighborhood, and countless trips to J-Town with my cousins. From the age of zero to twelve, I was surrounded by people who shared the same ancestral stories that I did. "Camp" was something openly discussed between everyone, and it was done preferably over a glass of Gyokuro and some pickled daikon. These teary-eyed conversations paired with delicious food were so quintessentially my life in California and during these years, I truly felt in touch with the culture that is half of who I am. These feelings, however, changed when I moved to Colorado in the seventh grade.

Transitioning from having school trips to Manzanar — an internment camp in Owens Valley, California to a place where most of my classmates did not know about the internment camps — was one-eighty that I wasn't prepared for. I knew that Denver didn't have as large of a Japanese population as Los Angeles, but it was still a cultural shock to experience it. I was so used to "Sunday Sushi" at my grandparents' house; and taiko drumming lessons with my cousins; the absence of these seemingly small events disconnected me from a culture I was once so proud to be a part of. I needed to do something that would reconnect me to my roots.

On June 12, 2022, I awoke early in the morning of the first day of field school and inventoried my packing list one last time.

and other camping equipment, I was filled with mixed emotions. Trepidation — camping has never been one of my passions and the idea of living in a tent for weeks was not particularly enticing. Nervousness — I am a fairly introverted person, and the idea of living with a new group of people made my stomach knot. And most importantly excitement — I had known about Amache for years, the birthplace of my grandmother, and was eager to see the place where she spent the first three years of her life.

When I arrived at Amache I was struck by the intense heat and wind. Amache is located in a desolate prairie land in the Southeast corner of Colorado. Like all internment camps, it is located where the land was cheap — almost uninhabitable. I got out of the van and looked around imagining how my great grandparents felt arriving at this place that would become their home — not just for a few weeks like myself, but indefinitely. Filled with sadness for my ancestors, I promised myself not to take the opportunity for granted, and truly dig for the stories of the ex-inhabitants.

On the first day of field school, we began to survey barrack B-27 when I came across a small and dirty glass bottle. It was slightly in the earth so I carefully pulled it out of the ground, revealing a bright red nail polish bottle. Although this was seemingly not a significant find, I placed it in the palm of my hand and imagined the girl who used this polish. She had been taken away from her life and imprisoned, but still, she chose to wear the most confident and loud color. These people that I had heard so much about growing up became very real to me at that moment.

I spent the rest of my journey experiencing little moments like those that proved to me just how strong my ancestors were. During my time at Amache, we found and excavated three Japanese gardens, and it became very apparent to me that Amache was a prison when the Japanese Americans arrived, but it was a home when they left. In an effort to make Amache more comfortable, they held game nights, mixers, and carnivals periodically. They constructed intricate gardens with roses and even ponds filled with catfish from Arkansas because they didn't have access to koi fish.

From this experience, I learned the true meaning of the word Gaman. The Japanese internees transformed the prison that the US Government created to confine them and transformed it into a liveable community. Participating in field school filled me with a sense of belonging. I was proud to be a small part of uncovering and preserving the history of the Japanese Americans. However, I am still stunned by how many people have no idea that this happened in the United States. I am currently working to make Amache and AAPI history a part of the Colorado history curriculum with my involvement in the Colorado Youth Advisory Council. Our bill is currently being drafted and I hope that it will drive forth what I've taken away from this experience. We deserve acknowledgement of our story.

About the Author

My name is Camryn Sample and I am currently a senior at Kent Denver School in Colorado. I am half Japanese and I am I super passionate about AAPI history. I am a descendant of two survivors of the internment camp. My Grandpa was born at Manzanar and My Grandma was born at Amache (what I wrote the piece on). Living and serving at the internment camp in which my Grandmother was born was an experience that connected me back to my roots. I learned a lesson in courage, dignity, and most importantly Gaman. I am so proud to be a part of such a resilient community.

Why I Stopped Trying to Break Asian Stereotypes

by Isabel Dorn

Stereotypical Asian characters in Western media have long shaped global perceptions of Asians. Since Asian-American writers and filmmakers have long been disproportionately underrepresented in the U.S. entertainment industry, the Western perspective of Asian people is built around portrayals from white creators perpetuated by, and originating in, the U.S. entertainment industry. Many of these characters, from the emasculated nerd Long Duk Dong in *Sixteen Candles* to the exoticized bar girls in *Miss Saigon*, frame Asians as a decisively foreign "other" that can be ridiculed, fetishized and degraded to entertain white audiences.

These mischaracterizations of Asians aren't just offensive; they're an active threat to real people's safety. According to a 2021 article in the *Los Angeles Times*, Asians are often denied promotions at major corporations because non-Asian employers perceive them as too docile to handle executive leadership (Tang). Oversexualized Asian female characters cause increased rates of sexual harassment and violence for real Asian women. In the 2021 Atlanta spa shootings, a gunman murdered eight people - six of whom were Asian women - then proceeded to blame his actions on a "sex addiction" (Whitehurst and Price). Stereotypes don't exist in a media bubble; they can complicate, endanger, and end people's lives.

As an aspiring novelist writing Asian characters, I have always been vigilant to ensure that I do not inadvertently create harmful representation in my own stories. While I draw heavily from my own experiences as an Asian woman, the harmful representation has tainted my perspective, and I've learned to unpack many internalized beliefs about my own heritage. When I began developing my Asian heroines, I took caution to avoid the notorious tropes: the lotus blossom, the dragon lady, the exoticized geisha, the model minority, the tiger mother, the martial arts genius, the gold digger, the diligent servant. But as I compiled this list of stereotypes to avoid, I realized that there are so many offensive narratives about Asians that it is impossible for a single character to subvert them all.

Western media portrayals often assign negative connotations to almost every aspect of existing as an Asian person. If I prioritize academics over my dating life, I am the high-achieving East Asian model minority. If I prioritize dating over my academics, I am an exotic sexpot. If I am quiet, I am the submissive ingenue. If I am assertive, I am a cunning femme fatale. If I am traditional, I am the obedient daughter who lacks agency. If I am rebellious, I'm an ABG (Asian Baby Gangster) or a Purple Streak Girl. If I cling to my Asian heritage, I'm reinforcing cultural divisions between Asians and whites. If I assimilate into Western culture, I'm a self-hating Asian who must secretly believe in white supremacy. No matter how we present ourselves, we will always be reduced to caricatures.

It is not Asian people's fault if we inadvertently fall into some of the many stereotypes that the Western media has created. There is nothing wrong with Asian people who are shy, nerdy or promiscuous. However, the Western entertainment industry grossly exaggerates these traits and attributes them to some inherent flaw in the entire Asian race.

For example, Western media frequently features Asian immigrant parents who expect their children to achieve academic excellence and land lucrative careers, even if it means sacrificing their personal happiness. While some Asian parents do fit this stereotype, the media usually blames this behavior on faulty values within Asian culture and neglects how systemic racism and generational trauma shape these ideals. They conveniently forget how Asian Americans must constantly outperform their White peers in order to receive the same benefits, or how immigrants who arrived in a new country with no money would want their children to be financially stable at all costs. In Western media, the impact of immigration on family dynamics is twisted to create a negative perception of Asians.

Asian Americans occupy a precarious position in conversations about identity politics, and Asian stereotypes have evolved to fit current narratives in the American social, political, and racial climate. When Asian-American laborers first arrived in the U.S. in the 19th century, caricatures of job-snatching, opportunistic foreigners helped unite poor white workers against the immigrants. When the United States launched its military campaigns in Korea and Vietnam in the mid-20th century, the media rallied support for the intervention by portraying Asian women as helpless, sexually desirable "exotic flowers" in need of saving while portraying Asian men as weak and inferior to their Western counterparts. When the civil rights movement brought increased freedoms for African Americans, the model minority myth emerged, pitting Asian Americans against African Americans in order to build a case against affirmative action. Often, Asian stereotypes reflect the United States' current socio political goals.

Fortunately, Asian Americans are gradually gaining representation in the entertainment industry, bringing increasingly complex Asian characters to audiences around the world. Many of these works do so by exploring common experiences Asian Americans encounter in the United States while decentralizing the white gaze.

Asian characters don't need to be morally flawless to be good representation; in fact, holding Asians to higher standards than their white counterparts is inherently problematic. Good representation merely depicts Asians as they are — messy, multifaceted people who exist to pursue their own goals. For example, *Crazy Rich Asians* features a cast of wealthy Singaporean elites who are often greedy, vindictive, and shallow. However, we experience this world through the eyes of Rachel, the sympathetic Asian American protagonist, rather than a white heroine. Therefore, the central conflict is class rather than race, and the film takes shots at the wealthy characters because they're snobs, not because they're Asian. While racism, immigration and generational trauma do influence the characters' personalities, *Crazy Rich Asians* allows Asians to exist within a traditional rom-com without reinforcing racist narratives. (That said, it's important to note that although *Crazy Rich Asians* avoids many of the problematic aspects seen in other Western films about Asian characters, racial and ethnic disparities still occurred in casting and production).

Recently, Asian-led projects have also started to tackle representation with a more nuanced lens. Rather than trying to create characters who somehow evade every major Asian stereotype, these works uncover the systemic issues behind these characterizations. For example, the protagonist Evelyn Wang in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* initially embodies the "tiger mother" stereotype; she is rigid, critical and demanding towards her daughter Joy because she believes Joy has made a mess of her own life. The film powerfully demonstrates how Evelyn's overbearing presence has inadvertently harmed Joy, but it also acknowledges how Evelyn's struggles as a poor Chinese-American immigrant and her disillusionment with the American Dream shaped her values and worldview. To save the world, Evelyn must work through her trauma, admit her own faults, and make amends with Joy. The film handles Evelyn and Joy's relationship with the compassion and sensitivity it deserves, and both characters learn to find compassion and forgiveness for each other.

In Western media, the "tiger mother" stereotype is used to portray Asian women as cruel and uncaring, but as Evelyn searches every version of the multiverse for Joy, we see that her mistakes stem from a misguided but infinitely powerful love for her daughter. *Everything Everywhere All at Once* directly confronts one of the most prevalent Asian stereotypes to build a genuine story about the difficulties of navigating mother-daughter relationships influenced by generational trauma.

As strong portrayals of Asian Americans continue to make their way into the entertainment industry, I've realized that racial stereotypes are, among many things, just one more way our oppressors try to police our behavior and artistic expression. I will never deliberately perpetuate racist narratives, and I call out characterizations that are clearly intended to disparage the Asian community. But I also refuse to spend my entire life jumping over landmines to avoid all the stereotypes that have been created about people like me.

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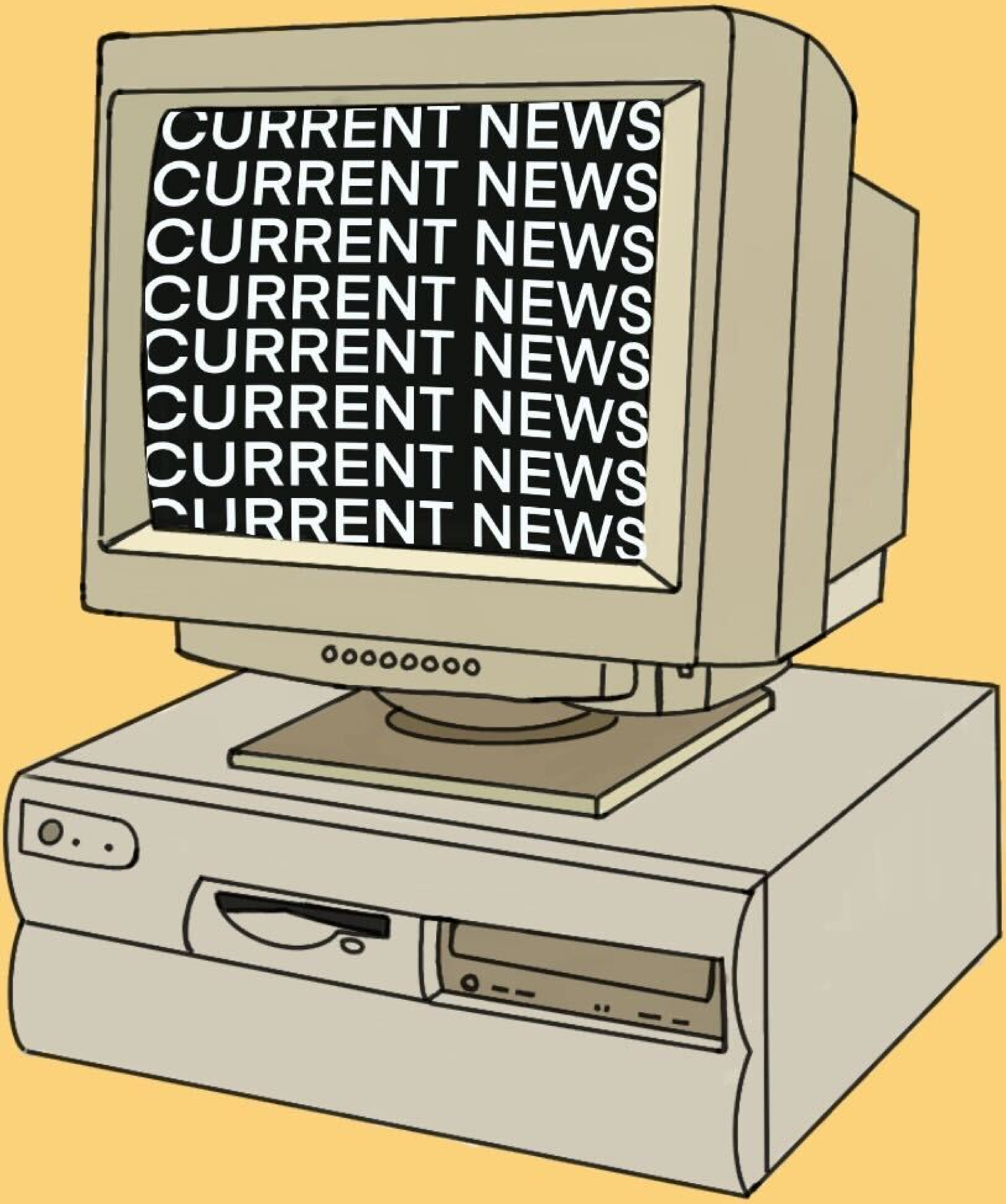
About the Author

Isabel Dorn (she/her) is a junior at Lawrence University studying Creative Writing, Government, and Russian. She is a frequent contributor to her university's weekly student-run newspaper The Lawrentian, where she shares pieces ranging from op-eds about intersectional activism to poetry that explores the complexities of coming of age in the 21st century. As a Vietnamese American woman, she sees writing as a powerful tool for social justice and strives to create more visibility for underrepresented groups with her work. When she's not writing, you can usually find her participating in student government, creating niche Spotify playlists, or enjoying a good boba.

BY ALLISON CHAN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What We Experience

meet the team

Jeenah Gwak

founder, editor-in-chief

(she/her; biology - Stanford University) Thank you, as always, for reading our 13th issue and supporting us! Besides the AAPI community, I am passionate about the brain, piano, reading, sleeping, and lifting.

Hope Yu

founder, editor-in-chief

(she/her; history - asian studies, & classics at Carleton College) Hi! I spend a lot of my time reading, studying, and hanging out with friends + family.

Ashley Chen

editor, writer

(she/her; NYU Shanghai) My passions include playing piano and videogames. In my free time, I likes to watch Chinese dramas and hangout with my friends. For *What We Experience*, my favorite topics to write about are Asian American mental health and current events.

Michelle Fung

editor, writer

(she/her; University of Pennsylvania) Hi! In my spare time, I enjoy painting, going to parks, and playing board games. I also like writing poetry and playing the flute.

meet the team

Nicole Kim

media manager

(she/her; Bellevue High School) Hi! Some activities I enjoy doing are visiting new places and spending hours at museums. I am passionate about learning foreign languages and connecting with culturally diverse groups of people.

Rojun Andres

writer

(he/him; University of Washington) Hello everyone! My name is Rojun and I enjoy playing games, making crafts, and listening to music. While I tend to always try different things very often, my current passions are learning different languages and playing the violin. Thank you!

Gabriella Ignacio

writer

(she/her; Stanford University) I really enjoy art – whether it be making my own or appreciating the works of others – and looking for places to try new food. Being a part of this magazine has been very valuable for me, and in the future, I hope to keep writing and being involved in Asian-American spaces.

Allison Chan

artist

(any pronouns; Garfield High School) Hobbies and interests of mine are swimming, coding, painting and running.

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