

APA Newsletters

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NEWSLETTER ON ASIAN AND ASIAN-AMERICAN PHILOSOPHERS AND PHILOSOPHY

FROM THE EDITOR, GARY MAR

REPORTS

RUTH CHANG

“The Pentagram of Love”

“East of California Conference”

GARY Y. OKIHIRO

“Opening Keynote Address”

NITASHA SHARMA

“Closing Keynote Address”

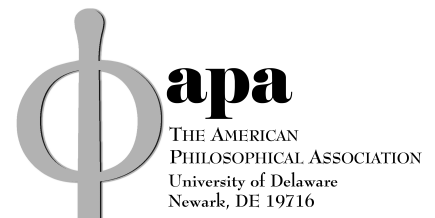
OTHER REPORTS

JENNIFER HAYASHIDA

“On Asian American Studies Program Today at Hunter College”

PATRICIA CHU

“In Search of Yung Wing’s Heir: The Chinese Educational
Mission of Chu Ching-nung, 1918-1951”



KYOO LEE

“Still, Only On Paper, or Not On Paper: The Artefactuality of Asian American
Ontology Allegorized in ‘The Paper Sons’”

**EASTERN DIVISION MEETING OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL
ASSOCIATION, DECEMBER 29, 2008, PHILADELPHIA, PA**

ASHBY BUTNOR

“Group Panel for the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy,
‘Liberating Traditions: Feminist Comparative Philosophy’”

A MELLON PROJECT, 2009-2010

KYOO LEE

“From Paper Sons to Asian Babies: Echoes of Familial Alterity
from the Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882-1943”



Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies

Gary Mar, Editor

Spring 2009

Volume 08, Number 2

FROM THE EDITOR

Gary Mar

Department of Philosophy, Stony Brook University

With contributions by committee members Ruth Chang, David Kim, Kyoo Lee, Ron Sundstrom, and others listed below.

The Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophy has a number of new members and has set for itself several new goals: (1) to promote dialogue between the APA and the Association for Asian American Studies and various associations advancing Asian Philosophy, targeting neglected areas such as South Asian Philosophy, West Asian or Middle Eastern Philosophy and other Asian or Asian-American philosophies in addition to the traditional emphasis on Chinese or Indian or other East Asian philosophies or religions; (2) to promote dialogue within the APA between the Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies with the other such diversity committees and other organizations promoting Asian philosophies; (3) to disseminate teaching materials and seminal articles authored by philosophers and Asian-Americanists with the aim of creating the first anthology devoted to Asian-American Philosophy; (4) to collect data on the status of Asian and Asian-American philosophers and the state of Asian and Asian-American philosophies; and (5) to sponsor panels at the APA regional conferences that stimulate awareness of and research and teaching about philosophical topics of interest to Asian and Asian-American philosophers and their communities.

Gary Mar, associate professor, Department of Philosophy, Stony Brook University, is the new chair for the Committee on Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies. Gary Mar is the last dissertation student of great 20th century logician Alonzo Church, co-author of the revision of Kalish and Montague's classic textbook *Logic: Techniques of Formal Reasoning*, and the catalyst for the Charles B. Wang Asian American Center at Stony Brook University (2005), which was financed with the largest donation (over \$50 million) to the public education system of New York State. Professor Mar is the founding director of the Asian American Center at Stony Brook, the founding director of the Philosophy Department Logic Lab, and is completing a book on Gödel's logical and mathematical discoveries and their impact on philosophy.

In addition to having a new chair, the committee has recently added four new members over the past year.

Kyoo Lee, assistant professor of Philosophy, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY, is the recipient of a Mellon Resident Fellowship in Humanities at the Graduate Center,

CUNY, for Fall 2009-Spring 2010, and will be leading a weekly faculty seminar there with the other resident fellow, Professor Alyson Cole, a political scientist from Queens College/The Graduate Center. Her Mellon project is on "the family," the theme of the next academic year.

Ron Sundstrom, associate professor, Department of Philosophy and co-director of African American Studies, University of San Francisco, is author of *The Browning of America and the Evasion of Social Justice* (SUNY Press, 2008), which was the subject of a panel sponsored by the Committee at the Central Division Meeting in Chicago (2009).

Minh Nguyen, associate professor of philosophy at Eastern Kentucky University, was born in Vietnam and after arriving in the United States in 1984, obtained his Ph.D. in philosophy from Columbia University (1999). He has proposed a session for the Eastern Division Meeting in New York on the topic of Teaching Chinese Philosophy: Challenges and Promises.

Bo Mou, professor of philosophy and director of the Center for Comparative Philosophy at San Jose State University in California, has advanced degrees from Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (M.A., 1987) and from University of Rochester (M.A., 1993; and Ph.D., 1997), was president (2002-2005) of the International Society for Comparative Studies of Chinese and Western Philosophy (ISCWP) and member of the APA's Committee on International Cooperation of (2002-2005).

To promote dialogue between this Committee and the Committees on Hispanics and Blacks, we have proposed a panel sponsored by all three committees for the upcoming Eastern Division Meeting in 2009 dealing with "**Migrant Laborers Building the Master's House: Enslaved Africans, Indentured Coolies, and Latino Contract Workers.**" The panel will feature two prominent Asian-Americanists and two philosophers. The Asian-Americanists are **Lisa Yun**, associate professor of English and Asian/Asian-American Studies at Binghamton University, author of *The Coolie Speaks: Chinese Indentured Laborers and African Slaves in Cuba* (Temple, 2008) and **Gary Okihiro**, Professor of International and Public Affairs and founding director of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, Columbia University (see keynote address below). The distinguished philosophers on this panel are **Linda Martin-Alcoff**, Hunter College/CUNY Graduate Center, and **Lewis Gordon**, Laura H. Carnell University Professor of Philosophy and director of the Institute for the Study of Race and Social Thought and the Center for Afro-Jewish Studies.

To promote dialogue between the Committee and the APA at large, the Committee sponsored a panel, "**The Pentagram of Love,**" organized and chaired by Ruth Chang (Rutgers) at the Eastern Division Meeting of the APA in Philadelphia in December 2008. This panel, which was well attended with standing room only, included panelists **Harry Frankfurt** (Princeton), **Rae Langton** (MIT), **Michael Stocker** (Syracuse), **David Wong** (Duke), and **David Velleman** (NYU), kindly filling in for **Jeanette**

Kennett (ANU) who was unfortunately unable to travel from Australia to participate in the session. Ruth Chang's report on this session is below.

Two panels sponsored by the Committee at the Central Division Meetings in Chicago (Feb. 2009) were designed to promote a dialogue between the **Asian Philosophy and Feminism** and Asian American Philosophy and the Association of Asian American Studies (AAAS). **Amy Olberding's** panel on the former topic will be discussed in a future issue of this newsletter. The other panel on "**Race, Immigration and Social Justice**" was co-sponsored by the Committee on Blacks and was chaired by **Eddy Souffrant** (University of North Carolina–Charlotte). This panel featured a presentation based on a chapter in Sundstrom's newly published book, *The Browning of America and the Evasion of Social Justice*, in which he defends aspects of the much maligned construct of the "black-white" binary.

In conjunction with Sundstrom's presentation was an invited talk, "**Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America**," by **Erika Lee**, Fesler-Lampert Professor in the Public Humanities, Department of History and Asian American Studies, University of Minnesota. Professor Lee's talk was based on the newest research co-authored by **Judy Yung** (Professor emerita, American Studies, U. C.–Santa Cruz) about the international character of immigration through Angel Island, sometimes (misleadingly) called the "Ellis Island of the West Coast." This new research was commissioned by the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation (www.aiisf.org) and will be published next year to commemorate the centennial of opening of the Angel Island Immigration Station in 1910.

Gary Mar, who was teaching a course on Philosophical Issues in Asian American History, asked Erika Lee for permission to create a documentary with his students based on this research. With the talent and directorial skills of **Dini Diskin-Zimmerman**, the first woman to director on CNN, Mar and his students were able to create a documentary, *We See Ourselves: New Immigrant Voices from Angel Island*, which was premiered on May 7th at the Charles Wang Center. This documentary will be donated, along with other projects, to the Angel Island Immigration Station for its centenary celebration in 2010. The documentary, completed during the semester, with a committed team of collaborators, can be viewed as a podcast at https://podcast.ic.sunysb.edu/weblog/gary_mar/ and was made possible, in part, by grant for a proposal to benefit the profession submitted in June 2008 entitled "**A Shorter Rethinking of Philosophy Through Asian/American Philosophy**."

REPORTS

The Pentagonam of Love

Ruth Chang
Rutgers University

The name "The Pentagonam of Love" was a metaphor for the experimental form of the session: five distinctive viewpoints on any aspect of love presented in 20-30 minutes, followed by discussion of the main points by panelists and audience alike. Since there was no constraint on what the panelists could talk about, so long as it was related to love, the session was more pointy pentagram than spherical roundtable.

Harry Frankfurt started off the session by suggesting that what it is to want "to be loved for oneself" is perhaps related

to why we want to be called by names rather than numbers. Recalling his time in the armed forces, Frankfurt pointed out that although names convey almost no information, recruits did not like being assigned an impersonal number even though numbers can convey attributes whose corollaries they instantiate—they can be "odd," "negative," "irrational," and, as audience member Stephanie Lewis pointed out, "imaginary." In discussion it was suggested that being named "seventeen" or the "fourth son" did not necessarily carry with it the impersonality of being numbered, since such numerical names could be a term of endearment. There is nothing in being called a number that is objectionable per se; rather, what is important to us is to be called by something that has normative significance, most usually because it is how we are or have been addressed by people with whom we have relationships, such as our parents.

David Velleman followed with remarks suggesting that the "self" that wants to be loved for itself is that which is "self-presenting." A person is self-presenting if she organizes her thoughts and feelings so they are manifested in an intelligible, coherent, and consequent way. As Velleman put it, such a person is constantly passing a Turing test (which today, he noted, goes by the name of "instant messaging"). For a computer, or a instant messenger, to pass the Turing test is not merely to mimic human responses, but to be able to organize one's inputs and responses as a coherent self. Velleman urged that what it is to be a self-presenting person is what it is to be a rational agent. Thus, the object of love in each of us is what Kant called our "rational nature."

David Wong considered the two central questions that have occupied much of the philosophical literature on love—"What is the object of love?" and "What are the reasons, if any, for love?" Wong framed his discussion by noting a general tension in our thinking about love: we want to be loved because of our lovable qualities, but we also want that love to be constant and non-fungible, and that is at odds with being loved because of our lovable qualities. This tension makes the usual unitary answers to the two central questions unsatisfactory. The problem with the "quality" view is that it makes love inconstant in the face of a change in qualities. The problem with the "no reasons" view is made evident by reflecting on the fact that a father wants his daughter to love someone for good reasons, and those reasons include the personal qualities of her beloved. The trouble with the "relationship" view is that the relationship isn't all that matters. The sage-king Shun is celebrated in Chinese Confucian tradition for loving his family despite three attempts by his parents and brother to assassinate him, but surely his love gave his relationships a distorted role in love. Wong suggested a pluralist answer incorporating insights from all these views to understand the object of and grounding for love.

Rae Langton distinguished three kinds of projection derived from Hume: 1) phenomenological gilding, or perceiving something with "colours borrowed from the sentiments," 2) wishful thinking, which may sometimes help bring about what one wishes for, and 3) pseudo-empathy, an over-readiness to take one's own mind as a mirror of someone else's, what Langton called the "dubious cousin" of sympathy. Langton argued that these forms of projection are useful tools in understanding when love goes badly and when it goes well. Using Ian McEwan's spy novel set in Post World War II Berlin, *The Innocent*, as her backdrop, Langton showed how the love relationship between the two main characters developed its highs and lows through the waxing and waning of these different forms of projection.

Michael Stocker mooted the arresting thesis that love requires ambivalence, in the sense of intra-psychic conflict.

In facing inevitable conflict within a love relationship, one does not simply recognize that one wants two things and can't have both—for example, to stay in the relationship and to take an enticing job in a far away city—but must rather feel the conflict—that is be conflicted or psychically torn. Citing the work of prominent psychoanalysts such as Donald Winnicott, who famously claimed “The mother...hates her infant from the word go,” Stocker urged that a deep conflict between the self and the other is a feature of all love relationships.

The session was characterized by lively and constructive discussion by both panelists and audience members. Among the many audience members who made interesting interventions were **Cheshire Calhoun, Joan Gilbert, John Fisher, Miranda Fricker, Stephanie Lewis, Michael Smith, Adam Swift, and Gary Watson.** (Apologies to those whose names I did not know!) The panel was videotaped to create an on-line resource through the grant mentioned above from the APA.

East of California Conference

University of Connecticut, Storrs, October 31, 2008

The East of California Conference (Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 2008) at the University of Connecticut at Storrs entitled “**A Movement to Look Back To.**” The keynote address was given by **Gary Okihiro** (reprinted below) and reminded scholars that Ethnic Studies and Asian-American Studies were born out of social justice agendas and the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement.

At this conference, this Committee sponsored an interdisciplinary panel placing Asian-American Philosophy and Cultural Studies in Dialogue, **Visual Epistemologies and Ontologies of Race in an Age of Neoliberalism: Asian American Philosophy and Cultural Studies in Dialogue.** It was organized by **Gary Mar** with panelists **Nerissa Balce** (Cultural Studies, U. Mass.–Amherst and now Department of Asian and Asian American Studies, Stony Brook University), **Kyoo Lee** (Philosophy, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY), and **Jeffrey Santa Ana** (English, Stony Brook University). Below is an abstract. Philosophers, attempting to claim the field of Asian-American philosophy, can benefit from the searching analyses from cultural studies of the subtle ways in which orientalist discourse disguises racial presuppositions and power dynamics that hinder the democratization of a discipline. This panel will contribute to this dialogue by examining the visual epistemologies of the imperialism of the Philippine-American War of 1899, the orientalist intertextualities involved in “paper son” phenomenon and detention of Chinese immigrants on Angel Island from 1910-1943, and the “colorblind” ideology of neoliberalism’s anxiety over global migrations and commercialization of mixed heritage and interracial Asians.

Report from co-organizers:

Cathy Schlund-Vials (University of Connecticut) and **Jennifer Ho** (University of Carolina–Chapel Hill)

In 1993, the East of California Conference (EoC) was hosted by the recently formed Asian American Studies Institute at the University of Connecticut. Fifteen years later, the EoC conference returns to UConn. As the Asian American Studies Institute celebrated its fifteenth anniversary, the field of Asian American Studies also celebrated a significant moment in 2008. The title for this year’s conference signaled the fortieth anniversary of the San Francisco State student strike that facilitated the emergence of Ethnic Studies within higher education. This history largely framed the 2008 conference, which brought together undergraduate activists, graduate students, archivists,

and faculty to contemplate the past, present, and future of Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies. A total of 140 students and scholars attended this year’s EoC conference.

Mindful that Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies were born out of social justice agendas, conference presentations will directly examine the ongoing impact and legacy of the Civil Rights Movement in contemporary scholarship and activism. Additionally, papers will highlight interdisciplinary and intra-ethnic approaches within Asian American Studies. The conference opened on October 31st with a keynote address by historian **Gary Y. Okihiro**, whose work continues to have a profound impact on Ethnic Studies scholarship. Roundtables and presentations took place in the Student Union on November 1st, and included a film screening of Curtis Chin’s documentary form, “Vincent Who?” The conference closed with an address by **Nitasha Sharma**, whose talk brought to the fore connections between the politics of 1968 and 2008, and the links between Asian American Studies and Ethnic Studies.

Opening Keynote Address

Gary Y. Okihiro
Columbia University

Gary Y. Okihiro is professor of international and public affairs at Columbia University, where he was the founding director of the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race. His research interests are Asian-American studies and southern Africa. He is the author of nine books in U.S. and African history, six of which have won prizes, most recently *The Columbia Guide to Asian American History* (Columbia University Press, 2001) and *Common Ground: Reimagining American History* (Princeton University Press, 2001). Others include *A Social History of the Bakwena and Peoples of the Kalahari of Southern Africa, 19th Century* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), *Storied Lives: Japanese American Students and World War II* (University of Washington Press, 1999), *Whispered Silences: Japanese Americans and World War II* (University of Washington Press, 1996), and *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture* (University of Washington Press, 1994). He is the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Studies Association and is a past president of the Association for Asian American Studies. His two latest books are *Island World: A History of Hawai'i and the United States* (2008) and *Pineapple Culture: A History of the Tropical and Temperate Zones* (2009), both published by the University of California.

I am greatly honored to deliver this opening lecture to a network long dear to my heart (and mind)—EoC. I would like to thank the program committee for having invited me. Who knows if this will be my last address to this group, and thus I will take this opportunity to reflect upon the founding of this regional caucus of the Association for Asian American Studies and its achievements and prospects. I think it important to acknowledge our debt and, hence, obligations, to remember our ancestors, for upon their shoulders we stand.

I must confess to being an undocumented migrant from California and islands West, come East for its opportunities. I admit to having held West Coast, specifically California, prejudices of originating, paradigmatic narratives of a “gold mountain” Asian America and of harboring ideas of alien, derivative lands out East. We, mainly Chinese and Japanese men with a sprinkling of Filipinos and Koreans, styled ourselves Chinatown cowboys, searched for our “homebase” in the

expansive West, and discovered instead that America was “in the heart.” We also believed patronizingly that our identities, histories, and social formations comprised “patterns” for our others East of California, dismissing as aberrant studies like those by Paul Siu and Rose Hum Lee set in bachelor Chicago and communities scattered in the Rocky Mountains. Our arrogance, our Orientalism, was unbridled.

As an institutional arrangement, Asian/Pacific American (A/P/A) studies was debated as the Berkeley versus UCLA model. At the former, A/P/A studies was folded within a Department of Ethnic Studies, while at the latter, it stood alone as a center with faculty appointments in “traditional” departments. But as Shirley Hune has pointed out, those exemplars arose in a particular place and time by and for second and third generation A/P/A students who were the beneficiaries of the civil rights movement, affirmative action, and an expansion in higher education. By contrast, in the Midwest and East Coast, A/P/A students were mainly immigrants or refugees who faced cutbacks and a backlash in affirmative action, raising questions about academic priorities and the establishment of new programs.¹

As discourse, California-centrism involved the historical narrative of Chinese Americans in Gold Mountain. “As the first Asian group to enter America,” Ron Takaki wrote in his much-cited text, *Strangers from a Different Shore* (1989), “the Chinese merit our close attention. What happened to them in the nineteenth century represented the beginning of a pattern for the ways Asians would be viewed and treated here....”² His declaration of “first Asian group” is historically inaccurate, although he might have meant that the Chinese were the first in terms of significant numbers, but that too is subject to interpretation. Observe the primacy accorded the Chinese as immigrants to nineteenth-century Gold Rush California, themes that resonate with the tropes of the U.S. as a nation of immigrants (Takaki adamantly denies that the Chinese were “coolies” or unfree labor) and the U.S. and its West as a land of plenty, of boundless opportunity.

Burdened with those gifts of program models and discourse, East I ventured from Santa Clara to Ithaca. I was a “missionary,” commissioned to spread the good news gospel of Asian/Pacific America to the untutored, the undisciplined of the “other” coast. Perhaps my students learned that lesson too well, believing that they, East Coast born and bred, were somehow deficient, and they longed for the animating virtues of California. I heard sighs and murmurs from my Cornell students, pining after a lost heritage and paradise—California. “After graduating,” they’d repeat as a mantra, “I’m heading for California,” as if they were fleeing bankrupt Egypt for the Promised Land. It was in that regard that I chose to name this network “East of California,” a play on John Steinbeck’s *East of Eden*. Over the years, EoC members, mainly sober faculty given to good sense, have proposed to change the name, rightly pointing out that it still centers California, that places in the U.S. outside of California are not just east but also north and west, and so forth. But East of California, a tongue-in-cheek critique of a centrism, remains much to the annoyance of some colleagues in and out of that fair state.³

East of California began in September 1991 when Lee C. Lee and I invited representatives from twenty-three campuses to participate in a symposium, “East of California: New Perspectives in Asian American Studies,” held at Cornell and sponsored by that university’s Asian American Studies Program and the Association for Asian American Studies. The theme was inspired by Peter N. Kiang of the University of Massachusetts, Boston, who at the 1987 Annual Meeting of the Association for Asian American Studies, described a “new wave” cresting on

the East Coast, creating “fresh challenges and opportunities for the entire Asian American studies field.” Unique to that “new wave,” Kiang contended, was raising student consciousness, generating materials relevant to the region, developing student leadership skills, involving students in community service and activism, and developing local communities. He called for “new institutional models” and a body of scholarship with “a regional emphasis,” which could provide the bases for “organized, coherent, and coordinated plans from national as well as regional perspectives....”⁴ In brief, Kiang envisioned regional-specific scholarship and institutional formations connected ultimately inter-regionally and nationally.

Accordingly, we asked the symposium’s participants to report on the state of and prospects for Asian/Pacific America on their campuses and in their regions. Most of the invited institutions had no programs on campus, few students and even fewer faculty and staff, and scant interest in A/P/A studies or Asian/Pacific Americans as peoples of color. Yet within that dreary, desolate survey, there was an optimism born of students who had a burning desire for Asian American studies and who refused to submit to the status quo. As a student told me, “I don’t know what Asian American studies is but I know I want it!” That energy generated by students unsettled seemingly tranquil seas and propelled those waves to crash on “different shores.” And that is why EoC conferences have typically involved hundreds of undergraduate students, mainly from the East Coast, Midwest, and South, eager to link their campus initiatives to regional and national projects and to learn from the experiences of others in struggle.

The delegates at that founding meeting at Cornell, thus, proposed that the national professional organization, the Association for Asian American Studies, should reach out to existing undergraduate organizations such as MAASU and ECASU to promote the idea of A/P/A studies, including graduate work in the field, and for EoC to develop a “starter packet” with ideas for program building and curriculum along with sample course syllabi and readings, and to establish a mentorship program to attract students into the field. Finally, the participants resolved to meet twice annually and to form a committee for the publication of a regional-specific anthology for introductory A/P/A studies courses. Those plantings bore fruit. Committed individuals and member campuses graciously hosted conferences and junior faculty retreats, EoC membership surged and new leaders emerged, and here we are at UConn, which was one of the original twenty-three founding campuses but where the university, according to the 1991 report, pursued a “programmed for failure” policy for Asian Americans.

In fact, you must remember that Professor Paul Bock, UConn’s representative at EoC’s establishment, was a mathematics professor who had little knowledge of or interest in A/P/A studies until December 3, 1987, when eight UConn Asian American students were victimized by racial hatred. This university refused to acknowledge the spitting, taunting, and mooning by white students of Asian American students to constitute racism and a hate crime, sparking campus-wide protests, including Professor Bock’s camp-out and hunger strike for justice. At the time when UConn maintained cultural centers for African American and Latina/o students and a center for women students, the university had no special services for Asian/Pacific Americans and it denied funds to A/P/As from its Minority Advancement Program. But the Asian American Students Association and Asian Faculty/Staff Association together with their allies pressed their demands, and today we are witness to and beneficiaries of those hard-won victories. Never forget to acknowledge our collective debt.

Since then and just off the top of my head, we have seen advances but also frustrating setbacks. Among the founding EoC institutions, once vibrant programs such as those at Hunter College and the University of Wisconsin have diminished, while the programs at Ohio State, University of Illinois, University of Massachusetts–Boston, and University of Michigan have surged while Brown, Cornell, Queens, and Williams saw incremental gains. And entirely new programs, not among the founding members, have emerged notably at Binghamton University, Northwestern, University of Maryland, University of Minnesota, University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Texas, and incipient ones at Arizona State, Columbia, Dartmouth, Loyola University (Chicago), University of Illinois–Chicago, University of Oregon, University of Utah, University of Virginia, Wesleyan, and Yale. Older programs such as those at the University of Hawai`i, University of Washington, and Washington State University continue. Apologies to those left off my list.⁵

The excitement that is East of California, I believe, remains intact, although there is a tendency toward complacency especially among campuses with strong A/P/A studies programs. There can develop an expectation of resources and courses among faculty and students, and programs can absorb energies within each campus and community, reducing the perceived need for outreach and solidarity across campus and regional divides. But several faculty are now working on putting together an anthology specific to East of California, an idea first proposed in 1991, and as you can see by those here the spirit of EoC endures, informing our personal and political commitments. In that regard, this week, San Francisco State University is celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the Third World Liberation Front strike, which gave to us ethnic studies in U.S. higher education.

I would like to digress now to illustrate from my own research the efficacy of studies east of California. Of course we know, from the work of our colleagues, that the originating story of Gold Rush California is merely one among many, and that there are other beginning sites of Asian/Pacific America, from Filipinos in Spanish America (Mexico and Louisiana) to South and East Asians in port cities along the eastern seaboard and among the enslaved in the U.S. South. I will speak of Hawaiians at Yale and in western Connecticut, East of California, to rethink the place of Asian/Pacific peoples in ethnic studies and U.S. history.

My story, an immense tale of U.S. and world history, begins with `Opukaha`ia, a solitary Hawaiian beached on the alien, Atlantic shore. Robinson Crusoe like, his footprints return us to the Pacific Ocean where a sea of islands, from the Pacific Islander perspective, dominate an otherwise vast emptiness in the European map maker's imagination. Polynesians likely settled Hawai`i around the turn of the eras, and had formed relationships, conceived of economic and political systems, held religious beliefs and observed laws, and invented traditions and conflicted with one another for nearly two thousand years before British Captain James Cook "discovered" them in the late eighteenth century. Soon thereafter, packs of European and American ships descended upon the islands in their voyages of exploitation, extracting the natural resources of the Pacific coast from Mexico to Alaska and of Hawai`i to tempt reluctant Asians to sell them their refined goods for the rough objects brought to them by American and European applicants.

Yankee ships from home ports like Salem and Boston, New Haven and New York, wintered in Hawaiian waters, took on provisions and goods, and enticed Hawaiians to work as sailors on the highways that took them from the islands to British Columbia back to Hawai`i and on to Canton. From China, they sailed westward into the Indian Ocean, around South Africa's Cape, and across the Atlantic to the U.S. Northeast, where

Hawaiians, like `Opukaha`ia, marooned in New York City and Boston and New Haven, were found by mission societies who conceived of the idea of a Hawaiian mission for the glory of God and mammon.

In fact, `Opukaha`ia, about fifteen years old at the time, was chosen in 1807 by the Hawaiian king, Kamehameha, to accompany his young son on board Captain Caleb Brintnall's ship bound for New York City. When Kamehameha changed his mind about sending his son to the U.S. for an education, `Opukaha`ia and Hopu chose to remain on the ship, and sailed to the Pacific Northwest to collect fur pelts from American Indians, and across the Pacific to Macao and Canton for a six-month stay. Its hold laden with cargo, the trade vessel traversed the Indian Ocean, around the Cape of Good Hope, and up the Atlantic to New York Harbor where the two Hawaiians stepped ashore in the fall of 1809.⁶

Soon thereafter, Yale students found `Opukaha`ia in front of a college building, weeping allegedly because of his thirst for knowledge and inability to enter Yale's doors. Touched by his story, Yale's students, including Edwin W. Dwight who would write `Opukaha`ia's biography, tutored him, and a visiting Samuel J. Mills, a recent graduate of Williams College, invited `Opukaha`ia to his parents' home in Torrington, Connecticut. There, Mills offered, `Opukaha`ia could continue his education. Several local families cared for the island castaway as he learned to read and write, and by 1815 he was able to translate passages from the Bible into Hawaiian.

About a year after the Foreign Mission School opened in 1816, `Opukaha`ia enrolled as a student there to work on a Hawaiian grammar, dictionary, and spelling book. Built by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in Cornwall, Connecticut, for "the education of heathen youth," the School's purpose was to train missionaries, teachers, and interpreters for labor in the fields among their people. Listed among its pupils in 1818 were six Hawaiians, two Society Islanders, two Malays, and eleven American Indians, mainly Cherokees and Choctaws, and in 1825, there were six Hawaiians, four Chinese, fourteen American Indians, a Portuguese from the Azores, and a "Jew of England."

Sadly, `Opukaha`ia died on February 17, 1818, at the age of twenty-six. His tombstone, set in the Cornwall Cemetery along Cemetery Hill Road, reads: "His arrival in this country gave rise to the Foreign mission school, of which he was a worthy member. He was once an idolater, and was designed for a Pagan Priest; but by the Grace of God and by the prayers and instructions of his pious friends, he became a Christian. He was eminent for piety and missionary Zeal. When almost prepared to return to his native Isle to preach the Gospel, God took to himself. In his last sickness, he wept and prayed for Owhyee but was submissive. He died without fear, with a heavenly smile on his countenance and glory in his soul." At his funeral, the Reverend Lyman Beecher lamented: "We thought, surely this is he who shall comfort Owhyhee.... We saw so plainly the hand of God, in bringing him hither.... His death will give notoriety to this institution [Foreign Mission School]—will awaken a tender sympathy for Owhyhee, and give it an interest in the prayers and charities of thousands who otherwise had not heard of this establishment, or been interested in its prosperity."

Still, three Hawaiians joined the first mission to the islands on October 15, 1819. Among the fifth company of missionaries were the Reverend Richard Armstrong and his wife, Clarissa Chapman, who arrived in Honolulu on May 17, 1832, after a voyage of 173 days. Decades later, on her eightieth birthday, Clarissa Chapman Armstrong would recall her early mission days in Hawai`i and the Marquesas as "a life amongst the heathens with the privilege of uplifting dark, degraded

humanity,” or the “children of nature, with no knowledge of civilization whatever and given over to animal lusts and selfish degradation.” A mature Samuel Chapman praised his mother: “It is wonderful how much you have gone through; you have taught a noble lesson to your children. You have helped me and have been in my work in a marvelous way.”⁷

Growing up in Hawai`i, young Samuel played and went to school with his fellow mission children, and he readily distinguished himself and his white friends from the “darkies” like the Hawaiians to whom his parents ministered and his family’s Chinese servant, Ah-Kam, “a typical Chinaman” with a habit for stealing, he wrote. His father, the Reverend Richard Armstrong, described the Hawaiian objects of his affection: “The females are in great need of improvement. Their habits, conversation and mode of living are filthy: They are ignorant and lazy, lack everything like modesty, and hardly know how to do anything. Of course, the mothers being such creatures, you may judge what the children are. In multitudes of cases the pigs are as well taken care of as the children and are nearly as decent and cleanly.”

Years later and laboring to uplift another dark and benighted race in the U.S. South, Samuel Chapman Armstrong would fondly recollect his mission days in Hawai`i and merge in his mind Hawaiians with African Americans and his mission with that of his parents. “Sometimes, when I stand outside a Negro church, I get precisely the effect of a Hawaiian congregation,” he mused, “the same fullness and heartiness and occasional exquisite voices, and am instantly transplanted ten thousand miles away, to the great Kawaiahaeo church where Father used to preach to 2,500 people, who swarmed in on foot and horseback, from shore, and valley and mountain, for miles around. Outside, it was like an encampment, inside it was a sea of dusky faces.”

Samuel Armstrong plunged into his life’s work, the founding of the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in 1868 under the aegis of the American Missionary Association to train “an army of black educators,” having learned the lessons of Hawai`i. “These schools over which my father as Minister of Education [of the Hawaiian kingdom] had for fifteen years a general oversight, suggested the plan of the Hampton School,” he stated. “The negro and the Polynesian have many striking similarities. Of both it is true that not mere ignorance, but deficiency of character is the chief difficulty, and that to build up character is the true objective point in education.” Further, “morality and industry generally go together. Especially in the weak tropical races, idleness, like ignorance, breeds vice.” Hampton thus sought to regiment its students twenty-four hours a day and, like soldiers, to train and discipline them in “general deportment, habits of living and of labor, [and] right ideas of life and duty,” which meant manual labor in industry and agriculture. And that brand of education, like the schooling of nonwhite youth in Hawai`i, must be a gradual evolution. “Too much is expected of mere book-knowledge; too much is expected of one generation,” Armstrong cautioned. “The real upward movement, the leveling up, not of persons but of people, will be, as in all history, almost imperceptible, to be measured only by long periods.”

So “Negro education,” an apparently simple matter of black and white, is in addition closely tied to Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and there is more. In 1878, Captain Richard Henry Pratt, an Army officer in charge of American Indian prisoners in Florida, asked if the Hampton Institute would receive seventeen of his wards. Armstrong readily agreed, noting that slavery had strengthened African Americans but the reservation system had spoiled the Indian. While the Negro knew hard labor, he declared, the Indian held it “in lofty contempt,” an

attitude fatal for their development as a people. “The Indian question will never be settled till you make the Indian blister his hands,” he wrote. “No people ever emerged from barbarism that did not emerge through labor.” Armstrong contrasted the experiences of the two races: “The severe discipline of slavery strengthened a weak race. Professed friendship for a strong one has weakened it. A cruel semblance of justice has done more harm than direct oppression could have done. The Negro is strong, the Indian weak, because the one is trained to labor and the other is not.”

Pratt, with the success of his Hampton experiment, lobbied for and received from the federal government funds to start the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania in 1879. Its purpose, he noted, was to civilize and assimilate the Indian by removing Indian children from their homes and parents and immersing them in a school and curriculum designed to transform them from savages to citizens. Like baptism, the conversion was total, from the death of the old to the rebirth of the new. As put by Pratt, “Kill the Indian and save the man.” (Similarly, in 1899 in the Philippines, in America’s “Far West,” General William R. Shafter explained the war of colonization as: “It may be necessary to kill half the Filipinos in order that the remaining half of the population may be advanced to a higher plane of life than their present semi-barbarous state affords.”) Please know that the initial Lakota children “recruited” for the Carlisle Indian School in 1879 were essentially hostages taken from recalcitrant Lakota nations by the federal government to guarantee the “good behavior” and cooperation of their parents. In addition, the U.S. imprisoned Indians, including eighteen Hopi men who were held in Alcatraz in 1895 for some eight months, for their resistance and refusal to enroll their children in Indian schools.

Like Hampton, Carlisle forced erasures of identities. Upon arrival, teachers stripped students of their clothes, bathed them, cut their hair, and issued them uniforms. They prohibited students from speaking their native tongue, wearing their native dress, and practicing native religions or traditions, including singing, praying, dancing, or creating art. They gave their students “American” names, like “Elizabeth” and “George,” and the students slept, woke, worked, played, and ate when told. Regimentation, as preached by Hampton’s Samuel Chapman Armstrong, was the practice at Carlisle Indian School.

Estelle Reel, prominent suffragist and the first woman nominated for a position high enough to require Senate confirmation, became the superintendent of Indian schools in 1898. By then, the federal government maintained hundreds of schools both on and off reservations, including the Carlisle Indian School. Determined to standardize the curricula of those schools, Reel issued her Uniform Course of Study for the Indian Schools of the United States in 1901. The text became the guide for all the Indian schools, and was even distributed to schools in the U.S. colonies of Puerto Rico and the Philippines. Reel believed that Indian children were “too dull” to excel intellectually, but were eminently fit, by racial makeup, for manual labor in the fields, farms, shops, and homes of white America. Her Uniform Course, accordingly, promoted trades training for boys and domestic education for girls, along with exercises like marching, breathing, calisthenics, and games. Indian students, Reel instructed, were to be schooled into subservience and utility.

The black/white binary, you see, is sadly inadequate to explain the complexity and fullness of the idea of “Negro education” begun at Hampton, and that spread like wildfire among black colleges generally. “Negro education” began as the civilizing ministry of New England missionaries among Hawai`i’s “savages,” was transplanted and hybridized in Virginia for

African Americans, and was refashioned for American Indians in Pennsylvania. Revealed in that archaeology is a dizzying array of places, from New England to Hawai`i to the U.S. South and to Puerto Rico and the Philippines, and peoples, whites and blacks certainly but also Hawaiians, American Indians, Puerto Ricans, and Filipinos. In addition to race, we have the instance of a white feminist engaged in racist discourse and practice. That diversity refuses the black/white binary so hegemonic in our East of California and its reductive formulation of race in the U.S., and helps to elucidate the relations between schooling and colonization, education and mis-education.

Such examples from our region East of California illustrate the openings awaiting us. There are countless such stories to empower us within and without California's orbit. The point is, centrism forming hierarchies invite opposition, including EoC, which might constitute yet another center and source of privilege. Regionalisms are human mappings of places as physical and discursive sites of difference. In the U.S., regionalism arose as a flight from modernity and its alienating and homogenizing natures. Regionalism was driven by a nostalgia for a perceived simpler past, for a genuineness set against synthetic modern life, for individualism and diversity as opposed to a unifying national culture, and for a sense of place and stability amidst dislocations and constant and rapid change.⁸ Regions, too, are historical, narrated in time and place, and as such require vigorous contestation. EoC, as an institution and discourse, is susceptible to that demand.

Having arisen from a distaste of California centrism, EoC claims differences to distinguish itself from its other. In that sense, the original influences the contours of its derivative, and hence the limits of the offspring's intervention. Other contrived spatial binaries of mutual constitution and of import to A/P/A studies includes "East" and "West" and "Atlantic and Pacific civilizations." Much has been written of Orientalism and Atlantic civilization, much less of their others.⁹ Needless to say, the "West" figures in everything Eurocentric, including its othering of its Orient, and Pacific civilization has been figured around the ocean's rim—continental America engages continental Asia—while ignoring Oceania's islands, waters, and biotic communities in their plenitude.¹⁰

Within the nation-state and fundamental to A/P/A studies is the spatial distinction, often unmarked, of urban and rural. A glaring defect in our field is the lack of attention to our intellectual genealogies, notably our debt to the Chicago school of sociology.¹¹ Influenced by Booker T. Washington and his Tuskegee Institute, both sired by Samuel Chapman Armstrong and his Hampton Institute, Robert Park was a key figure in the founding of Chicago sociology, which seized upon urbanization, immigration, assimilation, and race relations as the "problems" that beset early twentieth-century America and as distinguishing features of U.S. sociology as opposed to its European counterpart. Park and his colleagues and their students, notably African and Asian-Americans, studied the "Negro problem" and the "Oriental problem," the former primarily consigned to northern cities and the latter, to the Pacific coast. Chicago sociology gave to A/P/A studies, among other things, the race relations cycle by which immigrants become American, paradigmatic social organizations set in cities such as Chinatowns, and an ethnic and regional identification of the Oriental with Chinese and Japanese along the West Coast.

I once wrote of the "tyranny of the city" in a critique of that hegemony in A/P/A studies, and reported on a growing body of work in rural settings. My paper, "Fallow Field: The Rural Dimension of Asian American Studies," was presented at the 1988 AAAS annual meeting, which featured a number of other papers on that "frontier" and spatial dimension. The rural, those

scholars noted, presented a different portrait of Asian/Pacific America, away from the "deviance" of urban, bachelor societies to the more frequent cross-cultural encounters involving solidarities and conflicts because of the distribution of peoples and the diverse makeup of the labor force.¹² Pan-Asian ethnicity and class alliances were opportunities presented in agriculture, such as the Japanese Mexican Labor Association formed in 1903, and other rural studies on coastal fishing and shrimping villages and interior railroad, lumber, and mining camps will reveal new formations that transgress the borders of knowledge production. I am thinking of Moon-Ho Jung's award-winning book on Chinese and African Americans in the postbellum, rural South and Lisa Yun's recently published, transdisciplinary study of Cuba's Chinese coolies, both of which straddle Asian and African-American studies, area studies, labor history, and diasporic studies.¹³ Also, Manu Mathew Vimalassery's work on American Indian and Chinese American engagements on the Great Plains along the tracks of the transcontinental railroad performs a similar border crossing of several fields of study.

EoC, accordingly, as a formation and discourse will eventually expire as a site of critical resistance to some of the dominant centrism and hierarchies in A/P/A, ethnic, and American studies. Regions, like all mappings, are creations and they clarify as well as obscure. And while time was "richness, fecundity, life, dialectic," Michel Foucault recounted, space was "the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile." And yet, he noted, knowledge and hence power was best understood spatially. "Once knowledge can be analysed in terms of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transposition," he concluded, "one is able to capture the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power."¹⁴ And if power is the main subject matter of A/P/A studies and indeed of ethnic studies, then East of California, as a spatial turn in the field, is a precocious agent by which to understand our present predicament and to plot the means for our liberation.

Endnotes

1. Shirley Hune. "Hunter College." In *East of California: New Perspectives in Asian American Studies*, Cornell Asian American Studies Monograph Series, No. 2, edited by Gary Y. Okihiro and Lee C. Lee (Ithaca: Cornell Asian American Studies Program, 1992), 82.
2. Ronald Takaki. *Strangers from a Different Shore: A History of Asian Americans* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1989), 80.
3. See Stephen H. Sumida, "East of California: Points of Origin in Asian American Studies," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 1:1 (February 1998): 85-86, 98 fn. 7.
4. Peter Nien-chu Kiang. "The New Wave: Developing Asian American Studies on the East Coast." In *Reflections on Shattered Windows: Promises and Prospects for Asian American Studies*, edited by Gary Y. Okihiro et al. (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1988), 43-50.
5. Consult the annual survey of Asian American Studies programs compiled at Cornell in its Association for Asian American Studies website.
6. This account of `Opukaha`ia's life and death and the Foreign Mission School is taken from my *Island World: A History of Hawai`i and the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 73, 75-80, 82-87.
7. This account of Samuel Chapman Armstrong is from my *Island World*, 98-134.
8. See e.g., Merrill Jensen (ed.), *Regionalism in America* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1951); Robert L. Dorman, *Revolt in the Provinces: The Regionalist Movement in America, 1920-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); and Edward L. Ayers et al. (eds.), *All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

9. On Orientalism, see the foundational Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House, 1978); on Atlantic and Pacific civilizations, see my “Toward a Pacific Civilization,” in *Transcultural Localisms: Responding to Ethnicity in a Globalized World*, edited by Yiorgos Kalogeras, Eleftheria Arapoglou, and Linda Manney (Heidelberg, Germany: Universitätsverlag Winter GmbH Heidelberg, 2006), 15-25.
10. See, in that regard, Epeli Hau’ofa, “Our Sea of Islands,” *Contemporary Pacific* 6:1 (1994): 49-60; and Eric Waddell, Vijay Naidu, and Epeli Hau’ofa (eds.), *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands* (Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific, 1993).
11. Henry Yu’s *Thinking Orientals: Migration, Contact, and Exoticism in Modern America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) is a major contribution toward that reassessment.
12. See Gail M. Nomura et al. (eds.), *Frontiers of Asian American Studies: Writing, Research, and Commentary* (Pullman: Washington State University Press, 1989).
13. Moon-Ho Jung, *Coolies and Cane: Race, Labor, and Sugar in the Age of Emancipation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); and Lisa Yun, *The Coolie Speaks: Chinese Indentured Laborers and African Slaves in Cuba* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008).
14. Michel Foucault. “Questions on Geography.” In *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, edited by Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 69, 70.

Poon, Ph.D. Candidate in Education at UCLA—centered upon how program administrators can work with students in order to build and/or expand Asian-American Studies programs. Much of our discussion revolved around the activist histories of these programs where, as in the case of UConn, local bias crimes have catalyzed the community to take action and demand representation in the campus culture and the university curriculum. Tragedy, here, does appear to also have brought a sense of clarity to campus administrators who may have regarded their Asian-American constituencies as fully incorporated into campus culture, or who may not even have seen them at all.

To give some background on how the Hunter students and I arrived at this roundtable event: the City University of New York serves almost 40,000 Asian-American students, nearly 5,000 of whom are located on the Hunter campus, where Asian and Asian-American students make up approximately 25 percent of the student body. Founded in 1993, the Asian American Studies Program (AASP) has served the Hunter College community by offering courses on the history and experiences of Asians in the U.S. Our courses meet the university’s Pluralism and Diversity general education requirement, and in addition, the program offers a 12-credit minor in Asian American Studies. Despite its multiple functions, the AASP has since its founding had a somewhat strained relationship with the College administration, where faculty and students have continuously had to argue for its relevance; consequently, the program has had an unstable trajectory, depending largely on the level of agitation among students and faculty and resultant support from the administration.

In 2006, with no programmatic funding whatsoever and staffed exclusively by adjunct faculty, the AASP was stagnant: there was no program leadership, courses were recycled according to a predictable and deadening annual schedule, and students were frustrated by a lack of updated course offerings and co-curricular programs. Inspired by the San Francisco State student strike of ’68 and ’69—as well as the CUNY protests in ’75, ’89, and ’91—a group of students came together and formed CRAASH (the Coalition for the Revitalization of Asian American Studies at Hunter). This group took the lead in bringing attention to the sorry state of the AASP and advocating for its revitalization. Through petitioning, letter-writing campaigns, media outreach, and political pressure, CRAASH compelled the Hunter administration to turn its attention to Asian American Studies and students. As a direct consequence of their efforts, the AASP today has an acting director, a small budget to support our day-to-day operations, as well as some monies to fund speakers for co-curricular programs. The majority of our faculty, however, are highly dedicated and knowledgeable, but sorely underpaid contingent laborers.

The students with whom I attended the conference—Emil Marquita, Jacqueline Fernandez, and Zabrina Collazo—are all part of the core group of CRAASH students who have advocated for the AASP since 2006. Our ability to receive funding to attend the conference is in some ways an indicator that things are changing for the AASP, in so far as I, as a program administrator, am able to apply for such funding. At the same time, the program’s relevance seems to fall somewhere between fulfilling general education requirements and co-curricular enrichment, where the academic relevance of Asian-American identity, history, and experience is secondary to inquiries about study abroad programs to China and campus programs about “Indian dance.” Faculty and students repeatedly have to insist upon the distinction between the cultural and the academic, and these efforts are central to the program’s ongoing struggle to be considered a relevant part of the academic curriculum that grounds students’ liberal arts education at Hunter. Although

Closing Keynote Address

Nitasha Sharma

Northwestern University

The Closing Keynote Address was given by Nitasha Sharma, assistant professor in African American Studies and Asian American Studies, Northwestern University. *Claiming Space, Making Race: Second Generation South Asian American Hip Hop Artists* (Duke UP, forthcoming), Dr. Sharma’s ethnographic study of South Asian American hip hop artists analyzes their use of black popular culture to create and express alliances. She examines Black and South Asian race relations in order to document how immigrants insert themselves into existing racial hierarchies and, in the process, develop new discourses of “race.” Dr. Sharma received her Ph.D. from the University of California–Santa Barbara in 2004.

OTHER REPORTS

On Asian American Studies Program Today at Hunter College

Jennifer Hayashida

Acting Director, Hunter College Asian American Studies Program (AASP)

Thanks to a Presidential Initiatives grant, three Hunter students and I were able to attend this year’s EoC conference, where we on Saturday participated in a lunchtime roundtable discussion on academic/student affairs, moderated by **Angela Rola**, director of the Asian American Cultural Center at UConn. Our discussion—together with Roger Buckley, former director of the Asian American Cultural Center at UConn, and Oiyun

it is one of the most ethnically diverse institutions of higher education in the United States, Hunter College is also haunted by the specter of the fiscal crisis of the '70s and is moving towards an increasingly corporatized vision of public higher education in the city.

Participating in events such as the EoC panel is an important part of what sustains our work, since these conversations allow us to locate the AASPs situation in a larger historical framework and to at the same time draw upon other students' and administrators' past and ongoing struggles for a place at the table. One of our lingering questions, however, concerns the paradox of a program like ours, where "pluralism" and "diversity" requirements ensure a continuous stream of students who pass through our classes, but where the utility of an undergraduate degree is located in a professional future outlined by the lingering aura of the American Dream. Although CUNY is a site that is rich with activist histories and movements for social justice for students of color, women, and working class students, this history is a tough sell to many first generation Asian immigrant students whose lives demand attention to classroom survival and professional outcomes—pragmatic material concerns which can eclipse broader questions of social justice, even though the two are, in fact, inextricable. I should stress, however, that the presupposition here is not that first generation Asian immigrants enter the U.S. out of a political vacuum or as political naifs, or that capitalist materialism is their sole driving force: such assumptions do nothing but nourish stubborn myths regarding apolitical and self-interested Asian-Americans. However, from speaking with students and looking at some of the data on employment, education, and family life of New York City immigrant youth and college students, it seems safe to say that the challenges of acculturation and economic survival alone place students in positions where extracurricular activities frequently are a luxury; if an option at all, they are focused on future employment opportunities, not counter-institutional agitation. These systemic challenges become the crux of AASP faculty members' work in and outside of the classroom, where our commitment to linking students' lives to course materials and topics is fundamental to the program's evolution, yet the institutional framework situates our pedagogy (and program) as secondary to the more hegemonic discursive structures of traditional departments which offer a (utilitarian) major to our (auxiliary) minor. In some ways, San Francisco State College of 1968 seems more proximate than one would like to think, while the social, political, and economic landscape has shifted.

From talking to Jackie, Emil, and Zabrina after the EoC event, my sense is that we are all frustrated by the very common piece of advice that we need to organize around the activist histories and institutional memories of Asian American Studies and CUNY in order to "force" the administration to see the relevance of Asian American studies. This perception contains a great deal of truth—indeed, students and faculty have sought inspiration from and utilized strategies of earlier activist movements within CUNY and beyond—but the Hunter student body (a primarily commuter school where approximately 70 percent of the students self-identify as immigrants) as well as the economic climate (requires no explanation) places us at a challenging impasse: between first generation immigrant realities and a seemingly successfully "multicultural" campus landscape, how do we rally and sustain student commitment in order to "force" the administration to become alert to our presence and our urgent need for support? Thus far, faculty and students have in tandem attempted to utilize alternately activist and administrative/bureaucratic strategies, and although slow-moving and now increasingly hampered by a hostile economic climate, the program is in a more secure place. Ongoing efforts to reach out to other CUNY campuses,

community organizations, the CUNY Board of Trustees, and local policy makers have borne some fruit. At the same time, we are not yet at a point where our campus presence is seen as central to the academic fundament of the institution, and as we near the second decade of the twenty-first century, this institutional failure to take the lead and respond to reinvigorated public discussions around shifting color lines in our society is nothing short of negligent.

Judging from the EoC roundtable, there is renewed activity among Asian-American students, faculty, and administrators up and down the eastern seaboard, and my hope is that a recharged national conversation around race can serve as a locus of mobilization for Asian American Studies movements: the central originary axis of Asian American Studies will always be community activism and social justice, but as the students and I drove back to New York, we continuously returned to the question of how to organize across the shifting fault lines of neoliberal academic agendas, late capitalism, post-65 multicultural discourse, as well as the very palpable climate of economic scarcity. These issues are all rallying points that can be repurposed for unifying ends. The EoC roundtable reminded us of the need to reckon with this question of how to effectively draw upon the rich histories of the field of Asian American studies, while at the same time reformulating our strategies to the particulars of both our situation at Hunter as well as shifts in the sociopolitical and economic landscapes of our country. This work is ongoing, with occasional successes and just as many failures—and the work is persistent, nurtured and sustained by these important conversations for its intellectual and political vigor.

In Search of Yung Wing's Heir: The Chinese Educational Mission of Chu Ching-ning, 1918-1951

Patricia Chu

Associate Professor of English, George Washington University

Yung Wing, the first Chinese to graduate from an American university, published his autobiography, *My Life in China and America, in 1909* (New York: Henry Holt and Company). As the forefather of all Chinese scholars in the U.S. and one of the two first Chinese to publish a book-length autobiography in English, Mr. Yung occupies an established place in Chinese American cultural history, but his book has been studied primarily as a historical artifact by scholars of Chinese-American cultural exchange rather than as a cornerstone of the Asian-American canon. (The latter place is more commonly accorded to the collected stories, essays, and journalism of Yung's Chinese Canadian contemporary, Edith Maude Eaton (a.k.a. Sui Sin Far).) This essay argues that Yung's book deserves greater prominence because of the intrinsic interest of its subject matter and because of the importance and interest of the subsequent generations of Chinese who studied in the U.S. and then returned to serve China or migrated to the U.S., and thereby altered the course of Sino-American relations. However, due to the marginalization of Asian-Americans in Chinese area and literary studies, and of Chinese scholars in Asian-American studies, Yung Wing and the stories of educated Chinese have been treated as marginal figures in both fields. This paper seeks to question that position by reviewing Yung Wing's life and literary status, the enormous diplomatic impact of the students he had trained in the U.S., and the story of Chu Ching-ning, a scholar of the Chinese Republican era who

sought to continue Yung's work as a modernizer and reformer of Chinese education.

Yung Wing (1828-1912) was born to a Chinese family on San Pedro island, near the Portuguese colony of Macao, learned English at missionary schools in China and Hong Kong, and volunteered at age 18 to return with the Rev. Samuel Brown, his missionary mentor, to study in America. After eight years, during which he earned a B.A. from Yale and became a naturalized U.S. citizen, apparently without giving up his Chinese citizenship, he returned to China where, after holding various jobs, he became an official in the Qing dynasty. In his first successful mission, he ordered and shipped from an American manufacturer the necessary machinery to start a machine shop in China which became the basis of a famous arsenal and engineering school. He was also nominated as one of China's first Ministers to the U.S., a job which he turned down, and asked to investigate the coolie trade to Peru, an assignment which he used to stop that trade. However, Wing's most important contribution to China, and to Sino-American relations, was his creation of the Chinese Educational Mission (C.E.M.) to educate 120 Chinese youths in America, with headquarters in Hartford, Connecticut. The youths remained in the U.S. from 1872 through 1881, when they were recalled due to lack of support by conservatives in the Chinese government. In the wake of the coup d'état of 1898, Yung fled from capital punishment in China and returned to the U.S. (despite having been stripped of U.S. citizenship by changes in naturalization law), where he had married a white American woman and established a family, and he lived in retirement until his death in 1912.

Yung's proteges, the 100 students still enrolled in the C.E.M. when recalled in 1882, began their Chinese careers handicapped by the interruption of their American educations, the withdrawal of support by Qing officials, and their status as foreign outsiders to the Qing bureaucracy, but by the end of the century they had risen through the ranks and made substantial contributions to China in its navy, railroad, telegraph, mining, and diplomatic services, as documented by Thomas E. LaFargue (*China's First Hundred: Educational Mission Students in the United States: 1872-1881*, Pullman, Washington: Washington State UP, 1987). One of them, Yen Phou Lee, settled in America and published the first Chinese American autobiography in English, *When I Was a Boy in China* (Boston: D. Lothrop, 1887). Most notably, as T. K. Chu and Hu Shih have noted, the diplomat and C.E.M. alumnus Liang Tung-yen was instrumental in securing the partial return of the Boxer Indemnity funds from the U.S. to China, and having these funds dedicated to supporting the education of Chinese students and scholars. According to Chu, it was Liang who proposed in the course of negotiations that the funds being returned be devoted for this purpose, and for the purpose of opening a school in Beijing for the preparation of students to study in America. The resulting academy later became the distinguished Qinghua University. The Boxer Indemnity Fund of 12 million U.S. dollars was approved by Congress in 1908, and in 1909, the year Yung published his autobiography, an office was set up in Washington, DC, for administration of this fund. It, too, was called the "Chinese Educational Mission," in honor of the first C.E.M., and it was established by Yung Kwai, a nephew of Yung's who had come in the 1873 group to study in America. From 1909 through 1925, some 1,031 students came to study in America, but Hu Shih estimates that over 20,600 Chinese studied in American institutions in the years from 1854-1954, with 10 percent funded or aided by the new C.E.M. scholarships. Thus, T. K. Chu argues, Yung Wing, along with the diplomat Anson Burlingame, is one of two figures who were instrumental in directing China's interest in the West primarily towards America, despite the strong influences of the British in nineteenth-century China.

I have used Yung's 1909 autobiography to represent his career as a Qing reformer and the founder of what T.K. Chu calls "China's first study abroad program," an official career which ended with the coup of 1989, and Yen Phou Lee and the chroniclers of the C.E.M. to speak for the careers of the first C.E.M. students, whose careers as modernizers coincided with, and were hampered by, the rise of anti-Chinese feeling and exclusion in America and the decline and fall, in 1911, of the Qing dynasty. If we think of the Republican period of 1911-1949 in China as a third period in which Chinese students were once again sent to America to study, we find that Asian-American literary scholars have framed Chinese American literary production in this period in terms of a model of literary development within America rather than thinking in terms of Chinese educational, literary, or historical narratives set in Republican China. The remainder of this paper recounts the story of Chu Ching-nung, a Chinese scholar who studied briefly in the U.S. and returned to China with the aim of reforming Chinese education. In doing so, I ask how this transpacific life story, which anticipates the stories of other cosmopolitan writers, challenges Asian-American scholars to reframe our readings of Chinese American texts.

Chu Ching-nung (1887-1951, a.k.a. Zhu Jingnong and King Chu) studied briefly in Japan before beginning a career in education and political journalism in China. In 1915 politics drove Chu, who had narrowly evaded political arrest, to flee to Washington, DC, where he worked part-time at the Chinese Embassy while studying at George Washington University from 1915-1920. Having obtained his B.A. and M.A. in 1919, he enrolled briefly at Teachers' College, Columbia University, before returning to Beijing to teach at Beida University in 1921. (In 1919, a sensational triple murder at the new C.E.M. in Washington illustrated the close ties between the Chinese students at GW and the C.E.M., for two of the victims were GW students.) Back in China, Chu worked as an editor and publisher of new curricula, texts, and teacher's manuals at the Commercial Press; as a teacher and administrator at numerous institutions; as the Commissioner of Education in Hunan province; and as Chiang Kai-shek's Vice Minister of Education. In all these capacities, and in his numerous publications, he sought to improve and modernize Chinese education without thoughtlessly replicating American cultural assumptions and practices. Education throughout this period was deeply politicized, and, in 1945, when the Japanese invaders withdrew and civil war broke out, Chu was tapped to restore order at Lianda University, a prestigious wartime university where scholarly protests had erupted into violence. As soon as these issues were resolved in the spring of 1946, Chu made applications to U.S. institutions on behalf of his eldest son, Chu Wen Djang, a published historian who sought to complete his interrupted education by obtaining a Ph.D. in America. The younger Chu's success in securing a place at the University of Washington may be read not only as a sign of the father's high official status and the son's scholarly promise, but also as a sign of the U.S. government's eagerness, at a time when China's future was unclear, to reestablish the scholarly exchanges that had been promoted by the first and second Chinese Educational Missions. In this sense, the numerous scholarships allotted to Chinese and other foreign students by the State Department, one of which enabled my father, Chu Wen Djang, to migrate and eventually to settle in America, were the fruits of Yung Wing's C.E.M., the Boxer Indemnity, and Chu Ching-nung's own efforts to create a Chinese educational system informed by what he had learned and experienced in America. In this sense, Yung Wing is the forefather of all Chinese scholars in the U.S. and their descendants.

In 1949, when the Nationalist government fell in China, Chu Ching-nung was in America, visiting his son. Instead of returning to China, he secured a lectureship at the Hartford Seminary Foundation. In 1951, he died and, like Yung Wing, was buried in Hartford Connecticut.

Still, Only On Paper, or Not On Paper: The Artefactuality of Asian American Ontology Allegorized in the “Paper Sons”

Kyoo Lee

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY

Asian: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including [...] (emphasis added)

– U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

All look, but may not be, the same: that, still, appears to be the name of the game.

Hardly alarming is that slice of a certain reality: still, albeit implicitly, Asian Pacific Americans are seen as domestic aliens, queer and shifty. Still felt visceral, and real to that extent, to those seen as part of “the Yellow Peril” is such an onto-narratological sense of alienation: of being made in the USA and made alien from and to the narrative domination of Anglo-European America. For white America, the developed “Western” country that seeks to enlighten folks in and from the dark corners of underdeveloped or developing ones, persists to this day in forging ahead or else smuggling back the nativist line of Europeanizing America itself whose compositionality is, however, dynamic to the point of being constantly self-disruptive on multiple levels, epistemological, ontological, sociopolitical, economical, etc.

All that being yesterday’s news perhaps, especially given the on-going coloring and reformatting of the face of America, I am still riveted by that enduring cliché, the “perpetual foreigner,” the perceived, irreducible otherness of the U.S. population of Asian descent. Here, I find myself captured as well as captivated by a certain rigid, geohistorical materiality indexically ontologized in that ghostly, paradoxical figure: the “originally” “Asian” face that is at once hyper-visible and hyper-invisible in the psycho-political imaginary of the nation.

I set out to explore that sociopolitical conundrum by opening a cabinet of juridico-historiographical curiosities, taking it as an allegorical window into the temporal duality of American and especially Asian-American (dis)identities: the “paper sons” of U.S. citizens of Chinese descent. The “Gai Chees” were detained and interrogated at the Immigration Station on the Angel Island from 1906 and 1943: shortly after 1906, the year marked by the San Francisco earthquake that caused the loss of the public records, and until 1943, the year marked by the Magnuson Act that repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 that is the nation’s very first law to ban immigration explicitly on the basis of ethnonational origin. The subsequent, textual fabrication of genealogical authenticity and thus political legitimacy, by the incoming Chinese applicants who utilized the ghettoized legal resources, is primarily a strategic move, a survival tactic; the desperate migrant workers just “figuring out” ways to bypass the federal Act of ethn racial discrimination. Yet, the politico-historical resonances and futural significances of this dark period of textual sufferings, trials, and negotiations in the history of Asian-American immigration, and especially Chinese American, remain deeper than what we would learn

from a pragmatist or historicist reading of the artefactual textuality of their (mis)fortunes and fate. For to begin with: The Immigration Station on Angel Island is a citational Casino where the name of the game, for the detainees, is to gamble on the very possibility of surviving an alternative timeline of the past that would create time itself anew, a time for the “American dream.” The Island, thus approached, is a black box of intertextual America, ready to unfold in front of the “Western Gate” of the Golden Mountain.

Perhaps then, this is a real political paradox found “only in America,” as mirrored in the artefactuality of her political ontology: one’s identity is founded only on paper, and yet not found on paper. That seems truthful not only on paper but also in reality, as allegorized by countless “Paper Sons” whose legacy forms a bone of Asian America still in the making.

EASTERN DIVISION MEETING OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION, DECEMBER 29, 2008, PHILADELPHIA, PA

Group Panel for the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy

Liberating Traditions: Feminist Comparative Philosophy

Chair & Commentator & Report by Ashby Butnor

Metropolitan State College of Denver

One way this Committee is extending its invitation to diversity is through an engagement with feminism. “Feminist comparative philosophy” is one name that has been used to capture the exciting dialogue that is emerging between Asian philosophies and feminist philosophy of all stripes. Feminist comparative philosophy can be described as the practice of integrating feminist and non-Western philosophical traditions in an innovative way, while still being mindful of the unique particularity of each, in order to envision and enact a more liberatory world. East-West comparative philosophy and feminist philosophy already share much in terms of methodology: a hermeneutic of openness and respect for difference, a crossing of philosophical boundaries and traditions, a rejection of the dichotomy of theory and practice, and the pursuit of new ways of looking at the world.

This rather new philosophical program is gaining support through a number of different philosophical associations. Below, you will find the commentary from a group panel of the Society for Asian and Comparative Philosophy at the 2008 Eastern Division APA. As was noted, this Committee sponsored a panel at the 2009 Central Division APA entitled “Asian Philosophy and Feminism,” organized by Amy Olberding. In addition, the Association of Feminist Ethics and Social Theory is hosting a panel at their annual meeting in September 2009 focusing on feminist comparative ethics.

Hsiao-Lan Hu, University of Detroit Mercy

In her paper, “Kamma, No-Self, and Social Construction: The Middle Path between Determinism and Indeterminism,” Hu

provides an interpretation of the classical Buddhist notion of kamma that is compatible with the postmodern feminist project of self and social transformation. In both traditions, one central task is to recognize and address our unconscious, sedimented performances (including our habitual patterns of perception and action) that promote harm, suffering, and oppressive norms and customs. To answer the objection that both kamma and socially constructed selves are overly determined and incapable of free will and moral agency, Hu points out that it is precisely the fluidity and openness of these understandings of self (anatman and social construction) that allow for the possibility that our volitional actions can actually make a difference in creating better selves and better worlds. However, these understandings of self, including the notion of kamma, also remind us that we are constrained in particular ways—by our past, current capacities, social conditioning, etc. This conditioning, however, is of our own making (at least in part), especially when we remain complicit in its maintenance. Therefore, Hu argues that we all have a shared responsibility for the evolution and transformation of our shared rupa—in the expanded sense of our embeddedness in our particular social, cultural, and political worlds. Thus, in regard to specifically oppressive gendered practices, it is necessary to recognize both (1) their formation as part of a history of sedimented performances (a collective karmic creation) and importantly (2) our capacity to undo, or at least reconfigure, these norms and conventions. In both traditions, this moral responsibility is paramount.

Discussion Questions:

Your analysis of the social dimensions of kamma is very exciting and important for a rich understanding of early Buddhist philosophy and practice. However, in what way is a feminist (or a political) analysis necessary here? Can Buddhism reach these conclusions on its own? Do Buddhism and feminism need one another to make the connection between the self and the social?

Kyoo Lee, John Jay College

In her paper, “On the Transformative Potential of the Dark Female Animal in the Daodejing,” Kyoo Lee performs a deconstructive analysis of various interpretations and standardized understandings of “the female” (xuan-pin, “dark female animal,” dark womb) in the Daodejing as well as a reconstructive rendering of the latent potentials of this concept (especially in its sexuated nature). Lee notes the inconsistencies and contradictions or, at least, confusion of various attempts to describe the female. The first tension exists in the female’s dual state of transcendence and immanence—i.e., on the one hand, the female Dao is mysterious, profound, subtle, and mystical and, on the other, dark, animal, and bestial. So, at the same time, it is both ineffable and wondrous and primal, embodied, and reduced to sexual function and fertility. A second tension is seen in interpretations of the Daoist female (and feminine) as complementary to the Daoist male (and masculine), as in the relationship of yin-yang. The problem with a mere complementarity of these notions is the fact that the female both serves the role as complement to the male and always already as source, originator, and cosmic universal. Thus, the female is always subverting the co-extensiveness of male-female despite our attempts at this compulsory pairing. Finally, the third tension lies in both the utilization and appropriation of the female in Daoist interpretations while continuing downplaying its importance. The question that arises from these various tensions is therefore: “How or what to do with the sex or sexed signs of the metaphysical Dao?” How do we understand the “dark female animal” of the Daodejing and her role in the dynamism of evolving, subverting, fluid, and constant creation?

Discussion Questions:

Are these tensions resolvable? I know one of your goals is to recapture and reinvigorate the materiality of the female. How does that work with the more transcendent and ethereal notions of the female you’ve discussed?

Keya Maitra, University of North Carolina–Asheville

In “Mindfulness, Anatman, and the Possibility of a Feminist Self-Consciousness,” Keya Maitra discusses the importance of mindfulness (as developed in the Buddhist tradition) to the formation and development of a specifically feminist self-consciousness. The purpose of this self-consciousness is a thoroughgoing reflective analysis of one’s particular positioning in the social-political matrix so as to be well-informed and prepared to effect liberatory change for oneself and others. Maitra finds problems with the notions of feminist consciousness (such as those found in consciousness raising movements) for their focus on generalized “women’s experience” without due attention to the particularized and individualized nature of specific women’s experience and identity. Given that it is the specificity of one’s own experience that spurs feminist activism and serves as the catalyst for social transformation, something more is needed here. With feminist self-consciousness, Maitra is careful to avoid the opposing problem to female essentialism or universalism—i.e., the problem of radical difference. Maitra attempts to carve the middle way between these two problematic locations of feminist consciousness with the notion of gendered identity as positionality. To bolster the value of this understanding of gendered identity, Maitra introduces the practice of mindful attention—common to Buddhism but also found in various religious, spiritual, and contemplative traditions. With the assistance of mindfulness, one can attain a sensitivity to one’s own subjectivity as well as a clearer insight into the constitutive factors of one’s specific social positionality. This form of mindfulness is necessary for locating personal and social obstacles (our individual and collective dukkha) as well as identifying various pathways to some sort of shared flourishing.

Discussion Questions:

You discuss the notion of “habit-change” as essential to the self-centering aspect of self-consciousness. Can you elaborate on how you use this term—both in its relation to Buddhism and in the work you see it doing? Also, please explain how self-centering works here, especially considering that Buddhism may be more interested in self de-centering.

A MELLON PROJECT, 2009-2010

From Paper Sons to Asian Babies: Echoes of Familial Alterity from the Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882-1943

Kyoo Lee
John Jay College

I work in various intersections of ideas, traditions, and voices in the theoretical Humanities: aesthetics, comparative philosophy/literature, Continental philosophy, cultural studies, early modern European philosophy, feminism, literary criticism, minoritarian literature, rhetoric, and translation. So, quite naturally, the key ideas behind the Mellon project, “From Paper Sons to Asian Babies,” have multiple origins.

Here, I would like to note a series of specifically Asian-Americanist contexts in the last academic year, when the kernel of ideas, formed a few years ago when I chanced upon a documentary on the “Paper Sons,” became concretized into a project: joining the APA Committee on the Status of Asian & Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies; attending the conference on “Future Asian Americas: A Symposium on Asian American Studies,” Fordham University, Summer 2008; presenting a draft of the paper at the East of California Conference, University of Connecticut, Fall 2008; presenting a draft of the paper at The California Roundtable on Race and Philosophy, University of Berkeley, Fall 2008; attending the session at the APA Eastern Division Conference, Winter 2008; attending the session at the APA Central Division Meeting, Spring 2009. Conversations with fellow Asian-American thinkers and writers, as well as collegial and mentorship help from them, have been vital. Below is a description of the project, which forms part of a larger monograph project provisionally titled, *Familial Alterities: American Fables*.

This project draws attention to alterity at the moment of familial formation, taking it as a corrective index to sociopolitical

justice especially in and for the “American” family which, I highlight, is ontologically compositional, a constitutional microcosm. To illustrate this point, I bring to the fore, out of relative obscurity and marginality, two examples and draw thematic parallels between them, focusing on how ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and nationality intersect to reflect and impact the evolving concepts of the family: the early twentieth-century Chinese “Paper Sons” from the era of the Chinese Exclusion Act, and the early twenty-first-century Asian babies adopted into American families.

Resituating in global and transhistorical perspectives those once detained and interrogated in the Angel Island on suspicion of ID fraud, I show that this “minor” irony of familial-ethnic alterity and identity anxiety, on closer inspection, provides a magic mirror into the current debates in the U.S. on familial-national identity/security vs. transformation/hospitality, as relates to issues of global ethics, justice, and economy, ranging from what to do with terrorist suspects or cheap foreign nannies lodged at the heart of American families, to how to understand the now trendy legal incorporation, familial welcoming, of Asiatic babies into typically non-traditional households.