SURVIVING CHINA'S REJUVENATION—
GLOBAL HAN SUPREMACY, SINOPHOBIA + THE THEFT OF ASIAN AMERICA IN EDUCATION

By

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ABSTRACT

Chinese identity is perceived by education researchers is a confluence of deliberations on questions such as who is Chinese, how they are Chinese, how they come to identify as Chinese, and who gets to say who is and is not Chinese. This dissertation's task is not to define Chinese identities or Chineseness but to unpack multiple discourses that shape Chineseness and their impacts the decisions that governments, social movements, and schools make to (re)present Chineseness and Asianness. Multiple contestations across space and time sought to stabilize or institutionalize Chinese identities into a single idea, nation-states, such as the People's Republic of China and the United States of America, assert political, social, and cultural power. As well, individuals work to resist these state discourses to further shape their own and communities' understandings of Chinese identity. To analyze the global movements and circulations of Chinese*ness* across contexts, I use Asian Critical Race Theory (AsianCrit) and decolonial theory across four articles to center how Chinese*ness* moves through the power structures (white supremacy, Han supremacy, [settler] coloniality, and anti-Blackness) operating on its (re)production(s). In this dissertation, I argue for the concept of Han Supremacy to understand the global and cross-temporal movements of state discourses of Chineseness that shape the lived experiences of Asian Pacific Islander Desi American and Asian (APIDA/A) people and those identifying with Asian diasporic communities cross multiple curricular sites.

In the first article, I conceptually disentangle the overlapping and entangled boundaries between Han, "Yellow," Chinese, Asian, and People's Republic of China identities. I historicized the fluid boundaries and institutionalization of ethnic Han norms, ontologies, and logics that became subsumed into Chinese identity. I then show how nation-states operationalize the Han

identity into a form of supremacy that coexists with other supremacist ideologies and its implications on how diasporic communities (re)create Chinese identity. In the second article, I use critical race archival analysis and rememory to show the movements of Chinese identities across nation-state contexts by introducing an analytic possibility of a *nomencurriculum*, or curriculum of names. Within this framework, names are curricular touchstones by which nation-states can bind and (b)order individuals within a paradigm of white supremacy and empire. I do so by analyzing my own adoption paperwork and namings as an assemblage of ideologies, using critical race archival methods and AsianCrit counterstorytelling.

The third article uses critical discourse analysis and critical race archival analysis to analyze the U.S. military's training curriculum for soldiers during World War II. I analyze Educational Manual No. 42 (1944) *Our Chinese Ally* to show how the U.S. government mobilized a selective and stereotypical narrative about China to affirm its imperialist ambitions and show the document's racialized reverberations across time. Finally, in the fourth article, I use critical textual analysis to call for teacher resistances to these state discourses. Through a critical ideological textual analysis of Gene Luen Yang's (2006) *American Born Chinese,* I show the ways teachers can engage in self-work to disrupt anti-APIDA/A racialized and xenophobic stereotypes for students.

By adapting my methodologies and tuning my application of these two bodies of theory throughout these chapters, I show the contours and facets of Chinese identities as they are institutionalized and resisted. Across these chapters, I argue that repairing these histories means critically examining the ways Chinese identities respond and bend to Han supremacy, Sinophobia, and Sinocentrism across curricular contexts.

To my friends. For a future of liberated lands where the rivers, seas, straights and uplands are as one with mountain, wind and cloud— free. All under heaven is for all. 天下為公.

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"Creepin' in" — Norah Jones & Dolly Parton

"Phir Se Ud Chala" — Mohit Chauhan

"Ue o Muite Arukō" — Kyu Sakamoto

“Jesus, etc.” — Wilco

“Thinking of a Place” — The War on Drugs

“Fast Car” — Tracy Chapman

“You So (Youth Soul)” — I Mean Us

“Joe Metro” — Blue Scholars

“Lost” — Maroon 5

“everything i wanted” — Billie Eilish

“Way it goes” — Hippo Campus

“Le Feu” — Kendji Girac & Vianney

“This must be the place (Naïve Melody)” — Talking Heads

“ALIVE” — ClariS

“Dream Glow” — BTS & Charli XCX

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PREFACE

Did somebody order Chinese? 你吃了嗎 (*nǐ chī le ma*, have you eaten)? Have you eaten at a Chinese restaurant? Can you describe your experience there? What was it like? What did you have? Did you like what you had? What was your fortune, or did you get an orange slice (sorry)? Did you know that you can ask for more tea by flipping the lid on the teapot? Did you get glared at because you failed to read the tiny handwritten sign that says "cash only" (who carries cash anymore, anyway?)? Bonus points if you are eating some sort of Asian or Asian American food as you read this. I will take it as a great honor to have some grease or sauce spilled on this or any subsequent page of this manuscript.

Ok, but for real, what *makes* that restaurant Chinese? And, how many assumptions did I just catch you making? Before you keep reading, can you actually answer that question for yourself? Did you just realize that you told your friends once that you wanted to go out for Chinese and then got pad see ew, korma, or bibimbap (aka #WrongAsian)? Worry not, your secret is safe with me. One more question for you: how do you know that, like the restaurant, a person is Chinese? And, who says?

I ask these questions a lot when I teach or give a talk, I notice that people usually first give me this look that seems to tell me at least someone in the audience has never thought about this before. Then, I see people look around at each other as if to wonder if the signal they gave to me met others' approval or standard of social acceptability. No one's answer to these questions has surprised me. Yet. What gets under my skin is the question that comes after— "So, are you Chinese?" That question gets to me because I start to realize that I usually lack the two hours to

explain the entire settler colonial history of my home country of Taiwan, let alone my adoption that makes my identification with my "Asian*ness*," or my "Taiwanese American*ness*," layered.

I think a reason why people may not have thought about what makes a restaurant "Chinese" (or not) is because people may have simply never been socialized to discern that China is not simply synonymous with Asia and why that's important— especially in Americans' imaginations embedded throughout social and educational spaces. More specifically, that which makes someone or something Chinese, which many scholars and I refer to as Chinese*ness*, is not the only way in American or Western culture(s) that we can discern or recognize Asianness. Just the same, Chinese people are not synonymous with "Asians" and, therefore, Chinese *Americans* are not synonymous with Asian *Americans*. My dissertation in a nutshell explores, especially in educational spaces, how and why Chineseness seems to be the default avatar of all Asian diaspora communities.

Like a restaurant or a dinner table, classrooms are places where stories are shared and identities, experiences, negotiated. I come from a family where our dinners can be quiet and rowdy, so this dissertation tries to deal with the quiet and spoken ways in which Chineseness gets stir-fried into something that looks like a cohesive dish when served on a plate but is really made up of tons of different identities and experiences. Part of what got me into this topic is because I find it exceedingly frustrating that, in U.S. American curriculum, Chinese people and Chineseness are presented as a dominant narrative that frames how countless young people are taught to think about Asia, Asians, and Asianness. I'm down for legislative interventions and other efforts to bolster Ethnic Studies education such as Illinois' (2022) The Teaching Equitable Asian American Community History (TEAACH) Act and 2023 Wisconsin Act 266 which

mandates Asian American and Hmong American histories are beginning to address these dominant narratives. In the current paradigm where "U.S." and "world" histories continue to be a dominant curricular organizing logic,, it is a heavy lift for state curriculum, and the overworked and under-thanked teaching profession, to represent every linguistic, ethnic, or cultural group in the context known as "Asia," and those communities' experiences in diasporic contexts like the United States— let alone disrupt this artificial separation.

What I think is more feasible, and urgent, is scholarship that offers some analytical clarity on what Chineseness is, and how Chineseness moves from being an identity or value set that the People's Republic of China (PRC) pumps out as part of a national curriculum to shaping politics and education globally. My newsfeed and social media seem to both believe World War III will start somewhere in the Taiwan Strait or South China Sea over the question of where "China" ends. If nothing else, my dissertation's job is to explain the harm in constantly centering the version(s) of Chineseness that the PRC and U.S. put into the world— and, I guess as a result, reassure you that our Chinese American neighbors or friends are not responsible for that spy balloon last year or spying on your TikTok.

In all seriousness, "China" and Chineseness are contested concepts. If any of the sensational alarmism I see on my iPhone is true then it is imperative that, as a discipline, education researchers consider who, what, and how young people learn about Asia and Greater China, these contestations, and the histories that play out in the lived experiences of Asian, Pacific Islander, Desi American and Asian (APIDA/A— said Ah-PEE-Dah/Ay) people which includes but are not only Chinese. By the way, the most famous or recognizable "Chinese" dish to many Americans, General Tso's Chicken's Chineseness is questioned multiply and at length

by Ian Cheney's (2004) film *The Search for General Tso.* General Tso's chicken is a wildly complex global movement of Chineseness but suffice it to say that, in it, is a culinary history that resembles my own family's movements from Fujian and Sichuan to Taiwan and eventually to the United States.

With that, welcome to my dissertation. In the questions I asked you a couple of pages ago, I hope that a million more questions came to the surface— and I hope to do my best to answer them all for you in the chapters to come. In the next few pages, please allow me to introduce myself as a scholar, the theory and methods I use in this dissertation, and tell you what my meditation on Chineseness is trying to contribute to scholarship in curriculum studies, Asian/ Asian American studies, and the study of critical race theory in education. I begin my dissertation with a Mandarin greeting that refers to food because of the community that happens over a meal. Usually, if you eat with me, the food is pretty spicy, and I think you'll see a bit of my personality in these pages which can also be a little spicy. I am grateful you have chosen to join me for the following chapters and I am extra grateful to the people and communities, named and not in the acknowledgements above, that keep me accountable over the coming chapters.

Order up!

Kindly,

kc

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	American born Chinese
APIDA/A	Asian Pacific Islander Desi American and Asian
CCP	Chinese Communist Part
CRT	Critical race theory
EM42	Educational Manual No. 42 *Our Chinese Ally* (1944)
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Republic of China (Taiwan)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION: Gold Mountain Dragon Heir

Who am I, and what am I doing here?

I have a confession. I love the entire genre of Orange and/or General Tso's Chicken. I am not kidding when I say it is probably my favorite candied meat, and I drew a lot of conceptual and analytical inspiration from the Asian and Asian-inspired food that sustained me while I wrote. It is also probably my worst kept secret. Lots of Asian foods, certainly not unlike other culinary traditions, blend flavors like sweet and sour or spicy and bitter. The result is a flavor that is as complex and multifaceted as the people who make, eat, and share stories while eating these delicious dishes. Eating lots of Asian foods in the company of the dope people in my life while I wrote made especially visible for me the conceptual simultaneities that shape APIDA/A people's lived educational curricula and experiences. This dissertation looks at four such simultaneities: (1) the violent and liberatory possibilities of names and namings; (2) the Janus-faced double-speak of Han supremacy as a genocidal and postcolonial project; (3) the mutually-reinforcing interplay of Sinophobia and Sinocentrism; and (4) the tensions between intra-ethnic negotiation and push for (curricular/cultural) representation. In each, I am trying to lean into the layeredness of understanding Chinese identity's global movements.

Before my dissertation leans into any of this, my desire in this project is to make some sense of what my birth mother said was the hardest decision of her life: to give me up months after giving birth to me in Taipei and send me to the United States for a "better life" amid the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis where warships from the People's Republic of China (PRC) formed a

blockade around Taiwan and a threat of armed conflict was high. For years, I have struggled to understand her decision because my upbringing guided me to different conclusions.

I was adopted by Chinese American parents and grew up in a (mostly) monolingual, middle class family in San Francisco, a city that one teacher in one of my previous studies described as a "bubble" for kids racialized as APIDA/A to grow up in (Chong, 2021). I was, in a lot of ways, raised to be Han Chinese American— a "descendant of the dragon" and socialized into a mythologized lineage that called me back to our "homeland" in the mainland of what we now know as so-called China. My parents worked so hard and sacrificed so much to do the best they could to give me the life I have. At the same time, I shared many of the same struggles that McCormick and West (2022) and Louie (2015, 2018) shared about adoptees' experiences of *un*belonging, marginality, and instability as they moved through spaces in their adopted contexts. As an adoptee racialized as Asian American, I became only more aware of the curriculum of violence and erasure that left the histories of people who looked like me to the imagination of white gazes formed through militarism (An, 2017, 2020, 2021).

This curriculum of violence socialized me into nationalistic and U.S.-centric ideologies that reinforced narratives that my birth mother "saved" me by sending me far from the instability of the "theaters" of America's 20th century wars and the "One China Policy." When I was reunited with my birth mother in 2017, hugging her for the first time, being *Taiwanese* and *American* came into clear focus for me. Sitting at a large round table over a meal in Taipei with my biological grandparents and siblings made being lumped in as Chinese American fundamentally unacceptable to me. When I started correcting people that I was *Taiwanese* American, I noticed a new distance between me and my adopted family, who are descendants of

some of the earliest Chinese settlers in California (Chinn, 1989). However, rather than rejecting the cultures and communities my parents socialized me into, doing so helped me see my hometown of San Francisco as less a haven, and more a "progressive dystopia" (Shange, 2019) in which carceral progressivism has mobilized whiteness and Chineseness to affirm coloniality and anti-Black policies by continually erasing the multiracial coalitions that fought for the critical spaces that exist in curriculum and education.

I could see how San Francisco could be a haven to the Chinese American community and the hard-won oases in Chinatown and the Sunset where more Cantonese and Mandarin than English is spoken on the 30 Stockton and the L Taraval. San Francisco, called Gum Saan (Gold Mountain, 金山[i]), in Cantonese, is a name cherished by some elders in my community who sincerely believe in America's promise and prosperity. As Chinese Americans (美國華人), I can see the ways my parents act(ed) in ways that suggest they coveted their identities as Gold Mountain's dragon heirs (金山龍的傳人). Through my parents' efforts and the privilege of growing up in San Francisco, I was spared some of the forever foreigner tropes and Yellow Peril racism that positions APIDA/A people as contagious, invasive, and unassimilable— which I would experience later in life elsewhere (Liu, 2020; Tuan, 1998).

I experienced the potential benefit of being part of a racialized community recognized as a "model minority," that is assumed to be compliant, obedient, and hard-working. Within the model minority, San Francisco's carceral progressivism and hyper-disciplinary school policies

[i] Throughout this dissertation, I will occasionally use Mandarin characters written in traditional script. While associated by some with Han Chinese identity, and others with imperial China, I choose to provide the translations of some words in Mandarin with Pinyin translations in order to preserve as much conceptual nuance in my choices of language as possible. As a non-Han Taiwanese American for whom traditional script is more common than the Mainland-associated traditional script, I choose to use traditional Mandarin script to honor both my roots in Taiwan and San Francisco, even as I am critical of both contexts as settler colonial ones.

could be easily hidden away behind so-called cultural values that celebrated meritocracy (Lee et al., 2007). I sensed that, in San Francisco, it is similarly easy to reduce Chinese and Chinese American identities (and its multiple entry points and opaque boundaries) for its linguistic, cultural, political, and national diversity down to black eyes, black hair, Yellow skin (Louie, 2004). These visible markers made us descendants or heirs of the Dragon referring to our sacred connection to the Yellow Emperor of ancient Chinese mythology. In being a descendant of the dragon, a lot of nuance gets lost, like the Cantonese identity under assault in Hong Kong, or the delicate political balance where the Taiwanese and PRC flags can coexist atop Chinatown's buildings.

That reduction into Chineseness, which Louie (2004) refers to as a rootedness in a place and history, Iftikar and Museus (2018) might call a strategic essentialism that foregrounds the building of a political coalition to emerge from a panethnic racialization of Asian communities in the United States. Bound together by our shared experiences under U.S. colonialism, militarism, empire, and state-sanctioned white supremacy, this complex identity negotiation emerged from the Third World Liberation Front and the 1960's Civil Rights Movement seeded a pan-Asiansism that afforded significant sociopolitical strength in numbers (Espiritu, 1992; Kim, 1999; Kim & Hsieh, 2022; Museus, 2014; Lowe, 1991; Uyematsu, 1971; Wang, 1995). Throughout my predominantly white education my APIDA/A friends, student groups and community showed me some of the practical benefits of a single identity marker (strategic essentialism) that asserts a demographic imperative. Those same spaces also made visible for me the erasures caused by relying solely on demography, and a Chinese-centeredness in APIDA/A spaces made me wonder, as a non-Chinese American, where I fit into our growing community's narrative.

Then, in the summer of 2022, the missiles started flying over my hometown of Taipei in reaction to Nancy Pelosi's, my congresswoman, visit to Taiwan. As the PRC militantly asserts its territorial claim to Taiwan, it signals that Taiwan is Chinese but led astray by the same Western values that colonized and "humiliated" China for a century (Wang, 2012). Amidst a Fourth Taiwan Strait Crisis, I realized my mother gave me the privilege to gaze upon these increasingly frequent Chinese "military exercises" from afar that she and my siblings could not. My unsettledness about my mother's decision is not meant to be a signal of a lack of gratitude, but evidence of the interplay of racism, colonialism, and territorial nationalism that I and other APIDA/A people navigate in our lives. The global circulations of these power structures mean the boundaries of Chinese identities (broadly and multiply defined and disaggregated from the PRC) are violently contested and continue to enable ideological and racist violence even in diaspora spaces far from any potential military conflict. I am unlikely alone in my disquiet exploration of being Asian American, and problematically, assumed to be Chinese which erases Asian Americans' experiences across curricular contexts. This dissertation, as a result, begins to engage this layeredness and engage the "everything, everywhere all at once" of how Chineseness moves globally, becomes a supremacy, and requires new attention to the ways APIDA/A and other diasporic coalitions are negotiated.

The Project

My concerns at the heart of this dissertation are the contestations of Chinese identity (Chinese*ness*) through perceptions, state discourses, and political agendas that flatten and reduce Chinese identities to a single caricature, and how they are reflected in, and come to, the curricula that continues to harm Asian Americans in a multiplicity of educational contexts. My concern is

at three levels: (1) the transnational territorializing and concretizing of the ontological boundaries of Chinese identity by nation-states (*nationalization*); (2) the centering of Chineseness in the panethnic construction of APIDA/A and Asian diasporic communities (*Sinocentrism*); and (3) the mobilization of these state discourses of Chineseness identity influence education in both the PRC and U.S. contexts (*Han Supremacy*).[ii]

These three levels necessitate new analytical possibilities and inquiry to cut against the academic disciplinary paradigm that delineates and limits dialogue between the fields of Education, Asian Studies, and Asian American Studies (Wang, 1995). Through a transdisciplinary approach, this dissertation brings these fields into intimate and uncomfortable conversation to explore Chinese identity, broadly and multiply defined, and through the policies and framings in both the PRC and the United States that have deep political stake in its (re)creation(s). In this dissertation, my chapters will each analyze a series of texts that shape and contest the discourses of Chineseness all within the paradigm of curricular sites.

These analyses, in a moment of attention to *how* Asians and Asian Americans are presented in curriculum, politics, and culture, support efforts to demand more substantive and nuanced logics of representation for Asians and Asian Americans in the school curriculum. To do so requires explorations of the histories and assumptions about Chinese Americans and their

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[ii] In this dissertation, I will most frequently use APIDA/A (Asian Pacific Islander Desi American and Asian), as opposed to Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI), or the federally designated Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AANHPI) in recognition of the ways "Americanness" is positioned in these other acronyms. Doing so, as a result, means acknowledging the settler colonial contexts in which the United States continues to occupy stolen Indigenous lands across Turtle Island and the Pacific such as the occupied Kingdom of Hawai'i. I also will use the terms Asian Diaspora fluidly and interchangeably throughout this dissertation though they have different ontological boundaries. In particular, Asian Diasporic contexts are distinct from American ones and acknowledge those Asian communities beyond Asian contexts that exercise their agency to refuse to engage in this coalitional politic. This dissertation remains committed to those people and communities as well, especially those who refusals are grounded in historical and ongoing resistances to Chinese or American imperialism.

positioning as the default Asian Americans, across time and space that resist white gazes of Chinese and Asian identity in education.

In the wake of the 2021 racist murders of Asian Americans in Georgia, groups like #StopAAPIHate now support a broad panethnic community in reporting hate crimes that proliferated from President Trump's racist "China Virus," the latest manifestation of Yellow peril. Asian Americans' collective civil rights victories, like Japanese Incarceration reparations, and recent Federal hate crime prevention legislation, suggest "progress" for our panethnic community. However, I wonder if historical fears and centering of Chinese people in Americans' perceptions of Asian Americans hide the inequities that both non-Chinese Asian Americans and those across Chinese diasporic communities experience. These inequities experienced primarily by Pacific Islander and South[east] Asian Americans include a lack of student support in schools, differential negative stereotyping, and teacher invisibility (Kim & Hsieh, 2022, Ngo & Lee, 2007; Teranishi, 2002). I explore the roots of this fear, which I refer to as *Sinophobia* (Lee, 2010), and this centering, which I call *Sinocentrism*, and the creation of Chinese as the racial avatar for the Asian American community. As a result, these broader circulations of power, global anti-Blackness, and global white supremacy have afforded select and inconsistent agency to Chinese Americans and have rewarded "The Chinese" in curricula with *proximity* to whiteness, on the condition of perpetual exclusion from it (Kim, 1999).

My dissertation centers the global movements of these discourses about Chineseness and how these movements show the ways nation-states contest Chineseness within a paradigm of a polarized global axis of power (Zhang et al., 2022). This dissertation, as a result, contributes to research on Asian Americans, specifically Chinese Americans, across educational contexts by

exploring how that Chinese identity becomes a monolith, and a bellwether for the APIDA/A in curriculum by exploring the following questions:

Research Questions

1) How have a multiplicity of Chinese identities become flattened and racialized in proximity to global white supremacy and become synonymous with APIDA/A identities?
2) How do state discourses move across geographic contexts, and how are these discourses sustained across time?
3) To what extent do colonial-orientalist discourses inform and shape curricular and sociocultural perceptions of Chinese identities?
4) To what extent have state and non-state actors resisted nationalized or territorialized Sinocentrism in pursuit of stronger APIDA/A solidarity and strategic (anti)essentialism rather than demographic imperatives?

In this dissertation, I argue that the global circulation of Sinophobia, Sinocentrism, and Han supremacy form mutually reinforcing technologies across curricular spaces that preserve U.S. and PRC state discourses of Chinese identity that impede the complex and multilayered negotiation over Asian diasporic, and specifically APIDA/A identities. To do so, I show how state and non-state actors in both the PRC and the United States intervene to flatten Chinese identity, and the ways doing so affirms other dominant ideological structures and social practices across multiple curricular sites broadly defined. Further, this dissertation also mobilizes the analytical lens of Han supremacy to strengthen the intra-panethnic negotiations that Asian Americans, Desi Americans, and Pacific Islander Americans navigate in (re)creating our shared identity marker. This dissertation also engages the impacts Sinocentrism and Sinophobia have on

the ability for multiple communities to find solidarity with each other in this identity negotiation. By exploring how Chinese identity has been constructed and maintained, I hope to trace how Sinocentrism impacts APIDA/A and Asian diasporic identities and the ways supremacist ideologies impact our shared racialization and relationalities with each other. Doing so also points towards nuancing uses of the Transnational Contexts and Asian Critical Race Theory (AsianCrit) broadly, an extension of critical race theory, to attend to the ways transnational contexts, or more precisely transnational movements, shape diasporic experiences of individuals' racial possibilities.

Overview Theoretical Groundings

My project is less concerned with borders and more concerned with how hegemonic global power structures move across contexts. As a result, my project necessitates conceptual entry points into Chineseness and curriculum that attend to these movements of power. I bring a broad conceptualization of curriculum theorizing to situate the particular sites of my analyses in the subsequent chapters within the same paradigm as curricular sites. To do so, I pull from a multiplicity of critical curriculum theorists' framings of curricula beyond that which is present and not in classrooms. To look globally at the formation and circulation of state discourses of Chineseness, in my dissertation, I put Asian Critical Race Theory (AsianCrit) and decolonial theory in conversation. In doing so, I operationalize a lens that is responsive to the movements of global power across contexts and attentive to the intersections of race, racism, empire, and their particular manifestations within the U.S. settler colonial context. While each subsequent chapter will include a theoretical framework section, this brief overview outlines overarching concepts and entry points that I take up throughout this dissertation.

Curriculum (Theory & Studies)

My study examines how nation-state actors have manipulated and shaped perceptions of Chinese identity in education by conducting a qualitative content analysis of multiple curricular sites globally. Curriculum theory and curriculum studies scholarship since the 1970s, centers the "lived experience, social implications, and cultural politics of educational experiences" (Kumar & Kempf, 2023, 20 June, p. 3). As a result, this disciplinary lens offers a helpful entree beyond curriculum in the Western analogization of a track around which the mind runs or a container into which knowledge is put (Egan, 1979). I also deviate from Giroux's (1983) framing of explicit (official), implicit (hidden), and null curricula that situates this analysis of curriculum as only what is (or is not) taught in schools. While I share in Giroux's desire to critique the power structures that curriculum enacts and perpetuates, I am as much focused on the curricular sites through which individuals navigate in the broader contexts of their unique and complete personhood.

In my study, I define curricula broadly, using Aoki's (2005) and Jardine's (1990) respective notions in the field curriculum theory of a lived and integrated curriculum, which position lived experiences of encounters (such as culture, policy, as well as school curricula) that form the fullness of a student's racialized existence curricula alongside formal school curricula (including explicit, hidden, and null). Aoki (2005) theorizes a *lived curriculum* in which children and learners are surrounded by a multiplicity of curricula, beyond the explicit curriculum taught in schools. As well, Jardine's (1990) notion of an *integrated curriculum*, which positions people's lived experiences and explorations as part of their broader "curriculum vita," further extends the sites where the tools of curricular analyses or theorizings can be applied.

I then add two additional frames to my conceptualization that draw specific attention to the interplay of race and (settler) coloniality that manifest in curricular contexts. I draw on Cridland-Hughes and King's (2015) and An's (2020) uses of the curriculum of violence, and Díaz Beltran's (2018) concept of a curriculum of dislocation. I build on the curriculum of violence by analytically centering the ways curricular sites engage in socializing young people into the technologies of nation-states and (de)legitimize knowledge systems which results in psychological and spiritual violence against communities of Color (Cridland-Hughes & King, 2015). Within a curriculum of dislocation are the ways curricular spaces (dis)orient young people from their histories and contexts by offering Eurocentric ahistorical and decontextualized framings of content and reinforce (b)ordered methodological nationalism (Díaz Beltran, 2018). The intersections and interplays of lived and integrated curricula, and curricula of violence and dislocation makes visible the explicit and implicit (un-/de-/re-)learning and knowledge systems that individuals navigate as they move across geographic and temporal spaces.

Asian(CR)i(T)

AsianCrit, which emerged from Asian American Critical Legal Studies, extends critical race theory to unique Asian Americans' experience under American law (Chang, 1993; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Museus, 2014). AsianCrit's tenets are (1) Asianization, (2) transnational contexts, (3) [re]constructive history, (4) strategic (anti-)essentialism, (5) intersectionality, (6) story, theory and praxis, and (7) social justice (Iftikar & Museus, 2018). Asian Americans, like other communities of Color in the U.S., have been differentially racialized in their own ways "according to the needs of the majority group at particular times in its history" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 80). CRT provides an analytical

framework that disputes the presumed neutrality of constitutional law and centers both the voices and unique experiences with race and racism that communities of Color have experienced in American contexts. CRT and AsianCrit in extant educational research seek to detail Asian Americans' complex experiences in American education, mindful of the transnational contexts and the "tensions between… collective struggles and the diversity that exists" (Iftikar & Museus, 2018, p. 944) within a community stubbornly understudied in educational research.

AsianCrit tailors CRT to the unique needs of Asian Americans with emphasis on intersections of racism and xenophobia in education. Drawing on an AsianCrit framework, I expand extant literature by showing an internal negotiation in the Asian American community and extend Harris' (1993) and Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) discussions of whiteness as property in the context of educational spaces and curricular knowledge. This negotiation tacitly accepts the settler logics of whiteness as property that allows for Chinese Americans, who have overcome state-sanctioned discrimination, to function as both model Asian Americans *and* model minorities deserving of curricular visibility at the expense of solidarity with other Asian Americans (Chang, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

I draw on this framework to center ethnic and racial power dynamics *within* the Asian American community using qualitative content analysis to highlight how Chinese Americans' proximity to white supremacy and mobilizations in defense of meritocracy as educational "justice." As well, AsianCrit foregrounds researcher positionality and counter narrative as an intellectually legitimate data source because of the historical erasures in explicit curricula (Kolano, 2016). Resistances to the uncomplicated model minority 'success' story are marginalized in favor of a singular narrative that uniformly racializes Asian American bodies

under white supremacy (Matsuda, 1996). I contribute to this emerging body of literature by adding nuance to (ethno)racial analyses in showing the necessity of negotiating shared and individual communities' relational experiences to each other in a U.S. context, and across geography and time, culminating in our shared experiences in the United States.

Decolonial Theory

Decolonial theory is a multifaceted body of literature that emerges from Latin America, the Caribbean, and other contexts globally that studies the ongoing power relations of coloniality (Fúnez-Flores et al., 2022; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). Among the many legacies coloniality are racialized and gendered identity markers that create and dehumanize "Others" in ways that justify the violent domination, dispossession, and extraction of/from contexts made Other to colonizer's unilateral profit (Allweiss, 2021; Chen 2010; Peña-Pincheira & Allweiss, 2022; Quijano, 2000). The global project of critiques and resistances to coloniality (e.g. decolonial theory, postcolonial studies, anticolonial theory) are individually named assemblages of theory accountable to multitudes of contexts (Coloma, 2013; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018. Each such project engages different facets of this violent dispossession and extraction that center and uphold white Eurocentric knowledge systems (Subedi & Daza, 2008; Walsh & Mignolo, 2018). I say this not to essentialize or homogenize these critiques of coloniality which Fúnez-Flores and Colleagues (2022) caution due to their unique situatedness and accountabilities in their intellectual genealogies.

Instead, I share in Ndlovu-Gatsheni's (2018) efforts to inclusively conceptualize the continuities and solidarities between these multiple projects in their commitments to countering and repairing the ongoing impacts of colonial power relations. In doing so, I also enter taking up

postcolonial concepts and critiques that pertain to the contexts labeled as "Asia" that yield an Orientalized other and the deimperialist work that is situated in these contexts (Chen, 2010; Chen-Dedman, 2021; Said, 1979). I use decolonial theory because of its orientations toward the praxis projects of bearing scholarly witness in the ways communities continue to disrupt the ongoing and violent legacies of empire, militarism and coloniality globally to center "the significance of seriously thinking from historically specific places (contexts/practices) and with the intellectual expression (texts/discourses) of socio-historically, culturally, and geopolitically situated subjects" (Fúnez-Flores et al., 2022, p. 614). In this way, thinking from the contexts of "Asia," creates analytical space to decenter the U.S. and draw from Chinese contexts in order to witness how these discourses move to and are contested in the heart of the empire. Sensing these movements of power across contexts, therefore, embraces the fluidity of Chineseness across time and space. I will note that in the next chapter, I will discuss how this impacts young peoples' racialization and lean into disagreements about the use of decoloniality as an analytical lens in the context of Asia and China, in short, by nuancing Chen's (2010) argument about coloniality and imperialism.

Identifying and naming the interplay of transnational power dynamics that are summarized and condensed within the context of American curriculum is crucial to understanding the movements of Chineseness across borders and contexts that shape the ongoing negotiation of what being APIDA/A means in diasporic contexts (Au, et al., 2016). I do so with an eye toward synergies, rather than syntheses between these frameworks and the multiple analytical entry points into the study of parallel supremacist technologies and ideologies (Leonardo, 2009, 2013, 2020; Leibold, 2010; Megjhi, 2022). Using this framework makes visible

how state discourses of Chineseness are a result of both reactions to Western and Japanese imperialism, as well as a source of political legitimacy for the PRC's regime. Coupling decolonial and AsianCrit critiques, allows me to center the unique creation of an epistemological 'Asia' and the transnational orientalization and Asianization that transcend national contexts. This framework shows how Chinese identity is created by political interests in both the United States and the PRC. Further, this framework centers how colonial logics manifest in and are imprinted upon the research[er] through curricula of dislocation that privileges assimilation (Díaz Beltrán, 2018; Patel, 2016). I contribute to these respective bodies of literature by centering the movements of global racialization processes and discursive contestations of the (re)production(s) of identity. As a result, my dissertation draws on and brings together AsianCrit and decolonial theory in context of this expansive conceptualization of curriculum to examine the paradox in which Chinese (and Asian) Americans are racialized in close proximity to (whilst remaining excluded from) whiteness amidst global white supremacy, anti-Blackness, and [settler] coloniality.

Methodology

Each of my chapters uses different methodologies and methods that are responsive and reflexive to the curricular sites I analyze throughout. Broadly speaking, my dissertation uses a cluster of critical document analysis methodologies (Critical Race archival analysis, critical discourse analysis, and rememory with archival touchstones) to analyze the reverberations of a broad range of artifacts (legal documents, training materials, literature) that shape racialization processes and the lives and educational experiences of APIDA/A communities. While each

chapter contains its own respective methods section, I will briefly overview the "ology" and explain the "why" of my methods and data sources.

Chapter Two as an orienting chapter into the history and conceptual argument for the analytical utility of Han supremacy followed by three empirical articles (Chapters Three, Four and Five. The corpus of documents I analyze in the empirical chapters begins with archival materials from and related to my own adoption from Taiwan (Chapter Three) which includes court papers from the U.S. and Taiwan and social worker's home study reports of my family. Then, I move to U.S. military curriculum from World War II, analyzing an artifact called Educational Manual No. 42 (1944) titled *Our Chinese Ally* which is an instructional manual given to soldiers to better understand China while they were deployed across the Pacific (Chapter Four). Third, I analyze Gene Luen Yang's (2006) young adult graphic novel *American Born Chinese* which tells the story of Jin Wang and Sun Wei-Chen in an adaptation of *Journey to the West* (Chapter Five). I selected each of these curricular sites, overall, because each points to a touchstone that makes visible a reverberation, interplay, and impact of multiple power structures (white supremacy, [settler] coloniality, Han supremacy, anti-Blackness) on the construction or contestation of Chineseness.

Coding necessarily looked different for each text. In some cases, coding was guided by AsianCrit tenets such as transnational contexts to note moments when a text was working to sense or respond to something happening globally. In other cases, coding looked like noting moments where an ideology was foregrounded, such as in Chapter Two when I coded for moments of assimilationism in my adoption petition. Looking across curricular sites throughout my chapters, Chineseness was a "code" divided into state discourses that tried to define and

discourses that tried to reframe Chineseness. Across texts, I looked most for moments when state policies mobilized logics or discourses of Chineseness as rootedness (Louie, 2004), and as hollowness (Chun, 1996). These moments were critical to the ways I sustained my engagement with Chineseness as an evolving and fluid concept. I also noted moments when a text represented an individual's understanding of Chineseness which was helpful to discern the relationships between Chineseness and Asianness.

Across texts, I looked at situated rhetorics, as well as racial rhetorical positioning (Hsieh, 2023) which was helpful to look at policy documents such as Educational Manual No. 42 (1944) (Burch, 2018). My data analysis, as a result, centers both the reflexivity and inductivity central to relational qualitative content analysis. For this analysis I drew on a combination of inductive codes that emerge from extant theory such as discourses of national humiliation and curricular erasure that likely center on the ethnic, racial, linguistic, and national boundaries of Chinese identity, in both the PRC and American contexts.

In addition to these texts, I also take up my lived curriculum in the context of these documents to show some of the ways my own experiences align, and not, with my data. I approach my own *lived curriculum* using CRT's framing of racism acting upon the body (Matsuda, 1996) and AsianCrit counterstorytelling (Yeh et al., 2022; Kolano, 2016). I merge these methods with decolonial concepts of embodied knowledge (Bhattacharya, 2021; Patel, 2016) and how colonial logics and ideologies necessitate a simultaneous act of remembering and forgetting which Rhee (2021) calls (re)memory work, made necessary by the hauntings and materializations of Eurocentrism and coloniality in a curriculum of dislocation (Beltran, 2018; Tuck & Ree, 2013). I do so to merge these multiple frames drawn from CRT and decolonial

theory, respectively, to show how my lived curriculum comes into contact with multiple supremacist ideologies and coloniality (both in complicity with anti-Black ideologies). Together, these curricula begin to tell a geographic and chronological sequence of temporal and global circulations of Chinese identity. I do so to build on my concept of curriculum informed by my theoretical frames by putting my own lived curriculum, as told in narrative and artifact, into conversation with the documents that my chapters analyze.

Each curriculum artifact described above requires different questions to be asked. I answer RQ1 by conducting critical race archival analysis (Morris & Parker, 2019) merged with policy analyses (Burch, 2018) as discursive analysis in Chapter Four, as well as analyzing racial positioning toward assimilationism in Chapter Two. Doing so facilitates the merging of multiple bodies of theory, in this case, AsianCrit and decolonial theory, exposing potential possibilities for extending both. To answer RQ2 and RQ3 I conducted archival analyses and legal analysis primarily in Chapters Two and Five by showing the ways legal documents marked my own movements globally, and how these flattened identities manifest and are summarily challenged in *American Born Chinese*. Doing so is especially important in the case of Chinese identity which itself has multiple entry points and boundaries in multiple [national] contexts at different points in history as the targets of racism and colonialism shift. I take up RQ4 in Chapter 4 and the conclusion where I examine the ways these create barriers to entry for teachers, as well as how these interlocking power structures constitute a "theft" of Asian America using ideological textual analysis methods (Domke, et al. 2018).

Across each research question remains my attention to the simultaneities and layers of power that seemingly abstract the formation(s) of Chineseness, and addressing each requires

sustained attention across chapters to prevent unnecessary abstraction of the concept of Chineseness as a subjectivity. I do so by treating Chineseness fundamentally as an evolving concept to which people have multiple relationalities.

Roadmap

In each of my chapters, I work across multiple scales, geographic sites, and moments in time to illustrate something of a chronology and the multifaceted reverberations of Han supremacy and discourses of Chineseness. "Chapter Two: A precious nationalism of Han supremacy and Chinese characteristics" bridges RQs 1 and 2. This chapter analyzes the subsumption of Han identity into Chineseness and argues that Han supremacy aligns with other supremacist ideologies and is grounded in a Han ontology that enables the PRC to act in neoimperial ways that connect to subsequent chapters exploration of RQs 2 and 3. In "Chapter Three: The *nomencurriculum* and the tight curricular space of name(s)," I lean into RQs 1 and 3 and analyze my lived curriculum through the story of my naming and my adoption. I do so through my adoption and immigration paperwork to show the simultaneities of ideologies that governed my own adoption as well as outline a novel analytic possibility of the *nomencurriculum* that treats names and naming as curricular sites.

"Chapter Four: Sinophobia + Sinocentrism— An AsianCrit Analysis of The U.S. Military's Wartime Curricular [Re]racialization of Chinese [Americans]," uses an AsianCrit analysis to frame how the United States, in World War II, used a flattened construction of Chineseness to influence soldiers' perceptions of the Chinese people which takes up RQs 2 and 4. "Chapter Five: Is Teaching *American Born Chinese… Beyond Repair?*: Preparing preservice teachers to navigate a Great Wall of mirrors and bamboo windows" invites teachers to introduce

panethnic identities and global young adult literature and explores RQs 3 and 4 by using Gene Luen Yang's (2006) *American Born Chinese* to show how racial allegory and satire become subsumed in literature to model potential resistances to these state discourses. Finally, the conclusion chapter "What of our stolen Youth Soul? A loving caution on the futurity of pan-Asianism amidst Han Supremacy," contemplates the concept of theft made visible in the preceding chapters. I articulate the necessity of multiracial coalitional resistances (Hsieh & Nguyen, 2020), and the analytical utility of a Sinocentric construction of the Asian American panethnic community if the neocolonial logics of East Asian overrepresentation continues to marginalize South[East] Asian [American] voices amidst the parallels of global white supremacy *and global* Han supremacy.

A word about the title

I chose to title this dissertation, *Surviving China's Rejuvenation,* to a large extent out of fear that the land of my settler, home context of Taiwan could have been stolen again by the time I finished writing this dissertation. While a dissertation is not exactly an emergency preparedness guide as an earthquake checklist or bug-out bag, my title underscores the urgencies and possibilities of reclamation that this dissertation argues for. Chineseness is everywhere, that I (and many others) profit from passing as Chinese, and that this dissertation is fundamentally about the need to learn more about the APIDA/A community's divisions, resistances, and coalescences as a way to prepare to avert a potential conflict that starts because of the boundaries of Chineseness. As my belonging continues to be structurally questioned by forces big and small, the PRC's momentum as a global superpower is derived from pulling more and more of us into

the web of Chinesenesses— that beckons with an offer of belonging at the cost of complicity in a neoimperial agenda that moonlights as an anti-imperial project.

In that way, I think about how state discourses of Chineseness weigh heavily on our internal negotiations about what it means to be APIDA/A, in education, and right now. That is why I worry that APIDA/A identity can be stolen by Han supremacy. Curriculum, and the tools of Asian American studies, curriculum studies, and educational foundational analyses, help me see the urgency of addressing this problem space that spans generations of historical grievances, as much as it spans a vast geography. It is time to deliberate about what pan-Asianism needs to look like given this, and education is a place where we need to start. Returning to the metaphor of a meal in this dissertation, I hope that we can embark together across these chapters and share space and an experience through the stories we discuss at this table together. This dissertation's title and the metaphor of a meal are analytics in and of themselves which I will unpack in the Conclusion as well as offer you a fortune cookie. In the meantime, enjoy the meal!

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CHAPTER TWO: A precious nationalism of Han supremacy & Chinese characteristics

Throughout the last four millennia, each of the dynasties that governed the enormous geographic context I refer to as *China* sought to maintain a single cohesive kingdom and, later, nation-state. China has an equally long history of rebellions. From the Yellow Turban rebels against the Han Dynasty in 190 CE, Zheng Chenggong's (Koxinga) piracy against the Ming, to the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and Red Turban rebels who resisted the Qing, to the Tiananmen "incident" (massacre) in 1989, and recently 2023 pensioners and workers mounted the most significant protests in a generation against Xi Jinping. Each of these moments of resistance was a reaction to some perceived injustice, corruptions, or mismanagement by the government. China's history of rebellions also shaped what it means for people to identify with this land and place. In many of these rebellions, the *fànshàng* or defiance against the social order showed people's mobilizations and refusals to rule by a single state. These rebellions were not just internal conflicts— Western and Japanese imperialism irreparably damaged the Qing, the wake of which catalyzed three subsequent decades of political instability. China lives with the scars of imperialism (both internal and external)— after a Century of Humiliation (百年國恥) identifying as "Chinese" elicits a multitude of feelings and reasonings.

However, as much as China's governance and boundaries are contested, in equal measure so is who and what gets to be [understood as] "Chinese." Popularized by PRC paramount leader Deng Xiaoping, the phrase "Chinese characteristics" described the ways the PRC utilized "globalized" ideas differently. From embracing capitalism to needing to adapt Marxism to the PRC context (Harvey, 2004). The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) (2021) has since expanded

its use of "Chinese characteristics" to even qualify "rule of law with Chinese characteristics" (p. 8). When I read these six words, I immediately began to wonder what "Chinese characteristics" are, what makes them Chinese (especially in the context of a state discourse), and who gets to say. While I cannot claim to speak in any definitive or objective way as to what makes something Chinese, in this chapter I explore the turn from people and institutions, like the CCP, claiming what Chinese*ness* is and should be, to how it Chineseness is used to justify political actions on behalf of a community rather than bind it together. Moreover, these multi-layered discourses about Chinese*ness* show how Chinese*ness* is weaponized in ways that legitimize the ways the CCP governs the PRC.

This is not an Asian Studies or Sinology essay, however. Chun (1996), in a piece aptly titled "Fuck Chineseness," wrote that there was no distinction between Chinese and Chinese diaspora before the twentieth century. He writes that "there was no concept of Chinese nationhood to galvanize ethnicity into marked, bounded groups…. Despite their obvious attachment to a Chinese homeland, there was probably little else to unite them as Chinese, except in contrast to non-Chinese" (Chun, 1996, p. 122). Chun suggests that Chineseness is conceptually hollow and implies that it was the (b)ordering of the world according to nation-states that creates a necessity for Chinese*ness* to signify an ontology, political ideology as well as a multiplicity of identity markers. On the other hand, Louie (2004) argues, "Chineseness is used as both an inclusive and exclusive concept, empowered as racial discourse, used to reinforce a sense of rootedness, or turned into a commodity" (p. 26) especially in the PRC's exercise of power as a symbolic center to which Chinese identities in China and the diaspora are "metaphorically attached through state-sponsored identity-making projects" (p. 27). While Louie

certainly takes up Chun's (1996) point about the hollowness of Chinese identities, she also adds another dimension about the definitional role nation-states actively play in the construction of a single Chinese identity. These two lines, taken together, illustrate the layers, fluidities, and contestation of Chinese identities— and the institutions working to shape it for political purposes with implications for the polarization of global power.

Louie's (2004) contrast to Chun (1996) also hones in on how Chineseness becomes territorialized when mobilized by nation-states. The PRC's state apparatuses continue to territorialize through claiming of the South China Sea, economic exploitation of Africa, and the ongoing genocide in Xinjiang by the majority Han ethnic group (Clarke, 2021; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020; Wang, 2014). These expansionist territorial claims, coupled with the PRC's increasingly militant and aggressive positioning as the anti-Western global superpower, has caused some to escalate their rhetoric to merge the PRC's Han-centeredness, disregard for ethnic minorities (Baranovitch, 2010), and neoimperialist ambitions. These actions, I argue in this chapter, should be read as enacting the ideologies and logics of Han supremacy which I come to by analyzing these state and political actions in context of other supremacist ideologies.

Certainly, the term Han supremacy is not without controversy— with many preferring terminology like Han chauvinism, Han (ethno)nationalism, and Chinese nationalism (Townsend, 1992) to avoid explaining Han supremacy's conceptual interplay with a stable and durable concept of white supremacy. The differences between Han chauvinism, nationalism, etc. are not simply semantic nor are they interchangeable especially as these ideologies move into diasporic context. Rather, frequent conflation between Han and Chinese nationalism, chauvinism, and supremacy are deeply rooted in Greater China's historical and contemporary experiences with

global projects of racialization/Asianization (Iftikar & Museus, 2018), colonization, and Orientalization (Said, 1979). As a result, in this paper, I draw a conceptual line between Chinese characteristics and Han supremacy— and their movements into diasporic spaces.

In this essay, I argue that the conceptual ambiguities about Chineseness, upon which the CCP capitalizes, contributes further instability and abstraction as Chineseness as an identity marker circulates globally, such as to diasporic communities, to maintain the PRC's political power by fusing Han*ness* and Chinese*ness* and its mobilization within a framework of what I call Han Supremacy. I contribute this notion of Han supremacy to call attention to how Han supremacy magnetizes global axes of power grounded in a nation-state's institutionalization of postcolonial protectionism of a single group's assured supremacy. Analyzing Chineseness across time and space in this way provides the conceptual framework of how racialization moves globally to implicate even diasporic communities into a political project tied to a single nation-state.

To do so, I show the ways racial, ethnic, and ethnoracial identities are blurred in the interplay of Western and Chinese concepts of race. Then, I show the ways Chineseness is central to the PRC's nation-building project and how the ambiguities in Asian*ness* and Yellow*ness* interplay in the formation of Chineseness. Finally, I argue for Han supremacy's commonalities with other supremacist ideologies and its impacts on Sinocentrism embedded in the construction and negotiation over panethnic lumping within diasporic identities such as the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American and Asian (APIDA/A) coalition.

Orientalism

In order to begin to engage in critical analysis of Chinese identity, I will first situate it within the episteme of "Asia" to nestle China as an orientalized context. In *Orientalism,* Said (1979) demonstrated the racist ontological and epistemological manufacturing of an Orient alien from the West. In calling Asia an "ideological fiction" (Said, 1979, p. 328), Said critiques Western academia's (mis)framing of Asia as an exotic, uncivilized, Other. This violent portrayal serves as a basis on which much contemporary anti-APIDA/A, anti-Arab, and Islamophobic racism and xenophobia are based in Western contexts (Chang, 1993; Thobani, 2003; Wang, 1995). Said (1979) also suggests the utility of making the "Orient." That is, not just a geographic context but an adjective insofar as manufacturing of an Other "designated Asia or the East, geographically, morally, and culturally. One could speak in Europe of an Oriental atmosphere, an Oriental tale, Oriental despotism, or an Oriental mode of production, and be understood" (Said, 1979, p. 30). By adjective, I mean that Oriental (Asian) as a label inherently positions that which it describes as Other, as well.

Said (1979) articulates how the "Orient" is ultimately an unstable conceptual construction or epistemic context emerging from colonial and white supremacist ideologies. The transition from the Orient/Asia as a noun to an adjective, then, illustrates some of the instability around which a multitude of cultural and political ideologies are grounded. I am less interested in the potential of this turn from the "Orient" as noun to adjective, and back to a noun again for rhetorical or grammatical reasons. Rather, I am more attentive to where Asian*ness* transitions from Other to qualifier and then back to Other because at each turn it becomes more reified and

abstracted in each transition. After a certain amount of abstraction from which this postcolonial-postimperial world had to figure out how to govern (Chen, 2010).

In this abstraction, also, is also a potential for majoritarian logics to put a "face" to an otherwise heady discussion of Asianness. That is one of the central concerns of scholars who are critical of Sinocentrism, or the ways Chinese*ness* is centered, or Asianness consolidated, as axes of global power encourage hegemonic state discourses reinforce a binarized oppositional logic around which the world is divided and organized (Zhang et al., 2022). Within Said's (1979) critique of the perpetuation of a singular concept of the "Orient" is also a critique of Western academia's flattening of the pathways by which people come to these different kinds of identification or relationality within the concept of the "Orient." While I share in Anderson's (1983) critique of nation-states as "imagined communities," his point about the nation-state as a biological *physiognomic* reaction (e.g. Kazakhstan for Kazakhs) to the legacies of imperialism and colonialism in Asia and the Global South points to nation-state projects as emulative of the hegemonic powers from which they sought independence evident in moments such as the PRC joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001.

These multiple nation-building projects provided different ways for those who govern these imagined communities to create and maintain political relationalities within their respective nation-states. Beyond physiognomy, how individuals come to relate to their respective national contexts reveals some of the ambiguities in the "pathways" by which they come to identify. Specifically, when Chinese identity demarcates territoriality as well as an ethnic, cultural, or national (political) situatedness, it can be difficult to know what Chineseness represents for each person. These complications are further obscured within the construct of "Asia," especially as

many still refuse absorption into a nation-state in their own right such as the Uyghurs against whom the PRC is committing genocide (Clarke, 2021; Scott, 2009).

In the context of China, the allure of a "somewhere" (e.g. a PRC for "the Chinese people") in response to a Century of Humiliation (1839-1949) proved appealing in response to seven generations of Western imperialism (Wang, 2012). The Century of Humiliation began with the First Opium War with Great Britain in 1839, including the loss of Hong Kong and the Kowloon Peninsula, throughout which Greater China experienced brutal Western and Japanese colonization that had hardened Chinese people in common cause— revolt against these invading powers and against the Qing Dynasty (Chang, 2003; Spence, 1996). In response, Chen (2010) argues that people experiencing imperial aggression in China yielded a sustained period of accumulating anti-imperialist anger and fear. As a result, "the modern Chinese national identity can be said to have been formed by its relation with the former imperialist countries of the West" (Chen, 2010, p. 11). Chen's point about Chineseness' conceptual reliance on other identity markers is critical to understanding what the CCP is reactive to in operationalizing and institutionalizing a single concept of Chinese*ness.* In this way, the nation-state relative to Asian*ness is* a useful starting point for this chapter because it makes visible some of the axiological motivations (without apology for its genocide) for analyzing state discourses of identity before other nation-state contexts take up these same discourses. I, next, historicize these state discourses and work to connect Han identity to Chinese identity.

Han*ness,* "Yellow*ness,*" Chinese*ness* as "Race"

To unpack the multiple conflations circulating in Chinese identity requires first contextualizing the transition from Han to Chinese identity in context of "Yellowness" as a

racialized marker and the discrepancies between Chinese and Western concepts of race. With ample debate about where "Yellowness" becomes a racialized discourse, two dominant discourses speak to the global discourse of "Yellowness" as Asianness. Keevak (2011) traces Yellow as a racialized category until white westerners began to engage in systematic imperial incursions into China prior to the 18th Century which, he argues, is also when panethnic lumping becomes a racialized (orientalized) discourse of Asian as "Mongolian." On the other hand, greater scholarly attention to more contemporary racialized discourse of Yellowness usually in diasporic spaces which present themselves as Yellow peril (e.g. Bow, 2021, Eng, 2001; Wu, 2002). My attention, here, is to the former, and China's state mobilizations of Yellowness whereby Chinese symbols of the Han (e.g. the color red) get superseded in Western racial perceptions of Asianness with Yellowness embedded within the national symbology and mythology of post-imperial Chinese nation-states.

Following the fall of the Qing Dynasty, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen served as the first President of the Republic of China and sought to establish a Republic of the Five Nationalities introduced through a concept of Greater China (大中華民族). Greater China, as a messaging tool, sought to reconcile some of the lingering ethnic divisions from four centuries of non-Han rule over China (Baranovitch, 2010; Duara, 1995; Leibold, 2006). Following the fall of the Qing, the first national anthem of the Republic of China (1912-1913), entitled *The Song of the Five Races Under One Union* (五族共和歌) blended Chinese ideas of race with Western ones (Chen, 2010) and referred to the unification of the Han, Manchus, Mongols, Hui, and Tibetans under a single Chinese state (CCP, 2006). The anthem's lyrics referred to China (中華) as the earliest

civilization of East Asia, and corresponded to a five-colored flag that bore a red bar representing the Han atop the other colors representing the two non-Han ethnic groups, the Mongols (Yuan) and Manchus (Qing) that had established imperial dynasties, later referred to as "conquest dynasties" (征服王朝) and two ethno-religious minorities (the Buddhist Tibetans and the Muslim Hui) (Jones, 2005; Fitzgerald, 1998). While the anthem would last less than a year, the flag remained until it was replaced in 1928 by the twelve-pointed sun flag used to this day by Taiwan (ROC). Leibold (2010) describes Han as an "'empty,' 'invisible' or 'unmarked' signifier, a seemingly 'residual category' that marks all those who are not one of the feminized, exotic/erotic and oppressed ethnic minorities" (p. 542) which allows many sociocultural and political-national norms to be projected onto it. Yet Chen (2010) describes the synonymization of Han*ness* with Chinese*ness* as a subsumption— to which he adds "Han has never referred to a homogeneous population but to a historically fluctuating, imagined community" (p. 259). By fluctuating, Chen offers an extension of Anderson (1983) by situating the PRC's nation-building project as also one in motion.

However, the PRC's contemporary subsumption of Han identity into Chinese identity also fuses a logic of Han racism into Chineseness by institutionalizing Han majoritarianism into a dominant state ideology (Chen, 2010, Townsend, 1992). Chen (2010) argues that race as an identity marker, in the Chinese context, is conceptually different from Quijano's (2000) theorizing which is a result of white colonization of the Americas. Instead, the racial formation of a Yellow race emerging in the fifteenth century in China predates the formation of nation-states and Western colonization of the Americas (Dikotter, 1992). Dikotter's (1997) later work

adds that this Yellow*ness* formed a lineage by which the majority Han became able to assert this symbolic boundary between those of this sacred lineage and those not.

In response, Louie (2004) adds that the "color yellow was used to represent a 'racial' (biological) cohesiveness… and encompassed both hereditary and territorial components as the nation was imagined as descended from a common ancestor and living in a shared territory" (p. 58). Louie makes two important points in this line. First, Dikotter's (1992, 1997) use of the word race is unqualified insofar as it does not distinguish between Chinese and Western conceptualizations thereby necessitating her point that there is both a territoriality as well as a familial dimension. In doing so, Louie (2004) clarifies that physiognomy (again, Han=Chinese) was not solidified until the end of the Qing. Secondly, this subsumption of Han*ness* into Yellow*ness* with a territorial component is affirmed throughout the subsequent centuries and shows the way Asian*ness*, subsequently in Western contexts, becomes Sinocentric (e.g. Yellow Peril) which I take up later in this paper (Tuan, 1998).

With the fall of the Qing imminent, efforts to further destabilize the Manchu dynasty were pushed by several revolutionaries who tried to imagine a Chinese nation-state (中華民族). This Yellowness, as a result, denoted "both the 'racial-kinship' bond of the Chinese and their ties to the land" (Chow, 1997, p. 50) of the mythologized Middle Kingdom (中國) which was seen as under a constant state of assault by the west. This distinction, Chun (1996) argues, means that Chineseness "transcended the hard and fast boundaries that usually associate with the standardized dominion and sovereign totality of the nation-state. This explains the persistent imagination of an unbroken historical continuity" (p. 113). This perceived unbrokenness amplifies The Century of Humiliation's ontoepistemic shock which catalyzed an accelerated

consolidation of a single Chinese identity and reinforced the subsumption of regional identities into the nation-state framework.

Returning to Chen (2010), this Han-centered logic informs the turn from chauvinism into what he calls Han racism by consolidating Han from a default discursive "center" into a marker of exceptionalism, and then into an abject superiority. He writes that this logic begins with encounters with an Other that "always presupposes the subject's knowledge of an accumulated set of practices, which in turn condition and mobilize the subject's practices when confronting the unfamiliar Other" (p. 259). Within this framework, and a Confucian philosophical tradition, the creation of a personified *yin* (subject) and a *yang* (Other) the relationality presupposes a fixity of the subject. However, in the self-racialization as a "Yellow" race within a Chinese ontology also is a fluidity because of the dominant Han group's own fluid evolutions in their cultural (re)productions (Ang, 2022; Chen, 2010). As a result, the instinctual response to the Other is a reaction to the current iteration of Han*ness* and, therefore, the ways the dominant group chooses to manifest itself.

Citing ambiguities in Mandarin and English between race, ethnicity, and nationality, Chen (2012), asserts that "to demonize the Other is part of a familiar Han imaginary in which the self is human while the Other is not" (p. 260). In doing so, he also implies an elevation of wherever Han*ness* occupies to be a focal point of humanity civilization tying Louie's (2004) territorialization argument and the necessity of a geographic entity (Ang, 2022) whilst also aligning with Chun's (1996) argument about its hollowness. Taking this logic one step further, Chen (2010) suggests that the slipperiness of Han racism is in its power as a technology of contemporary nation-building mobilizing the logic of humanizing the self and animalizing the

other as a "formula of self-defense through psychic superiority" (p. 264). To echo Louie (2004), this territorialized psychic superiority, however, is part of its simultaneous rootedness and its ability to stretch and constitute what Chen (2010) refers to as a universal chauvinism that parallels many of the technologies and methodologies of other supremacist ideologies in their ability to reinforce their epistemic superiority (Leonardo, 2009).

For example, in the century that followed the founding of the Republic of China, a bitter contest was fought over how the Qing and Yuan Dynasties would be portrayed in Taiwanese and PRC textbooks which impacts Han and Chinese identity relative to these so-called interruptions to Han rule over China (Baranovitch, 2010). As a result, as Baranovitch (2010) shows, this contestation and subsequent ones suggest the ways Chinese*ness* in the last century is reactive to that which is not Chinese, in territoriality or ontology (Chen, 2010). This line of reasoning is easily linked to the physical space of borders of a nation-state as a principle organizing logic—but also the ways these psychological defenses are mobilized to protect them (Ang, 2022; Zhao, 1998). The heart of what Han*ness,* subsumed into Chinese*ness*, is violently reacting to gets to the heart of the stickiness between terms like chauvinism, nationalism, racism and, I argue, supremacism. This subsumption also, notably, is a form of protectionism by placing Han people as legitimized inheritors of the long history of the Middle Kingdom so to challenge the Han is to assault this historical legacy rather than the immediate and contemporaneous choices by Han people, in roles of the political and economic elite, enacting violence against those deemed to be subhuman and Other.

This contest has also been over the essential Chinese identity marker, whether it be language, culture, religion, ethnicity, race, or even descendants from the Yellow Emperor (炎黃

子孫) (Louie, 2004). Yet, ethnic Han supremacy (Hanism, chauvinism, centrism, nationalism) burgeoned as resentment of the Manchu Qing especially grew both in Chinese history teaching and amongst the public against the non-Han dynasties for their aggression, a sentiment that had grown in intensity throughout the end of the Republican Era and well into the foundation of the PRC (Osnos, 2014). As the Dynastic period ended, the Manchu Qing's instability came a sentiment that China needed to be for Chinese people (Hanren) in reaction to the Qing's loss of the Mandate of Heaven which Dr. Sun opposed which has became central to the historical narrative told in Mainland schools (Pinar, 2014). Chow (1997) also is careful to state that the 'modern' era of Chinese history of the Opium Wars - 1911 suggested that anti-Manchu sentiments made it impossible to draw strictly biological distinctions between Han and Manchus, instead shifting to familial lineages that descended from the Yellow Emperor. This shift, Chen's (2010) argument suggests, reinforces the Han as anointed or entitled rulers of China and exemplifies how the dichotomized paradigm of human and nonhuman within the logic of Han racism burgeons into a technology of national imagination— and coherence.

Sun and Mao both foresaw the post-Qing nation-state needing to navigate the Han people's prejudicial and discriminatory actions towards ethnic minorities in China as essential to maintaining a fragile national imagination (Wang, 2012). Within this logic, and given that the Han had claimed the territories associated with many ethnic minorities, the state lost its ability to mobilize exclusionary xenophobia. Instead, Republican China and the early PRC chose to use educational contexts, such as placing political emphasis on national curricula, as spaces of ethnonationalized consolidation around a singular Chinese identity in which Han*ness* was fundamentally embedded (Ang, 2022; Chow, 1997; Scott, 2009; Townsend, 1992). Post-Qing

multiculturalism grounded in ideas of tolerance, as a result, suggests how immediate needs of political security can mask an underlying and nefarious project that maintains Han political power (Baranovitch, 2010). By the founding of the PRC, Mao Zedong saw the intensifying so-called anti-minority sentiment as a threat to the early PRC's stability.

Mao (1953) described the danger of failing to "overcome Han chauvinism… The problem in the relations between nationalities which reveals itself in the Party and among the people in many places is the existence of Han chauvinism to a serious degree and not just a matter of its vestiges" (n.p.). Mao's explicit resistance to the idea of a Han ethnostate aligns with the Marxist-Leninist view of a united working class. Yet, in the early years of the PRC (mid-1950s) "the rest of the Mao era were still extremely Han-centric and treated non-Han peoples as non-Chinese others" (Baranovitch, 2010, p. 87). Baranovitch helpfully situates ethnic nationalism as both the construction of racialized identities in the early PRC, and also angling of racialized identities in the creation, and upkeep, of political stability. As a result, I show the ways Han*ness'* subsumptions into Yellow*ness* (Louie, 2004) and Chinese*ness* (Chen, 2010) is not merely a conflation, but an intentional turn that also leads others (e.g. Chun, 1996) to call important analytical attention to Hanness' hollowness.

Miasma, Humiliation, Chinese Characteristics, and *Chinese Characteristics*

Thus far, I have argued for the formation of Han racism that also is tied territorially to the context I refer to as China. Next, having situated the transition from Hanness to Chineseness, will shift to focus on how these conceptual conflations are institutionalized and weaponized by the PRC. On October 1, 1949, when Mao proclaimed the founding of the PRC which many scholars cite as the end of the Century of Humiliation (1839-1949) (Wang, 2012). Townsend

(1992) writes that what is perhaps most humiliating about imperialist aggression in China was that "foreign imperialism did not have to conquer the empire to destroy it. It had only to demonstrate that its formidable military power carried an explicit challenge" (p. 99) to a Chinese worldview. Townsend argues, like Zheng (2012), that what is most traumatic in Greater China's collective memory is the loss of a sacrality (a celestial empire) that came with a loss of sovereignty. Amidst the chaos, Christian missionaries seeded an institutional legacy that persists to this day in contexts such as Christian orphanages' facilitation adoptions to the United States from where many transnational adoptees originate (Louie, 2015).

One such missionary, Arthur Henderson Smith, coined the phrase "Chinese characteristics" in his (1894/1890) book of the same time (Liu, 2013). The phrase, incorrectly attributed to Deng Xiaoping, who popularized it through his project of neoliberalization of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) economy under the banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics (Harvey, 2004). In *Chinese Characteristics,* Smith (1894) describes the necessity of continued Western Christianization of China in racist detail— a seeming justification for continued imperialism in China. Among the many dehumanizing claims Smith (1894) makes within the book, he writes that the Chinese people are "seen to be irrepressible; is felt to be incomprehensible. He cannot, indeed, be rightly understood in any country but China, yet the impression still prevails that he is a bundle of contradictions who cannot be understood at all" (p. 11). Noting the use of the singular tense in the quote above, Smith makes the deliberate choice to construct the Chinese people as a monolithic singularity which aligned with popular theorizing of the time that "conceptualizes human differences primarily in terms of organic unity and identity" (Liu, 2013, p. 410) which served the purpose of creating a taxonomy of racial and

national hierarchy epitomized in 18th and 19th century German Romanticism. Yet, Smith's (1894) ethnography of the Chinese people's characteristics was conceptually problematized by Said's (1979) seminal *Orientalism*, less than a century later. Yet, the titular phrase has endured even being enshrined in the Constitutions of both the CCP since 1978, and of the PRC since 1997 (CCP, 1997; PRC, 2018). While Smith's account can be understood today to be racist and essentializing, his characterization endures in the legitimization of an ethnoracial paradigm in which people claim and seek to defend their and others' Chinese characteristics.

Smith's descriptions of China written in this period of transition from empire to nation-state created a monocultural nationalism that yielded "a genre of empty, homogenous space that transcended whatever ethnic, religious or other attributes (even citizenship and sovereignty)" (Chun, 2017, p. 6) that scholars affix within the boundaries of a national identity. While I present this contestation of national identity without a desire to engage in intent around the formulation of Han*ness* and Chineseness, Chun's (2017b) point that "Chinese everywhere are clouded by their own fog of identity" (p. 7) lends itself to a resignation that its hollowness lacks analytical value. I argue, instead, that the fog metaphor helpfully recalls the "miasma" associated with ancient Southern China that a fog reflects the in-betweenness of Han identity. On the one hand, social forces that lift up Han*ness* and hegemonize it as an axis of global power as a way of protecting it from external forces (e.g. Western imperialism) (Zhang et al., 2022; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). On the other is an identity crisis of sorts caused by this fog in subordinating China to Western imperial powers, against whom Han logic defines itself, that gives way to global discourses of Sinophobia (He, 2010; Liu. 2020).

As Han-centered "Chinese characteristics" move across borders, it does so into diasporic places without the protectionist orientations toward a physical space, even as members of the diaspora long for it. Louie (2004) writes that, for members of the diaspora, "two physical characteristics [black eyes and yellow skin] were used time and time again in both official and informal discussions to explain why overseas Chinese would wish to return to China, and what, if nothing else, remained essentially Chinese about them" (p. 151). In Louie's telling, the phrase "if nothing else" stands out because of the multiple layers of diversity within the diaspora communities that can complicate the negotiations needed in Western contexts like the United States where Chinese diasporic communities are in community and shared racialization with other APIDA/A communities (Chun, 2017; Kim, 1999). Louie evokes the imagination of a Chinese nation around the biological physiognomy of Chinese people grounded in Han so-called biological traits from which national and political identity can emerge (Anderson, 1983). The CCP's seeming embrace of biological physiognomy then permits the fusing of Han ethnic nationalism with a conservative political ideology (Leibold, 2010) necessitating further historicization of how these discourses have been fused into a national political ideology. To most fully engage in the logic of Han racism and its turn towards a supremacy, I will next turn to PRC nationalism and the ways this fundamental logic of Han racism is taken up.

Who, then, are the people of the People's Republic of China?

Before I make the case for Han racism as a supremacist ideology, I will contextualize why the PRC has narrativized preserving a Chinese homeland in such militaristic and protectionist terms. In his book about Chinese national-political memory, Wang (2012) argues that the PRC's redemption story reflects a "Chosenness-Myths-Trauma" complex or

megalomania-paranoia set on never, ever, allowing for another humiliation to happen to a people (and their nation-state) chosen by celestial forces. Some (e.g. Schell & Delury, 2013) even suggest that this is both a means of maintaining the PRC's political legitimacy, and a motivation to maintain the logics of Han racism and, I argue, mask them somewhat innocuously as nationalism.

Agamben (1993), writing shortly after the 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre, articulated the aftermath in terms of the PRC's repression of what could be seen as a corruption of Chinese 'characteristics,' in the form of advocating for political liberalization in the wake of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). Reflecting on Tiananmen, he writes that "what the State cannot tolerate in any way… is that singularities form a community without affirming an identity, that humans co-belong without any representable condition of belonging" (Agamben, 1993, p. 85). Agamben, writing from the West, gazes upon the PRC and seemingly argues that even within these conditions of revolt Chinese characteristics are presumed to have a fixity around which a condition of belonging can be enforced. While I take Agamben's (1993) point that nation-states cannot tolerate when those who resist refuse the state. Here, however, with the PRC exercising the power to claim who belongs and who is Other does so predicated upon the fluidities of Han*ness* and Chinese*ness* around which a "chosenness" is internalized and trauma that shapes a national consciousness reactive to the collective trauma of imperialism (Fanon, 1967; Chen, 2010).

As a result, one interpretation of the PRC's militant repression of Tiananmen shows that Neo-Confucian societal 'harmony' operationalizes the Han logic of subject and Other vis-a-vis any dissent or acclimating to outsiders' epistemologies (e.g. Western liberal democracy) is a

turning of subject into Other (Bell, 2010, Feb. 20; Ford, 2015; Jin, 2014, Sept. 30). As a result, Han*ness* is whatever the state says it is. In another, the PRC's actions against peaceful demonstrators shows that being 'Chinese' is perhaps less culturally dependent, but rather a form of cultural power defined by the regime or government in power. In the consequent criminalization of dissent, combined with the subsequent campaign for Patriotic Education, suggests that dissent is thus both un-Han and unpatriotic (Zhao, 1998).

In the wake of Tiananmen, the PRC instituted the Patriotic Education Campaign (PEC) that sought to place Deng Xiaoping's Reform and Opening policies which embraced Western and neoliberal market principles, but not the political liberalization that modernization theorists assumed would follow (Fukuyama, 1992; Zhao, 1998; Zheng, 2008). Zheng (2008) argues that Tiananmen and the subsequent PEC encouraged the PRC to reimagine its history curriculum in particular to redouble the CCP's political legitimacy by placing themselves between the savior, victor, and victim narratives. Doing so allowed the CCP to highlight how the century of humiliation was a deviation from China's otherwise proud past, equating Western liberal democracy with the politics of imperialism and colonialism. Subsequently, the PRC proceeded to radically revise the national school curriculum nearly annually in the years immediately following the 1989 Tiananmen massacre (Pinar, 2014; Zhao, 1998).

Following these educational reforms, the PRC also tightened its control over the internet where Leibold (2010) argues, that there is a "Hanist" movement that blames the Yuan and Qing for an otherwise Han Chinese context's historical declines which he analyzes to articulate a concept of Han supremacy. Leibold (2010) writes about the conflation between Han and Chinese, as well as "the inherent fungibility of Han as an ethnic and cultural marker" (p. 542).

Leibold's use of the word fungibility, while reiterating the political exploitability argument, belies the dynamic of self and Other. That is, while Han identity can be weaponized in ways that create political and symbolic boundaries between peoples (Dikotter, 1997), the fundamental logic of fungibility also suggests that mimics other forms of supremacy. While I ultimately agree with Leibold's (2010) call to utilize Han *supremacy* as an analytical possibility rightly acknowledges the ways in which the construction of a Han ethnonationality institutionalizes the dominance of Han epistemology into the governing philosophy of the PRC.

The PRC has, in effect, doubled down on these policies in the three decades since Tiananmen by implementing a "Great Firewall" that has amplified, according to Leibold (2010), Han supremacist speech. Leibold (2010) further explains that the internet, as an access point to information, has made the Han-Chinese conflation problematic because it called attention to its potential for weaponization without shifting the narrative of self and Other. From the patriotic education campaign following Tiananmen, the moral patriotism and national rejuvenation themes of the current 2010-2020 education policy, to even a recent ban on karaoke songs that "endanger national unity, sovereignty, or territorial integrity" (Tan, 2021, 11 August), reveals the political legitimacy, stability, and stake invested into the national curriculum by the CCP (Devarajan & Chong, 2023; PRC Ministry of Education, 2010; Zhao, 1998).

In these repeated conflations of national unity with the continued institutionalization of Han culture with the idea of Chineseness, further layers of obscurity of this norm seem to be placed on top of how the PRC has engaged with educating its large populace inside and outside of the classroom, since. The consequences of this have become a canonical or near-universal construction of Chineseness that has been imported by those fleeing the PRC since its founding

and permeated into the Western North American consciousness of who the Chinese people are, and how this has become increasingly synonymous with 'standard' forms grounded in Han cultural praxes. Next, I seek to apply this historical background to argue for Han Supremacy as a form of supremacy in and of itself.

Han Supremacy

Concepts like "race," especially in Dikotter's (1992) usage, have specific roots in modern Western epistemology with racial categories emerging out of imperialist and colonial ideologies enacted upon the Americas (Quijano, 2000). Dikötter (1997), acknowledging that he is applying a Western conceptualization of race, is cautious about whether or not discourses of race and racism even exist in conversation about Asia despite his conclusion that a [Han] Chinese race fundamentally grounds the PRC as a nation-state. Many Western-trained and situated Sinologists point out how Chinese identity as a "racial" marker is grounded in a biological discourse of purity and centrality to the center of power in the Imperial court which draws lineage to the Yellow Emperor (Huang Di) (Louie, 2004). Yellowness is an affective and mythologized link both to territoriality (a pathway to nationalism), and physiognomy (a pathway to ethnoracial superiority) which is easily exploited to reaffirm the existence of nation-states. While I have, thus far, argued for the ways the multiple layers of subsumption and abstraction blur the potential precision that Han racism as a concept can provide as an analytical tool. In the remaining sections of this essay, I build on Chen's (2010) concept of Han racism and depart from Leibold's (2010) (who never defines supremacism) conceptualization of Han supremacy while still arriving at the same term.

Supremacist Ideologies

I lack space in this paper to fully elucidate the multitudes of supremacist ideologies globally, nor will I engage in creating hierarchies around them. Dominant ideologies operate in supremacist ways. Thobani's (2019) and Knitter's (2019) arguments of the symbioses of supremacies and ethnonationalism, focus on their shared technologies and operationalizations as a cluster of supremacist ideologies. The shift to Chineseness as a racial identity, as Louie (2004) and Dikötter (1997) describe, is important because of how people take up multiple iterations of Chineseness and how they are superimposed to revise and assert a single Chinese kingdom/ nation-state's claim to "China" even as Chineseness extends beyond and predates the concept of a nation-state.

While Chinese conceptualizations of race embed Han logics and territoriality into a singular label, this does not inherently mean a "Chinese nation-state" is not inherently founded on institutionalizing that supremacy such as the case of Israel and Jewish supremacy (Rose, 1986). Duara (1995) refers to the activists who reframed "multiple, mobile identifications into a Chineseness that eliminated or reduced internal boundaries, on the one hand, and hardened the boundaries between Chinese and non-Chinese, on the other" (Duara, 1995, p. 41). Duara's logic parallels Chen's (2010), which Ang (2022) echoes by referring to Chinese identities as containing "senses of racial distinctiveness if not chauvinism" (p. 763). This, still, does not equate to supremacy.

First, while supremacist ideologies are not solely the domination of one *racial* group over another (Thobani, 2019; Anuar, 2019), supremacy in the anglophone Global North is often associated with white supremacy. White supremacy, however, can coexist with other supremacist

ideologies across identity markers. As Thobani (2019) and Knitter (2019) argue, mutually reinforce each other through a "linking of political projects and actors" (Thobani, 2019, p. 750) through seemingly unrelated political projects. Religious supremacies such as Christian and Buddhist supremacies in the United States and Sri Lanka respectively embed themselves within other forms of supremacy (white supremacy and Sinhalese supremacy, respectively) in ways that coexist but are not mutually reliant and supportive. Multiple supremacist ideologies exist simultaneously and act in ways that institutionalize and normalize multiple layers of domination (Leonardo, 2009). Specifically, dominant ideologies and practices within one context, such as "Asian values" in the U.S. context, can simultaneously be cathected with Sinocentrism as well as Hanness even as it is racialized and marginalized under white supremacy. As a result, the dominant material and sociocultural power of a given group over those dehumanized and Othered is less effectively analyzed in terms of hierarchies but rather for simultaneities (Park, 2023).

Second, Han identity as an ethnoracial identity marker interacts with the Western paradigm. In the context of a label like Asian American, ethnoracialization is a product of anthropology that sought to turn theoretical lenses rooted in zoological classifications of blood and genetics into ones that explain culture, whereby cultural categories became racial ones (Prashad, 2010). Ethnoracialization can lend itself to a form of ethnoracial nationalism as a more fluid process in order to "attend to the entwined process in which the PRC utilizes ethno-racial claims to sustain its predatory expansion," (Zhang et al., 2022, p. 503). Zhang and Colleagues notably do not use the phrase Han supremacy, but rather Han-centrism to point to the ways ethnoracial nationalism institutionalizes dominance. Even in not using the phrase, they point to

the ways that white supremacy and other forms of domination exist in parallel without requiring them to be mutually reliant, though they may mutually reinforcing. This relationality is important because the Han are often referred to as an ethnic community (such as within the APIDA/A coalition) which draws on Western conceptualizations of race insofar as ethnicity is distinct from a socially constructed mode of classification based on phenotype or physical characteristics. In doing so, Han supremacy can operate in context, and some relationality to, other supremacist ideologies and logics.

Chinese Supremacy

The mixing of local and colonial/global ideologies of race in greater China, for example, means that words like 族 (*zú*) have become references to clan, race, and nationality (e.g. 民族, *minzú* [nationality]; 五族共和歌, *Wǔ zú gònghé gē* [Song of the Five Races]) to reflect the needs of contemporary political discourse (Link, 2013). This reinterpretation and embrace in the PRC and Taiwan of Western epistemological constructions of Chineseness as a race and Han identity as an ethnicity also muddle what kinds of violence Han*ness* is being mobilized to enact. This distinction is far more than semantic, given the ways that these actions have an analytical bearing on how state discourses enact neoimperial violence, especially in a moment of ethnoracial paranoia along a 21st century Cold War polarization of global power (Zhang et al., 2022).

This mix of linguistic ambiguity and uncomfortable tensions between epistemological paradigms position Chineseness and race differently and have facilitated state discourses of Chineseness that merge racial, ethnic, national, linguistic, and cultural identities (Chen, 2010). The nation-state is, as a result, uniquely positioned to enact and reproduce socialization-politicization-racialization in contexts such as education. Therefore, with these state discourses

as “the basis for inculcating national identity in both thought and practice, it is difficult to distinguish the various dimensions of political orthodoxy, social value, and life routine, all of which serve to engender ‘Chineseness’” (Chun, 1996, p. 117). Chun (1996, 2017), while somewhat reticent to delve into race as part of the construction of Chineseness, does detail talk about these big-tent concepts of a single Chinese family, and ethnicity. Chun’s implicit argument aligns with Chen’s (2010) about the fluidity of the practices that constitute Han*ness*.

Chen’s (2010) argument, however, is not contingent upon a single Chinese nation-state and when merged with Zhang and Colleagues’ (2022) argument makes visible these identity dimensions converge when operating within a national context that has the political capacity to seek to export their hegemonic discourse of Chineseness’ superiority into other contexts. In this way, the transpacific turn can begin to shed light on Sinocentrism within diasporic are situated awkwardly within these multiple paradigms that, at first glance, combine ethnic, racial, linguistic, cultural, and national identities.

It is important to note, too, that the discourses of people in Greater Chinese contexts need to be distinguished from those of diasporic communities. In particular, Chun (1997) writes in his seminal critique of the concept of “Chineseness,” that:

> The difference between [Chinese] ethnic disposition as characterized by custom or language and their sense of identity as a bounded community vis-a-vis others is important for understanding why Chinese overseas could continue to claim to have a sense of ethnic Chineseness, regardless of how deeply they were actually assimilated into indigenous society. The

> sojourning nature of the Chinese in premodern times is an extreme example wherein Chineseness represents both ethnicity and identity (p. 123).

This distinction points to the multiple pathways that Lowe (1996) and Louie (2004, 2015) explicate in how people come to their ethnic and racial identities, but most relevant for this exploration is how these multiple pathways become summarily attached to a historical, civilizational and even cosmological lineage which has itself been appropriated and controlled for political purposes. These discourses are fueled through Chinese identity and suggest the movements of Han-as-Chinese globally to affirm the PRC's construction of a Han-centric Chinese identity. The transition between Han*ness* being synonymized with Chinese*ness* then asserted by state discourses impacts the ways by which people come to identify as Chinese. This conceptualization of Chineseness, as a result, already envelops an embedded logic of territorialized Han*ness.* This institutionalization clarifies and lays bare the interplay of racism, coloniality, and Orientalism is permissive of Sinocentrism thereby impacting Asianization beyond the PRC, such as in white Western formalizations of Asian diasporic identities.

What's Precious about Han Supremacy

In this final section, I take up how Han supremacy's logics are mobilized in ways that transcend the PRC's borders and impact the lived experiences of diaspora communities, as well as the contradiction of a violent supremacist ideology and preciousness. I like to use the word "precious" in my analyses because what makes something precious is its ability to signal the multitude of intimacies (Lowe, 2015) and relationalities that individuals experience toward Chineseness— especially in diasporic contexts. That which is precious is also something to be

defended. To be clear, I have no such attachment as a non-Han, Taiwanese American person but my own social positionality impacts my sensitivities to Han supremacy, especially in the in-betweenness that Chineseness creates for those like me who identify as Taiwanese (He, 2010). Sensitivity towards preciousness also calls attention to the complex mix of emotions that individuals have about the ways their Chineseness positions them in a state of in-betweenness and exile in diasporic contexts and amidst seemingly irreconcilable paradigms (He, 2003, 2010, 2021). For others, Chineseness remains something that is inescapable and binding, a source of long-distance connection tinged with longing (Louie, 2004; Thobani, 2019). For other still, Chineseness is an inescapability that gestures towards forced relationality to, and therefore complicity in, a PRC state in whose shadow that necessitates many scholarly meditations often balanced in urgency against the immediate needs of the diaspora in the U.S. context (Ang, 2001; Au, 2018; Chun 1996, 2017).

Chen's (2010) caution to the diaspora, writing from Taiwan, now reads like an eerie premonition. He writes that critical reflection within Diasporic contexts was/is urgently needed and that doing so "preempts the possibility of falling back into the imperial dream, the desire to become a superpower that can compete with the United States" (Chen, 2010, p. 197). In context of governing doctrines of the Chinese Dream, and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era in the PRC, Chen's call suggests that what is most precious to the CCP is that historical identity. The Chinese dream evokes the technologies of the West (*a la* American Dream) that also calls attention to the ways APIDA/A people are positioned in ways that seek distinction from other racialized communities (Goodwin, 2010). In mobilizing the fluidity associated with Han identity embedded within state discourses of Chinese

characteristics, the CCP injects further layers of abstraction and subjectivity by making one person's thoughts and an indefinite material condition of a "new era" a hegemonic doctrine of the PRC nation-state.

Transnational circulations of Sinophobic racism, that is the racialization and racial subordination of Chinese people in Western contexts, also suggest a practical need to protect 'Chineseness' from external forces. Western scholars and politicians perpetuated orientalist ideologies and epistemologies that exotified and dehumanized Asian peoples which made an Other that was easy to intellectually and militarily colonize (Said, 1979). Simultaneously, state-sanctioned discrimination, like the Chinese Exclusion Acts (1882) in the United States and the contemporary "archetype of the contagious Orientalist" (Liu, 2020, p. 13) tropes, suggests an undeniable and persistent pattern of Sinophobia (Day, 2016; Kim, 1999; Liu, 2020; Takaki, 1998). The collective uprisings that emerged in response to Western abuse of China eventually ended the Century of Humiliation and found common cause in Marxist-Leninist, and later Maoist, thought (Spence, 1996; Wang, 2009). At the same time, as with much of China's history, numerous communities never wanted to be governed by the Han in the first place thereby making absorption in diasporic contexts a potential continuity of historical trauma for many non-Han peoples relative to Sinocentrism (Espiritu, 1992; Scott, 2009). This, albeit temporary, nationalization of all of Greater China in order to resist the ongoing trauma of imperialism created a boundedness affixed to territoriality that I argue is central to the construction of a state discourse of Chineseness (Chun, 2017; Louie, 2004).

The neoimperial implications of the PRC's recent expansionist policy orientations are but one dimension of the global reach of Han supremacy (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, 2020; Zhang et

al., 2022). However, this is at the level of policy and now these ethnoracial and racialized Chinese identities are internalized by members of the diaspora where these intimacies are perhaps more visible, even as people interact with these policy paradigms. In the U.S. context, the social construction of racial identities, and differential racialization, are technologies of white supremacy that are well understood through analytical frames such as Critical Race Theory and its extension frameworks like AsianCrit (Bell, 1991; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Leonardo, 2009). However, there remains a need to further explore the consequences of conceptualizing Chinese and East Asian dominance in the Asian American community (Ngo & Lee, 2007), as a precedent set for defining or presuming Asian to be stereotyped as, and synonymous with, Chineseness. "Yellowness" that I discussed above becomes "Sinified" (made Chinese) as it moves to the U.S. context (Takaki, 1998). Asian Americanists continue to grapple with the durable pervasiveness of the Yellow Peril (that is, the modern and contemporary manifestations of Yellowness) and its rootedness in racist-xenophobia, and how Yellow Peril is asymmetrically addressed in ways where East Asian diasporic communities receive significantly more support (Hsieh & Kim, 2020; Ngo & Lee, 2006) While Yellow Peril was weaponized against newcomers from China to the United States, Sinocentric responses to it uphold anti-Blackness without critiquing Han supremacy's reliance on exceptionalism to privilege discourses that privilege APIDA/A racialization relative to whiteness in Western contexts (Friend & Thayer, 2017; Kim & Hsieh, 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). Sinocentric constructions of the APIDA/A coalition risks mobilizing the model minority myth and more to embed those Han-centric exceptionalist discourses into the construction of the entire

coalition when problematic assumptions like the model minority emerges out of problematic assumptions about Han and other East Asian communities.

The problem then becomes when Yellow*ness*' inculcations with Chineseness morphs into a signifier of Asian*ness* in the U.S. context. To be clear, I do not mean to hyperbolically hyperextend this argument to suggest that Han supremacy is embedded within the APIDA/A coalition, or that majoritarian discourses suggest that the APIDA/A coalition is full of Han supremacists. Our shared racialization under white supremacy does, however, facilitate a coalitional politic that is certainly responsive to the ways U.S. contexts engage in panethnic lumping and essentialism (Espiritu, 1992, Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Wang, 1995). The distinction I make here is that critiques of Sinocentrism are distinct from critiques of Han supremacy because to critique the former is critiquing Chineseness defined by a majoritarian logic rather than a supremacist ideology. By this I mean that critiques of Sinocentrism rely on critiques of a logic of consolidation along a binary construction of China and the West (Chen, 2010), and a majoritarian logic whereby there were (but no longer) simply more Chinese than all others ethnoracialized as Asian in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 21 September).

To critique Han supremacy, instead, is to critique the underlying logic that motivates Sinocentric consolidations in the first place and the supremacist ideologies embedded and operationalized within the PRC nation-state. To avoid the perception of Sinophobia in my argument, I am attentive to the instability that Han supremacy interjects into the APIDA/A label and its impacts on diasporic communities by masking the many pathways by which people come to their respective identities within the APIDA/A coalition.

People's multiple entry points and pathways to Chinese identities, masked by a hegemonic and exported state doctrine of Chineseness, highlight the complexity of multiple epistemologies coming into contact. While certainly not a new phenomenon, the implications of doing this without sufficient nuance have material consequences. For example, the intersections and tensions between these forms of "Chinese" identity and history which, along with other East Asian contexts, tend to dominate the curricular representation of the APIDA/A coalition as a panethnic community exemplify the complex relationship with colonialism and imperialism that shaped the national and ethnic boundaries which refine the technologies of a curriculum of violence against APIDA/As (An, 2020; Espiritu, 1992). Further, the challenges of nuancing the curricular representation of the Asian American panethnic community which sometimes struggles to define itself beyond Han Chinese, Japanese, and Korean narratives, and experiences of pain and struggle (Espiritu, 1992; Ramaprasad, 2020; Rodríguez, 2020).

One example where the opacity of Chinese identity beyond the PRC is on full display is navigating the ethnolingual identity of Cantonese in Hong Kong (Bland, 2017; Chan, 2015). In an editorial for *The New York Times*, Yu (2010, 22 July) lamented how "when these children are not taught to speak the language of their ancestors [Cantonese], a connection with their native culture is bound to be lost" (n.p.). She expressed concern about how the PRC's increasing exercise of direct political control over Hong Kong (contrary to the One Country, Two Systems doctrine) began with the encroachment of Mandarin (so-called Standard Chinese) into Hong Kong schools which had taught in both English and Cantonese. What would emerge in the subsequent decade is a brutal crackdown on the city, and the amplified presence of "a blood-based view which encourages an oversimplified and racialized understanding of Chinese

identity" (Lin & Jackson, 2020, p. 9) to combat localism such as Cantonese or Hong Kong identities and violently absorbing them Chineseness (Gao, 2013). Lin and Jackson (2020) further suggest that this racialized identity positions ethnolingual of sociocultural minorities as seemingly 'corrupted' Chinese insofar as "the blood-based view links with ethnic nationalism… constructs a fabricated image of homogenous Chinese ethnicity" (p. 9) that views linguistic differences as inconsequential.

As migration to Chinese American enclaves in the American and Canadian Pacific Coasts, local governments have seemingly accepted the PRC's redefinition of the Chinese language. For example, Section 203 of The Voting Rights Act (1975) created Language Minority Provisions which requires localities to provide election materials in multiple languages if a linguistic minority exceeds 10,000 persons or five percent of the voting population. In San Francisco, CA, and New York, NY, for example, this includes the Chinese language. However, both the San Francisco and New York City Departments of Elections list the Chinese (中文) translations in traditional Mandarin which is considerably less accessible to those who were educated in the PRC and can be subject to intense political controversy (Zhao & Baldauf, 2010). In basing the linguistic label on a geographic, rather than cultural affinity (acknowledging also that Cantonese is a dialect with largely the same written language), the written language is implied to be more definitive than the spoken, thus suggesting that all dialects are dominated by a single Chinese (Putonghua) label which further concretizes these conditions of belonging to a catch-all Chinese label even if individuals cannot speak 'standard' Mandarin.

As the matrix of global power shifts towards the PRC, its emulation of Western technologies of empire the genocidal interventions in context of minoritized ethnic communities,

territorial expansionism in the South China Sea, and neocolonialism in Africa has been canonized by a materially and affectively Chinese ontology (Devarajan & Chong, 2023; Harvey, 2005; Mignolo, 2020; Paine & Zeichner, 2012). Where scholars go from here is what I hope will be an analytical sensitivity to Han supremacy that takes into account its intimacies and its preciousness— especially as future work attends to its violence.

A Conclusion

This essay has argued for the analytical utility of Han supremacy, which I position as having methodological similarities and ideological parallels to other supremacist ideologies. I have done so by briefly historicizing Han ethnic, and ethnoracial, nationalism. In doing so, I argued for its conceptual distinction from similar terms such as Han chauvinism and Han centrism, as well as Sinocentrism. This distinction is especially important in my critique of the genocidal and neoimperial interventions of the PRC nation-state, rather than of the "Chinese" people. As I conclude this essay, I wish to offer a deliberation on the stakes in getting any such future analysis right and urge caution to colleagues to take up this framework.

Amidst the pomp and circumstance of the CCP's 100th anniversary, the party added another plank to its argument about the supremacy of the Han: descent from a unique species. In a recently published report by Shao and colleagues (2021) found that a skull hidden in a Harbin well for 85 years is, in fact, a new species of human. Named *Homo longi*, or Dragon Man (龍人), describes a human ancestor that is more closely related to us *Homo sapiens*, rather than Neanderthals (Shao, et al., 2021). The implications of these findings, beyond the paleoanthropological and geochemical, are also a potential justification for the newly centenarian

CCP to claim that human civilization perhaps owes less to the proliferation from Africa, replacing even the Tigris and Euphrates with the Yellow and Yangtze rivers.

The perhaps concerning part of this indisputably consequential scientific discovery is the ammunition afforded to the PRC government to essentially claim even further biological superiority in a way that Chinese historical memory of Han Supremacy that Smith (1890), Dikötter (1997), or Chow (1997) describe, could have dreamt. The use of these findings, seemingly timed to the CCP's centennial not only demonstrates several scientific advances but also a near return to transitional political legitimacy that can justify rule through a claim that humans evolved from a 'Chinese' source. The Han exceptionalism that undergirds this chauvinistic claim suggests supremacy perhaps more clearly than prior examples in this essay. What is especially frightening about this claim is that the multiple logics of consolidation I have discussed in this piece suggest that the PRC has little desire to be in coalition or solidarity with other Asian contexts except as it affirms its consolidation of an axis of global power.

The stakes of this analytical precision play out in addressing the curricular issues that both U.S. and PRC contexts need to navigate. For the PRC, national history is what can bring young people into this political project, and illustrates the intersections of racialization, nationalization, and politicization in how official curricular narratives enable young people's assimilation into the PRC's imperial project (Crowley et al., 2021). Wang's (2012) argument is that the PRC's national humiliation is more than what Cridland-Hughes & King (2015) call a curriculum of violence in the U.S. context, but a psychic trauma into which children are socialized. While part of this discourse is one about national identity and, as a result, about the global and the local, underlying this is also an educational context that seeks global competition

and economic advantage. Future research must attend to how Han supremacist logics become embedded in political decisions and how national identities become part of the PRC's neoimperial project.

In the context of the diaspora, my attention to the preciousness of Han supremacy is a call to center the transnational contexts and global dimensions of Chineseness as scholars in Asian American Studies and Education challenge the persistent centrality of the Yellow Peril in our critical analyses of Chineseness and Asianness. Liu (2020) concludes that, while racist and xenophobic, Yellow Peril in context of "the politics of internationalism in the present conditions requires a much more nuanced analysis of interregional geopolitics across the transpacific" (p. 17). It is this nuance that necessitates further study of the layers I begin to unpack in this essay. To build on Liu (2020), the move to how these power structures and identities move transpacifically must include study of the intersections of historical and contemporary shifts in relationality to China and a sustained examination of anti-Blackness that is not solely reliant on U.S.-centered epistemologies. This returns me to the quotes I shared at the beginning of this essay.

All the hollowness that Chun (1997) and others ascribe to Chineseness, in this context, also belies its preciousness. Louie (2004) recenters that relationality with Chineseness as an identity marker to the *physical* space that members of the diaspora feel. In the quotes I shared at the beginning of this paper, Louie (2004) and Chun (1997) both use language that refers to the scant relationalities, beyond these Chinese identities that are products of social context, that connect members of the diaspora back to "China." For research in Asian diasporic communities, and especially in the application of AsianCrit, I hope that the layers of preciousness, hollowness,

and supremacy that Chineseness carries forward are ways to show there AsianCrit can grow and deepen its analysis of transnational contexts and Asianization as responsive to the multiple supremacies that must be negotiated as critical scholars imagine the APIDA/A coalition forward.

I also understand that not everyone can safely make these arguments as Han supremacy is an ongoing force. My sense, then, is that it is not about forgetting Chineseness as Chun's (2017) title suggests. Instead, it is about sensing Han supremacy's preciousness and the lengths states and people will go to protect that which is a precious intimacy and invisibility even if one may never confess holding this ideology.

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CHAPTER THREE: The *nomencurriculum* and the tight curricular space of name(s)

> You might only see a pile of boring forms and numbers, but I can see a story. With nothing but a stack of receipts, I can trace the ups and downs of your lives. I can see where this story's going and it doesn't look good.[iii]

It took me 22 years to learn to write my name. Not the name that appears atop this article, or the one that appears on every form I fill out, but the birth name that a California superior court form stripped me of. In summer 1995, fears of military conflict between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan were at their highest in a half century. Against this backdrop, my birth mother gave me up for adoption to a Chinese American family, seeking "a better life" for me amid the Third Taiwan Strait Crisis. This was a decision she called the hardest of her life. Yet, my transnational adoption story was, on paper, uncomplicated; some would call it "ideal." I had the privilege of an expeditious pathway to U.S. citizenship and "naturalization" in part because I was adopted through a Catholic organization in Taiwan with missionary roots. For another, I was adopted by an upper-middle class Chinese American family and was spared having the awkward conversations many transracial adoptees have with their parents about why they look different from their parents (Louie, 2015). I was privileged with an expeditious pathway to citizenship, and grew up in San Francisco, California—home to vibrant Asian diaspora communities. I even

[iii] Deirdre Beaubeirdre (Jamie Lee Curtis) speaks this line to Evelyn Quan Wang and family who are subject to an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) audit (Kwan & Scheinert, 2022 20:38-20:56).

reunited with my birth mother both in Taipei and San Francisco in 2017 and 2019. Around this time, I began to wonder about my birth name.

My education in schools governed by Catholic doctrine taught me to answer to, and clumsily write, my English name only. I later learned that I, in fact, have three names: 1) a Mandarin name given by my birth mother (張/陳創庭); 2) an English name (Kyle) by which you may come to know me; and 3) a Cantonese name given to me by a community elder when I was "naturalized" (張玉庭). My English name erased my Mandarin birth name, which I encountered later in my life after years of learning fragments of my adoption story; my Cantonese name became my "official Chinese name" signifying belonging in my adoptive family. I feel haunted by my names—especially in that my English name, when spoken, calls attention to phonetic stereotypes (namely "L deficiency") associated with Asian diasporas. This made me hate the sound of my name—partially out of guilt for some family members' struggle to pronounce it, and partially because it sounded misfit to my body. In this way, my names and namings reflect the tangle of assimilation, erasure, and reclamation and offer an analytic possibility that helps to locate and resist the violence of names and namings that circulates through people's lived experiences.

When I heard the above epigraph, spoken by Deirdre Beaubeirdre (Jamie Lee Curtis), an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) case worker in the film *Everything Everywhere All At Once* (*Everything Everywhere*; Kwan & Scheinert, 2022), I thought about the number of interactions with nation-states that shaped my journey from an Taiwanese orphanage to our modest San Francisco home. As Deirdre sat in a drab cubicle staring down Evelyn Quan Wang (Michelle Yeoh) threatening a tax audit of her family's laundromat, Evelyn discovers that there are many

parallel universes between which she can travel to access alternate experiences, memories, and skills. As I watched *Everything Everywhere*, I saw in the circulation of these multiple universes an analogy for the ways global power structures can appear as a tangle of ideologies long-abstracted by and dislocated from the places that empowered the colonial-imperial powers to enact violence through mere paperwork. Yet, studying this paperwork, especially the violence of names and (re-/mis-)naming(s), makes visible the movements and operations of these power structures.

In *Everything Everywhere*, the multiverse is threatened by Evelyn's daughter Joy Wang/ Jobu Tupaki (Stephanie Hsu) who is forced to experience all these simultaneous universes at once. In the conflicts within the Wang family and their many parallel existences, the film questions the linearity of relationships and growth, all while being a story of a nuclear U.S. family told through the evolution of Joy and Evelyn's relationship. Deirdre Beaubeirdre's quote helped me think about the multiple existences that Joy/Jobu and Evelyn live—and the multiple existences I (could have) lived had a few pieces of paperwork been filled out differently. My State of California issued delayed birth certificate, for one, binds me to the name I am forced to answer to—replacing my birth name and marking me with a swirl of imperial and colonial ideologies. That is why I needed more than two decades to learn to write my name.

The school curriculum, though, is little help in addressing the decontextualized, ahistorical erasures of communities of Color that are visible in the violent misnaming of racialized children in schools (Bucholtz, 2016). In fact, I argue, curricula of violence and dislocation are closely aligned especially for Asian diasporas because these erasures and refusals to learn to pronounce our names continues to push us to silently assimilate into different names

that we answer to (An, 2020; Cridland-Hughes & King, 2015; Díaz Beltrán, 2018). Orientalism and anti-Asian xenophobia (yellow peril) proliferate in the absence of Asian diaspora communities and other communities of Color in U.S. school curricula—a haunting that assures its innocence (neutrality), which is unrecognizable to the students whose lives and heritage practices defy this horror (Hsieh et al., 2020). Evaluating the extent to which my life has been "better" in the United States is subjective. However, the choices made by people in each context have tangibly impacted my life. Two relentlessly visible impacts are the names that people choose to call me and those people refuse to use. These names shape the lenses through which people interpret and make sense of our experiences, forming what Aoki (2005) referred to as our lived curricula.

Naming is also a catalyst—an elegiac representation of someone's life, foretelling the tight spaces they will navigate and making visible the resistances happening within namings (Lugones, 2003). To counteract the racialization I would face because of my Asianness and the idea that "all Asians are the same," my parents created for me additional names that reflected their aspirations and hopes that I could conceal my "unassimilability" associated with anti-Chinese fears (Sinophobia) and yellow peril (Tuan, 1998). In this article, I argue that names and the ideologies contained within them can be mapped as a form of curriculum and an analytic possibility I call the nomencurriculum. The nomencurriculum, I argue, shows how names are curricular touchstones and technologies by which nation-states can constrain, bind, and fit people into a "standardized" paradigm recognizable to white supremacy and empire. I put forward the concept of a nomencurriculum using Latin as I analyze my transnational experiences using Asian critical race theory (AsianCrit) and decolonial theory. Doing so acknowledges that my education

socialized me into the technologies of a settler colonial nation-state and responds to the violent ordering constructed by U.S. legal language. My bending of Latin reflects my embodied in-betweenness between contexts using a tripartite portmanteau of *nomen* (name) + *clatura* (summoning) + *currere* ([race]course, running) that translates to "the course of summonings by name." With names and namings as a site, I foreground the interplay of currere and clatura to identify the string of colonial harms within Western nation-states and the healing potential of these analyses, rather than provide a definitive "study" of names and namings (onomastics; Hough, 2016).

I analyze global power structures through an analysis of my own three names (English [given], Cantonese [given], Mandarin [given/chosen]). From these names, I show ways I can discern my families' and communities' aspirations for me to embody as I carry these names throughout my life. I also show the competing and simultaneous ideologies of assimilation, erasure, and reclamation as told in legal documents from my adoption and immigration files, interspersed with counternarrative. My analysis uses critical race archival analysis (Morris & Parker, 2019) and rememory work (Rhee, 2021) to acknowledge the legal contexts in which I am bound and compelled to answer to a single name that erases my transnational movement. I then explore how my curriculum of dislocation (Díaz Beltrán, 2018) emerges from my namings, presenting lenses of analysis that flatten Asian identities to center Chineseness with harmful implications for non-Chinese members of Asian diaspora communities who are essentialized into

a single label.[iv] I conclude by outlining how nomencurriculum invites the field of curriculum studies to engage with names and naming as curricular sites and informs how names shape individuals' movements through educational contexts. I organize my sections with quotes from *Everything Everywhere* to underscore the simultaneous onslaught of ideologies in my namings and the interplay of my multiple "selves" in my lived curriculum.

"A Lifetime of Fractured Moments, Contradictions, and Confusion"[v]: Theoretical Framework

Joy Wang's/Jobu Tupaki's persona, a GenZ millennial nihilist, is perhaps part of a broader desire for Asian diasporic representation that "individualizes, multiplies, takes apart then wackily reassembles" responses to anti-Asian racist and xenophobic tropes like *Everything Everywhere* itself (Cheng, 2022, para. 3). Jobu's line in the film evokes her feelings of a splintered existence that recalls the liminality and dual-domination of Asian American identity seminal to earlier generations of critical Asian diasporic scholarship (Chang, 1993; C. J. Kim,

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[iv] This article takes up the question of Chineseness throughout; the question of Taiwaneseness also reasonably arises in turn. While I lack space to fully elucidate the intense (and ongoing) contestation of Taiwanese identity, I will do so briefly here because it is important especially as I engage my own Taiwanese American identity throughout. Taiwan, formerly a colony of Portugal, the Netherlands, and Japan, is a settler colonial context in which the ethnic majority are descended from Han mainland Chinese. The Kuomintang (nationalist) (KMT) Party that governed Taiwan for much of its existence as a nation-state attempted to "nationalize Chinese culture ... where no such culture (of the nation) really existed" (Chun, 2017, p. 18). This political-cultural foundation laid during the KMT's period of martial law gave way to a "nativist" movement that has begun to unpack Taiwan's (like Japan's) "dual status as both colonizer and colonized" (Chen, 2010, p. 10) and its implications for Taiwaneseness as a cultural-national-ethnic identity. Another dimension of Taiwaneseness is its foundations in a negative conceptualization relative to Chineseness in part because of some Taiwanese's belief that Taiwan is the "real China" and the ways national education has shifted to begin to address Indigenous erasures and decenter Sinocentric perspectives in the last three decades (Chun, 2017; Wu, 2017). This concept of Taiwaneseness is especially contested as the critiques of mainland China have shifted at least in part in response to how the People's Republic of China acts as a Han supremacist empire and the ways Taiwan is perceived as a U.S. protectorate or aligned with the Western global axis of power, especially after the Nancy Pelosi's 2022 visit to Taiwan and the 2024 presidential elections with Democratic Progressive Party candidates Lai Ching-Te (William) and Hsiao Bi-Khim (Louise) (Chen-Dedman, 2021; Ho, 2022; Leibold, 2010; Liu, 2020). As Taiwanese*ness* shifts rapidly, it also shows the ways naming works to constrict or belie the multiple acts of reclamation that happen on an individual level, which I discuss throughout the article.

[v] Jobu Tupaki (Stephanie Hsu) voices over this moment in the film as Evelyn is quickly pulled through multiplicity of universes and existences near the end of the film (Kwan & Scheinert, 2022, 1:37:58-1:38:10).

1999; Matsuda, 1996; Wang, 1995). While deeply tied to the U.S. context, I take up AsianCrit's (undertheorized) commitments to transnational contexts. Decoloniality bolsters analysis of the movements of global power structures and grounds me in the contexts to which I am accountable, allowing me to build on both frameworks. I build on both by making visible the ideologies within my own namings that transcend national borders and branch across imperial worlds. I contribute to this literature by theorizing transnational contexts through examining militancy, empire, and coloniality in Asia as they relate to the proximity to modernity and whiteness embedded into naming (Iftikar & Museus, 2018). Necessarily, the transnational legal context (and the centering of U.S. law) is important to this article because of the ways in which transnational adoption processes in the United States are governed by multiple layers of state, federal, and international law (Bussiere, 1998).

AsianCrit

Asian critical race theory (AsianCrit), an extension of critical race theory (CRT), provides a framework to center Asian diasporas. Iftikar and Museus (2018) laid out seven core tenets of AsianCrit: (1) Asianization; (2) transnational contexts; (3) (re)constructive history; (4) strategic (anti)essentialism; (5) intersectionality; (6) story, theory, and praxis; and (7) commitment to social justice. Asianization, transnational contexts, and story, theory and praxis ground my exploration. Jobu's/Joy's disassociativeness in *Everything Everywhere* suggests that intergenerational shifts in discourse about Asian diaspora identities need to inform AsianCrit's evolutions. Many Asians' and Asian diaspora communities' new reckonings require global analysis to process encounters with racism and colonialism. These fractious contradictions

necessitate theorizing the dizzying interplay of ideologies like assimilation, erasure, and reclamation.

Asianization

Iftikar and Museus (2018) described how a single panethnic label ("Asian American") is created by white supremacy and merges tropes that grew out of nativistic and racist fears of some ethnic groups. Further, this lumping of multiple communities into a singular racial identity marker enables hegemonic tropes, like the model minority myth, to "[cover] up the existence of institutional racism and [validate] US hegemonic ideologies such as color-blindness and meritocracy" (An, 2017, p. 133). I take up the Asianization tenet to understand multiple layers of hegemonic discourses about *and within* Asian diaspora communities that cause me to examine how Asianization and Sinification take up the same logic of essentialization, erasing nuance within Chinese American communities.

Transnational Contexts

The transnational contexts tenet of AsianCrit "recognizes how the forces of American imperialism and neocolonialism, globalization, and war have deeply impacted the flow of migrants between Asia and the United States" (J. Kim & Hsieh, 2022, p. 35). In addition to the pursuit of economic opportunity, migrations to the United States have been necessitated and catalyzed by migrations and wars within Asia catalyzed in large part by Western imperialism (Goodwin, 2010; Lowe, 1996). The U.S. government's immigration/documentation policies and practices created the conditions in which under-equipped immigration officers splintered families with numerous romanizations of Mandarin and Cantonese names. The Chinese Exclusion Acts further forced migrants to become "paper sons," claiming to be children of Chinese Americans

for the "privilege" of entering the country (Lowe, 1996). Transnational contexts impact Asian diaspora racialization, insofar as these contexts embed the Orientalist discourse of a foreign "Other" into U.S. law and dichotomize Asian diasporic experiences in a dual-domination structure of unassimilability (Wang, 1995). I use this tenet to show how transnational contexts are also visible within individuals in the case of names.

Story, Theory, and Praxis

Storytelling is an important analytic of CRT on which AsianCrit builds (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Delgado and Stefancic (2017) wrote that storytelling facilitates a "deeper understanding of how Americans see race" (p. 44) and challenges dominant narratives about race. The story, theory, and praxis tenet of AsianCrit builds on its CRT roots and "centers Asian American experiences to offer an alternative epistemology … and can inform theory and praxis" (Iftikar & Museus, 2018, p. 941). Counterstorytelling centers personal and collective narratives as part of a narrative methodology and challenges the persistent essentialism, panethnic flattening, and Asianization that reproduces cycles of hyper (in)visibility (Berry & Cook, 2019; J. Kim & Hsieh, 2022; Yeh et al., 2022). I use this tenet to frame my own naming(s) as touchstones in my own racialization and to show how Asianization and transnational contexts operate when navigating the multiple ideologies that frame Asian diaspora experiences.

Decolonial Theory

I share in Meghji's (2022) desire to explore potential synergies between critical race and decolonial theory while resisting a need to "hierarchize or synthesize them" (p. 648). Before getting there, it is important to note that de/anti/postcolonial and deimperial theories each draw from distinct epistemological traditions and praxis projects despite sharing commitments to

critique imperialism and colonialism. However, in the contrasts between decolonial and postcolonial theories, concepts that this paper brings together, are important intellectual genealogies that need to be acknowledged to justify the multilateral framework, based on complementary theories, that I propose.

Fúnez-Flores et al. (2022) have cautioned scholars (like me) from the Global North to avoid homogenizing or essentializing decolonial theory which, citing Lowe (2015), is a pluriversal discourse and praxis that draws from multiple geographies and contexts. These contexts each contain different manifestations of the technologies of colonial nation-states, as well as the ongoing reverberations of that coloniality and settler horror (Tuck & Ree, 2013). Situatedness, as a result, is an important part of how scholars globally come to their critiques of colonialism and imperialism. These critiques are often products of scholars' individual experiences within the context in which they live as these experiences relate to "collective and geopolitical projects, which at times complement, contradict, or conflict with one another" (Fúnez-Flores et al., 2022, p. 601). Decolonial theory emerges from a multiplicity of intellectual genealogies from Latin America and the Caribbean. This multifaceted body of theory intervenes in pursuits of resistances that dismantle "colonial domination, simultaneously allowing us to reflect upon and theorize from these sites of struggle" (Fúnez-Flores et al., 2022, p. 609). These sites of struggle are those at the margins made disposable by the (technologies and arrogance of) colonial powers. One such technology, Quijano (2000) wrote, is the contemporary Western conceptualization of race and racialization as a means of social classification. Even after successful postcolonial independence movements, global axes of power remain (b)ordered as the reverberations of coloniality rely upon nation-states organized by biological physiognomy,

thereby allowing white supremacy and global imperial/colonial hierarchies to persist (Anderson, 1983; Leonardo, 2002; Subedi & Daza, 2008).

As I draw from this multivocal body of scholarship to analyze my own transnational movements between Taiwan and the United States, I am aware of the ways that Asian contexts differ from, but are inextricably linked to, the global struggle against the multi-layered hegemonic power structures of empire, (settler) coloniality, and white supremacy (Fanon, 1961/1963; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Peña-Pincheira & Allweiss, 2022, Quijano, 2000; Said, 1979). Acknowledging this, it is beyond the scope of this article to rigidly categorize the bodies of often-conflated decolonial, postcolonial, and anticolonial scholarship (Fúnez-Flores et al., 2022). Instead, I hope to resist this conflation whilst also engaging in their shared critiques. To do so, I draw from postcolonial and decolonial scholarship situated in both Asian and U.S. contexts that argue education and curriculum are complicit in "facilitating the process and manifesting as the product of imperialism and colonialism" (Coloma, 2013, p. 650).

Certainly, my analysis is critical of empire and coloniality. I treat Taiwan as a settler colonial nation-state project (Wu, 2017) rather than only a society premised on a deimperial-anticolonial independence movement or postcolonial nation-building project (Chen, 2010). While I deviate from Chen's (2010) premise that complete occupation constitutes colonization, I share in what Lin (2012) referred to as Chen's desire to focus on "psychological complexes and cultural imaginations of the ex-colonized" (p. 158); the need for parallel and simultaneous processes to address this deeply rooted internalized coloniality are felt across time and space. I attend to these "reverberations" across time and space of coloniality because doing so allows me to bring together the concepts of tight spaces (Lugones, 2003), haunting (Tuck & Ree, 2013), and

dislocation (Díaz Beltrán, 2018). Taken together, these concepts frame how namings, and curricula of names, are evidence of transnational power structures and, in my case, their interactions with U.S. nation-state apparatuses. This multi-theoretical lens helps me to center the shared commitments and praxes across these theoretical traditions and attend to how the projects of deimperialization and decolonization must proceed together with postcolonial and anticolonial projects to heal the reverberations of epistemic coloniality (Chen, 2010; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; wa Thiong'o, 1986).

As a child, I attended regular gatherings of Taiwanese adoptees in the San Francisco Bay Area. Long after no longer attending them, I still cannot forget the words of the other parents who assured us we have better lives. Each time we would (re)introduce ourselves, we would say our names and it would always feel like a sadistic ritual reminding me that I could never forget that I must only feel gratitude for my adoption. Of course, I am grateful for my adoptive parents, and, in each of those gatherings, I saw how names are hauntings. Tuck and Ree (2013) described the "relentless remembering and reminding that will not be appeased by settler society's assurances of innocence and reconciliation" (p. 642). Part of my relentless rememberings is of the contexts from which and to which I was taken, Taiwan and the United States, and the simultaneous dislocation of being socialized within an episteme of Eurocentric modernity. Ahmed (2021), extending Macgilchrist (2014), discussed the colonial residue in how "colonial vocabulary is employed, reproducing power differentials that continue to create inequality, oppression and poverty" (Ahmed, 2021, p. 145). Departing from Yosso's (2005) concept of aspirational capital, I suggest how aspirational ideologies infiltrate discourse, which I extend to naming in its capacity to signal coloniality/modernity or development in its stasis and

standardization. Haunting, in naming, is a way settler coloniality can be embedded by nation-states to signal "the management of those who have been made killable, once and future ghosts —those that had been destroyed, but also those that are generated in every generation" (Tuck & Ree, 2013, p. 642). The ghastly spectacle of naming, anglicizing, and categorizing reminds some that the names we may survive using are chosen for the convenience of the dominant—a wispy reminder of alienness (Day, 2016). Namings position us relative to hegemonic power structures and are subject to erasure as much as they can reward our conformity on a passport.

Relentless remembering, for me growing up in the Bay Area, manifested in the ways I was never allowed to forget the Chinese American culture into which I was socialized. This separation from my Taiwanese identity manifested in constant corrections and scorn for identifying otherwise; it took me years to confidently resist my assimilation into Chineseness. The multiple layers of politics that made the distinction between Chineseness and Taiwaneseness in the Bay Area necessitated different kinds of pushing back within what Lugones (2003) called a tight space. Lugones (2003) defined tight spaces as sites of resistance in spite of (sociopolitical) constraints. Tight spaces necessitate analyses that "sense resistance, interpret behavior as resistant, even if it is dangerous" (p. 7). Building on Lugones's (2003) argument that resistance is more than what is visible within decontextualized conceptualizations thereof, Cruz's (2011) framing centers youth agency in moving within these tight spaces despite the danger and "political climate of retribution" (p. 548). This political climate and the resistances within it are "(re)imaginings of worlds outside the violent confines of global white supremacist heteropatriarchal colonial capitalism" (Allweiss, 2021, p. 223) that must be sensed as resistance. I extend Lugones's (2003) and others' (Allweiss, 2021; Cruz, 2011) uses of tight spaces in

contexts of youth resistance to naming. Names, being a form of social control used by the state to surveil and sort, inherently essentialize people's existences to Latin script on U.S. and some other Western governmental paperwork, masking heritage languages and aspirational ideologies (resistance and conformity) many parents have for their children that can become embodied in their names.

While names and namings are spaces I argue are tightened by these hauntings, they are also entrees into different knowledges, stories, and identifications as they connect people to the contexts, communities, and traditions to which they/we are accountable. The storytelling made possible by analyzing names and namings helps to locate the violence of these seemingly innocuous state technologies like paperwork to counter the forced disconnection in being assimilated into a Western construction of a name (one given and surname) to which one is compelled to answer (summoning). When I say I felt separated from my Taiwaneseness, I mean that my childhood was filled with moments when identifying as Chinese felt mandatory, like celebrating Chinese, not Lunar, New Year. Each moment seemed to add to the distance and disconnection between me and Taiwan. In describing what she called a curriculum of dislocation, Díaz Beltrán (2018) discussed the discursive subjectivities that center "'First World'/Eurocentric/ developed subject positions through nation–state frameworks" (p. 274) that separate people from "decontextualized, ahistorical, and oversimplified framings of culture and Western Eurocentric modernity" (p. 274).

Rather I propose that names and namings can be part of what Díaz Beltrán (2018) called a healing curriculum that is grounded in "critically reflecting on our lived/living experiences" and allows people "to imagine ways in which we become pertinent to our communities" (p. 286).

Díaz Beltrán (2018) reflected that her experiences of her curriculum of dislocation taught her "separation from a whole" and made her "relation to others invisible" (p. 276). I resonated with this explanation of the curriculum of dislocation because it reminded me that, once categorized and sorted, people are then part of a hierarchical taxonomy that (b)orders individuals according to the nation-state's terms. A curriculum of dislocation, as a result, frames the relentlessness, racist, and imperial violence in misnaming. Names and namings, similar to disciplines, are both assemblages of relentless categorization and relentless remembering of the hierarchical knowledge systems to which names contribute (McKittrick, 2021; Tuck & Ree, 2013). Decolonial theory complements AsianCrit in making sense of the transnational contexts given the latter's basis in the U.S. legal system. This theoretical merging enables theorizing *how* global frameworks can sustain analyses of transnational contexts within AsianCrit and make visible the simultaneity of curricula of violence and dislocation.

AsianCrit's tenets and decolonial frameworks elucidate how global ideologies, logics, and processes necessitate global analyses of naming as curricular. In using AsianCrit, I contribute a theoretically grounded analysis that helps to make visible coloniality's embeddedness within the ideas of transnational contexts and Asianization in AsianCrit. This visibility facilitates deeper inquiry into (my) namings as curricular within the haunting and engulfment of ambiguity within the Black-white and U.S.-foreign binaries for Asian Americans and Asian diasporic communities in the United States.

"Every Rejection, Every Disappointment Has Led You Here, to This Moment"[vi]: The Lived Curriculum

I cannot seek my alphaverse self, or versejump to another universe where I live with one of my other names. However, I wish I could refuse the disappointing curricular portrayals of people who look like me that I encountered in school. California's social studies curriculum, for one, romanticized the Spanish colonization of California and enslavement of Indigenous people through Catholic missions (Keenan, 2019). For another, California also distilled Asian diaspora representation to minimalist and damage-centered narratives (e.g., railroads, Japanese incarceration) that centered East Asian Americans before subsequently enacting ethnic studies education frameworks (Rodríguez, 2020). These curricular narratives that uphold white supremacy and settler ideologies form what Cridland-Hughes and King (2015) referred to as a curriculum of violence that enacts the spirit-murder (Love, 2019) of children of Color in schools; An (2020) conceptually extended this curriculum of violence to analyze the experience of Asian diasporic communities in educational contexts. The in-betweennesses and multiplicities erased in the curriculum of violence that many Asian diasporic people experience is dissonant with the intersections and layers of identity we embody. He (2010) referred to "the in-betweenness in exile" (p. 471). The in-betweenness(es) that exists outside the Western hierarchical categorization of multiple layers of essentialism that bring Asian Americans into official curricular "representation." This simplistic representation minimizes the complications, contradictions, "hybridity and multiplicity of diaspora consciousness and diasporic space, where

[vi] Alpha Waymond Wang (Ke Huy Quan), upon first interjecting into Evelyn's perceived starting reality, confronts her with this quote in the closet after she has been confronted with an IRS tax audit Kwan & Scheinert, 2022, 22:19-22:28).

exile pedagogy, exile curriculum, and diaspora curriculum emerge" (He, 2022, p. 6). Within, and in response to, these curricular narratives are also opportunities for individuals to speak back especially in the site of names and the acts of namings (even if they are in the empire's languages). Namings, then can act as entrees into grasping the stories that counter the dislocating affects of curricula by placing us on the junctures where the tangle of ideologies that shape young people's educational experiences and socializations are visible.

However, teachers work to resist these dehumanizing portrayals with their own narratives and lived experiences (J. Kim & Hsieh, 2022; Rodríguez, 2020), underscoring the importance of *lived curricula* in education. Aoki (2005) theorized a lived curriculum in which children are surrounded by a multiplicity of curricula, beyond the school curriculum. Jardine (1990), further, theorized an *integrated curriculum* that positions children's lived experiences and explorations as their curriculum "vita." Both concepts depart from traditional ideas of curriculum as prescriptive and formalized (Egan, 1978) or limited to school curricula (explicit, hidden, null; Giroux, 1983). Within the complex project of reproducing Chinese identity in school and lived curricula lie problems that impede Asian diasporas' substantive negotiation of our own coalitions, divisions, and needs in education (Espiritu, 1992).

I define curricula broadly, using Aoki's (2005) and Jardine's (1990) notions of lived and integrated curricula. This broad definition of curricula positions my and others' lived experiences and curricular encounters as part of the fullness of individuals' existences alongside formal school curricula. For Aoki (2005), lived curriculum deviates from planned curriculum in which students' "uniqueness disappears into the shadow when they are spoken of in the prosaically abstract language of the external curriculum planners who are … condemned to plan for faceless

people" (Egan, 2003, p. 202). That uniqueness embodies the many assets, identities, and interplays thereof that people bring into schools each day as well as their unique and complex encounters with the global systems of power that systematically shape their lived experiences. Jardine (1990) added that broadening concepts of curriculum to include our spiritual and ecological encounters "exudes the generativity, movement, liveliness, and difficulty that lies at the heart of living our lives" (p. 110). These intimate connections to the earth are informed by our cultural ways of knowing and limited in the school curriculum.

Curricular violence, however, can be similarly broad. Like curricular violence against communities of Color, the curriculum of dislocation outlines how assimilationist logics foreground how curriculum reproduces harmful logics of ahistoricism and decontextualization (Díaz Beltrán, 2018). Díaz Beltrán complements An (2020) by arguing that curricular erasures and attention to transnational contexts from a U.S.-centered perspective also require desegregating so-called "world" histories and contexts from "longstanding wounds created by imperial history" (Díaz Beltrán, 2018, p. 275) that cause "psychological and physical violence" (An, 2020, p. 147) to Asians and Asian diasporic communities. Díaz Beltrán's (2018) concept of the "*now*here of global curriculum" problematizes "ideas of the 'global' that have been used to think about the world as 'one place', as 'one global community', as one 'humankind' erasing the traces of difference created by multiple histories" (Díaz Beltrán, 2018, p. 274). Challenging this flattening also undermines Western epistemology's monopoly over the ontological boundaries of modernity and "global citizenship," instead centering a multiplicity of stories and challenging the ordered fixity and stasis nation-states' documentation prioritizes.

These four conceptualizations of curricula (lived, integrated, violence, dislocation) contribute dimensions of my expansive conceptualization of curriculum that identifies blockages to multiple pathways of knowing. Bringing these framings together is not to simply argue that everything, everywhere (all at once) is curricular. Instead, my conceptualization shows how names can be pathways of knowing, and all that is contained within our names can be part of our lived curricula. As a result, using curricular tools, I offer new insights into naming, the ideologies imposed upon our being, and the expectations for our embodiment of them. For me, these lived curricula are the deeply embedded presumptions of Chineseness, itself an unstable identity marker (and avatar of Asian Americanness). My exploration of my names extends these extant frameworks of haunting, (re)memory, dislocation, transnational contexts, and counterstorytelling to foreground the tensions within a person's lived curriculum. I tell this lived curriculum through my names; my nomencurriculum is part of a larger project of rememory that challenges Asianization and Orientalist Sinophobia.

"Looking For Someone Who Could See What I See, Feel What I Feel"[vii]: Methodology

Jobu/Joy's characters mirror what I felt navigating my Chinese American parents' expectations and desires for me. AsianCrit and decolonial framings of narrative show how these ideologies of assimilation, erasure, and reclamation cooperate in my namings. This led me to my own adoption paperwork to learn how I was named. I put Rhee's (2021) take on Morrison's (1987) rememory into conversation with critical race archival analysis methods (Morris & Parker, 2019) interspersed with AsianCrit counterstory (Kolano, 2016; Yeh et al., 2022) to theorize my own namings as part of my nomencurriculum.

[vii] Jobu Tupaki speaks this line to Evelyn when Jobu confronts Evelyn with the Everything Bagel which symbolizes the unending deluge of simultaneous realities she experiences (Kwan & Scheinert, 2022, 1:34:38-1:34:47).

My parents and I found my adoption documents while renovating our home. The documents included court documents from Taiwan and the United States, newspaper clippings, and a social worker's home study reports about my parents' household, accompanied by the requisite testimonies from family members and friends. The documents include both Mandarin originals and notarized English translations of documents. For this article, I selected documents that described me using my names, those that described me without using my names, and those that pertained to my names being changed. In particular, I chose documents from my file that situated me in relation to my parents and talked about the material contexts of my adoption. I selected these documents because they are the only records of my name changes and because they center the U.S. legal context in which I live. However, I chose documents that did not compromise sensitive details about my three parents.[viii] I chose the Taipei District Court document titled "Release of Orphan for Immigration and Adoption," an "Adoption Petition" filed in the Superior Court of California, and a social worker's home study of my parents' household, which is used to certify that the adopting family can humanely care for their prospective adoptee. After taking scans of the originals, I reviewed the documents to establish a chronology of my adoption and then read them for the legal motions they made to move me between Taiwan and the United States. I then analyzed them with particular attention to, per my theoretical framework, how the transnational circulations of power and the settler colonial contexts of my birth and adoption legally bound me to answer to my names. I kept going back and forth between

[viii] The State of California is a "closed" adoption state under California Family Code §§ 9200–9209, meaning that identifying information in adoption records is sealed and is only unsealed in the case of medical emergencies or by "research" petitions initiated by an adoptee or other party (biological/adoptive/step parents). This means that, without going through the courts, I as an adoptee have no inherent right to, or direct ownership of, the instruments that establish my naming. For this reason, I am unable to display my actual adoption petition but found it to be nearly identical to the template petition provided by the Judicial Branch of California reproduced here.

my documents and pictures of my birth mother as I wrote to remind me of the humanity of the people involved, often minimized by the documents themselves. I connected with my birth mother via machine-translated text messages after a period of silence; she gave me permission to share quotes in this article. I then sought and received consent from my adoptive parents to use their names, which are referenced throughout the documents given their role as named petitioners.

I arrived at meaning by troubling the linearity of these documents using Rhee's (2021) interpretation of Morrison's (1987) *rememory.* Carrying multiple layers (haunting), rememory "generates different relationships between you, me, and place (time/space)" (Rhee, 2021, p. 3) to challenge how people read the world. Rhee (2021) wrote that names "deceive you or fool you as they do not tell you anything about those pictures waiting to happen again before and for you" (p. 18). This challenges the assumption that names are static, an assumption that erases the fluidities between contexts when individuals are reduced to a single name to which they are forced to answer. I also use CRT archival analyses interspersed with counternarrative because "the end result of a CRT-informed research study that relies heavily on historical documentary, archival data, and oral history is ultimately a counter-narrative" (Morris & Parker, 2019, p. 30). Building on Morris and Parker (2019), I center these documents, which are the only historical record of my naming, in order to speak against majoritarian and essentialized experiences of racialization created by a legal system in which racism is endemic (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Further, I complicate the presumed homogeneity of Chinese diasporic experiences (Yeh et al., 2022). Looking critically at both the documents and engaging in rememory, I argue, exposes the

ideologies and hauntings of coloniality that are embodied in my names and my namings filtered through the state.

"A Pile of Boring Forms and Numbers"[ix]: My Names, Their Ideologies

Next, I explore my own namings and my adoption paperwork through my names. I find that, as a settler in both Taiwan and the United States, my names embody ideologies that reflect the desire for proximity to those who enact settler horror against the Indigenous peoples whose lands they stole in an effort to escape empire as they recreated the structures of it (Day, 2016). My analysis highlights the nomencurricular narrative that emerges from the weaving of narrative and document analysis of my three naming: (1) my English given name (Kyle Chong) from my adoptive parents, which reflects ideologies of assimilation and the model minority; (2) my Cantonese given name (張玉庭) from a community elder, which reflects my experiences of erasure and how my adopted Chineseness dislocated my Taiwaneseness after coming to the United States; and (3) my Mandarin given/chosen names (張/陳創庭) as a lens of reclamation, which situates me as Taiwanese but also reflects the settler colonial histories and legacies of Taiwan that have pushed me to internalize the forever foreigner trope. These three lenses, with their interplays and simultaneities, converge to outline the utility of a nomencurricular analytic as a way to examine individuals' lived curricula.

How Did I Get These Names?

My mother named me 陳創庭 (Chen Chuang-Ting), which translates to stone foundations in a rock garden courtyard from which new life sprouts. My name both invoked the Christian Garden of Eden and the rock gardens of the Imperial Chinese aristocracy. My name

[ix] Deirdre speaks this line to Evelyn during her IRS tax audit appointment (Kwan & Scheinert, 2022, 20:38-20:42).

legally changed to Kyle Lee Chong (a Gaelic given name) when the State of California issued my delayed birth certificate in 1996. In between these two namings was another. While there are numerous traditions for baby naming, some Chinese and Chinese American families will bestow upon children a "courtesy name," chosen by a trusted elder or family friend. While my and my adopted parents' memories have since faded, what we do remember was the name a community elder named King Lee gave me: 張玉庭. This name, in Cantonese, merges my father's surname (*chong*) and part of my birth given name (*ting*), mediated by the character for jade (*yook*), which is itself a nod to Imperial China. Between these three names, however, are more than semantic differences; there are ideological ones that are embedded between the cracks of legal documents.

Assimilation: English Given Name (Kyle Chong)

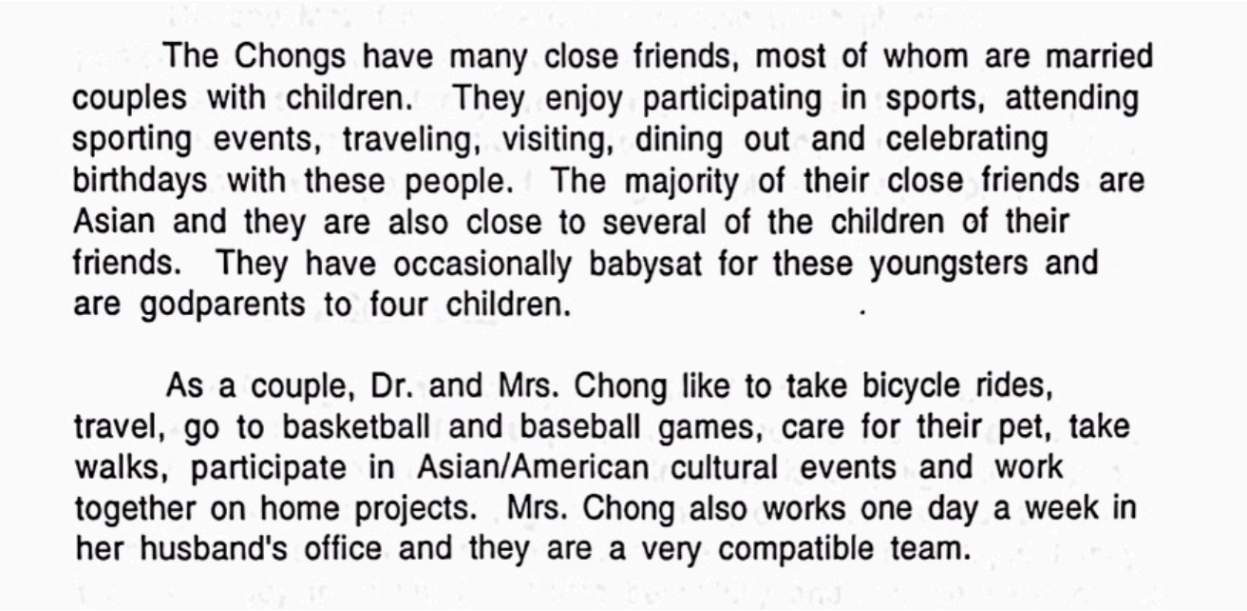
I found it strange that my adopted father's side of the family, like my classmates, were all given Anglo-American names like Robert, Arthur, or Gregory. To understand the extent to which assimilation is coded within my name Kyle, I show some of the legal context that gave me this name. In 1995, my adoptive parents filed a four-page adoption petition with the Superior Court of California in San Francisco. The petition alleges that I was born Chuang-Ting Chen in China (later corrected errata to "Taiwan" in a subsequent amendment). The petition, which is a template completed with the adoptee's information, accomplishes three stated goals: 1) to state intention to adopt me; 2) to file for custody of me; and 3) to change my legal name. This petition was accompanied by the "home study" report prepared by a social worker who would describe my family to establish whether or not they could sustain me as required by California law.

Within the petition, section VII outlines the intent to adopt and establishes consent between parties to "adopt said child and to treat him in all respects as if he were their lawful

child, and as such lawfully should be treated … including the right to inheritance." The phrase "as if" I was their lawful child violently embodies much discourse about "naturalization" and the process by which someone becomes recognizably nationalized. In fact, this petition is the only document cited as supporting evidence of my naturalization. The petition, however, also shows how the Taiwanese (transnational) contexts are marginalized within the framework of U.S. law because my right to property (inheritance) is fundamental to my legal belonging in the United States. The centrality of property in the document underscores the entanglement of the nominal political rights of democracy and capitalism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). My identity is reduced to that of a nameless "said child," which positions me as the possession of my parents. In the context of the legacies of the Chinese exclusion acts in the United States, the discourse of merely resembling a family highlights the immigration context of my naturalization/adoption. This ghostly namelessness seems to naturalize me with ambivalence, perhaps akin to how some Asian Americans were reluctantly assimilated and superficially "naturalized" as a result of contemporaneous political needs during World War II. Put another way, this language also invisibilizes my own experience, detaching me from the lived reality of the complex ethnoracialization that followed (Chang, 1993; Matsuda, 1996). Further, this excerpt positions me liminally within the U.S. immigration framework of the time insofar as my Taiwanese citizenship had been renounced when I left Taiwan. This renunciation that my parents made for me left me momentarily without nationality while these proceedings were adjudicated, positioning me uncomfortably in the sociopolitically tight space of "resident alien."

The supporting evidence that accompanied this petition included the "home study" conducted prior to my adoption in which a social worker assessed my then-potential parents'

capacity to care for me. One section of the report titled “Family Interactions and Relationships with Friends,” is emblematic of the rest (see Figure 1). In this excerpt, the clinical social worker goes to great lengths to establish my adoptive parents as an assimilated and “normal” Chinese American family. For example, she writes that:



The Chongs have many close friends, most of whom are married couples with children. They enjoy participating in sports, attending sporting events, traveling, visiting, dining out and celebrating birthdays with these people. The majority of their close friends are Asian and they are also close to several of the children of their friends. They have occasionally babysat for these youngsters and are godparents to four children.

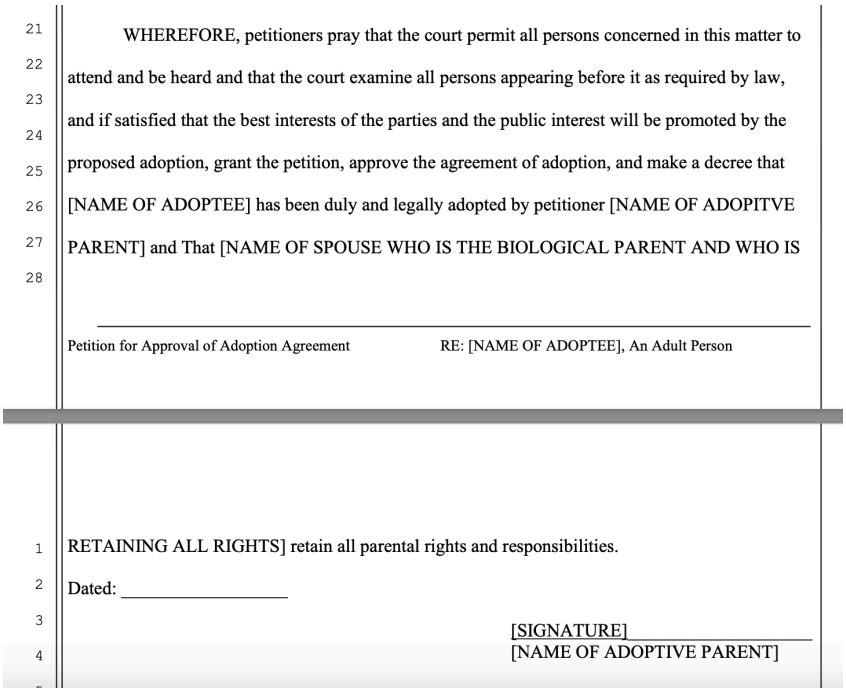
As a couple, Dr. and Mrs. Chong like to take bicycle rides, travel, go to basketball and baseball games, care for their pet, take walks, participate in Asian/American cultural events and work together on home projects. Mrs. Chong also works one day a week in her husband's office and they are a very compatible team.

Figure 1: Excerpt from the Social Worker’s Homestudy Report

Within this excerpt, the social worker makes the case that they participate in “Asian/American” cultural events, which reinforces the forever foreigner trope that literally excludes Asian diasporas from what she perceived to be U.S. culture through the use of the slash (Jacolbe, 2019). Further, the report both embraces and resists Asianization by seeming to undermine my parents’ being in community with their Asian friends by seeming to center the “American” cultural events like baseball games they went to as if they engage in assimilating others. This assessment of my parents is important to my own naming because of how it positions both of them within the space of assimilation given how my adoption was supported by my parents’ degrees, financial stability, and accomplishments. These distinctions were recognizable to the

nation-state as reproducing hegemonic and dominant cultural practices that catalyzed my own disidentification and dislocation (Díaz Beltrán, 2018; Lowe, 1996).

This context from both immediately before and immediately after my adoption situates the "ask" of the culminating adoption petition: the establishment of custody and a legal name change (see Figure 2). The template petition concludes by asserting:



WHEREFORE, petitioners pray that the court permit all persons concerned in this matter to attend and be heard and that the court examine all persons appearing before it as required by law, and if satisfied that the best interests of the parties and the public interest will be promoted by the proposed adoption, grant the petition, approve the agreement of adoption, and make a decree that [NAME OF ADOPTEE] has been duly and legally adopted by petitioner [NAME OF ADOPITVE PARENT] and That [NAME OF SPOUSE WHO IS THE BIOLOGICAL PARENT AND WHO IS

Petition for Approval of Adoption Agreement RE: [NAME OF ADOPTEE], An Adult Person

RETAINING ALL RIGHTS] retain all parental rights and responsibilities.

Dated: _____

[SIGNATURE]_____
[NAME OF ADOPTIVE PARENT]

Figure 2: Excerpt from a California Template Adoption Petition

This petition, a document to which I do not have legally recognized access, both legally strips me of my Mandarin name and formally severs my legal ties to Taiwan, further suggesting the disidentification and dislocation separating me from my naming. My name change signifies my naturalization, which was granted after guaranteeing that assimilationist ideologies could be imposed upon me in the home study report; this process relied upon the evocation of an idealized U.S. nuclear family that could resemble the dominant white middle class ways of being. I was nominally dislocated from sensing certain resistances to this settler colonial context by being

named to blend in with those around me (Louie, 2015). My settler identities were played up by my being "awarded" to my parents in the form of legal custody, masking my migration behind the guise of being "as if" I was their "lawful" child. My experience, as part of my lived curriculum, solidifies my dislocation from Taiwan and clarifies how assimilationist ideologies were imposed on me through my renaming. My given name is a white name, positioning me as complicit with the assimilationist logics of Asian diasporaness and, therefore, the model minority. Assimilation and the model minority lay out a problematically simple pathway to upward socioeconomic mobility in proximity to whiteness, as is evident in this piece of my lived curriculum.

Erasure: Cantonese Given Name (張玉庭)

In the previous section, I showed how my legal name change reflected the ways I was positioned in close proximity to whiteness than without the name Kyle. My Cantonese name, 張玉庭 (Chong Yook-Ting), reveals much about the erasure that accompanies this assimilation. While King Lee has since died, I analyze both the slip of paper he wrote naming me, the name itself, and further excerpts from the home study that show how this name and naming tracks with erasures I have experienced, reflecting my adopted Chineseness and the dislocation of my Taiwaneseness upon entering the United States.

This slip of paper, written by King Lee is my only record of this given name (see Figure 3). Immediately apparent from this image is the simultaneous acts of assimilation and erasure. In the translation, however, is concrete evidence of the panethnic lumping and erasure that I center in this section (Espiritu, 1992). The translation of my name is a shift from the name that my birth

mother gave me. King Lee used a more contemporary translation by interpreting the third character as a "hall, a yard, imperial court," rather than the reference to a rock garden that my mother said she had intended. This, alongside distinctly Cantonese pronunciations, reflects how early Chinese settlers in San Francisco "hailed from many parts of China … [where] local customs varied widely from district to district as did the spoken language" (Chinn, 1989, p. 2). My name also contains the character for jade, a nearly ubiquitous symbol of "Chinese" culture in the context of uniquely pan-Chinese sociocultural traditions forged by early Chinese settlers to survive in a ghettoized early San Francisco Chinatown (Lowe, 1996).

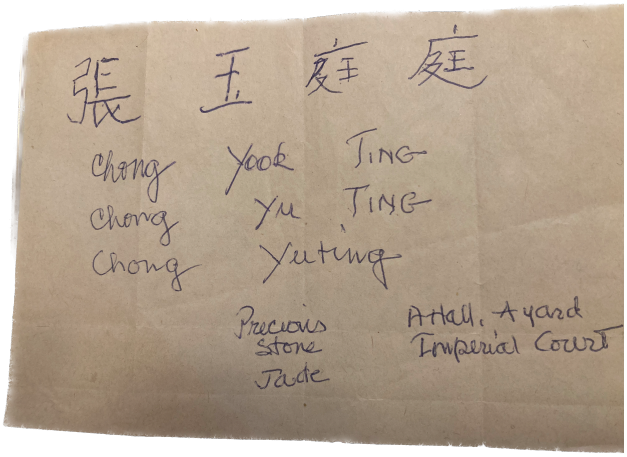
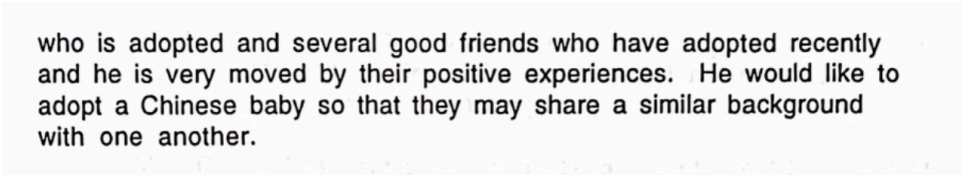


Figure 3: Slip of Paper that Records Kyle's Cantonese Name

This Sinification, or making Chinese, of my name, by way of my naming within San Francisco's emphasis on being a haven for pan-Chinese communities (Chinn, 1989), shows and complicates the multiple erasures captured in my namings. Building on Díaz Beltrán (2018), my curriculum of dislocation can be traced further back from my schooling experiences to my namings, but complicated by attempts in my community to name me—and haunt me—in alignment with multiple past and present imperial superiorities (Fanon, 1961/1963). The name itself positions me as part of a perhaps romanticized, monolithic form of Chinese culture, even as

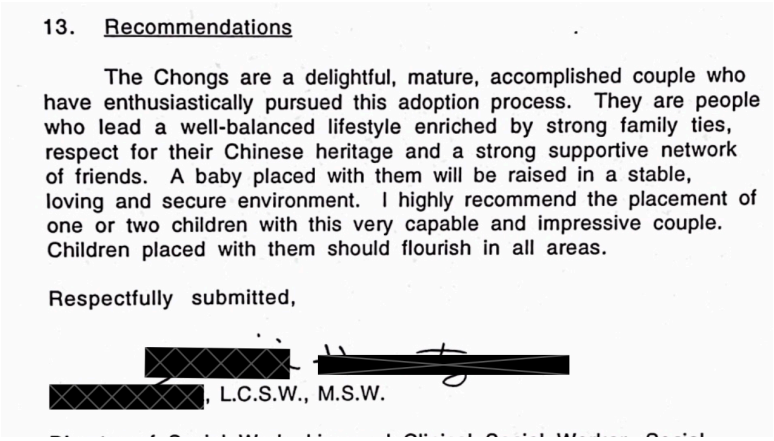
it uses a marginalized dialect (Cantonese) and is written in traditional script. The name suggests a dated longing for unification while also pulling me into a shared panChinese struggle emblematic of San Francisco's Chinatown (Louie, 2004). Haunted by this legacy, this naming also helps me see further evidence of singular Sinocentric constructions of Asian American panethnic identity—alongside Sinophobic (and other anti-East-Asian diaspora) racism that foreground coalition due to the unique context of shared panethnic experiences in the United States—at the expense of my Taiwanese identity (An, 2020; Rodríguez, 2020; Wang, 1995).

Moreover, the home study report further shows how this act of dislocation in my naming reflects my Sinification and ethnoracial flattening. The 1994 report, issued before my adoption, stated that "the Chongs are applying to adopt a baby girl from Asia" and "have been educated about the fact that their adopted child/children may not resemble them physically." Despite these disclaimers, the report describes my adoptive parents' desire (see Figures 4 & 5).



who is adopted and several good friends who have adopted recently and he is very moved by their positive experiences. He would like to adopt a Chinese baby so that they may share a similar background with one another.

Figure 4: Excerpt from the Social Worker's Homestudy Report



13. Recommendations

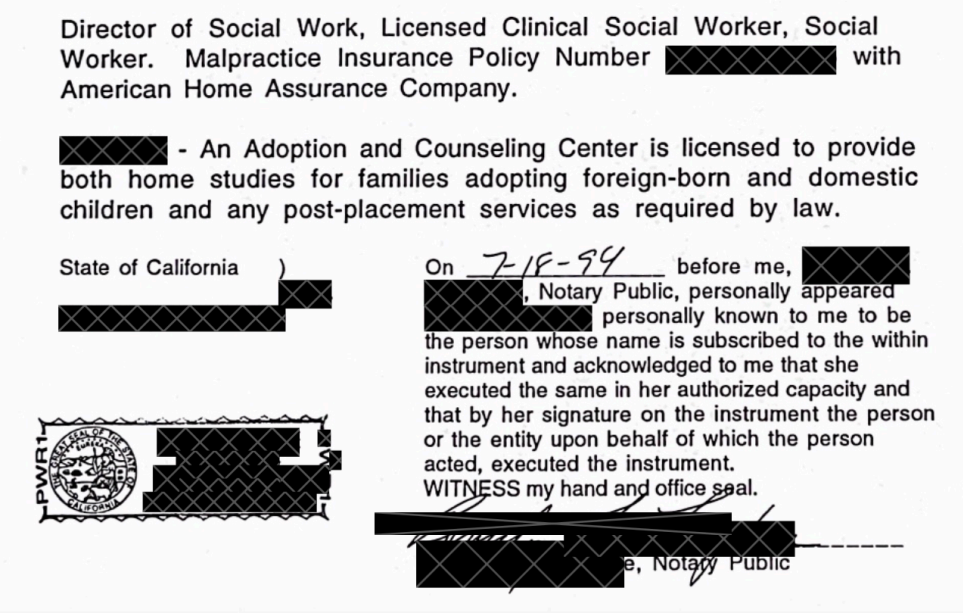
The Chongs are a delightful, mature, accomplished couple who have enthusiastically pursued this adoption process. They are people who lead a well-balanced lifestyle enriched by strong family ties, respect for their Chinese heritage and a strong supportive network of friends. A baby placed with them will be raised in a stable, loving and secure environment. I highly recommend the placement of one or two children with this very capable and impressive couple. Children placed with them should flourish in all areas.

Respectfully submitted,

[redacted], L.C.S.W., M.S.W.

Figure 5: Redacted Excerpt from the Social Worker's Homestudy Report

Figure 5 (cont'd)



Director of Social Work, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Social Worker. Malpractice Insurance Policy Number [redacted] with American Home Assurance Company.

[redacted] - An Adoption and Counseling Center is licensed to provide both home studies for families adopting foreign-born and domestic children and any post-placement services as required by law.

State of California)
[redacted]

On 7/8-94 before me, [redacted], Notary Public, personally appeared [redacted] personally known to me to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged to me that she executed the same in her authorized capacity and that by her signature on the instrument the person or the entity upon behalf of which the person acted, executed the instrument.
WITNESS my hand and office seal.

[redacted]
[redacted], Notary Public

The social worker wrote: "[Dr. Chong has] several good friends who have adopted recently and he is very moved by their positive experiences. He would like to adopt a Chinese baby so that they may share a similar background with one another." The report continues:

> The Chongs are a delightful, mature, accomplished couple who have enthusiastically pursued this adoption process. They are people who lead a well-balanced lifestyle enriched by strong family ties, respect for their Chinese heritage and a strong supportive network of friends.

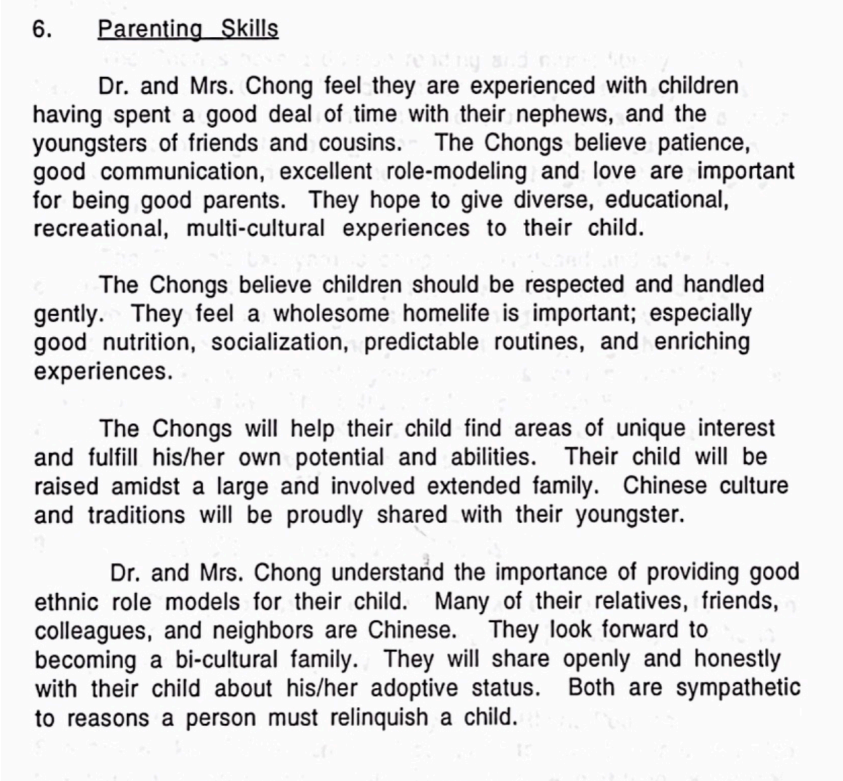
My goal in sharing these excerpts is not to question my adoptive parents' intentions but rather to show how the report is predicated upon language that repeats a conflation of Asian and Chinese cultures. The report declines to define or nuance what it means to be Chinese. Instead, the emphasis is on a "similar background." Whatever shared background my parents' potential adopted child might have had, the report leaves the grain size of that similarity ambiguous. This

ambiguity reflects several assumptions that position a flattened conceptualization of Chineseness at the heart of an itself flattened idea of Asianness or Asian diaspora experience which subsequently erases the tensions, and hauntings, of multiple experiences of coloniality into a single Asian diaspora label (Lowe, 1996). As a result, these passages show where the hauntings of Chineseness interplay with its colonial and imperial histories in the U.S. context. These desires show how my own naming is cathected with the hauntings affixed to a name, a stable recognizable signifier to the nation-state that is legitimized in law; the name also concretizes misinformed perceptions about my specific ethnoracial and sociocultural contexts, thereby necessitating rememory (An, 2020; Rhee, 2021).

The Cantonese name my adoptive parents approved for me seemed to capture what the social worker referred to as my family ties grounded in my adoptive parents' Chinese heritage; the name attaches me to and claims me as part of their lineage, which also affords me the privilege of conveniently passing as Chinese American. Yet, the glaring conflations of Chineseness, Asianness, and exclusion(s) from belonging in the United States captured in the report haunt my second naming (see Figure 6). The further report states:

> The Chongs will help their child find areas of unique interest and fulfill his/her own potential and abilities. Their child will be raised amidst a large and involved extended family. Chinese culture and traditions will be proudly shared with their youngster.
>
> Dr. and Mrs. Chong understand the importance of providing good ethnic role models for their child. Many of their relatives, friends, colleagues, and neighbors

are Chinese. They look forward to becoming a bi-cultural family. They will share openly and honestly with their child about his/her adoptive status.



6. Parenting Skills

Dr. and Mrs. Chong feel they are experienced with children having spent a good deal of time with their nephews, and the youngsters of friends and cousins. The Chongs believe patience, good communication, excellent role-modeling and love are important for being good parents. They hope to give diverse, educational, recreational, multi-cultural experiences to their child.

The Chongs believe children should be respected and handled gently. They feel a wholesome homelife is important; especially good nutrition, socialization, predictable routines, and enriching experiences.

The Chongs will help their child find areas of unique interest and fulfill his/her own potential and abilities. Their child will be raised amidst a large and involved extended family. Chinese culture and traditions will be proudly shared with their youngster.

Dr. and Mrs. Chong understand the importance of providing good ethnic role models for their child. Many of their relatives, friends, colleagues, and neighbors are Chinese. They look forward to becoming a bi-cultural family. They will share openly and honestly with their child about his/her adoptive status. Both are sympathetic to reasons a person must relinquish a child.

Figure 6: Excerpt from the Social Worker's Homestudy Report

The report affirms my parents' "privilege of authenticity," even as adopted parents because they could share "exploration of [the child's] identity without [their] intentions or authenticity being questioned" (Louie, 2015, p. 12). That is, my parents' Chineseness (or manifestations thereof) was left unquestioned because what surely at least some Chinese American parents experience. Díaz Beltrán's (2018) point about having to learn that white Eurocentric ways of being are not ideal offers another potential read of Louie (2015) finding a contentiousness about parents educating adoptees about Chinese culture "because they removed the child from his or her birth

culture before [they were] old enough to give consent" (pp. 59–60). My parents' positionality, therefore, complicates the contours of my dislocation because of their connections to Chineseness, while also being socialized and racialized as Chinese American under white supremacy.

The social worker's assertion that my parents would be ethnic role models for me, yet live in a "bi-cultural" family, shows the cracks and artifice of Asianness as Other; the assertion implied that nuances in our ethnic, cultural, and racial identities were inconsequential. In particular, the ambiguity implicit in their *becoming* a "bi-cultural" family, whether it refers to two hegemonically essentialized concepts of Chinese and U.S. cultures, or Chinese American and so-called "Asian culture," shows how what would become my eventual naming was part of a highly political process that reflected both my parents' aspirations (assimilation) and fears (erasure). This excerpt shows the purity ascribed to a singular Chineseness is bound, or territorialized, to a particular geographic context which, in turn, becomes a deception that apprehends and haunts a child and locks them into an Asianized essentialism from which it is difficult to escape (Louie, 2004; Lowe, 1996; Rhee, 2021; Tuck & Ree, 2013). However, in the next section, I discuss my attempt to circumnavigate these ideologies and shift toward reclamation.

Reclamation: Mandarin Given/Chosen Name (張/陳創庭)

My birth family's household certificate, filed in the Taipei City Household Registry, establishes my family relations immediately post-adoption (see Figure 7). It is important to note my privilege to even have much of this information formally documented—in particular a birth date let alone the name of my birth parent, birth time, or place of birth.

Figure 7: Excerpt from the Taipei District Court's Household Registration

Member(s) of Household

Name in English : Chen, Chuang-Ting
I.D. Card Serial No. : [redacted]
Relationship : Boarder
Order of Birth : 1st son
Date of Birth : April 18, 1995
Father's Name : Blank
Adopted father : [redacted]
Mother's Name : [redacted]
Adopted mother : [redacted]
Name of Spouse : Blank
Place of Birth : Taipei Hsien, Taiwan Province
Education : Blank
Occupation : Blank
Remarks : Born at Cardinal Tien Hospital, Taipei Hsien, registered on [redacted] 1995. Adopted by the American couple Mr. [redacted] and Mrs. [redacted] on [redacted], 1995, registered on [redacted], 1995.

This extract is a true and correct copy of the entries in the Household Register.

Household Registry of Hsin-Tien City, Taipei Hsien, Taiwan Province, R.O.C.

Chief : Lin, Huang-Yuan
Date : June 28, 1995
File No.: Pei-Hsien-Hsin-Tien-Hu-Teng-Tze-(Yi) - 973083

中央翻譯社
CENTRAL TRANSLATION SERVICE

I CERTIFY THAT THIS TRANSLATION IS A TRUE AND CORRECT ENGLISH VERSION OF THE ATTACHED ORIGINAL TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF.

TRANSLATOR [redacted]

JUN 28 1995

本文件之簽名或蓋章，經中華民國台灣台北地方法院公証處公証人認証。
公証人 趙原孫
Attested on this 30 day, JUN 1995, at the Taiwan Taipei District Court, Republic of China, That the signature(s)/seal(s) in this docu-

The two most important things in this form are the lines that state my "Relationship" and "Order of Birth," which place me as a "Boarder" but also a "1st son" without a named father, which is important because Taiwan maintains some Confucian cultural practices of patrilineality and primogeniture. This name positions me ambiguously within my family in a way that is almost analogous to the liminality of Taiwanese identity itself. This form shows the extent to which my naming is ideological. First, I bear my mother's surname, which itself literally translates to "exhibit/display," seemingly to flaunt her irrevocable haunting in my life (Tuck & Ree, 2013). I say haunting because my surname is one of the old hundred names—the names of the ancient Chinese clans since time immemorial.

Second, in my given name are the words for establishing a garden or courtyard. Interestingly, the characters in my given name contain the radicals for legal courts, trauma, and knife cuts, which are fitting because this analysis is situated in the psychological violence of curriculum and the haunting trauma of law on my experience.[x] I can speak with certainty to my own two interpretations of my names.

The first is a reference to the biblical Garden of Eden, and the second is an evocation of growing with my Taiwaneseness, my roots bringing me back to Taiwan. To orient my name close to the biblical Garden of Eden suggests the influence of the legacies of the Christian missionaries who cared for me and facilitated my adoption. However, this potential placement of my name in proximity to these multiple occupations of Aboriginal (Kulon, Ketagalan, Basai) lands in Taiwan shows the interplays, and leveraging, of those colonial hauntings in a profoundly difficult choice for my birth mother to position me to be adopted by parents who might give me a better life.

In this way, the tight sociocultural space permitted me to be both “boarder” (marginalized) and “first-born son” (privileged), is tightened a bit further by naming me within the Christian world (Lugones, 2003). The implications of doing suggest a simultaneity of my birth mother embracing the missionary histories in Asia and navigate the Christian adoption service that would facilitate my adoption and her own aspirations for me. This proximity to Christianity facilitates my adoption because my parents, at the time of my adoption, intended to raise me as Christian inasmuch as they selected “Christian as the “religion child to be reared in" in the social worker’s report. In short, this interpretation of my name is an orientation to sense a

[x] 陳 translates to exhibit or display, in addition to being a surname, and contains the radicals 阝(place, pictograph for a banner) and 東 (east); 創 translates to start or achieve and contains the radicals 刀 (knife sword, pictograph for wielding a blade) and 倉 (granary or berth); 庭 translates to a hall, courtyard, or a law court and contains the radicals 广 (wide, broad, vast) and 廷 (court of a feudal ruler, seat of monarchy).

subtle resistance. The Orientalist hauntings and painful histories mean even my names can be weaponized to mask the complexities of my namings. This masking makes me legible to the state institutions that act on my behalf while maintaining the idea of a global yellow peril that engulfs and flattens my ethnoracialization (Day, 2016; Liu, 2020).

The second interpretation is similarly uncomfortable for me but is informed by my birth mother herself. This interpretation of my name places me at odds with the Chineseness into which I was ultimately socialized and which I continue to covet. My birth mother's explanation is that my name means to create a royal court and a happy family:

> I thought about your name for a very long time, because apart from your life, this is what I can leave to you. Although I know that as soon as you have a name, you will have to apply for a certificate and leave me. … Because as soon as you have a name, it means you are going to America. But I believe you will come back to me. (Personal communication, 09 May, 2023)

Here, my birth mother shows her aspirations and ideological choices in my naming. She resists the dichotomized separation of national identities, stating that I can return to Taiwan, remain her son, and that my Taiwanese roots remain mine. While my name is cathected with pain and mourning, there is also aspiration. That is, my Taiwaneseness is at my core and roots, a source of nourishment and also trauma. Taiwaneseness does not neatly sit amidst the matrix of identities most legible to Eurocentric ways of knowing, especially because of the ways it is mobilized against hegemonic notions of Chineseness peddled by colonizers (Louie, 2004; Quijano, 2000).

However, in context of my birth mother's explanation this interpretation is a reclamation of my names, constituting resistance to and (re)remembrance of the lifetime of spiritual injuries that Chineseness has inflicted upon me, my ancestors, and other Asian diasporic communities within the white supremacist settler colonial context of the United States (Chun, 1996; Rhee, 2021).

Talking to my birth mother, I revisited the tensions of naming. My name, something she could leave me with, was subsequently erased under the guise of "naturalization," much like the erasures implicit in my dislocation from my Taiwaneseness and disidentification through renaming (Lowe, 1996). The nation-state, though, has little capacity to sense (Lugones, 2003) the human relationship that it severed in stripping me of this name with a form. Yet, I am my birth mother's first son; that familial bond and cultural affinity will never be captured in the legalistic documents that "legitimize" me to the nation-state. My name, then, functions as a tight space because the boundaries of Taiwanese identity are constrained, engulfed by the mainland Chinese nation-state, the Taiwanese nation-state, and the U.S. nation-state (Chen 2010; Ferreira da Silva, 2007). Despite multiple layers of dislocation, I see the potential for my *now*here of global curriculum to problematize "standards of global citizenship that disregard relationships embodied in the everyday experiences of citizens whose histories have been marked by colonialism, imperialism and capitalism" (Díaz Beltrán, 2018, p. 274). I live and sit between these two interpretations as they both simultaneously dislocate me in different ways within the same name.

With my analysis and counternarrative, I challenge dichotomized logics that position me liminally between multiple nation-states and the boundaries of identities. I see ghosts around me, and this ghastliness reveals itself to me every time I write the name that grants me my nationality

(U.S. citizenship) but is never fully mine. This unsettledness is my entire point: bearing and embodying our names, our nomencurricula, makes visible the impositions, aspirations, ideologies, and resistances in our namings to challenge the violence of singular signification.

The Nomencurriculum: "The Ups and Downs of Your Lives"[xi]

Thus far, I have shown how my three names embody entwined ideologies of assimilation, erasure, and reclamation. This simultaneity forms my nomencurriculum. The nomencurriculum intervenes in recent reckonings about the impact of names and (re)namings. From schools and military bases (imperial outposts) named for white supremacist Confederates to cities enforcing the maintenance of names imposed by colonizers, names are curricular insofar as they represent the official signifier and memory of people, places, and things. By splintering the multiple names of people, places, and things into an assemblage of simultaneous ideologies, the nomencurriculum can function as a lens through which to parse whatever "best intentions" dominant forces have for us and their impacts on us. Using the nomencurriculum clarifies how names claim (naming "in honor of") and frame (naming wars, such as the "Global War on Terror").

Names and namings are an opportunity to counter this curriculum of dislocation because they foreground the activity of unlearning the emotional distance in theory that allows many scholars (myself included) situated in the Global North to justify or apologize for "keeping myself untouched" (Díaz Beltrán, 2018, p. 286). For me, the distance at which I kept myself from my work from the beginning of my career reminds me how the normalized feeling of dislocation at times leads me into a self-imposed exile to try to escape the hauntings of the

[xi] Deirdre speaks this line to Evelyn during her IRS tax audit appointment (Kwan & Scheinert, 2022, 20:43-20:47).

empire across the contexts through which I move (He, 2010). To extend Díaz Beltrán's (2018) concept, the standardization of given names and *sur*names, while seemingly neutral, violently erases, for example, the value of Indigenous matrilineal worldviews, an erasure that dislocates individuals from their communities (Brant, 2023).

The dislocation that happens as a result of names and naming also has an important racial and linguistic dimension because of the ways that languages that do not use Latin script are contorted to fit within state hierarchies. This second dislocation from even the language people use to identify themselves further suggests how naming acts as a technology of violence that tightens the spaces in which people resist the haunting across contexts. Studying names, as a result, can be a way for people to consider how school contexts governed by dominant ideologies. To begin to resist the ways in which young people are compelled to absorb the curricular violence, requires scholars and practitioners to center the sustained erasure and dominant ideologies, dislocating people simply because of the inescapability of namings, coloniality, and modernity.

Therefore, the nomencurriculum allows the field of curriculum studies to account for what names teach us as we move through our lifecycles, and is being taught to us to sense as a result of our names, as gateways to knowledge that we carry in our lived curricula. In the classroom, teachers and teacher educators have long known the importance of pronouncing students' names correctly to acknowledge their cultural assets (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012) and avoid the violence of misnaming (Bucholtz, 2016). While avoiding racial and gendered microaggressions is of course important, the nomencurriculum also foregrounds that within the classroom everyone must answer to a single name and must be named. We are "called on" by our

name and often compelled to answer. However, of equal importance is a caution that the nomencurriculum is not meant to be a means of extraction to further demand that teachers force students to share or be named in ways they do not wish to be named. Teachers must understand the vastness of chosen and given names and challenge English-centrism in their praxis without using their power to further extract cultural knowledge from students that may not be safe or affirming for them to share (e.g., deadnames). Instead, the nomencurriculum is meant to sense (Lugones, 2003) resistances within the tight space of names and challenge the tightness names can impose upon individuals. Moreover, the nomencurriculum pushes teachers and those who share space in educational contexts to value the stories of names and namings.

At stake is a world in which Deirdre Beaubeidre is right: a boring pile of forms and numbers alone comes to define our existence and humanity. Instead, the nomencurriculum is an invitation to look beyond the paperwork and make visible the power structures that shape our lives through the names that are given to us, along with their accompanying stories and ideologies. Examining those ups and downs and the many lives visible through our names is an exercise in what is curricular as much as how curricula impact people relentlessly and simultaneously. Further at stake are the constant reminders that the violence of misnaming reproduces fear and othering.

In exploring my nomencurriculum through archival analysis, I see how my names and parts of my lived curriculum between nation-states, settler identities, and cultural affinities are shaped by legal documents. These documents, however tell far from the full story, which necessitates counternarrative and rememory to elucidate the contexts that show more complexity than a form or piece of government paperwork can to speak against the violence of such

paperwork. Labels flatten nuance, and a name is a label. I concur with Díaz Beltrán's (2018) conclusion that "healing a curriculum of dislocation needs a contextual response to relationships that cannot be predicted" (p. 289). I extend her question "What are the stories that separate me from 'others'?" (p. 289) by asking: What stories are inescapably captured by the otherwise curricular sites that dislocate us? In exploring my own curriculum of dislocation, I turned to my names to show how the U.S. legal and global contexts that bring me to this work inform my ability to sense resistance and see harm in the unpredictability of my relationships to curriculum.

In part, I wrote this article to deliberate over whether or not I believed that my birth mother gave me up for adoption for a "better life." My answer brought me to this framework of theoretical merging, revealing the importance of names in and of themselves for the field of curriculum studies. Putting AsianCrit and decolonial theory into conversation shows me that to pursue a "better" life is to pursue modernity grounded in the Eurocentrism that excluded and incarcerated Asians and Asian Americans out of economic and "nativistic" fears and white rage (Fanon, 1961/1963; Goodwin, 2010). Yet, that pursuit is very real when living in the shadow of the subaltern empire and global superpower in the PRC that has a historical score to settle in response to global Sinophobia. So, for me it is not about a better life but seeing the fluidities of living multiple lives and the rememory that emerges from seeing what might have been had I lived with a different name, recognizing the privilege I have that these names are neither deadnames nor posthumous names. They live in me. Like the ideologies and contexts I move between, it is important to sense the multiple lives created by white supremacy and settler coloniality that pass through me through these names. In the end, a nomencurriculum disrupts the linearity of the educational logics of modernity, social mobility, or history and invites a messy

reckoning that lies at the heart of sitting with curricula all at once (formal, explicit, informal, null, lived, embodied, and now nomen).

"It Does Not Look Good"[xii] … Right Now: Conclusion

In this article, I put AsianCrit and decolonial theory into conversation to analyze my three names: (1) a Mandarin name given to me by my birth mother; (2) an English name given to me by my adoptive parents; and (3) a Cantonese name given to me by a family friend. These theoretical frames make visible the multiplicity of power structures and belongings into which I have been positioned. My analysis shows the overlaps and cracks of these power structures. This framework of analyzing names helps me track the circulations of global power in my names and outline an analytic possibility that I call nomencurriculum.

Names are part of our lived curricula. My names represent my encounters with the U.S. immigration/adoption system, my position within my own family, and my relationship to the curriculum about Asian diasporas. Through this storytelling, this article contributes to curriculum studies scholarship by providing a framework of analysis through which students can investigate their own lived curricula, especially in the context of heightened censorship and backlash against challenges to official narratives of identity in the United States.

This exploration, for me, helped me empathize with Joy Wang/Jobu Tupaki's nihilism (and not just because I am "GenZ") from having to endure the relentless injury of an infinity of simultaneous realities. Her personas showed the tensions of bearing and embodying names. The nomencurriculum, however, sits between Joy's and Evelyn's experiences and reflects the need for education to tap into the cultural assets and skills that come from versejumping, connect with

[xii] Deirdre speaks this line to Evelyn during her IRS tax audit appointment (Kwan & Scheinert, 2022, 20:52-20:56).

our multiple simultaneous selves, and make space for Joy's crushing feeling of bearing layers of pain and terror inflicted by white supremacy and coloniality. My own family stories run parallel to one another, intercepting and interrupting one another throughout my life. Curriculum inquiry, at the heart of this exploration, is imperative for children who look like me; it allows us to not feel the pressure to take on a "white" name in U.S. (educational) contexts out of fear or because of the need to assimilate. Instead, I hope that theorizing a nomencurriculum can help kids learn more about themselves, as I did in this exploration, and disrupt the power structures they are named into.

The curriculum of names that we give to people, places, and things make determinations and tighten spaces. Names create a curriculum of claiming, framing, and blaming, and names signal everything, everywhere, all at once; the harm caused by the names we "give" and impose comes to contain experiences of a finite reality of white supremacy. Certainly, when even naming can act as a technology of white supremacy and settler coloniality, I feel haunted and afraid. Returning to the epigraph with which I chose to begin this article, locating violence in our names makes Deirdre Beaubeirdre's point that piles of boring forms tell a story about us that does not look good. Yet, this is not the only story a nomencurriculum makes visible. Instead I implore you to use this framework to locate the possibilities of reclamation and resistance in this multiverse of abundance, the ups and downs of our lives, which cannot be contained in a name.

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CHAPTER FOUR: Sinophobia + Sinocentrism— An AsianCrit Analysis of the U.S. Military's Wartime Curricular [Re]racialization of Chinese [Americans]

My Chinese ally?

I took an undergraduate course called The Politics of National Identity in Greater China, in which I visited twelve cities in Greater China, at the same time that I reunited with my birth mother in Taiwan.[1] I remember feeling particularly anxious during my first hours in Mainland China. Once settled in Fuzhou, our professor assigned us an excerpt in the US War Department's Educational Manual No. 42 (EM42) American Historical Association (AHA) (1944) titled 'Who are the Chinese?'. EM42 is an American instructional pamphlet for soldiers in World War II (WWII), which 'challenged' the perceptions of the time that 'Chinese are just about as different from us as human beings could be' (p. 7). While I fail to see myself in this nauseating portrayal of a people I continue to be lumped in with, EM42 showed me that American perceptions of Chinese people at the time continue to reverberate and impact how Asian Americans are racialized today.

Chinese identity, or Chineseness, is territorialized (Louie, 2004) based on biological physiognomy (Anderson, 1983) meaning that it is often associated with a specific place (that is, China for Chinese people). Chinese identity is, as a result, shaped by competing national discourses which, makes Chinese [American] identity difficult for me to claim or escape as a Taiwanese American adopted by Chinese American parents, especially as the People's Republic of China has injected Han ethnic nationalism into its national history curriculum (Law, 2014; Lee

& Wang, 2023). Despite my adopted parents' best efforts, I learned to shun the body I live in—my 'marked body that holds the white projection of racial Othering' (Liu, 2020, p. 13). My family, generations removed from our immigration story, emphasized assimilation. I wondered at the time if this was a fearful reaction to how my family had been treated since they returned from WWII (Chinn, 1989).

As I read the pamphlet, my unconscious belief that the United States 'saved' me started to fall away. Frighteningly, this pamphlet was likely intended to inform many soldiers' perceptions of Chinese people, and perhaps of Asians and Asian Americans. Those soldiers' descendants, who were in turn socialized by their parents, are still alive, and with them, the perceptions of Asians and Asian Americans informed by EM42. My story is one of many who have reckoned with our racialization since the recent onslaught of anti-Asian racism and xenophobia. I wonder, then, how Asian Americans are being harmed by the reverberations of EM42's portrayals of Chinese [American] people.

The flattened caricature of Asian people rapidly spread in the latter half of the 19th century as white Americans' fears that Chinese people represented a sub-human threat to American jobs (Lee, 2010; Louie, 2004). U.S. government rhetoric spread fears of contagious immigrants that justified state-sanctioned exclusion to the American public, which I refer to as *Sinophobia*, for three generations from 1882 to 1964 (and, later, COVID-19). These stereotypes about Chinese people have imposed racist assumptions upon Asian *Americans* as a panethnic community as a result of White Americans' exposure to Chinese people. I refer to the positioning of Chineseness as a default Asian and Asian American avatar as *Sinocentrism*. Without interrogating fear and centering of Chinese identity, Chineseness may remain synonymous with

the racialization of Asian Americans. This simultaneity of Sinophobia and Sinocentrism compels me to connect EM42 to my own racialization, as well as part of the military's curriculum (Bruscino et al., 2017). EM42 was also likely some American G.I'.s first and only encounter with Greater China's last two centuries of history, one of which scholars call a colonial Century of Humiliation and the other a developmental 'miracle' (Schuman, 2009). While EM42 has several stated purposes, such as a topic of continuing education discussions, perhaps most consequential of its contemporaneous implications is on the racialization of Asian Americans.

In this paper, I utilize AsianCrit, an extension of Critical Race Theory, to analyze EM42 (1944). I argue that EM42's attempts to [re]racialize Chinese people satisfied American political interests and maintained white supremacy through simultaneous technologies centering Chineseness as indicative of (1) *Sinocentric* racialization of Asian Americans and (2) *Sinophobic* portrayals of Chinese people. These simultaneous technologies, I argue, exemplify how a state-sponsored [re]racialization project can challenge dominant stereotypes without decentering whiteness. I also offer implications for how EM42's messaging reverberates and impacts Asian American identity today. I do so by overviewing AsianCrit and contextualizing EM42 in a historical moment of the U.S. government's differential racializing of Chinese and Japanese Americans. I then analyze EM42 using four strands that highlight the simultaneity of Sinocentrism and Sinophobia: (1) departures from American policy; (2) Chinese people's racialized political identity; (3) a qualified humanization of Chinese people that preserves whiteness; and (4) erasures of Chinese Americans and presumed whiteness of the military. These analyses offer implications for ongoing contemporary Asian American curricular erasure and

questions the need to continue to center Chineseness in contemporary curricular discourse about Asian Americans.

AsianCrit and constructing Asian American identity

My analysis of EM42 foregrounds how the target(s) of racism shift to conserve white dominance in American life, and how Asian Americans' unique experiences of racism and xenophobia are situated in legacies of American imperialism. I do so using Asian Critical Race Theory (AsianCrit). AsianCrit extends Critical Race Theory (CRT), which seeks to center the relationship between power, race, and racism in American law (Bell, 1991; Crenshaw, 1989; Delgado, 1982; Harris, 1993). AsianCrit, accordingly, calls particular attention to the unique needs of Asian Americans who, like other communities of Color, have been differentially racialized in their own ways 'according to the needs of the majority group at particular times in its history' (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 80). I build on and contribute to this literature by examining how the state, through the military, used differential racialization to marshal fear and dehumanizing portrayals of Chinese and Japanese people to advance a narrative of American benevolence and white supremacy. As a result, I use AsianCrit to frame how Chinese Americans, as part of a panethnic racialized community, were rehabilitated and (re)racialized for political purposes in EM42, centering the transnational contexts tenet of AsianCrit.

AsianCrit

Chang (1993) outlined the necessity of an Asian Critical Legal Scholarship that centers the unique needs and racialized experiences of Asian Americans under American law. Building on Chang (1993), Museus and Iftikar (2014) extend CRT's tenets to center the unique experiences and needs of Asian Americans: (1) Asianization; (2) transnational contexts; (3)

(re)constructive history; (4) strategic (anti)essentialism; (5) intersectionality; (6) story, theory, and praxis; and (7) commitment to social justice (Iftikar & Museus, 2018). I highlight the transnational contexts tenet and how it interplays with the others through my analysis of this artifact of military curriculum because the transnational contexts tenet highlights the unique impacts that imperialism and colonialism continue to have on the racialized experiences and processes of Asian Americans (Museus & Iftikar, 2014).

The transnational contexts tenet calls attention to Asian Americans' racialization as a product of the global circulation of white supremacy, and how that racialization is impacted by forces that transcend national borders such as imperialism and migration (Ang, 2001; Museus & Iftikar, 2014). Iftikar and Museus (2018) define this tenet of AsianCrit as 'the ways that past and present global economic, political, and social processes shape the conditions of Asian Americans' (p. 940). U.S. laws, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (CEA), excluded *Chinese* migrants to the United States and denied citizenship to *Chinese Americans* who would have otherwise been naturalized. However, those newcomers who fled as a result of American and Western imperial conquests in Greater China migrated to the United States only to subsequently experience political exclusion and racism (Lowe, 1996). The transnational contexts tenet of AsianCrit foregrounds how the United States played a major role in creating the conditions that catalyzed significant migration from Greater China. The Unequal Treaties in the wake of the Opium Wars imposed by U.S. and other Western militarism created economic conditions in which foreign companies gutted domestic industries leading to food shortages that made the allure of gold in places like California a worthwhile risk for many Chinese people (Takaki, 1998). Yet, this fact is largely evaded in dominant political and curricular narratives.

Instead, the U.S. government vilified Chinese migration as merely a threat to American jobs leading to the Exclusion Acts that made Sinophobia federal policy (Lee, 2010).

Looking transnationally at histories and policies of imperialism, migration, and racialization is necessary for understanding how these tropes and dominant frameworks emerged and continue to operate. The transnational contexts tenet of AsianCrit is also important given the model minority and forever foreigner tropes mobilized against Asian Americans. Asian Americans have been positively stereotyped as a model minority for being hard-working, submissive, and obedient, and are 'rewarded' with proximity to whiteness and the appearance of not experiencing racism, which consequently creates an anti-Black racial wedge (Chang, 1993; Hsieh & Kim, 2020; Suzuki, 1977). The model minority, therefore, positions Asian Americans close to whiteness without challenging the curricular violence against Asian Americans by highlighting Asian American assimilation (An, 2020). The Yellow peril and perpetual foreigner tropes, similarly, position Asians as contagious invaders grounded in the same orientalist fear that undergirded the Chinese Exclusion Acts (Takaki, 1998; Tuan, 1998). Kim and Hsieh (2022) and Liu (2020) note that these two tropes are linked to the differential racialization of Asian Americans because these tropes are mobilized as a racial wedge under whiteness to subordinate other racialized communities. As a result, Asian Americans are racialized unstably within the Black-white racial binary, and this proximity to whiteness and essentialized tropes position Asian Americans as unassimilable into white American society despite being excluded from it (Poon et al., 2016).

Legal interventions, like the Chinese Exclusion Acts, as well as American military interventions resulted in targeted racism and xenophobia towards Chinese and Japanese

Americans as well as other Asian Americans. However, U.S. law makes little distinction between contexts that are imagined as Asian, necessitating analyses using AsianCrit's transnational contexts tenet to nuance the unique experiences of individual communities that are otherwise racialized within the single Asian American panethnic label (Said, 1979). Doing so deepens analyses of differential racialization of Japanese and Chinese Americans that have impacted other communities within the Asian American panethnic community. In sum, AsianCrit's transnational contexts tenet, in conversation with the other tenets, highlights the global circulations of power that continue to inform Asian Americans' experiences in the United States. This paper builds on and contributes to this literature by seeking to disentangle the synonymy of Chinese identity with Asian identity, which has consequently racialized other Asian Americans according to stereotypes originating from exaggerated and imagined cultural tropes (Kolano, 2016; Ngo & Lee, 2007).

Differential racialization of Chinese Americans at the onset of WWII

Christian missionaries had a significant role in forming white Americans' imaginations of Chinese people, which would be subsequently grafted onto perceptions of Chinese Americans. Notably, Arthur Henderson Smith (1890/1894 wrote a monograph called *Chinese Characteristics*, in which Smith essentialized and homogenized what he thought was a comprehensive portrait of Chinese people (Liu, 2013).[2] Beyond Smith's racist ethnography, essentialized ideas of Chineseness are increasingly territorialized by nation-states who have a political stake in a single idea of who Chinese people are and where they live grounded in colonial logics and epistemologies about race (Louie, 2004).

The mass migration in the wake of the Opium Wars (1839–1842; 1856–1860) and the destabilizing and eventual overthrow of the Qing Dynasty (1911) *created* economic protectionist, racist, and xenophobic sentiment in the United States, which prompted the Chinese Exclusion Acts and normalized Sinophobia. The United States formalized anti-*Asian* racist, xenophobic, and jingoistic policies in the Chinese Exclusion Acts, then splintered into discriminating against individual groups like Chinese and Japanese newcomers. The Chinese Exclusion Acts barred Chinese people from entering the United States and permitted legal, institutional, and physical violence against Chinese Americans, who were a proxy for all Asian Americans (Au et al., 2016). The notion of an 'Oriental' culture and people, who were seen as a threat to whiteness and colonial authority led to the formation of Chinatowns and the 'Oriental School' in San Francisco in 1885 (Chinn, 1989) as a result of *Tape v. Hurley. Tape* created a separate segregated school for Chinese Americans but also contributed to the solidification of a panethnic identity (Espiritu, 1992) that budded an 'inability to distinguish between Asians', but not an 'inability to discriminate against Asians' (Chang, 1993, p. 1246). This in turn leads to a political dichotomy between assimilated and unassimilated Asian Americans which continues to complicate the Asian American label as both an ethnic and racial identity marker (Lo, 2016). Additionally, these racist tropes grounded in stereotypes about Chinese newcomers exemplify a Sinocentrism that cast the entire panethnic community as vulnerable to Chinese stereotypes based on majoritarian logics about Asian Americans. Simultaneously, these tropes perpetuated Sinophobic Yellow Peril, which would proceed to bleed into violence against other communities lumped into the Asian American label (Espiritu, 1992; Museus & Iftikar, 2014).

While certain racist tropes caricatured all Asian Americans, other manifestations of white supremacy sought racial distinction between Japanese and Chinese Americans at the onset of American involvement in WWII. Sinophobic Yellow Peril captured in the Chinese Exclusion Acts, and the quota systems introduced under the Immigration Act (1924), had established an inherent tension between treating the Chinese as a separate group from, and at times proxy for, the broader Asian American community. Following the United States' entry into WWII following the attack on Pearl Harbor, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 and the Magnuson Act (1943), which repealed the Chinese Exclusion Acts. The United States incarcerated a whole generation of Japanese Americans and took steps to signal political alliance with China alone rather than more explicit moves towards racial equity for fear of losing support from Southern members of Congress (Yui, 1992). The United States' political interest turned to [re]racializing, or at least differentiating between, Chinese and Japanese Americans (Seto, 2015). China would become an ally in the war, and Japan a threat to the mirage of Western, and white, supremacy.

American imperialistic paternalism positioned China as 'little Yellow brothers who needed US help and guidance' (Seto, 2015, p. 58) leveraging the budding Republic of China (ROC) as a foil to Japanese militarism. This is an example of State-sanctioned moves towards Sinocentrism, a centering of Chineseness in American conceptualizations of Asia. This shift in racism and xenophobia from Chinese American newcomers threatening American jobs allowed for Japanese Americans to be associated with 'malicious subhuman creatures bent on the desertion of the American nation itself' (Seto, 2015, p. 60) and threatening the Western imperial world order.

Asian migrant labour in North America was not subject to the same abuse, theft, and enslavement as Black people (Day, 2016). Rather, Day (2016) writes, "Asianness as a racial signifier of indelible, exclusively transferable attributes was less necessary as a strategy of containment" (p. 32) to exclude Asian newcomers to North America from the nation-state on the basis of fears of Asianness as a source of biological contamination but made uneven due to panethnic lumping of multiple ethnicities into a single Asian racial category (Espiritu, 1992). Thus, Asian Americans became harder to clearly define within a Black-white paradigm that does not consistently differentiate between race (especially those that differ from Western European epistemological constructions thereof) and ethnicity (Kim, 1999; Louie, 2004). This ambiguity between Asian ethnicity and race created a politically advantageous opening for the U.S. government to shift its stances to meet the political needs of the time.

Pseudoscience was also mobilized to justify this shift in the target of racialized violence. Time Magazine's (1941) 'How to Tell the Japs from Chinese' feature contains annotated photos of Ong Wen-Hao and Hideki Tojo that distinguish the two based on the 'Yellowness' of their complexion and their different epicanthic folds. This attempt to impose a pseudoscientific categorization to differentiate between Chinese and Japanese people on the basis of physical features was motivated, according to the article, by unwarranted attacks on Chinese people mistaken for being Japanese (Time Magazine, 1941). This shows how nationality and race were conflated in a hybridized Chinese identity, the basis of which was a misappropriation of science to justify sociopolitical subordination. Therefore, as American political needs changed, they necessitated a racial 'rehabilitation' of Chinese and Chinese Americans to seek distinction from Japanese Americans. Analyses informed by transnational contexts therefore helps make visible

instances in which the U.S. government has exploited chronic absences of Asian and Asian American histories to accommodate its political needs.

The *G.I. Roundtable Series* as military curriculum

While Asian Americans have been largely erased from the school curriculum, there are other 'curricula' that have contributed to the differential racialization, Orientalization, and Othering of Asian Americans in the American popular consciousness (An, 2017a, 2020; Ngo & Lee, 2007; Rodríguez, 2018). Less infamous than Time Magazine's (1941) article is Educational Manual No. 42 (EM42) (1944), which was part of a Department of War training effort to educate American soldiers on the contexts in which they were fighting. EM42 details Chinese history, people, and culture. Over two hundred thousand copies were created and distributed widely towards the end of WWII, but it has not yet been studied as a piece of curriculum (AHA, n.d).

EM42 (1944) was initially authored by orientalist Owen Lattimore and his sister Eleanor Lattimore for the American Historical Association (AHA), in collaboration with the Information and Education Division of the U.S. Army. They created a pamphlet for soldiers in the field to read and discuss with their senior non-commissioned officers, who doubled as facilitators. Owen Lattimore, who would later be entangled in Joseph McCarthy's purges for alleged communist sympathy, was accused after the war of indoctrinating American soldiers with subversive beliefs (Newman, 1992). Among these subversive beliefs were stances taken within EM42 (1944) that praised China's progress as a result of Soviet support and Sun Yat-Sen's ability to 'organize factory workers and peasants' (p. 26) in revolutionary struggle against the Qing. Lattimore positions the United States as sympathetic to the Chinese people's struggle against 'tyranny …

combined with foreign domination' (p. 47). Notably, however, this sympathy did not extend to those who fled China for the United States.

EM42 is part of a series of pamphlets collectively titled the *G.I. Roundtable Series*, which were part of an effort to win WWII and 'provide factual information and balanced arguments as a basis for discussion of all sides of a question' (AHA, 1944, p. i). Pamphlets, like EM42, suggest the U.S. government's explicit intervention in the process of (re)racializing and rehabilitating the Chinese who had been legally excluded from American life for three generations. The document has nine sections over sixty-one pages that focus on three central strands: (1) a description of 'the Chinese' as a single people and culture, (2) China's recent history, and (3) China's place in the post-war world.

The pamphlets covered military topics from the treatment of war criminals to profiles of Allied nation-states. They also covered civic matters such as the utility of public opinion polling and women's roles in American life. During WWII, pamphlets were distributed to soldiers in the field with the intent of contextualizing the work they were doing, underscoring the reasons they were fighting, and laying the groundwork for their post-war return to civilian life (AHA, n.d.). The AHA (n.d.) would later go on to engage in self-criticism over the series. The AHA critiqued its prior uplifting of white upper-middle class norms and the military's liberal interpretation of the pamphlet series' audience being 'democratic citizens' while being adverse to free discussion of the topics contained within the pamphlets. The audience of the pamphlets, according to the AHA (n.d.) were 'enlisted men who were young, white, and male' (n.p.) in the field, and each pamphlet was ordered in quantities of 200,000 and distributed through the fall of 1946. In the

case of EM42, this battlefield introduction to Chinese history and Chinese people reinforced the common perceptions of Chinese people that soldiers likely brought with them from home.

Soldiers' perceptions are a result of Asians' and Asian Americans' curricular erasure. Curriculum, conventionally, refers to what students should learn, and by what methods (Egan, 2003). The U.S. Government has historically taken great interest in using curriculum as a means of maintaining national cohesion, political education, and supporting its military superiority (Gibbs, 2020; Kliebard, 2004). Curriculum, through a CRT lens, can be conceptualized as a form of property, and a site of racialized violence in schools (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). When Asian and Asian American histories are erased from curriculum, like those of other racialized communities, the students of that curriculum learn that these stories have no value within the official or 'objective' narrative of history (Rodríguez, 2018). In the context of military education, legitimizing of curricular knowledge within a linear chain of command structure means that racialized violence within the military's educational apparatus was communicated with the authority of the state. As a result, military education needs to be understood in terms of how education is 'an instrument to create the soldiers the army most wanted to have', and attracted soldiers to education 'because it offered a pathway to becoming the citizens they most wanted to be' (Loss, 2005, p. 867). In EM42, the aspiration to create civically participatory citizens implies the importance of educating soldiers with the state's civic ideals, especially as agents of the state. This is poignant in the context of the post-war shifts that forced the United States to depart from previous policies towards Chinese people, placing EM42 at a rich historical juncture.

While not all of the pamphlets were published before the war ended, the *G.I. Roundtable Series* articulated the U.S. Military's utopian post-war worldview by preparing soldiers for return

to civilian life in pamphlets like EM30 *Can war marriages be made to work?* (1944) or EM34 *Shall I go back to school?* (1945). The U.S. Army prioritized influencing soldiers and maintaining morale grounded in the power and mythos of the American state, over the needs of those living within the United States (Loss, 2005). Next, I argue that EM42 exemplifies the simultaneity of Sinocentrism and Sinophobia as violent doctrines that maintain white supremacy and the American empire.

When the United States Said the Chinese are ____

I analyzed EM42 (1944) using the transnational contexts tenet of AsianCrit to argue that the discourses and frameworks outlined in EM42 are foundational to the Model Minority Myth which is part of Asian Americans' racialization (Kolano, 2016; Suzuki, 1977). I also use An's (2017b) application of AsianCrit in social studies research to build on literature that attends to anti-Asian racism in context of the 'intricate relations with the larger issues of racism' (p. 138) to uncover the transpacific impacts of the U.S. Military's framing of Chinese people which moves to inform the lived experiences of Chinese Americans and Asian Americans.

I turned to two studies to help inform my methods to inform this analysis of this single curricular document. The first uses critical discourse analysis, and the second critical race archival methods. In this paper, I analyzed EM42 informed by Burch's (2018) study of a British Government policy document about disability and education and Morris and Parker's (2019) outlining of a CRT historical and archival analysis in education.

I borrow from Burch's (2018) methods to analyze the discursive power relations asserted by government documents which demonstrates the affordances of closely reading a single government document to unveil an 'assemblage of rationalities and strategies concerned with

economic advantage' (p. 100) which show how the discourse of policy documents impact education. In my study, I do so by centering the economic advantage afforded by American militarism and the racialized power relationship established within EM42. Morris and Parker's (2019) study showed that archival materials become historical because of narratives 'constructed around them' (p. 32), some of which are curricular. One affordance of closely analyzing EM42, as an artifact of state-created discourse legitimized by the U.S. military, is that it communicates official stances that inform contemporary racial perceptions. In context of the 'perpetuity of offenses and grow the past has continued to shape the future' (Morris & Parker, 2019, p. 33), a single document like EM42 can show the reverberations from these power relations and justifications of militarism and empire as part of the U.S.'s history of Sinophobia as part of the endemic racism in American life.

Burch (2018) and Morris and Parker (2019), together, show how analysis of a single document creates space for how these documents make visible potential sociocultural reverberations due to the 'historical' narratives constructed around them. Analyzing a single document as a piece of policy and curriculum shows how policy impacts education, in particular as a means of racialization.

To conduct this analysis, I used an inductive and interactive process informed by AsianCrit and CRT literature, to map four main themes that I noticed in the process of concept mapping my higher of EM42 and looking back on notes from my own education about this pamphlet (Bhattacharya, 2017). The thematic strands I found using this process are as follows: (1) how Chinese people are (re)racialized under white supremacy; (2) compatible with democracy; (3) humanized in ways that did not challenge white supremacy; and (4) kept as

exotic foreigners. My thematic clustering process came by sorting my quotes into first identifying moments of humanization and dehumanization in the text. In particular, I noticed the silences and contradictions in EM42's characterization of Chinese people. I then conducted a second reading to make sure those themes permeated the document and organized key quotes with my concept map and my own separate reflections of who and what was absent and invisible as I re-read. My analysis was informed by treating this document as an archival, military, and therefore government document (Burch, 2018; Morris & Parker, 2019), and as a curricular document, which created opportunities to analyze it as part of a continuity, or curriculum, of violence that erases Asian people broadly in an educational context (An, 2020; Suh et al., 2015).

The transnational contexts tenet of AsianCrit in particular helped to make visible the discursive erasures of Chinese Americans within EM42 (Burch, 2018), while my own experience and encounters with EM42 helped me see how this document can have reverberations for contemporary curricular discourse about Chinese and other Asian Americans. Inserting my own narrative and context relative to EM42 also addresses Morris and Parker's (2019) concern that researchers exclude 'perspectives from the marginalized' (p. 33). While analysis of a single document cannot fully capture its impacts, this paper seeks to show the discursive and political moves within a piece of military curriculum that seed concepts that drive anti-Asian racism today.

My analysis' attention to the transnational contexts tenet of AsianCrit begins to separate the layers of military and political rhetoric in EM42. While there are similar pamphlets to EM42 (e.g. EM41 *Our British Ally*, EM 47 *Canada: Our Oldest Good Neighbor*) that specifically profile whole national contexts in the *GI Roundtable Series*, this manuscript solely focuses on

discursive and textual choices within the document that highlight and reinforce relationalities and erasures of Chinese Americans through to justify the U.S.-ROC military alliance but not racial justice for Chinese Americans. While I had initially considered analyzing EM15 *What shall be done with Japan after victory*, I decided that many of the themes such as the seeding of the Model Minority Myth and differential (re)racialization of Chinese and Japanese people were clearest in EM42, as it is the only pamphlet that makes explicit comparisons between Asian contexts.

While created by historians, EM42's place within the *G.I. Roundtable Series* means it should also be analyzed within the context of the military's chain of command structure, thus allowing it to be representative of the U.S. government's thinking of the time. As a result, I analyzed EM42 with particular attention to how the U.S. government circumnavigates its own role in China's sociopolitical instability, to foreground AsianCrit's transnational contexts tenet's focus on militarism and imperialism.

EM42, I show, does little to distract racist perceptions of Chinese Americans, but instead states support for Chinese people and acknowledges the United States' role in violence against them through the Exclusion Acts. Yet, EM42 also features violent reverberations of these technologies of racialization that made Chineseness both the target and focus of anti-Asian racism without complicating the panethnic experience or challenging American orientalist imaginations that harm other Asian American communities. Further, I show how the hybridity of an identity marker like Chinese that has multiple entry points that are flattened by EM42. In effect, this curricular artifact in which the U.S. Army framed education as 'a democratic form of propaganda that offered soldiers a subtle but clear affirmation of liberal values' (Loss, 2005, p.

876), was largely grounded in American white middle-class norms like meritocracy and bootstrap individualism. This reaffirmed whiteness' centrality as a norm of American life, which positions the document in complicity with American imperialist aims.

I organize my analysis using descriptions of the Chinese from EM42 that correspond to my four analytical themes: (1) the (re)racialization of Chinese people; (2) Chinese people's compatibility with democracy; (3) humanization; and (4) maintained as foreigners. I identified the interplay of Sinophobic and Sinocentric racism that wove through the document and emerged from my reading of EM42's attempts to define Chineseness and qualify China's development through descriptions of Chinese people in contrast to Japanese people. Each title uses a central phrase from the pamphlet, symbolizing the analysis therein, and completes the sentence: 'The Chinese are _____'.

Not "exotic and inscrutable": policy departures

EM42 highlights the interplay of Sinophobia and Sinocentrism by 'humanizing' Chinese people only in relation to whiteness. EM42 shows how [re]racialization of Chinese people contrasts the explicit work done in legislation like the Chinese Exclusion Acts and thus departs from previous U.S. political discourse.

EM42 goes to great lengths to shift perceptions of Chinese people. For example, in a section titled 'Who are the Chinese?', EM42 (1944) states,

> The truth is, however, that [the Chinese] are much more like us than we have been led to suppose. It is as hard to describe a 'typical Chinese' as it is a 'typical Englishman'. Would you choose a London cockney, an Oxford scholar, a country squire, or a 'man about town'? There are as many

> ‘typical’ Chinese as there are ‘typical’ Britishers. But one thing it is safe to say—the exotic and inscrutable Chinese depicted in American fiction is no more true to life than the la-di-da Englishman with an exaggerated Oxford accent so popular in our plays and stories
>
> (p. 7)

The shifting racial logics remain connected to whiteness by placing Chinese people closely to a positively connoted white group and drawing on a historical parallel to the British who were vilified and then turned into a political ally that tracks with dominant perceptions in the American government. The artifact undermines American portrayals of Chinese people which suggests a departure from the racist caricature amplified by comparing the Chinese to the British, suggesting both a political and racial implication to this statement. Importantly, the government positions itself as having stake in shifting racialization processes. Within the context of the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Acts and WWII, the underlying goal is to shift the target of racism, positioning the Chinese as an ally, and differentially racializing Chinese people from Japanese, disrupting the singular trope of an ‘oriental’. These arguments within EM42 push back against the most egregious state-sanctioned racism, using a state-created curriculum, to manufacture a convenient racial and political foil against the Japanese.

Additionally, EM42 instructs soldiers to humanize their interactions with Chinese people in relation to whiteness. EM42 undercuts the orientalist stereotypes of Chinese people as ‘exotic and inscrutable’ mentioned above, EM42 (1944) writes that:

> Above all, no matter how poor, badly dressed, or uneducated a Chinese is, you must, when you first speak to him, show your respect for him as an

> independent human being. To treat him in any way as socially inferior is bad mannered and is regarded as showing that you yourself are ill-bred (p. 10)

EM42 instructs soldiers to confront their assumed dehumanizing perceptions of Chinese people and resist their socialized Orientalism of Chinese people from Western film and media. The pamphlet assumes that someone has to be ill-bred, further implying that the orientalist and binary logic that creates an Other in proximity to whiteness (Said, 1979). This advice is couched between paragraphs that articulate the similarity of Chinese and American values, refining the Othering that had been explicit a generation prior in the Immigration Acts. The pamphlet seems to offer two simultaneous instructions. The first is the obvious guidance to be respectful to Chinese people. The second, however, is a subtler implication through the use of explicit deficit language and positions the American G.I. as part of a savior-complex of American benevolent intervention.

EM42 (1944), similarly, blames WWII's start on 'Japan's aggression in China' (p. 34) and states, "at the moment China's difficulties may loom larger than its progress. The ravages of seven years of war are serious. Chinese are not all heroes, but are very human, and we must understand that they are in a tough spot. It is to our interest to help them" (p. 54). The pamphlet, viewed through the lens of the transnational context tenet of AsianCrit, reinforces the logic that the West can say what is human—a logic which has historically justified slavery, colonialism, and genocide (Césaire, 1972). The U.S. Military's ability to racialize, and therefore to include, contains the power to dehumanize and to exclude if the Chinese were, say, not in a tough spot.

The political necessity of WWII also required the United States to rethink many of its prior stances about Chinese Americans as much as its global political stances.

"Naturally democratic": a political identity grounded in race

EM42 (1944) also frames Chinese people as 'naturally democratic' (p. 9) and frames Chineseness as a political identity grounded in racialized biology that enables a politically convenient, and differentially racialized, curricular foil against the Japanese. EM42 (1944) makes several acknowledgments of the negative impacts of Western, and notably Japanese, imperialism in China. The pamphlet is clear that:

> The typical Chinese is naturally democratic, and in this he is as much like most Americans as he is unlike most Japanese. In the Japanese language there are whole separate vocabularies for ordering servants about, for keeping your wife in her place as a subordinate being, or for showing servility to your social superiors. The Chinese are not like this. (AHA, 1944, p. 9)

In this passage, the pamphlet seeks to bring the Chinese closer to the dominant white American worldview and farther from the Japanese. EM42's assertion that this political disposition is natural is indelibly bound to whiteness by emphasizing the fundamental compatibility of Chinese *peoples'* politics despite the dehumanizing racialized caricatures portrayed in American media.

Despite Chinese peoples' purported similarity to the West, EM42 concedes that it was Western imperialism that caused China 'to fall suddenly from the proud position of the advanced and enlightened Cathay [Greater China] of earlier centuries to the weak and half-conquered China of the past hundred years' (p. 21). This acknowledgement, ironically, comes from the

same military which imposed some of the Unequal Treaties on China, which enabled Western empires to economically extract from China. In conceding the West's colonization of China, EM42 implies that American imperial paternalism is in China's interest because '[e]ven though it was an expression of American self-interest, the practical effect of this arrangement was to halt the process of cutting China up into colonial possessions' (p. 24). The pamphlet argues that the opening of China to Western markets was a means to democracy as 'the opposite of the system of terror and force which Japan has imposed' (AHA, 1944, p. 54), and therefore benevolent. This distinction, EM42 (1944) describes, between Japan's imperial ambitions and China was that Japanese 'leaders were making it increasingly clear that they fanatically believed in their god-given mission to rule the world, the first step to which was the conquest of China' (p. 29). EM42's distinction implies that American imperialism was, essentially a matter of economics, whereas Japanese imperialism was grounded in the subordination of Chinese *people*. As a result, this piece of curriculum suggests a narrative shift towards Sinocentrism insofar as Chineseness is privileged for this alignment with Western economic and political interests. However, the message soldiers received was one that conflated humanizing Chinese people with allying with the Chinese State. EM42's reliance on a reductive 'biological physiognomy' (Anderson, 1983, p. 148) (e.g. China for Chinese people) suggests how military curriculum was complicit in exploiting Chinese identity's multiple entry points to create a reductive and politically convenient narrative for American soldiers.

EM42 states that the West has little interest in 'possessing' China in contrast to the Japanese, who are impeding the 'realization of the democracy that Sun Yat-Sen promised the Chinese people' (p. 46). The U.S. military's Sinocentric view of Asia cast Japan as a greater

threat than the economic threat of Chinese newcomers (Day, 2016). Doing so in EM42, the U.S. Government maintains whiteness as a norm by which humanity and acceptability are measured. In contrast to Japanese people, the pamphlet is clear to not place blame for China's military defeats onto Chinese *people*, instead framing Chinese as having 'the values of culture and of being civilized … so long that they have soaked right through the whole people' (p. 21). EM42 makes a Sinocentric assumption that being Chinese was seemingly the apex of an 'oriental' cultural zeitgeist, thereby positioning Japanese culture as derivative, and contrary to civilization. The pamphlet's description of Mandarin as a 'naturally democratic' language contrasts with Japanese values (captured in Japanese languages), which EM42 describes as fanatical and menacing, thereby justifying Japanese incarceration.

The linking of a political ideology in EM42 to a racialized biology shows that Chineseness' purported affinity for American democratic values are leveraged against Japan to justify the war effort. Doing so mobilizes Sinocentrism in the military's paternalistic tone by allaying cultural Sinophobic fears for political gain. EM42, by asserting Chinese people's biological predisposition to democracy, differentially racializes Chinese people in close proximity to whiteness by citing Chinese people's affinity with American ideals. The reverberations of this political claim grounded in racialized biology can also extend to whiteness as property and the links between capitalism, whiteness, and democracy itself by reifying Chinese bodies into an untapped market of democratic capitalist potential and proximity to whiteness (Harris, 1993). Without disrupting the problematic logic that politically rehabilitates Chinese people, EM42 allows these logics to ripple from unchallenged Sinophobic fears, like in contemporary narratives where Asian people are presumed to be invasive. Further, McCarthyist

fears associated with a 'Red China' permeate the entire panethnic community from ongoing Sinocentrism (Liu, 2020). This dehumanization also permeated discourse about Japanese Americans (Seto, 2015) and ignored transnational contexts of Western militarism that created the migration from which much of the Yellow Peril tropes emerged (Day, 2016; Kwon, 2019). EM42's narrative tacitly shifted the unassimilable forever foreigner trope onto Japanese Americans out of fears of Japanese infiltrators in the United States, which justified mass incarceration. Further, foregrounding Chinese affinities with American values shifted Chinese from invaders to 'alyssum seekers' or perhaps exploitable labor. Under white supremacy where racism and capitalism are closely intertwined (Quijano, 2000), Sinophobia is seemingly replaced with Sinocentrism to satisfy the United States' political agenda in creating a Chinese ally in contrast to Japan. The American claim to say what is 'ill-bred', and therefore uncivilized, is masked by the benevolence and 'humanization' of the Chinese.

"Still 'backward'": qualified humanization

Despite the platitudes and adulation lavished upon Chinese people throughout EM42, the pamphlet leaves ample dehumanizing caveats about Chinese people. A section of the pamphlet titled 'But China Is Not Yet Modernized' claims that 'China is still "backward" … by modern American standards and has made remarkable progress only in relation to the China of a generation ago' (pp. 52–53). This line of the pamphlet, while acknowledging China's progress, implies a futility of China's progress compared to 'American standards', appearing to necessitate a future dependence on America for economic support. America's implicit claim of power over China also allows the United States to declare Chinese people 'civilized', maintains Chinese

people's racial Asianization by implying that no matter how civilized, Chinese people remain Asian and linked to their transnational (non-U.S.) contexts.

To American soldiers engaging with this piece of curriculum, this turn to China's qualified progress suggests the United States' greater interest lies in being a benevolent empire, rather than in confronting its domestic racial caste system. For example, EM42 (1944) states, 'China's roots are so deep and its ancient civilization so strong that it is probable (and many think desirable) that when China does become modernized, it will not, as Japan did, simply copy the superficial features of Western life' (p. 53). Given that intense nativistic racism against Chinese and Asian Americans in the generations before WWII, and decades of internal conflict within China, fuelled American perceptions of Chinese people and China as chaotic. As a result, the pamphlet works to remake those perceptions, to make a case for expanding American influence—meaning that Chinese people needed to be worth helping with American blood and treasure, in order for the U.S. Military to initiate Chinese people's racial rehabilitation in EM42. EM42 (1944) refrains from predicting China's political future, but forebodingly describes 'an enormous task after the war … of rebuilding what the Japanese have destroyed' (p. 55) and ending "China's semi colonial subjugation" (p. 56) implying that the United States believes it can win the war and will have a role in China's reconstruction, and leaving open the possibility of China reaching the status of equals with Western powers and businesses—something that cannot as easily be justified for people understood to be uncivilized, backward, and Asianized.

The U.S. military describes China's resistance to Japanese militarism as almost serendipitous. EM42 (1944) describes that Americans 'have been inclined to accept the continued resistance of the Chinese as an unexplainable miracle. But the Chinese themselves are

driven by moral and spiritual forces, aided by geographical and other considerations', (p. 57). First, framing China's survival as a miracle belies the destabilizing impacts that the West had on the Qing Dynasty. As well, the pamphlet encourages discussion leaders to posit whether supernatural moral and spiritual forces mysteriously guided Chinese resistance. The pamphlet also nods to the Century of Humiliation, which caused a mass migration to Western countries. Without curricular representation to the contrary, Chinese people became an exotic and mysterious community which bled into perceptions of other Asian Americans who shared the single label (Au et al., 2016). EM42's framing of Chinese success as an 'unexplainable miracle' created a split-screen, in contrast to Chinese *American* ghettoization as a result of Sinophobic forever foreigner tropes (Kim, 1999; Massey & Denton, 1993). EM42's refusal, as a result, to fully humanize Chinese people maintains separations between American and non-American contexts. Thus, the transnational contexts makes visible EM42's qualified and controlled humanization of Chinese people. It does so by weaving American political and racial agendas of expanding American influence but within a framework of maintaining white supremacy encoded within American imperialism.

The portrayal of China's economic 'miracle' shows how the pamphlet distances itself from American complicity in China's instability. EM42 blames China's 'backwardness' on its ancient civilization, rather than Western intervention. EM42 situates the United States and the West as a neutral observer, rather than active in China's colonization. EM42 states that "China's roots are so deep and its ancient civilization … has only begun to acquire the scientific and technical knowledge (most of which we ourselves have had for less than a hundred years) which is needed to deal with germs, floods, and famines" (p. 53). This statement frames China's

civilizational history as nearly incompatible with or 'behind' a modern nation-state like the United States even as it lifts up Greater China as a focal point of U.S. involvement in Asia.

This significant caveat at the end of the pamphlet (before a section about officer facilitation) exemplifies how the United States used Sinophobia and Sinocentrism together to maintain whiteness as synonymous with civilization. The omission of the United States's role in China's instability facilitated the narrative of benevolent American empire. EM42 implicitly claims that Chinese people were never capable of fully Westernizing, and, as a result, this backwardness was therefore 'exported' in the waves of migration to Western contexts throughout the Century of Humiliation. Sinophobia and Sinocentrism, therefore, preserve American benevolence by articulating to soldiers China's and Japan's different proximities to 'development'. The implications of the U.S. military's leaning into these simultaneous technologies suggest a tacit satisfaction with divisions within the then-budding panethnic Asian American community, rather than reconciliation of varying transnational contexts.

"Living between two vast oceans": transnational erasures

Before concluding this paper, I turn to the absence of Chinese *Americans* in EM42, and the presumed whiteness of the reader. For all of the comparisons in EM42 between the United States and China, there is no mention of Chinese Americans in the document. This absence is glaring to me, as my grand-uncle Edmond Chong was posthumously honored with the Congressional Gold Medal in 2021 along with 20,000 other Chinese Americans under S.1050 (2018) recognizing Chinese Americans' service in WWII.

Instead, EM42 makes ample comparisons between China and American geography, culture, and politics. For example, EM42 (1944) states that 'the typical Chinese has a very keen

sense of humor and one much nearer to the American sense of humor than that of many other peoples' (p. 9). This is among a series of descriptions of Chinese culture that makes granular comparisons to American cultural practices. The absence makes clear that the U.S. government sees Chinese Americans as perpetual foreigners. Takaki (1998) and An (2020) argue that the perpetual foreigner is a defining characteristic of the Asian American experience in the United States, and in curriculum especially. The only mention in EM42 (1944) of the possibility of Chinese people existing in the United States is a reference to how the Chinese 'government has advised students to continue with their studies, including those in American colleges, in spite of the lure of more patriotic work' (p. 49). This reference still denotes the existence of Chinese Americans who had been guaranteed constitutional rights in Mamie Tape, an Infant, by her Guardian ad Litem, Joseph Tape v Jennie MA Hurley (1885) (Au et al., 2016).

This absence, in addition to the insult to the 20,000 Chinese Americans who fought for the United States in WWII, signals the United States's official Sinophobic stance. The U.S. government's; generations of state-sanctioned exclusion and elimination (Day, 2016) and maintenance of the forever foreigner trope through Sinophobic erasure of Chinese Americans is a clear split screen with the rehabilitation China itself received throughout most of EM42. Centering the transnational contexts helps to elucidate the seemingly intentional conflation between, and erasure of, Chinese and Chinese Americans in the American racial imagination. Aside from an attempted political rehabilitation of China that is grounded in a [re]racialization, EM42 (1944) fails to decouple 'Chinese' from a marker of national or ethnoracial identity (Rodríguez, 2018). As a result, EM42 further erases the ethnic communities which have been historically 'Sinified', or made Chinese through a broader project of Han supremacy that has

merged Han ethnic identity with Chineseness in the PRC (Baranovitch, 2010; Scott, 2009). Therefore, EM42 perpetuates the forever foreigner trope by presuming that to be Chinese is to be from China (and synonymous with the Han majority, or whiteness in the United States). As a result, these simultaneous technologies of erasure have fabricated a thoroughly essentialized imaginary of Chinese people, and expose EM42's (1944) political agenda as disinterested in repairing the harm done by the United States' actions to racialize Chinese people.

To the leader

Borrowing the title of EM42's conclusion, I have analyzed the AHA (1944) Educational Manual No. 42, *Our Chinese Ally*, as a document of military curriculum from WWII. I show both the explicit curricular racialization of Asian Americans and also the discrete presence of Asian history in an American piece of curriculum. I situated EM42 in a chronology that starts with Arthur Smith's (1890) book *Chinese Characteristics* that tracks to today with Xi Jinping's (2020) political aspiration of a Chinese Dream of 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' that mobilizes supremacy (Leibold, 2010)[3] for political gain. I analyzed EM42 using AsianCrit, in particular the transnational contexts tenet, to critique the pamphlet's rehabilitation of Chinese Americans amidst the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans in service of American interests in WWII. Analysis of EM42 shows how the intersections of racism, American imperialism, and essentialism are made visible with attention to transnational contexts in this piece of military curriculum. The shift in the target of anti-Asian racism from Chinese to Japanese people during WWII positioned Chinese people as an essential 'Oriental'. The subsequent post-war rehabilitation of Japanese Americans is significant to both understanding curriculum's complicity

in the construction of the Model Minority in the United States, and the persistent curricular erasure of Asian Americans.

From my analysis, the [*re*]racialization of Chinese people can also trace the Model Minority Myth's origins to WWII as further evidence that racist stereotypes about Asian Americans are grafted from those about Chinese Americans. Chang (1993) argues that one of the consequences of the Chinese Exclusion Acts was that 'most Chinese remained within the security and familiarly of ethnic enclave Chinatowns, while others repatriated' (p. 1297), which was evidence of the widespread Sinophobia of the early 20th century. However, in singling out Chinese American communities, Sinocentrism contributes to the racialization of Asian Americans, broadly, in curriculum by highlighting how these enclaves became the default assumptions about all Asian Americans.

EM42, as a result, is part of what makes the Model Minority Myth possible and easily acceptable. While the Model Minority Myth is often traced to the 1965 Watts Riots and the Moynihan Report (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Suzuki, 1977), by extending the presumed American context of white supremacy transnationally, the Myth can be traced further back to the U.S. Government's [re]racialization and rehabilitation of Chinese people, out of political and military self-interest, in this piece of curriculum. The U.S. Government's messaging in pamphlets like EM42 seemingly omitted the global impacts of its own Sinophobic policies like the Chinese Exclusion Acts and the Sinocentric construction of Asia emerging from the war as an explicit stance disseminated by the U.S. Military. This suggests that the United States contributed to the shifting differential racialization of Asian Americans, Chinese, and Chinese Americans in contrast to the Japanese and Japanese Americans as a purpose of military continuing education.

This analysis of a portrayal of Chinese people in China, therefore, has implications for seeing the racialization of Chinese Americans, and other Asian Americans who have been historically and contemporaneously 'homogenized under the category of "Asian American"' (An, 2009, p. 783). EM42's mobilization of Sinocentrism and Sinophobia also shows how the U.S. Military elevated Chineseness as quintessentially Asian, which has implications for the [re]racialization of other Asian Americans despite our diverse transnational contexts. This interplay of technologies in EM42, despite elevating Chineseness closely to whiteness, shows that Chineseness has been used *within* the Asian American community to subordinate other Asian and Asian American communities while preserving white supremacy as a logic which persists today, especially in education. While every curriculum contains ideology (much of which is often nationalistic) (Fodzar & Martin, 2020; Law, 2014), EM42 and the G.I. Roundtable Series makes its ideology explicit. The pamphlet clearly positions Chinese people as both distant from and unassimilable to, the U.S.-dominated post-war world order. (An, 2009). As a piece of military curriculum, EM42 sheds light onto how curriculum [re]racializes communities of Color, and pursues aims of social justice, without ever challenging the hegemonic power of whiteness.

Our panethnic Asian American community feels the reverberations of EM42 today, each time we heal after another hate crime. The simultaneity of Sinophobia and Sinocentrism persists as the syncretism Yuji Ichioka sought in the pan-Asian movement seems strained. Antiracist mobilizations against a 'China virus', without challenging transnational Han supremacy and/or East Asian privilege, suggests that Chinese identity and struggle are more visible than other Asian Americans, even as South[east] Asian Americans suffer racist violence alongside Chinese Americans without similar support. I have suggested some of the reverberations from EM42 and

their impacts on American curriculum, due in part to the broader technologies of state-sanctioned racialization of Chinese Americans and Asian Americans. The pamphlet's logic of Western nation-states defining what is civilized based on perceived proximity to a white American ideal persists. Sinocentrism and Sinophobia, therefore, are not just simultaneous technologies of racialization but mutually reinforcing and maintaining of white supremacy by presuming the utility and stasis of a single Asian American identity.

This paper has implications for curriculum researchers as we continue to navigate curricular nationalism in global superpowers like the United States and PRC, who are both reckoning with their national histories, especially in regard to their respective minoritized communities (An, 2020; Chang, 2022; Law, 2014; Lee & Wang, 2023). As curriculum studies research continues to seek more nuanced understandings of communities invisibilized in curricula in both the United States and the PRC, the reverberations of framings of Chinese people, like those in EM42, continue to cast long shadows by shaping perceptions of Asian American communities as essentialized and, as a result, in competition with each other (against predominantly Chinese American narratives).

This paper has implications for how individual communities' histories are negotiated with panethnic shared experiences in U.S. K-12 curricula, especially at a time when ethnic studies curricula are increasingly threatened by those mobilizing the innocence of whiteness (Chang, 2022). The reverberations of EM42 show the dangers of continuing to center U.S. perspectives in isolation of transnational contexts in teacher education, and how teachers relate to curricula they teach (Kim & Hsieh, 2022). While panethnic visibility and priorities are important in curriculum, teaching, and education policy, this paper has shown the vast shortcomings that

have impeded curricular humanization for all Asian Americans that stem from conflating Chineseness with Asianness. Disrupting a nation-state-based organizing logic of curriculum, as well as American-foreign binaries of U.S. and 'world' histories, can disrupt the perceptions of competition between racialized communities rather than coalition. Importantly, in curriculum policy, researchers should consider the ways in which Chinese identity has been simultaneously territorialized by both the PRC and the United States for their own respective nationalistic and political interests (Louie, 2004).

Additionally, Asian Americans are hardly the only racialized community that have been [*re*]racialized according to the shifting interests of white supremacy or struggled to be visible in curricula (Au et al., 2016; Massey, 2014; Quijano, 2000). This paper also has implications for other panethnic communities as they/we continue to pursue greater curricular representation and visibility beyond token or damage-centred narratives. Further research can take up a similar framework using other Crits (e.g. LatCrit, TribalCrit) to trace the intergenerational reverberations of other historical and legal materials which can inform ongoing conversations about their/our panethnic identities (e.g. Latine/a/x/o, AAPI, APIDA/A) (Salinas, 2020).

By speaking to 'the leader', ambiguously defined, I conclude this paper reflecting on how reading and refusing EM42 for the first time touched my life like an aftershock through time. It found me when everything I thought I knew about my identity seemed to liquefy underneath me. Meeting my birth mother showed me that being Taiwanese is inalienable to me, as much as being racialized as Chinese is inescapable to me.

In my attempt to show the simultaneity of the Chinese as an alien center of my panethnic community, I am left struggling with the persistent Sinocentrism in the Asian American

community after speaking back to the U.S. military for their erasure and essentialization of my ancestors (Park & Liu, 2016). At the end of this paper, I find myself returning to my Taiwaneseness. Despite all of the contested geopolitics, we are racialized under whiteness all the same. I depart this inquiry knowing better who the Chinese were thought to be but wonder—do the Chinese wish to be *our* ally?

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CHAPTER FIVE: Is Teaching *American Born Chinese… Beyond Repair?*: Preparing preservice teachers to navigate a "Great Wall" of mirrors and "bamboo" windows

> When I was a kid, my mother used to tell me Chinese folktales before bedtime. My mother is an immigrant. She was born in mainland China and eventually made her way to the United States for graduate school. … Monkey King is one of my protagonists, but [*American Born Chinese*] isn't a direct adaptation of my mother's stories. Sun Wukong occupies too high a pedestal in my mind. I wouldn't dream of attempting a project like that. Instead, I invited Monkey King into my story so that I could talk about the uneasiness of growing up Asian in America. …I tracked down an English translation of *Journey to the West*, the centuries-old Chinese classic that first told the monkey king's story. Reading it was the first time I encountered him on my own, without the filter of my mother. Turns out, my mother was pretty faithful. As I read it, I realized that American superheroes hadn't replaced Sun Wukong in my heart after all. Superman, Spider-Man, and Captain America were simply Western expressions of everything I loved about the monkey king.
>
> — Gene Luen Yang (2021, pp. ix-x), "Foreword," *Journey to the West* (J. Lovell, trans.)

Gene Luen Yang, author of *American Born Chinese* (2006), and I share a lot in common based on the above epigraph which is a foreword for a recent translation of Wu Cheng'en's *Journey to the West*. We are both Taiwanese Americans who grew up in the San Francisco Bay

Area, became educators, and are deeply influenced by the childhood bedtime stories our parents told us. Growing up, I frequently struggled to fall asleep which meant my parents had to dig deep into their libraries of stories and reserves of energy at the end of a long day running our family business— for which I have only become more grateful as an adult. Perhaps unlike Gene, the stories my parents shared with me, like the ones I had access to in school, placed me as somewhat of an observer to Chinese cultures. The books my parents and teachers read to me seemed to teach me how to be Chinese American and were positioned as instructive, or a "window" into another way of being rather than a "mirror" that let me see my own identities in the book (Sims Bishop, 1990) such as their use of phrases like "Chinese people" instead of "our" festivals. My childhood experience diverged from Gene's in that my encounters with the Monkey King (Sun Wukong) were not replaced by American or Western expressions of him. Rather, my encounter with the Monkey King and *Journey to the West* felt like an adaptation of the stories my parents shared with me and disrupted my perception that my family's Chineseness was only visible during holidays.

Engaging with my adoptive family's culture with books written by authors with lived cultural experience with Chinese cultures ("insiders"). But, my parents presented Chineseness to me in ways that sought to teach me to be Chinese American (a cultural outsider), which is a liminality my social positionality as Taiwanese American makes visible (Rodríguez & Kim, 2018). At the same time, this in-betweenness (He, 2010) between Taiwaneseness and Chineseness; Taiwaneseness and Taiwanese Americanness; and as a result "insider" and "outsider" is a major influence on my teaching of texts generally and *ABC* specifically, and the ways I think teacher educators should work with preservice teachers to prepare them to engage

with texts and students' navigations of them. Texts that surface the messy stuff of negotiating panethnic racialized (e.g. APIDA/A), identities can certainly be hard texts to teach, let alone the added complexity of when those texts rely heavily on the visual cues such as in graphic novels (Nishime, 2022). Yang's (2006) *ABC* can, as a result, be a challenging text to teach because it presents teachers with two tasks of identifying and then challenging those harmful visual cues. *ABC* can play the role of being a text that deepens students' engagements with visual media, as well as a text that challenges the ways visual media reify and reproduce racist stereotypes. While a vehicle to access these important learning opportunities, *ABC* is too often positioned in ways that leave its critiques of APIDA/A stereotypes, Yellowface, and hyper-visibility unchallenged. Gene Luen Yang, in the epigraph, engages this complexity by framing the Monkey King as deeply embedded in his racial identity, but also easily essentialized as a monkey with super powers that explains a universalities of the human experience devoid of the folk and heritage context in which authors imagine Sun Wukong. In order to start to challenge these essentializations that lead us to universalities, there are three layers of essentialism that I call into question.

First are essentializations of all APIDA/A peoples. That is, the use of label like Asian American as a way to suggest that we all identify with the same set of sociocultural and sociohistorical experiences (I use APIDA/A to combat this to highlight the coalition formed from people with connections to a disparate assemblage of geographic contexts that have been collectively orientalized). Second, are essentializations that emerge from the centering of East Asian Americans (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean Americans) within the panethnic coalition. One consequence of this is that people with connections to orientalized contexts (e.g. the

"Middle East") are unstably placed within the coalition which impedes opportunities for solidarities with contexts and people against whom U.S. and other Western countries are enacting genocide and military violence (e.g. Palestine and Yemen). This layeredness is visible across the APIDA/A curricular representation in state standards (An, 2022). The third layer is the centering of a homogenous imagination of Chinese Americans and Chineseness within the construction of East Asian American, and therefore APIDA/A panethnic, narratives (Louie, 2004; Poon, 2024), which I seek to disrupt in this paper. Delarosa (2023) recently wrote that APIDA/A communities "fought to create and maintain our image as beautiful, human, and multifaceted. When our images are used by people who don't understand the Asian American political story, you get distorted and racist images that lead to… 'Yellowface'" (p. 124). To that end, this article encourages APIDA/A and non-APIDA/A-identifying teachers of literature to consider the work they/we all have to do in order to present the most nuanced and deep reading of complex texts like *American Born Chinese* (2006).

In this paper, I argue that teachers can deepen their students' engagements with *ABC* and other APIDA/A texts by scaffolding the multiple layers of essentialism within the text to engage the intersections of identities and resistances to systems of oppression as told through the narrative and visual cues of the text. I also argue for teachers to, in turn, engage in difficult self-work before teaching texts like *ABC,* they have to navigate their own prejudicial socialization towards APIDA/A literature. In this paper, I propose teachers do this self work by identifying the "Great Wall" of mirrors and "bamboo" windows of how racial stereotypes and racist rhetorical positioning within texts influences their decisions about which texts they show to their students.

I begin by contextualizing the literature on *ABC* and the curriculum of violence against APIDA/A histories and other racialized communities in curricula, and challenges of teaching Asian American children's literature in a white supremacist imperialist colonial context. I briefly outline AsianCrit with a focus on [strategic] [anti-]essentialism. I unpack vignettes from *ABC* (2006) to show how this identity negotiation exposes the contested hollowness of Chinese identity and conclude with implications for teacher educators about how to potentially reframe the windows and mirrors framework to face the teacher. Doing so, I argue, centers teachers' critical self-reflection work necessary to resist essentialized (strategic or otherwise) narratives in APIDA/A graphic novels.

About *American Born Chinese*

American Born Chinese (2006) is a graphic novel adaptation of Wu Cheng'en's (1592) *Journey to the West.* The novel follows the identity negotiations of protagonists Jin Wang and Sun Wei-Chen who are Chinese American and a Taiwanese newcomer to the United States, respectively, as they both navigate American schools as well as their own identities told in three ultimately intertwined arcs. The first arc of the story begins with Sun Wukong's (the Monkey King) rejection from the Court of Heaven for being a monkey, and his imprisonment for 500 years by Tze-Yo-Tzuh, a Chinese adaptation of the Christian god. The second arc follows Jin Wang experiencing racialized stereotypes at a predominantly white school especially as he oscillates between closely aligning himself to whiteness when Sun Wei-Chen, initially portrayed as a Taiwanese student, joins the school. The third arc traces Cousin Chin-Kee, who embodies embody racist, exaggerated, and dated anti-APIDA/A tropes, and Danny who is ultimately revealed to be an avatar project of Jin's desire to be proximal to whiteness, and whom Cousin

Chin-Kee seems to perpetually torment. The novel concludes with Danny revealed as a projection of Jin's desire for whiteness. In doing so, Yang reveals that Wei-Chen is Sun Wukong's son. The novel concludes with Wei-Chen and Jin reconcile after falling out over Jin attempting to reject Wei-Chen and, by extension, Jin's own Asianness.

Theoretical Framework

AsianCrit extends critical race theory's core tenets to the unique and complex needs of analyzing APIDA/A racialized experiences in American life in conversation with Carter Andrews' (2021) merging of culturally relevant, sustaining, revitalizing pedagogies. AsianCrit in education calls attention to the essentialized portrayals of APIDA/A people in social studies (An, 2017, 2022; Rodríguez, 2016) and the glorification of U.S. militarism in children's literature (An, 2021, 2023). AsianCrit's seven tenets are (1) Asianization; (2) transnational contexts; (3) (re)constructive history; (4) strategic (anti)essentialism; (5) intersectionality; (6) story, theory, & praxis; and (7) commitment to social justice (Iftikar & Museus, 2018). These tenets converge to complicate a picture of racial identity, relative racialization, and the impacts of imperialism and colonialism on the shared and individual racialized experiences of ethnic communities within the APIDA/A coalition (Iftikar & Museus, 2018). AsianCrit "draws heavily upon how realities of how the [model minority myth and perpetual foreigner tropes] are used against Asian Americans" (Kim & Hsieh, 2022, p. 8) and the multiple identities that might be sources of discrimination (with)in the APIDA/A community (Delarosa, 2023). I focus on the Strategic [Anti-]Essentialism and Transnational Contexts tents of AsianCrit to highlight how *ABC* (2006, 2023) can support teachers in leaning into the nuanced intra-ethnic community negotiation over Chinese identity whilst also challenging East Asian-centeredness in teaching APIDA/A texts.

[Strategic] (Anti-)Essentialism

Essentialism refers to certain communities' commonalities, becoming an "essence" that comes to represent the entirety of a community. In AsianCrit, this tenet weaves between APIDA/A people being lumped into a single panethnic community representing many ethnicities (Espiritu, 1992), and the ways APIDA/A communities build and maintain coalition given our shared experiences under white supremacy (Coloma, 2006; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). The brackets around this tenet are important because strategic essentialism can reinforce APIDA/A panethnic solidarities as well as nuance the ease with which APIDA/A solidarities are conflated with geographic imperatives that imply some sort of "natural" solidarity. I am also attentive to the ways that essentialism is sometimes un-strategic insofar as East Asian Americans act as a dominant APIDA/A avatar, allowing anti-Chinese stereotypes in particular to define much anti-APIDA/A racism and xenophobia (Bow, 2021). Simultaneities *and* tensions between [strategic] (anti-)essentialism and strategic essentialism, in teaching of APIDA/A literature, play out in the hypervisibility of anti-APIDA/A stereotypes that often masks more proximal representations and portrayals (Nishime, 2022). Strategic [anti-]essentialism is, as a result, much a contestation over the spread of stereotypes onto non-Chinese APIDA/A communities as it is a powerful tool to locate, given the importance of foregrounding the intersections and nuances of people's multiple identity markers (Crenshaw, 1989) where in educational spaces these stereotypes subtly but violently manifest.

Transnational Contexts

The transnational contexts tenet of AsianCrit focuses on how U.S. and Western militarism and empire have impacted and catalyzed the experiences of people racialized as Asian globally

(Iftikar & Museus, 2018). The forever foreigner trope, a racist trope which assumes that APIDA/A people cannot assimilate into U.S. life, has historically framed APIDA/A people in media as contagious foreigners in line with 19th century fears that Chinese and other Asian migrants were threatening American jobs (Takaki, 1998; Tuan, 1998). However, less often analyzed are the ways U.S. imperialism impacted individual contexts differently, as well as catalyzed and maintained these tropes in curriculum and media. One example is the ways grotesque caricatures like Chin-Kee and racist cute characters like the panda, born from Chinese stereotypes, come to represent the entirety of the APIDA/A community to emphasize APIDA/A foreignness (Bow, 2019).

These tenets of AsianCrit come together to make visible the challenges of pushing through multiple layers of racist representation of APIDA/A communities in literature. I build on and contribute to this literature by showing how foregrounding transnational contextual nuance helps to combat unstrategic essentialism in teaching of APIDA/A children's and YA literature.

ABC(s), ABCs, and APIDA/A Texts

It is important to mention American born Chinese (ABC) is a term referring to the community of diasporic Chinese Americans. Louie (2004, 2015, 2018) frames Chinese Americans as a diverse community comprised of multiple ethnic communities, pathways, and entrees by which they come to be lumped into a single label of "Chinese American." That is, American born Chinese and transnational adoptees are two groups who are racialized as "Chinese" (Ang, 2001). Chinese*ness* acts as an "'open signifier' that can encompass the hybridity of the diaspora" (Louie, 2018, p. 188). This means that supporting teachers to teach *ABC* also suggests they must be prepared to teach ABCs, and the complexities of ethnic

identification often erased by racialization under white supremacy as Chinese or Asian American (An, 2009; Chun, 1996; Okamoto & Mora, 2014).

Asian racialization within the U.S. context has often been subjected to what Espíritu (1992) calls "panethnic lumping," in which multiple ethnic communities are racialized under white supremacy as "Asian American." While not the only panethnic community, the APIDA/A coalition as a whole has been largely underrepresented in curricula and in popular culture by East Asian Americans (e.g. Chinese, Taiwanese, Hong Konger, Japanese, and Korean Americans) (Song, 2013; Au et al., 2016). Many of these stereotypes emerge from anti-Chinese (Sinophobic) tropes. For example, the model minority myth where APIDA/As are perceived to be hard-working and obedient and, therefore the "correct" way to be a racialized person in the United States— an anti-Black racial wedge (Tuan, 1998; Lee et al., 2017). For another, the forever/ perpetual foreigner which grew out of the so-called "Yellow peril" in which racist and xenophobic fears of Chinese migration to the United States drove economic fears that yielded cultural caricatures of Chinese people as contagious and animalized invaders (Lowe, 1996; Takaki, 1990; Liu, 2020). The result was, as Wang (1995) argues, a structure of dual-domination with APIDA/As experiencing racist pressure to demonstrate assimilation and loyalty in order to exist within the U.S. context. Within this context of Chinese and APIDA/A racialized experiences in U.S. contexts

Windows, Mirrors and APIDA/A Representation in Children's/Young Adult Literature

Sims Bishop (1990) offers a framework of windows and mirrors for educators to select and present texts that allow readers to normalize their humanity in their own context, and across others' (though Sims Bishop uses the language of "worlds"). The framework is important

because teachers' initial choices set up their subsequent ones about how a text is taught and framed for students. Sims Bishop writes that:

> Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. (Sims Bishop, 1990, p. ix)

When a window, a text can help a reader see other ways of being and knowing. When a mirror, texts can be ways for readers to see themselves in literature. As McNair and Edwards (2021) present, there have been ample reworkings and wordplays with the windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors that play with the framing of "diverse' literature with the shared goal of giving young readers a way to see themselves, those less like them, and those around them. As Enriquez (2021) describes, this framework and its iterations inform a multiplicity of pedagogical interventions, but importantly calls attention to how these texts can be put into practice.

These reworkings of Sims Bishop's framing seek to support teachers trying to "get to" those contexts and help students "step into" them. However, the risk persists that teachers can sometimes betray their own good intentions and normalize voyeurism by reinforcing a

global=other=different paradigm in the geographic organization and selection of books in classrooms (Bradford, 2007; Delarosa, 2023). Reading globally, however, also works to defy methodologically nationalistic, narrow, and place-based assumptions about the "global" that otherwise relies on borders and nation-states (Shahjahan & Kezar, 2013). To further problematize the "global" as inherently "other" like Sims Bishop (1990) referring to gazing upon other "worlds," Short (2019a) argues that there is a danger of reading globally because it forgoes the stance that students need to take social responsibility as readers for how they engage in narratives that may be windows into different experiences and ways of knowing (Sims Bishop, 1990). That social responsibility is for teachers to provide students with how they can connect global and local issues (Short, 2019b; Brewer, 2019), as well as framing global as more than a means to "lament the world's cruelties" (Lee & Dickstein, 2019, p. 115). Rather, as Hsieh (2023) argues, in the context of Black-APIDA/A racial solidarities, critical global literacies can act "as a tool to address the intentional erasure of shared (and differing) oppressions and histories" (p. 220) and resist rhetorical positioning within the United States that reinforces an oppositional dynamic between Black and APIDA/A communities (Kim, 1999).

Bradford (2007), taking a postcolonial literary studies approach, concludes that portrayals of cultural differences in literature sustain what Tuck (2009) calls damage-centered portrayals and Otherness in literature's contributions to students' racial formations. Reading globally in class is important because it can challenge the deeply socialized primacy of nation-state organization of the world and by extension the cultural or ethnic homogeneity of a context (Andreotti et al., 2015; Bradford, 2007). Students can, therefore, engage with global children's and young adult literature even if the book depicts or is produced locally to them if the text is

taught in a way to connect the local with the global (Azano, 2019). Teaching texts contextually across time and space (Bradford, 2007), and consider students' own social positionalities relative to the text resists deficit framings that emerge from reductionist or essentializing framings of cultures (Rodríguez & Swalwell, 2022) and center critical literacies (Janks, 2012, 2014).

Teaching (the Visual Rhetorics of) APIDA/A Texts

Two difficulties, literature shows, of teaching APIDA/A children's and YA literature, are the narrative indicators of Asianness and the visual cues thereof which, together, form a racist rhetorical positioning that can be difficult not to lean into (Nishime, 2022; Hsieh, 2023). *ABC* (2006), as a graphic novel, heightens this difficulty by bringing together a complex visual rhetorical space with these narrative indicators (Schindler, 2014). Delarosa (2023) argues that to take steps toward a "pro-Asian American lens" in middle grades teaching, teachers and students must engage in critical self reflection how texts "help you embrace and reclaim your version of Asian American identity" (p. 15). This and other questions Delarosa (2023) provides in model lesson plans normalize a plurality and diversity of APIDA/A identities through both the texts students read as well as teachers' own readings of texts that depart from reifying, or making a text into an allegory for abstract social inequities.

Teachers positioning critical texts as mere allegory preserves emotional distance and abstraction in which texts confirm, project, and center white fears as evidenced in how caricatures sustain 19th century racist and xenophobic tropes throughout education (Lee, 2010; Goodwin, 2010). Consequently, without careful scaffolding, teachers can inadvertently reproduce the "purposeful invisibility of global and critical literacies" (Hsieh, 2023, p. 216) about APIDA/A communities which obstruct APIDA/A people from telling their own stories. Doing so, Hsieh

(2023) argues, requires a critical starting point "through lenses of power that ask who is telling the stories, for what purposes, and whether particular rhetoric and discourses reinforce, reify, or resist dominant narratives" (Hsieh, 2023, p. 223).

Returning to the three layers of essentialism I discussed in the introduction (of "Asian Americans," "East Asian Americans = Asian Americans," and "Chinese Americans = all East Asian Americans"), literature shows that the visual cues and rhetorics can enact these layers of essentialism without careful scaffolds (Rodríguez & Kim, 2018). At worst, these visual cues can act as a permission structure for students to recite or replicate these tropes masked in "cute" or grotesque racial caricatures (Bow, 2019, 2021; Kim, 2021; Mudambi, 2019; Oh, 2017). For example, "cartoonified" characters can, in an attempt to broaden their relatability and appeal, rely on visually racist tropes to do so which are not scaffolded in even "critical" readings (Bow, 2021; Hintz & Tribunella, 2019). Despite Bow's (2021) caution that the cute cartoony caricature can be satirized in ways that create a permission structure for normalizing racism. With proper scaffolding, Kim (2021) argues that racial satire in APIDA/A spaces "lay in the rejection, subversion, and perhaps even reclamation of the stereotypes that have historically been used to disparage them in legal, political, and social institutions" (p. 314). Teachers can use texts to make these rejections and subversions more visible and accessible to students in ways that center authors' challenges to the boundaries of APIDA/A identities (who is included and excluded). Teachers can do so through the visual representations that teachers choose, as well as the social positionality of authors of the books themselves (Rodríguez et al., 2024; Rodríguez & Kim, 2018). In addition to the difficulties in challenging these layers of essentialism, teachers must prepare students to "critique and resist their positioning, re-author their own stories, and take

transformative social action" (Hsieh, 2023, p. 222) informed by practicing the skill of resisting racist rhetorical positioning in response to texts, as well as choosing more culturally proximal and diverse texts.

While "children's literature" can often refer to picture books, these layers of essentialism are further complicated in the case of graphic novels. Song (2010) argues that cartoons, which I extend to graphic novels as book-length comics (Hintz & Tribunella, 2019) have a painful history with anti-APIDA/A racism. Comics, Song (2010) argues, "graphically demonstrate that popular racial exaggerations had the effect of creating a consistent, powerful visual vocabulary for imagining the Chinese" (p. 80) in accordance with the model minority and forever foreigner. This racialization through visual media, as a means of perpetuating racial stereotypes, is also gendered in its portrayals of APIDA/A identities which Yang tries to resist with scripted laughter in the form of a laugh track in the text (Nishime, 2022; Oh, 2017). Scripted laughter, Oh (2017) writes, "interpolates the audience to clap or laugh at what is clearly racist and wrong … enables readers to affectively experience shame in the reading process and rethink and reflect upon the silent racism that still pervades" (p. 24) American life. As I position the model minority in this paper as a form of East Asian American essentialism for its grounding in East Asian American tropes (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Poon, 2024), visual representations of the model minority literature need more pedagogical scaffolds for students that disrupt methodological nationalism or written cues.

Despite teacher education research that argues *for* teachers to narrowly position APIDA/A texts like *ABC* (2006), as a way for students to visually identify and critique the violence of stereotypes (Gomes & Carter, 2010; Sams & Crippen, 2018; Schieble, 2011). Schieble (2011)

focuses on *ABC*'s ability to show preservice teachers to take critical approaches and more expansive definitions of texts including graphic novels (Hammond, 2012). Other studies conclude that *ABC* can be best used as a way to support students' critical visual literacy and a "structural understanding of racism" (Scheible, 2014, p. 49), or to learn visual symbolism which harmfully erases needed nuances of character-as-caricature (e.g. Chin-Kee) (Gomes & Carter, 2010). Schieble does so by historicizing and contextualizing Yang's presentations of Chin-Kee relative to racist caricatures of Chinese people in particular from the 19th and 20th centuries. As well, Schieble (2011) focuses on the challenges of scaffolding nuanced and critical engagement with this text showing the necessity of contextually crafted follow-up questions to elicit deeper student engagement, especially in contexts in which student bodies are predominantly white. Sams and Crippen (2018) caution teachers about *ABC's* ample "room for misinterpretation" (p. 33) and refer to it as a "nontraditional text." They recommend teaching this text as a means for white students to nuance their own racial identities and conclude that *ABC* helped them see it as a means to model "risk-taking and thoughtfulness" (Sams & Crippen, 2018, p. 34) to preservice teachers.

However, while these approaches purport to elicit deeper student thinking they rely upon unquestioned and normalized stereotypes within the text itself, rather than challenging them. If teachers leave these stereotypes unquestioned, they risk mobilizing them as-is to achieve a more generic pedagogical end. Like Yang's reflection about the Monkey King relative to *ABC,* I respond to and build on this literature by leaning into the ways *ABC* makes visible to students the complex identity negotiations and nuanced intertextualities that can shape the racialization and the possibilities of racial embodiment for students of Color.

Methodology

In this study, I approached *ABC* (2006), first, as a "text" in order to conduct a critical literary ideological analysis of it (Domke et al., 2018; Weippert et al., 2018). Like picture books, graphic novels have visual and artistic elements which allow for them to be analyzed according to their literary and artistic elements (Domke et al., 2018; Serafini, 2014). Secondly, doing a close read of *ABC* (2006) on its own lays the groundwork to make future intertextual comparative study between *ABC* (2006) the graphic novel and *ABC* the TV show (2023), which sets up the intertextual relationship between the two (Weippert et al., 2018). Doing so models an important skill for students to consider the ways that as texts move between media, they are inevitably being interpreted in doing so. This is important for teachers and students to be aware of especially as racial representation across media relies on a multiplicity of visual and narrative cues. I focused on only the graphic novel because it was more likely to be in school libraries, as well as more focused on the transnational contexts than the *ABC* (2023) streaming adaptation.

I used Bhattacharya's (2017) process of inductive analysis by chunking moments and patterns in both texts into themes that are organized by the AsianCrit tenets of Strategic (anti-)Essentialism and Transnational Contexts. I initially took note of which moments were most commonly discussed in the literature reviewed above, followed by initial coding that focused on capturing moments of Sinophobia in the text. I then refined this scheme and coded the text for moments of (1) strategic essentialism and anti-essentialism; (2) transnational/global essentialism and anti-essentialism; and (3) racial satire for and about APIDA/A people. While I cannot speak to the intent of particular moments, I coded for satirical moments that seemed to require cultural knowledge of Chineseness and moments where identities shifted in emphasis

prominence (i.e. racial identities receding to emphasize gender identity). In doing so, I model in my findings foregrounding race and global movements of power structures in reading *ABC* (2006).

These codes, taken together, build a comprehensive picture of *ABC* that foregrounds the nuances between the at times rigid categorization of identity markers and experiences I discuss above. The interplay of these codes also calls attention to the at times diverging strategic aims of essentialism and anti-essentialism. With attention to these moments, my framework foregrounds intersectionality and attends to the tensions between essentialism and anti-essentialism, as well as the ways this interplays in the space of racialized satire. Doing so, I argue, foregrounds teachers guiding students to see themselves and not in the story as a product of teacher self-reflection and in ways that are humanizing.

Findings

I organize my findings in a way to scaffold for teachers a way to present some of the nuances of this text to students. First, I walk readers through the perniciousness of the anti-APIDA/A stereotypes that a racialized lens makes visible for students and disrupt the first layer of essentialism. Second, I add onto that lens the narrative and visual cues that can challenge those stereotypes. Third, I disrupt the remaining two layers of essentialism by parsing the multiple readings and invite teachers to consider the ways they take up multiple nuances such as the multiple histories within transnational contexts like "Asia" and how they shape APIDA narratives and relationalities within the U.S. context.

The strategic anti-Essentialism tenet clarifies that Jin's and Wei-Chen's interactions in *ABC* (2006) are not just boyhood conflicts but also their anxieties about who gets to say what

"represents" APIDA/A communities. The simultaneities *and* tensions between [strategic] (anti-)essentialism and strategic essentialism, such as when Jin and Wei-Chen both navigate the boundaries of their own social acceptability, show a need to witness how these two ways of resisting the racism and xenophobia they experience interplay. Strategic [anti-]essentialism is as much a contestation over the spread of stereotypes onto non-Taiwanese/Chinese APIDA/A communities as it is a powerful tool to locate where these stereotypes subtly but violently manifest. My findings sections speak to the three layers of essentialism that I discussed throughout the opening sections of this paper (of "Asian Americans," "East Asian Americans = Asian Americans," and "Chinese Americans = all East Asian Americans").

Critical Readings with a Lens of Racialized Awareness

From the beginning of *ABC* (2006), Yang keys readers into the "schema," or contexts needed to understand the constant state of in-betweenness that Jin Wang and Sun Wei-Chen experience throughout the graphic novel (He, 2010; Oh, 2017). One example that appears early in the text is how we meet Jin. As Jin moves from San Francisco to the suburban Mayflower Elementary School, Jin leaves the bubble where he may have been insulated from anti-APIDA/A racism (Chong, 2021). Mrs. Greeder introduces him in this vignette:

Figure 8: Page 29 of *ABC*

Hintz and Tribunella (2019) argue that moments like this introduction juxtaposes the "movement from child to young adult— the experience of adolescence— with the movement from China to the United States— the experience of immigration" (p. 212). This point and interpretation of it suggest that Jin's immigration story is foregrounded both in the text and the reading of it suggesting Jin is positioned to be "foreign" despite being an American intermediary for Wei-Chen throughout the text. This moment exemplifies the danger of forgoing the racist rhetorical positioning of APIDA/A people within the narrative or visuals of a text because it might be so easy to simply laugh at the way Jin is misnamed (Hsieh, 2023).

On first glance, it might be easier to critique the teacher rather than center Jin's reaction to his misnaming. Focusing on Jin and his reaction to Mrs. Greeder introducing him to the class the subtle and sometimes un(der)stated violence of misnaming by dehumanizing students in suggesting that their names are not worth pronouncing correctly (Bucholtz, 2016) that I discuss in Chapter Three. At the same time, focusing on Jin in this moment underscores for teachers the ways that, if unaddressed, microaggressions sustain harm to students without the "pedagogical" scaffolds like scripted laughter (Oh, 2017) which provides rhetorical and narrative cue (Nishime, 2022) to call attention to the harm Yang is capturing for readers. Without scripted laughter, readers can be left without cues to foreground the absurdity of mobilizing the racist and xenophobic trope in order to encourage them to look past it for what "else" using this satirical approach is trying to make visible. As a result, this is an opportunity for teachers to help students navigate the discomfort of misnaming by turning Jin's visual rhetorical positioning relative to Mrs. Greeder and to the reader, to disengage the "all Asians are the same" stereotype.

Scenes like Jin's introduction to Mrs. Greeder's class build context for students that Mrs. Greeder misnaming Jin is not a harmless mistake, but his new teacher mobilizing the forever foreigner trope. Focusing on Jin is important because it shows both the knowledges that students bring into the classroom that can, despite movements to the contrary, still be filtered through teachers relying on official curricula that institutionalize the violence and perpetuate these layers of essentialism (Rodríguez et al., 2024; Chosen Kin, 2023). Official curricula, however, largely do not provide these scaffolds to build racialized schema for students.

Another instance that helps to build a lens of racialized awareness, later in the graphic novel, are the ways that Danny (Jin's white avatar), even [as Yang illustrates him to be] coveting his proximity to whiteness sees his internalized Othering as a reason to distance himself from Chin-Kee. Danny, being rejected after asking his classmate, Melanie out on a date, responds:

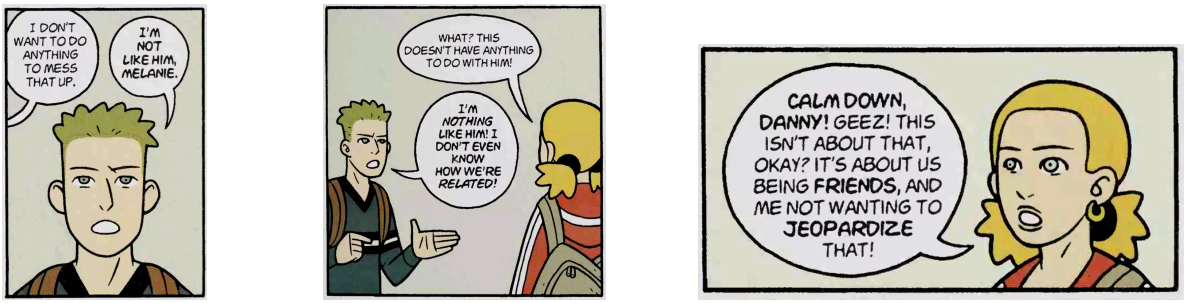

Figure 9: Page 123 of *ABC*

Danny's reaction is to blame Chin-Kee for what he experiences as Amelia's rejection points to the need for teachers to center the pedagogical importance of everyday embodiments of intersectionality (Delarosa, 2023).

Jin's (Danny's) character exemplifies the feeling of racial castration in which APIDA/A men (Eng, 2001; Oh, 2017), relative to white masculinity is "feminized and emasculated" (Oh,

2017, p. 21). This feminization aligns with how whiteness essentializes *and orientalizes* APIDA/A men in ways that affirm the supremacy of white masculinity as equating idealized humanity. Danny reenacts "heterosexist and patriarchal American masculinity towards the opposite sex of the dominant racial group" (Yoo, 2022, p. 166) which flaunts his proximity to white masculinity as a pursuit of white masculinity as a universal signifier of humanity (Wanzo, 2020; Dyer, 1997).

This interaction cautions, and encourages, teachers to consider the ways APIDA/A people of all gender identities are differentially perceived in the context of white supremacy. This moment guides teachers to foreground for students why some APIDA/A people are socialized to embrace one or more parts of their social positionality. Visually, the panels with Danny are drawn with sharp, as opposed to smooth, lines that reinforce white masculinity as Danny mimics white masculine-coded behaviors. At the same time, the narrative cues exemplify Danny both disassociating from and expressing a lack of control over his own identity using phrases like "I don't even know how we're related," and "I am nothing like [Chin-Kee]" (p. 123). Here, the visual rhetoric suggests coveting eligibility (and proximity) to white masculinity as evidence of one's humanity which Danny would otherwise be denied which causes him to feel out of control and, as a result, try to use his masculinity as a way of reasserting control of the situation (Yoo, 2022) while rejecting his association with Chin-Kee as if to decry the connection imposed on him to the stereotypes Chin-Kee embodies.

This interaction, seen through a strategic (anti-)essentialism lens, also shows how assimilationist logics reward the distance that Danny (Jin) claim from stereotypes about their Chinese American identity (Shieble, 2014) that gender him as sexually deviant or impotent (Eng, 2001; Kuo, 2010). This interaction invites students to consider why Danny's behaviors are coded

as “white” and begin to engage more deeply with the visual rhetorical cue. Using the visual and narrative rhetorics in conversation with one another helps to disentangle APIDA/A essentialism by foregrounding the intersections of Danny’s racial and gender identities. Focusing on the intersections of Danny’s racial and gender identities shows students how the anti-APIDA/A stereotypes are harmful even when many APIDA/A people have little or no connection to the racist origins of these stereotypes.

Using a racialized lens to disrupt tropes that “all Asians are the same” through the interactions of APIDA/A masculinity distinguishes between unstrategic essentialism (e.g. Mrs. Greeder) and strategic (anti-)essentialism (e.g. Danny’s problematic interaction with Melanie) for students because it makes visible the anti-essentialist resistances to stereotypes while acknowledging that Danny is unsure how he is connected to these stereotypes. Teachers can resist reifying these stereotypes into allegories rather than seeing their rhetorical positionings as if the violence of, and disconnection from, stereotypes only exists this viscerally in fiction.

Resisting Racist Rhetorical Positioning

Positioning visual and narrative racist stereotypes about APIDA/A communities as allegory, can further leave stereotypes in the text unquestioned for students especially when those stereotypes are grounded in specific parts (e.g. “China”) of the broader context associated with a racialized community (e.g. “Asia”). However, many of the ways characters interact offers opportunities to center resistances to hegemonic and stereotypically-grounded portrayals (Hsieh, 2023). Foregrounding moments of resistance offers potent opportunities for students to disengage racist narrative positioning while also navigating, rather than avoiding, the complexities of scripted laughter (Oh, 2017).

When Wei-Chen and Amelia are paired together to be caretakers for an iguana and monkey visiting their science class, Wei-Chen's dialogue shows how he resists being lumped in with other classmates like Jin and Suzy. In the closet, Wei-Chen explains to Amelia his and Jin's relationship after she asks Wei-Chen why he feels he owes Jin so much. He says:

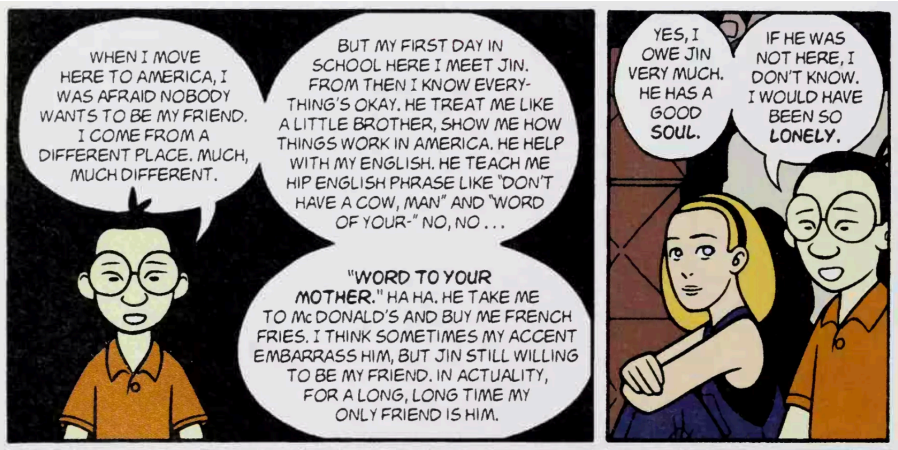

Figure 10: Page 102 of *ABC*

Through the lens of the model minority myth, this interaction may be read through assimilationist logics and easily be overlooked. This dialogue can, as a result, confirm readers' socialization into these stereotypes and suggest to APIDA/A readers that they, like Wei-Chen, will be rewarded for acquiescing to dominant cultural norms of white middle-class life, through the use of the reference to McDonald's. More subtly, Wei-Chen carefully circumnavigates gendered and xenophobic stereotypes which is one way he re-authors his own experience in real time (Janks, 2014). Centering the transnational contexts tenet of AsianCrit make visible the ways Wei-Chen can also be read as resisting the forever foreigner tropes by showing the ways he sought out belonging. Wei-Chen positions his relationship with Jin as one of choice rather than necessity (such as the assumptions that the APIDA/As naturally gravitate towards one another) and shows how Wei-Chen also acknowledges Jin's role as an intermediary. Wei-Chen even in

befriending other APIDA/A classmates at Oliphant High School distinguishes between intentional coalition and the "inevitability" of panethnic affinity or solidarity (Hsieh, 2023).

Notably, Wei-Chen positions his Taiwanese identity as different, but never a deficit, as he struggles at times to speak to Jin and others in English. Even in calling attention to what he describes as his "accent," Wei-Chen does not express shame over it or his Taiwanese identity even if he perceives it to embarrass Jin in ways that undercut Jin's role as an American intermediary. This shows the way Yang (2006) tries to position his characters as agentic in the face of these stereotypes to engage in, at times subtle, resistances against essentialism (Hsieh, 2023). In contrast to Yang's more overt resistances to stereotypes using characters like Chin-Kee, Wei-Chen in moments like this exposes a layer of nuance that invites readers to challenge their assumptions about Chineseness as a monolithic bellwether for Asian*ness* in the American curricular imaginary. Yang's use of racial satire separates for readers the difficult work of challenging the absurd stereotypes *imposed* upon APIDA/A communities and the racism those within APIDA/A communities internalize to resist. Wei-Chen's and Jin's navigations of anti-APIDA/A racism contrast with Chin-Kee's exaggerated caricature to show how both are ways for readers to resist racial abstraction and not reify *ABC* as a whole into an allegory (Bow, 2021; Ma, 2021).

Jin's and Wei-Chen's descriptions of their friendship makes visible their coalitional negotiation in its most raw— that the solidarity and camaraderie they eventually show by the end of the novel is not simply inherent or given. As a result, Yang rhetorically repositions Jin and Wei-Chen to suggests how (anti-)essentialism can be *strategic* and simultaneous. Foregrounding Jin's and Wei-Chen's identity negotiations negotiations over identity, works to resist the

stereotype that their friendship is inevitable, especially as they embarrass each other. Rather, Yang frames Jin and Wei-Chen as consciously resisting these stereotypes which is a useful teaching moment for teachers hoping to show how racialized people resist harmful stereotypes.

Agency and Coalitional Negotiation

Thus far in this analysis, I have presented moments in which a lens that focuses on building racialized schema prevents otherwise easy misreadings that affirm racial stereotypes and essentializations of APIDA/A communities. Next, I focus on Jin and Wei-Chen as "round," or nuanced characters in contact of their shared racialization. As one of the few APIDA/A texts commonly in classrooms, teaching *ABC* in ways that foreground its making visible of coalitional negotiation disrupts the second and third layers of essentialism ("East Asian = all Asian American"; and "Chinese = all East Asian American") and therefore representative of *an* APIDA/A experience, rather than of *the* APIDA/A experience.

The ways that Jin and Wei-Chen each embody different kinds of masculinity as much as nationality also highlight their agency in the context of the messiness of their negotiation of shared identities. The simultaneity of APIDA men coveting or pursuing APIDA/A proximity to whiteness even in the face of their perpetual exclusion from it is a distinction that nuances the conversation about intersectionality and APIDA/A masculinity above. Two moments in *ABC* (2006) model this tension about the pursuit and exclusion from whiteness; both are moments when Jin rejects his own racialized and gendered existence responding in a way that parallels white rage (Love, 2019).

In the first instance, Jin forcibly kisses Suzy Nakamura, who is dating Wei-Chen. Wei-Chen then goes to Jin's house and confronts him about his assaulting Suzy. In this interaction, Jin becomes progressively angrier, and responds to Wei-Chen:

Figure 11: Page 191 of *ABC*

Jin suggests that his Chinese Americanness is different from Wei-Chen's Taiwaneseness and places barrier to their shared experience under white supremacy rather than foreground the coalitional possibilities in the face of stereotypes that harms them both in different ways. In this excerpt, Jin uses a slur ("fresh off the boat") to put distance between himself and Wei-Chen and also mimics the dialogue that Greg (a white classmate) uses to tell him that he should not be dating Amelia. Building on Oh's (2017) analysis, Jin objectifies Suzy "to confirm his own masculine power and pleasure" (p. 170), making her "a channel through which to vent male anger and frustration at white racism and a means through which to establish hegemonic, heterosexual masculine identity" (p. 170). Further, Jin enacting this violence suggests his simultaneous gendered power and racialized marginality in context of others' perceived deficits

about his ethnicity and nationality. As well, Jin lashes out again in reaction to what he signals is a loss of control about his visual and narrative racial positioning within the text that his racialized and gendered points him towards competing (e.g. physically) for Suzy to be able to date within his racial community.

For teachers, this conflict between Jin and Wei-Chen is a potent reminder of the danger in assimilationist logics that reward students of Color for embracing their socialized proximity to whiteness or dominant identities. Jin's embrace of white masculinity causes him to forgo his and Wei-Chen's negotiated friendship and reject the opportunity to strategically be "alike" (strategic essentialism). Instead, Jin chooses to compete and try to dominate on the basis that he can mobilize stereotypes (F.O.B) to assert that he is, in this moment, not an American intermediary for Wei-Chen, but *more* American. In doing so, teachers have the opportunity to connect two major ideas in the text— that there can be differences and tension between people who are similarly racialized, and that those tensions may not always be visible.

Jin and Wei-Chen have been in the United States for different amounts of time. These transnational contexts are what create the necessity of strategic (anti-)essentialism. Erasing these nuances in Jin's and Wei-Chen's stories lessens the "safe" distance from which readers can abstract how those nuances can impact their lived experiences suggesting even greater importance to Yang's use of the narrative and visual cues to invite readers into these nuances that are often erased in curriculum (Wang, 2017). Teachers presenting this text to students, therefore, need to lean into the scaffolds within the text as well as apply a racialized analytical lens to make visible the tensions underneath the surface of "two Asian Americans fighting" and call attention to what which may not be visible to dominant white audiences (Song, 2013, 2018).

As Jin mimics Greg's prior behavior when Jin expressed attraction to Amelia, teachers can complicate for students visual rhetorics and disrupt the layers of essentialism that can be easily reinforced by a text like *ABC.* Part of separating and disrupting these layers of essentialism requires noticing when teachers foreground race (ethnicity) and nationality as APIDA/A peoples' most visible identity markers (e.g. Tuan, 1998; Museus & Iftikar, 2014). As East Asian American-centered histories and discourses continue to dominate the limited APIDA/A representation in curriculum, teachers must take every opportunity to disrupt white-centered curricula by lifting up moments that disrupt racist and xenophobic APIDA/A stereotypes in multiple ways (An, 2020; Chandler & Branscombe, 2015; Hsieh & Kim, 2020). Disrupting these discourses with texts like *ABC* mean working with students to see how the inter-ethnic tensions can lead to coalitional negotiations and resistances which addresses both East Asian-centered and Chinese-centered discourses in the second and third layers of essentialism (Heish & Nguyen, 2019).

Further, Danny (Jin), proceeds to violently attack Chin-Kee after Chin-Kee performs She Bang (a la William Hung's performance in *American Idol* in 2004). Danny then exclaims to Chin-Kee:

Figure 12: Page 205 of *ABC*

In this interaction Danny, again negotiating feelings of a loss of power or control, defaults to hypermasculine behavior by engaging in physical violence and rage (Anderson, 2016). Danny does so after mobilizing xenophobic and racialized technologies of white supremacy to humiliate Chin-Kee and exemplifies how technologies of white supremacy are coded with masculinity and uplifted in schools as a humanistic ideal (Harro, 2000). Danny also seemingly projects his own socialized self-hatred to reject his feelings of gendered racial inferiority (castration) (Eng, 2001), given the racialized and gendered subordination Danny (Jin) experienced throughout the book.

Teachers have an opportunity here to scaffold and complicate for students the visual positioning that Danny's (Jin's) [proximity to] whiteness allows him to simultaneously resist these stereotypes but problematically use physical violence to demonstrate that he has overcome the racist stereotypes that Chin-Kee embodies. This interaction builds on Yoo (2022) and Oh (2017) by showing how the model minority myth and other anti-APIDA/A tropes manifest within the book as a pursuit of whiteness and is central to understanding *ABC* (2006).

The climax of the graphic novel creates moments for teachers to work with students to challenge the "everydayness" of the model minority and forever foreigner ropes and show students how to nuance both their perceptions of anti-APIDA/A stereotypes in their own multiple relationalities to these stereotypes. By multiple relationalities, I mean that these vignettes can certainly confirm stereotypes without necessary scaffolding but also can be read in multiple ways that allow APIDA/A and non-APIDA/A readers to witness multiple APIDA/A experiences without upholding them at *the* APIDA/A experience. Teachers, to prepare students to engage in this, must also themselves do critical self-work in order to consider which facets of these

multiple readings they default to, and which assumptions, biases or prejudices they may draw from, to guide students through the readings they will bring to class conversations.

For example, Jin's (Danny's) navigating of his own socialization into hegemonic ideologies of white Western masculinity as well as his relationship to Wei-Chen challenges the perceived passivity of APIDA/A people under the model minority myth. At the same time, by the conclusion readers see Jin's (Danny's) behavior become increasingly aggressive and toxic masculine rewarded by coveting his proximity to whiteness. For teachers, this final showdown between Danny and Chin-Kee merges the previous scenes' showing the ways characters, like APIDA/A kids in real life do in their own unique ways, navigate the multiple layers of stereotypes and violence and negotiate how they/we come to our shared panethnic coalitional racialization as an APIDA/A community shown throughout my analysis.

Implications

In my findings, I show how *ABC* functions as a complicated text which presents both opportunities and cautions for teachers to mobilize the foundations of anti-APIDA/A stereotypes. I do so to show the ways APIDA/A individuals navigate our racialized existences and disrupt some teachers' assumption that *ABC* is a mirror (and even a window) for all APIDA/A readers. I expand on the necessity of teachers working with students to notice racial satire, and the self-work teachers can do to make critical decisions about how they choose to bring their readings into their classroom conversations about *ABC* and texts like it with students. Doing so contributes to ongoing conversations that respond to Sims Bishop's (1990) seminal framework of windows and mirrors doors in children's literature to nuance APIDA/A identities for students. These implications push teachers to disrupt perceptions that APIDA/A students, like all students

of Color, are, or can be, only one static thing and resist damage-centered portrayals reinforced by stereotypes and white gazes (Love, 2019; Tuck, 2009; Yoo, 2022).

Resisting (white-Centered) Means to Teach About Race: Teacher Self-Work

My analysis suggests that building racialized schema and context for teachers to teach complex but generative texts like *ABC* requires some self-work to position and situate themselves and their own readings of the text before and as they walk students through it. The push in education for social studies and English classrooms to move away from essentialized reductionist portrayals of Asian Americans and other racialized people also suggests urgent attention be paid to how teachers are trained to collect, select, and contextualize images, especially in how we teach young adult literature (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim 2014; Rodríguez & Swalwell, 2021; Rodríguez & Kim, 2018).

As a Taiwanese American teacher educator, I had to reflect on how my own socialization and scholarly work interplay while I taught *ABC* to preservice teachers and prepared other instructors to teach in my teacher preparation program. In particular, I thought about the extent to which I could change my students' socialization into essentialized perceptions about APIDA/A communities given that this might be one of the few APIDA/A texts that they would engage with in their teacher education program experiences. In that way, my own lessons reflected building that schema for them without the expectation they would necessarily teach *ABC* themselves in their teaching careers. While teacher education literature frequently highlights *ABC*'s challenges (often by non-APIDA/A authors), I encourage teachers to lean into identity negotiations that authors like Yang are inviting readers into. These texts, like *ABC*, reinforce and normalize the

nuance of racial identity formations and deepen antiracist pedagogical learning outcomes for students (Kohli & Solórzano, 2012; Ohito, 2016).

As a result, teachers' self-work has to include critically reflecting on how their social positionalities and situatedness position them to see these navigations *as navigations* rather than an ambivalent perpetuation of stereotypes. Jones and Berends (2023) frame this as centering teacher vulnerability and duality which attends to how teacher positionalities impact the ways they implement antiracist pedagogies but is also an invitation to do this ongoing navigation of "difficult" texts and the opportunities they create for students. Centering Yang's intentional choices to show readers the complex intersectionality in characters opens up the possibility of foregrounding that these differences are not constructed to teach students, but parallel the lived experiences of people who look like the characters in texts like *ABC.* Going one step further, the transnational contexts and strategic (anti-)essentialism tenets of AsianCrit help make visible the allure of whiteness and masculinity, especially given APIDA/A's chronic exclusion from it. *ABC* makes clear through Jin's and Wei-Chen's messy negotiations over APIDA/A identities in their school, the importance of working with students to decenter white norms by leaning into the nuance needed to resist multiple simultaneous layers of racist violence in and beyond classrooms. Treating Yang's (2006) text as an invitation to witness some of that messiness, rather than papering over it in the name of "diverse" books or "representation" in children's and YA libraries, also turns focus on how people from racialized and other marginalized communities engage in the process of "figuring out" how they want to appear as a window to others. To prepare to teach a text like this, I argue that teachers can ask themselves questions like: (1) what social identities do I prioritize and why?; (2) what social identities do I choose to make visible to

others?; (3) which social identities do I struggle to embrace and why?; (4) what identities (theirs or others) do I want students to embrace or grapple with as they read this text?; and (5) what tensions, histories, or identities did I notice myself needing to learn more about as I read this text?

Engaging complex APIDA/A texts like *ABC*, of course also require teachers and teacher educators to confront what racialized schema they have, do not have, and what they have to un/relearn. To try to maximize the amount of essentialism teaching a text like this can disrupt, I propose a framework of a "Great Wall" of mirrors and "bamboo" windows to both reflect back to us what we know, and when we mobilize stereotypes to cover for what we still need to learn more about. Doing so can help teachers get the most out of working with students to deepen their own racialized schema and interrupt the reproduction of curricula of violence that finds humor in racist satire (An, 2020; Mudambi, 2019).

A "Great Wall" of Mirrors & "Bamboo" Windows

I understand the concern that many (often white) teachers and future teachers voice about not "getting it right" when they are asked to explain and frame a text or social justice concept. For many, Sims Bishop's (1990) concept of windows and mirrors offers a helpful way to sort texts in their children's and young adult literature libraries. Yet, as I troubled throughout my analysis, sorting literature as diverse and not, or by geography can present different challenges. Children from different contexts or racialized communities do not live in different "worlds," where one is "diverse" and one is not. My issue is less with teachers' text selection as it is with how they choose to present the texts they do choose, which is a product of (self-)work we each have to do. Doing so is my invitation to present APIDA/A stories and the stories of historically

marginalized communities in ways that do not merely reify or reduce racial stereotypes or violence as an allegory to introduce students to stereotyping.

Without defaulting back to unnecessary wordplay with the windows and mirrors metaphor, I propose framing difficult texts like *ABC* (2006) as much as a window or mirror for the teacher as the student about what continuing work they need to do to embrace the complexities, intersectionality, and historical nuance of a text. In this way, what I half-jokingly call a "Great Wall" of mirrors illustrates the challenge of disrupting the generations of (under-/mis-)representation of APIDA/A histories that have yielded the East Asian-centered portrayals of APIDA/A communities that rely on more recognizably encapsulated by Chin-Kee than Jin, let alone Wei-Chen or Suzy, which highlights the danger of APIDA/A communities normalizing our racialized proximity to whiteness. At the same time, this kind of teacher self-work also centers the experiential knowledges of the students in the classroom who can draw from their lived curricula to expand on Yang's invitation into APIDA/A identity negotiations. Confronting a "Great Wall" of mirrors concurs where damage-centered, essentialist, and assimilationist literary narratives of APIDA/A identities highlight what is reflected back to teachers about their knowledge of Asia and APIDA experiences. Often portrayals that exist in official curricula confirm and reinforce the very stereotypes they could combat. Without teachers doing the necessary self reflection to select and scaffold texts, these dated portrayals continue to define the pop cultural zeitgeist devoid of their context and histories and reverberate causing students to feel as if these stereotypes are inescapable as Danny did.

ABC, as a result, can be instructive of what self work teachers need to do to (support students to) scale the Great Wall using cues like scripted laughter (Oh, 2017), as an entree into

nuancing other APIDA/A stories where these scaffolds may not be present. The structure of the story, by scaffolding the transitions between moments of strategic essentialism and strategic anti-essentialism, walks the reader through the many simultaneous identities that Jin and Wei-Chen embody— as well as the ways in which dominant groups' norms shape their sociocultural aspirations. For teachers, this means critically reflecting on whether they present or select texts "because they are Asian," or if it is because it shows the ways that APIDA/A people navigate the regime of stereotypes that lead us to reenact whiteness in pursuit of *some* form of social acceptance.

In the same way, without working towards climbing over the wall of hyper-reinforced essentialism of communities of Color, and APIDA/A students specifically, makes the pursuit of windows opaque by these stereotypes. Hence, I turn the window back on the teacher to be reflective and intentional in how they decenter whiteness in their approach to texts to get to a place where they present the text as a completely transparent window. Inviting teachers to disrupt the opacity of a text's window encourages them to be part of disrupting the historical erasures of APIDA/A stories as more than a hyper(in)visible way to show students what stereotypes look like without engaging their social contexts. I also refuse to blame teachers, or default to abstract critiques of the systems of power, meaning that my turn of the metaphor is intended to consider the active role teachers can play in pushing past or through the "bamboo" (stereotypes) helping students seek our readings so they no longer feel as if racist tropes are inescapable, especially for the students who navigate them each day in schools.

Here, too, I use the word bamboo half-jokingly because bamboo as a ubiquitous stereotypical symbol of Asian contexts but also because of bamboo's ability to bend which is

analogous to the durability of the status quo of stereotypes that yields frustration amongst some APIDA/A scholars that we struggle to go beyond "proving" the existence, let along elucidate the extent or ripples, of the model minority or forever foreigner (Louie, 2018; An, 2020). As a result, my findings also suggest the importance of how teachers choose texts with the express intention of trying to challenge our biases but also recognizing how deeply socialized they are in our thinking. My ultimate goal, in short, is for teachers to do self reflection so that that begin to undermine, ridicule, and critique the stereotypes for their harm rather than the people they mark in the way that Mudambi (2019) and Bow (2019, 2021) distinguish between socially acceptable forms of anti-APIDA/A racism (*racist* satire), from satire whose specific purpose deconstructs and critiques anti-APIDA/A tropes (*racial* satire).

Chineseness… *Beyond Repair*?

ABC's screen adaptation, despite being network-canceled, is but a further step towards recognizing the way narrative and visual cues are part of the racialized rhetorical positioning of APIDA/A communities for students. As texts move between media, more information and interpretation can come to color how communities are portrayed by confirming or shifting how identities are visually represented (Hintz & Tribunella, 2019). In the case of *ABC*, its (2023) Disney+ adaptation compels me to urge teachers to be attentive to how perceptions of Chinese*ness* (as opposed to Taiwaneseness and Cantoneseness) are taken up in the television show. Beyond my charge for teachers to reflect and to push past the "easy" read of this text, the show focuses on the incredulity and grotesqueness of anti-Chinese stereotypes that have impacted the lived and racialized experiences of APIDA/A communities. In the show, Jamie Yao (Ke Huy Quan) plays a character who is himself a character named Freddy Wong in the fictional

show *Beyond Repair* who becomes famous for his character's catchphrase "what can go Wong?" In *Beyond Repair* and Jamie Yao, which reimagines Chin-Kee, suggests the many cautions with the use of mobilizing racial satire to challenge it. In this reimagination, Jamie Yao's character shows the ways that anti-Chinese (Sinophobic) stereotypes are durable even as APIDA/A creators try to mask them or imagine them forward in ways that are still instructive to an audience more willing to disrupt them. My findings also lead me to argue that these layers of essentialism that conflate Chinese American as representative of all East Asian American, and therefore all APIDA/A experiences are difficult to disrupt because of the ways these stereotypes are so normalized, that their very grotesque construction is but a satirical allegory. In Jamie Yao's case, the confines of the stereotype, despite clear scaffolds and guardrails in *the show*, still showcase the harm of these stereotypes as they impact other characters like Suzy Nakamura because of Chineseness' synonymy with the entire APIDA/A community without equitable support across communities (Ngo & Lee, 2007).

ABC shows how Chineseness is deeply embedded without the U.S. curricular or educational imaginary of Asianness— and works to show that Chinese identities are diverse and many that far extend beyond simply being from a nation-state like the People's Republic of China. Treating *ABC* as representative of *the* APIDA/A experience, consequently also narrows what we let students see Chinese and Chinese American identities to be even as well-intended teachers try to lift up more APIDA/A stories. This is why I fully embrace *ABC*'s (2023) creators' choice to use the double-meaning of "Beyond Repair" to signal both the laying Chin-Kee's character (and the stereotypes which he embodied) to rest as well as the logic that this text and its subsequent adaptations represented the Chinese American community's singular experience in

the United States, let alone the entire APIDA/A community's. For teachers, this moment is an important indicator of the self-work they may need to do to teach this text because it can show the more deeply seeded biases we hold than those which inform whether or not teachers can ethically engage with Chin-Kee, or not.

The naming of pieces of literature, especially when it is organized in terms of racial categories created by coloniality and white supremacy, is also an important point of context to this implication. *ABC* (2006) as a distinctly Chinese story can easily be positioned as an authentic and cultural insider APIDA/A text under Rodríguez and Kim's (2018) selection criteria. However, this text certainly does not speak for the entirety of the APIDA/A community. While Rodríguez and Kim's framework is intended to encourage teachers to select children's literature that is not a harmful or essentialist story based on stereotypes, *ABC* (2006) can be framed such that Chinese experiences represent the entirety of the APIDA/A experience. There is a tension that sorting texts by geography, representation, or whether or not they center "diversity." By sorting texts (and curriculum) in terms of binaries like American and "global" children's literature as Short (2017) argues, and in terms of racial categories that are themselves created to maintain white supremacy. I am also aware that no single text can represent everyone. Naming *ABC* (2006) as an APIDA/A text can harmfully affirm the Greater Chinese and East-Asian centeredness of APIDA/A representation. Continuing to do so, extending Oh (2017) and Eng (2001), reproduces a Chinese-centered racialized ideal that benefits from its proximity to whiteness, and thus pursues white norms even in the face of perpetual exclusion from it due to legacies of Sinophobia.

Conclusion

Throughout this paper, I have shown how teachers can parse and scaffold a complex APIDA/A text like Gene Luen Yang's (2006) *American Born Chinese* to separate and contextualize the multiple layers of essentialism and racism that can make this text easily reified into reinforcing stereotypes. I have also outlined, based on these findings, the teacher self-work that can maximize *ABC*'s (2006) ability to disrupt all three layers of anti-APIDA/A essentialism informed by AsianCrit's strategic (anti-)essentialism and transnational contexts tenets. Doing so, I argued, offers teachers ways into more careful in text selection and reflection about the work we need to do to teach a text like *ABC* (2006). More importantly, then, is the potential for that reflection to turn into needed relearning to break the cycle of reproducing harmful stereotypical portrayals of APIDA/A identities and discourses for students.

I want to be clear that I believe *American Born Chinese* (2006) should be taught in schools. This text is a strong opportunity for us to challenge the multiple layers of domination that come from the deeply ingrained media narratives that are reproduced by teachers who do not have consistent access to ethnic studies teaching. For the specific context of Chinese identity, the framing of the dominant group using a dominant identity as representative of the whole community continues to circulate a perception that Chinese is APIDA/A at the expense of non-Chinese APIDA/A people in schools (Ngo & Lee, 2007). Implications of my study's findings are also important for other panethnic communities that, in critiquing this logic, gets us away from singular pointing at Chineseness and dominant groups that become proxies for whole communities.

Beyond this work, I see the ways Chinese identities are moved onto the screen. While *ABC*'s (2023) adaptation no longer includes Chin-Kee and Guanyin (Michelle Yeoh) replaces Tze-yo-tzuh, Wei-Chen's Taiwanese identity is erased in favor of a simpler Chinese and Chinese American stories. This erasure by making them both Chinese shows the many challenges ahead for educators to continue to distinguish the many ways in which people come to their Chinese identities, or their APIDA/A identities.

As I reread Gene's reflection in the epigraph, I wondered the extent he sees Chineseness everywhere like how he saw the Monkey King in the superhero stories he consumed. A question I still have alongside my excitement for what teachers will do to nuance APIDA/A stories in classrooms is the extent to which, for Gene, Chineseness is a superpower in both senses of the word. While Chineseness is a diverse set of (pathways to) identities and a set of assets students bring to school each day, I feel a certain ambivalence to the ways Chineseness becomes a lens through which teachers make sense of APIDA/A texts. Sinophobic stereotypes are harmful to all students. My charge to teachers, then, is to teach through these stereotypes are *Beyond Repair*.

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CONCLUSION: What of our stolen Youth Soul? On the futurity of pan-Asianism amidst Han Supremacy

At the end of the first episode of the Disney+ (2023) Streaming adaptation of Gene Luen Yang's *American Born Chinese,* Jin Wang discovers a Monkey King transformer toy in his backpack given to him by Sun Wei-Chen who is on Earth after stealing the Monkey King's staff of power. The toy has two heads. One head is of a humanoid robot, and the other is a monkey representing the shapeshifting nature of Sun Wukong in *Journey to the West* hidden where the toy's heart would be. At the episode ends, "You So (Youth Soul)" by Taipei dreampop band I Mean Us fades in (see link in the end of the Acknowledgments section). I wrote much of this dissertation listening to this song on loop because the lyrics felt connected to the show, to this dissertation, and to me.

In the chapter two, "A precious nationalism of Han supremacy and Chinese characteristics," the line "You drown yourself from head to toe, oh no you didn't know," reminded me that the flattering (albeit genocidal) supremacy that I call Han supremacy perpetrated by the People's Republic of China (PRC) is an ideology with global reach that impacts the lived curricula of diasporic communities. This lyric was a persistent reminder that many in the PRC, and increasingly in the United States, live in the incredibly tight space of a coercive curriculum that is evidence of the PRC's fragility by cracking down on free speech using the largest scale censorship apparatus in human history. In the third chapter, "The *Nomencurriculum* and the curricular tight space of name[s]," I outline the analytic possibility of a Nomencurriculum that considered the ideologies of people's names and namings as told through a study of my own adoption. My argument in that chapter connected to the lyric "I never

wanna fall in love with someone like me, look at me I'm gonna hurt you so," which reminded me that in my multiple namings, perhaps my multiple possible 'selves,' there is deeply socialized scorn that kids are taught as they learn about the, often narrow, possibilities of their APIDA/A identities.

In the fourth chapter, "Sinophobia and Sinocentrism— An AsianCrit Analysis of The U.S. Military's Wartime Curricular [Re]racialization of Chinese [Americans]," I resonated with the song's opening lyric "Hey, now, you better go put yourself into that hole. Oh, no, ready to fall." This lyric reminded me that, even as I argued for the ways that the U.S. military was seeding harmful and dehumanizing perceptions of Chinese people, many Chinese Americans including some in my own family who were willing to risk their lives and fight for the United States in World War II. Some of my ancestors sincerely believed in the ideals of the American Dream/ Empire despite being systemically harmed by portrayals in artifacts like Educational Manual No. 42 that only re-racialized Chinese people to benefit the war effort. Finally, in the fifth chapter "Is Teaching *American Born Chinese… Beyond Repair?*: Preparing preservice teachers to navigate a Great Wall of mirrors and bamboo windows," the lyric "but you're the one who always save me from tears, you and me, I wanna love you so," reminded me of the power of stories to provides ways to love ourselves more fully in the face of multiple layers of historical and contemporary violence in explore in the previous three chapters. This line spoke to the self-work teachers must do in order to support students in seeing the many affirming possibilities of their unique embodiments of their racial identities through texts like *American Born Chinese.*

The song's title, You So (Youth Soul), kept me accountable to the fact that, for many APIDA/A kids, the racialized insults rampant in educational spaces are spiritual and

psychological wounds that tear at the very soul of the young people entrusted to us in schools. The song's title, also a clever play on the mispronunciation of English by some Mandarin speakers, was a reminder that this work is about those very young people in schools whose experiences are shaped by documents published decades ago. Those documents draw repeatedly on grotesque stereotypes imagined by white people about Chinese migrants two centuries ago that remain largely unqualified and unquestioned across American law and educational spaces. Those stereotypes, regrettably, go on to impact the racialized experiences of young people across the APIDA/A coalition.The merging of Sinophobia and Sinocentrism in American life, I showed, consequently marked other APIDA/A communities in ways that make visible the violence of un-strategic essentialism in our communities.

I want to take this a step further, however, and argue that this constitutes a form of theft. By focusing on the concept of theft, I extend my two central arguments in this dissertation: (1) that what the governments, official curricula, and people say about Chinese*ness* belies its own imprecision insofar as it fails to see past majoritarian logics that uplift Han norms and representation as a bellwether for all APIDA/A peoples; and (2) that speaking back to and against these documents pinpoint where education scholars and educators can continue to connect the physical, political, rhetorical, and curricular violence in order to reclaim APIDA/A coalitional futures that move towards solidarity and a collective response to this theft of racialized possibility. I will start by naming theft, then use this dissertation's title, *Surviving China's Rejuvenation— Global Han Supremacy, Sinophobia + the Theft of Asian America in Education*, as an organizational tool to locate these multiple thefts and the simultaneity of these sites of theft as sites of possibility and resistance in each of these analytical facets of the project.

(The) Theft (of Asian America)

I imagine that when I talk about theft at least some will wonder: how can the "model minority" perceive anything to have been stolen (from them)? How, or what, can Chineseness steal? In short, I contend that our position in solidarity with Black and Indigenous communities as well as other communities of Color was stolen because white supremacy thought us compliant enough to affirm and protect their hegemony. I zoom into this idea of theft to argue that naming and (re)claiming the idea of an APIDA/A coalition as being stolen allows for us to mount a more targeted conversation and shift our educational and curricular representation accordingly towards these coalitional resistance possibilities (Hsieh & Nguyen, 2020).

As we progressed through doctoral education, I more and more admire my friend Bri Markoff's (e.g. Markoff, 2023, 11 November) thinking around the idea of hoarding as an extension of the whiteness as property arguments that Harris (1993) and other CRT scholars make. I especially resonate with how she argues that, under racial capitalism and the racial caste system, resource guarding is normalized and rewarded. To build on Markoff's (2023, 11 November) point, these ideas of scarcity also normalize survivance as a methodology of living which distracts from the violence of finiteness within capitalistic logics (Sabzalian, 2019). As a settler community, the APIDA/A coalition needs to be more aware of our complicity in the theft and occupation of Indigenous lands, and also how white supremacy steals from us the ability to tell our own stories in curriculum and education which harms the collective memory of the APIDA/A community's diversity in education.

When Sun Wukong laments at the end of *American Born Chinese* how he could have saved himself five hundred years of imprisonment had he simply realized how good it is to be a

monkey, I wondered to myself why he felt as if his "monkey-ness" was a deficit. I also noticed myself feeling similarly about my presumed Chineseness. Something about theft that I learned from writing these chapters is that theft is often accompanied by an adjective. Be it "petty" theft, land theft, or "identity" theft, some*thing* has to be taken from someone else (or something else because corporations are people now…). My findings bring me to think about how an identity, or assemblage of identities, can be stolen in ways that are not only stealing credit cards or government identification numbers as proxies for "identity" theft. The underlying assumption, too, is that one's identity is that which makes them identifiable to the state. Identity theft, while I am no expert, I understand to be an act of taking one's ability to access state social services and transact capital— and has relatively little to do with one's identities as an assemblage of markers that have implications for that person's lived experiences. Identity theft, or I suppose it can be called "identities theft," I argue, is more like the theft of whole communities' capacities to define how their identities are represented, or tell their own stories. In the case of this dissertation, the theft of APIDA/A identities is a two-fold process.

First, the theft by those acting in the name of white supremacy of land that catalyzes the global migrations that leads to people from "Asia" coming to contexts like the United States as settlers only to be racialized within the white supremacist racial caste system. In this theft is the literal extractive tendencies and power of coloniality that white settlers would use militarism and capitalism to dispossess from other contexts and steal the lands themselves for their own gain. As a result, white supremacy, using coloniality and the technologies of global capitalism can steal the ontological conditions by which people can identify as part of their own communities. Instead, as is the case of the APIDA/A panethnic coalition, people from many contexts are

racialized together partly out of necessity and partly out of our shared experiences under white supremacy and empire. Where this becomes theft, then, is when that coalition becomes something that is imposed (such as antiquated labels like "orientals") as a technology of racist ordering, and that this label continues to be a source of collective power and solidarity is a limitation, or an inescapable binding that ties communities who have their own historical conflicts to have to resolve them admits a shared struggle against white supremacy.

This first theft makes the APIDA/A label both a resistance and a complicity. By resistance, I mean the shared resistances made possible when APIDA/A communities stand together and demand collective reforms or progress. By complicity, I mean the, at times, apathy to the extent of the harm of the model minority myth that comes from an association of racial proximity to whiteness. White supremacy's impositions upon the APIDA/A community bind us together by our inescapability for these durable stereotypes despite the incredibly inspiring work of community leaders and academics. The model minority (and its material implications) remains part of the problem as much as we are sick of talking about it. This leads me to the second theft.

The second theft is the theft that occurs utilizing the first, where majoritarian logics of representation and lasting implications of Sinocentrism that make Hanness and Chineseness a dominant force within the social construction of an APIDA/A coalitional identity. Chinese and Chinese American communities' transaction of their seeming separation from other Asian identities in exchange for "saveability" by white Western powers (e.g. in World War II) meant that logics of Sinophobia and Chinese exclusion could be seen to have been "overcome" by the model minority's conceptual proximity to whiteness. This second theft is the ways the APIDA/A identity marker is then beholden within the racial caste system to its desire for (Han)

Chineseness which, as I have shown throughout this dissertation, and therefore its desire for whiteness.

This captivity also means the conceptual links forged by nation-states and economic policy all the way down to curriculum and pedagogy between Chinese identities and whiteness speaks to the multiple layers of erasure and essentialism at play (accomplices) in this theft. Han supremacy analyzed in tandem with white supremacy makes visible this coveting of proximity whiteness as well as how other non-Chinese APIDA/A communities are brought into complicity with these (neo)imperialist projects. Educational, and specifically curricular, spaces are strong entrees into addressing this problem and seeking redress for these thefts perpetuated by supremacist ideologies that include Han supremacy—and empire. "Identity theft," though, is only the beginning of a way to explain the multiple thefts that I want to be critical of at the end of this dissertation. Consequently, by attempting to legitimize and justify the PRC's and U.S.' neocolonial actions globally, their militant resource hoarding and theft suggests future mutations of global anti-Blackness and anti-citizenship in which the CCP and U.S. are complicit (Busey & Dowie-Chin, 2021; Jiang, 2021; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). The remainder of this conclusion takes up the idea of thefts of racialized possibility for APIDA/A, Black, and other racialized communities to extend my findings.

Surviving

Love (2019) seminally argues that racism literally murders your spirit. While my preceding chapters often centered the "spirit[ual]," and psychological violence in curriculum, those injuries are also part of our lived curricula (Cridland-Hughes & King, 2015; An, 2020). My articulation of global Han Supremacy in curriculum and education attends to how these

psychological and spiritual violences that emerge from state, curricular, and educational discourses. These discourses racialize, socialize, politicize, and nationalize all at once, and can justify or motivate individuals towards physical *and* other forms of violence.

Resisting the normalization of survival in the face of an increasingly imperialistic PRC means resisting the Han supremacistic ideologies that create the educational and political conditions where survival is normalized. The machinery of state apparatuses yielding polarized axes of global power (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020) give way to political postures that use curriculum policy to achieve national cohesion in which marginalized communities are taught by curriculum to survive and trust the colonizer's assurances of innocence and reconciliation (Tuck & Ree, 2013). Despite the PRC's Patriotic Education campaigns following Tiananmen, and Donald Trump's *1776 Report* (2021) and Executive Order No. 13,958 (2020) which pushed for a patriotic education curriculum that seeded the present anti-CRT bans— educators continue to resist survival as the "ceiling" (Orr & Chong, 2024, Chong 2019). These (attempts at) state policies in both the PRC and U.S. transact loyalty to the state for survival predicated on tolerance is a theft of official curricular space in which to re-story our experiences under, *and between*, these respective regimes. But, this is not just abstracted as a critique of curriculum policies. Families and individuals navigate these survivals everyday.

Trying to understand the contours of my own socialization into normalized survival continues to push me to grow, and is what I think helps me remember that my adoptive parents and family exist within the same power structures that my birth mother does. Those power structures continue to act on them and have led them to many difficult choices as they cared for me growing up which are in context of our family histories that they carry forward. In 1895, my

American-born great grandparents, Sam and Quan Shee Hall, became parents to my grandmother's eldest brother Hinquong in Guangdong. By the time Hinquong graduated from Stanford with an M.D. in 1922, Hinquong was known as James and described as "having the 'manners of a genial old Oxford don'" (Chinn, 1989, p. 208). 102 years later, as I complete my own doctoral education at a similar age as James, I am conflicted about how much of my story I see in his— and how his success shaped my socialization. James Hall's success in the medical profession in San Francisco allowed him the social capital (within Chinatown), and the economic capital so my family could survive until "the passage of time had softened some of the harsh anti-Chinese attitudes, and discrimination had lessened" (Chinn, 1989, p. 241) and become one of the first Chinese American families to live outside San Francisco's Chinatown— something that has historically classed us as distinct, and at a distance form, from many other Chinese Americans and APIDAs in San Francisco.

My ancestors' pursuits of survival can certainly be read as reinforcing the myths of the American Dream and model minority. At the same time, I resonate strongly with Poon's (2024) descriptions of her research participants who reminded her "lot of my parents, uncles, and aunties-deeply human and imperfect elders whom I love" (p. 106) whose life experience led them to have strong and fundamental political differences. Poon (2024) ponders these political differences in a way that largely does not question the sincerity of their commitments but also left space for how "they resented the ways policy debates about race and education felt dismissive of their struggles and experiences. (p.107). Poon's (2024) framing extends a helpful amount of grace to my own view of my ancestors because, as she describes, there is a sincerely held feeling that contemporary pushes for social justice dismiss their struggles and experiences. I

am privileged that many of my (grand)parents' struggles have largely not been mine which made it hard for me to contextualize their choices and sometimes puts me at a distance between me and them. This is why I was drawn to He's (2010, 2021) concepts of in-betweenness and exile because I felt trapped between two contexts of Taiwan and the United States as I grew up missing a lot of intergenerational context I would have needed in either place. I also, unfairly, blamed my parents but their success was also a survival within a system that presented to them a series of hard choices— many of them ones which set me up to do what I do now, and from which I actively profit. For much of this dissertation, I often focused on our political disagreements and I apologize to them for that.

The predominantly white, mostly private, education my (grand)parents worked hard to provide for me was a part of my story I felt like I needed to explain away for much of my doctoral education because of the ways it gave me years of rewarding my embarrassment of my own identities. My education taught me a lot about psychological survival because I never felt fully accepted by my white peers despite the struggle and hard work my parents did to sustain me in each of those places. At times, I thought it was my own deficiency. Other times, I blamed my peers when I should have been locating these feelings within white supremacy into which we are all socialized. I will continue to take grave issue with the systems of Han supremacy and white supremacy that position Chinese Americans within the APIDA, Asian diasporic, and Asian communities globally that forced all of my parents to make the hard choices because of what possibilities these logics of survival stole from them, not just me.

My saying this does not excuse the anti-Blackness, anti-Indigeneity, homophobia, transphobia, stigmatization of mental healthcare, or race evasiveness (Annamma, et al., 2020) I

see in some parts of the APIDA/A coalition (Leonardo, 2009). I also do not excuse or erase the ways some APIDA/A people and community leaders endorse and campaign for curriculum and educational policies that actively harm us and all racialized people in the United States. My trying to extend grace to my family and ancestors is to say that we are all parts and products of an educational system that necessitates a multiplicity of methods of survival and resistance in each of our contexts. However, those resistances should not come at the expense of others but with a demand to see our shared commitments and stakes in challenging white and Han supremacy which means that as we inherit the profits our ancestors' investments in us, we must also act in ways that continue to invest in our own communities' pursuits of equity and justice but also those of other communities who act within the same power structures that force equally hard choices.

I say this as a push to the Chinese American community that raised me in San Francisco, especially. We must see our shared struggles that, to remix Poon (2024) and Chinn (1989), unfairly punish us all into believing that hard work and the passage of time will lessen all the racism we are socialized into and mobilize our proximity to whiteness into a shared opposition to global anti-Blackness rather than let us be used in complicity to reproduce it. I want to extend the same grace Poon (2024) extends as I try to make sense of my parents' choices. The conditions imposed by China and the United States on my ancestors and family that necessitated the choices they made so we could survive, move towards advocacy for APIDA/A communities, and other racialized communities, and away from merely surviving in education, and beyond.

Surviving (Pt. 2)

My family and I also continue to exist in a U.S. nation-state that continues to shape discourses of Chineseness and (as) Asianness in education that remain far too comfortable with orientalized communities, in particular the "Islamic Orient" (Said, 1979, p. 27), as a familiar enemy. Like the PRC's pursuits of a "harmonious society" and justification of its counterterrorism doctrine of hyper-surveillance and genocide (Clarke, 2021) in East Turkestan as merely "Chinese characteristics," exemplifies how Chineseness deals with its Other'ed perceived threats. The United States's and PRC's active participation in the genocides of Native Americans, Palestinians, Uyghurs, and others exemplifies a harmful logic that the survival of the self is tied to the elimination of the Other. Palestinians' physical survival and resisting the theft of their land, property, and ability to live free of Zionism is of the utmost importance in context of the ongoing genocide and scholasticide in Gaza.

My study is also a call to action for the Asian diasporic communities to resist survival and survivance and "whatever traditional, latent mistrust a Westerner feels towards the Oriental" (Said, 1979, p. 286). Doing so means mobilizing to resist Sinocentrism, Sinophobia, and Han supremacy and center Arab and Muslim communities who are ambiguously positioned within the racial caste system and in solidarity with all Asianized/Orientalized communities, even if not consistently visible in the APIDA coalition. Despite East Asian-centered assumptions in the model minority myth that position us close to whiteness, a trope which some internalize as central to our collective survival. I urge skepticism because we have seen how white communities can turn on whatever perceived enemy the U.S. government is ready to serve up like how some white American Jews described "betrayal" as if expressing entitlement to

solidarity in transaction for support for social justice movements in the United States following 07 October 2023 (Boas, 2023, 24 October).

As we witness the ongoing genocide in Gaza, anti-Arab racism, and state-sponsored Islamophobia principally perpetrated by the Israeli Occupation Forces, the United States, and PRC, the censoring of those "who challenge fascist discourses overwhelmingly present in the media" (Díaz Beltran, 2024, 26 February, n.p.). A portion of this dissertation was written since, and at a privileged distance from, the ongoing genocide in Gaza; and without the minimum of a permanent ceasefire. The ongoing curriculum of violence that extends far beyond classrooms and into social and news media's constant reaffirmation of dominant state discourses that endorse Israel's occupation of Palestine. Censorship in academic spaces calls into urgent question what "hate speech and dehumanizing discourses justify incalculable violence, death, and destruction, as we have historically seen and are seeing now" (Fúnez-Flores, 2024, p. 11) mobilized against Palestinians. This dissertation's arguments, as a result, are about the necessity of coalition and resistance against hegemonic power structures must include and center solidarities across all communities who are Asianized and Othered *vis-a-vis* Orientalism (Iftikar & Museus, 2018; Said, 1973). Critiquing Han supremacy and the PRC's creation of state discourses that mobilize a territorially-bound Han identity problematizes the conflation of Han*ness* with Chinese*ness*— a similar critique that can be made in the merging of Jewish and Israeli identities in the territorialization of a Jewish homeland at the core of Zionism's arrogance. The APIDA/A coalition must stand in unconditional solidarity with Palestinians globally, and their anti-colonial resistance to this settler colonial existential threat enabled by both the United States and PRC.

China's Rejuvenation

In response to those who may read my dissertation as me saying that the PRC should not be allowed to "rejuvenate" as it wants in the wake of Western imperialism, my situatedness in the U.S. context does not inherently position me as rationally apologizing for the PRC's staggered development. Instead, I argued that this facile equivocation of "China" with "Han people," and both being tied to a PRC ruled by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is dangerous. The deep reverberations of the Century of Humiliation throughout the PRC's collective memory and national narratives, for education and Asian studies researchers, means seeing the PRC's mobilizations of this trauma as both a postcolonial project as much as it a neoimperial one.

China's rejuvenation, however, must be attended to in the context of U.S. imperialism. State-sanctioned discrimination, like the Chinese Exclusion Acts in the United States and the contemporary "archetype of the contagious Orientalist" (Liu, 2020, p. 13) ('China virus') tropes, suggest a persistent pattern of Sinophobia that continues to shape the choices APIDA/A people make (Day, 2016; Kim, 1999; Liu, 2020; Takaki, 1998). As this implication relates to education, especially the education of Asian diasporic communities, necessitates we break up with essentializing and physiognomic logics that assume that the PRC speaks for "the Chinese." I urge researchers to consider not only methodological *nationalism* (Shahjahan & Kezar, 2013), but methodological *physiognomy* that enforces that very nationalism.

The PRC's global political power is not synonymous with the growing political power of Chinese-identifying people globally. Physiognomic logics that also assume the PRC is the nation-state of the Chinese people would have us believe that Chineseness profits when the PRC does. This set of assumptions is another form of theft of racialized possibility. China's

rejuvenation threatens to steal people's capacity for movement globally by doubling down on the physiognomic logic that a homeland imagined by nation states on occupied land can demand and expect political, social, and racial conformity. China's rejuvenation and the assertions of physiognomy steals nuance from curriculum especially that which is mediated by the state.

Global Han Supremacy

When we no longer take nation-states' mythologies as canon or for granted, their narratives for clinging to power become scrutable as arguments, discourse, and rhetoric. Ang (2022) writes that the "unraveling of racialized Chineseness, where the meaning of being Chinese is subject to multiple, shifting and conflicting identifications which irrevocably transcend the fixity of racial homogenization" (p. 770) attached to the idea of race shows the multiple ways that the idea of Chineseness is not just a construct but a "dream." Han supremacy is, then, an undergirding logic around which justified more visible and material forms of theft occur— thefts of land, property, sovereignty.

The CCP's mobilization of a singular "Chinese Dream" and enacted through its patriotic education campaigns since Tiananmen combat what the CCP perceives as inconsistency in the stability of Chinese identity using curriculum to erode local identities (e.g. Cantoneseness) and civil society. China's history, as told by the CCP in curricula, has been manipulated to affirm this single Chinese identity in ways that position non-Han dynasties as "invaders," and that China's encounters with Western imperialism as a national trauma that justifies its own dispossessions of land, property, and sovereignty in the name of China's rejuvenation. These curricular framings fabricate and promote a historical claim to lands in Tibet, East Turkestan, Taiwan, Saichen, Galwan and Mongolia among others that have justified (the threat of) hypermiltiarized and

genocidal repression in Tibet, East Turkestan, and Taiwan under the Han-dominant CCP regime. The claims of national rejuvenation in response to a Century of Humiliation achieved through patriotic education that teaches loyalty to a hollow (or "raveled") ideology of socialism with Chinese characteristics. This educational paradigm in the PRC merges multiple layers of Han racist logics that justify extraction, dispossession, and theft of material things. Beyond the material, however, is also a theft of whole communities' historical and contemporary connections to their lands and militarily integrate communities who existed outside of the CCP's ontology.

The logic of scarcity that fuels the PRC's desire to outcompete with the West fallaciously equates rejuvenation with neoimperialism. For example, the forever foreigner in the U.S. context allows for Han supremacist discourses of Chineseness to pull non-Han peoples into an exportable conceptualization of Chineseness that enacts erasure of diasporic communities, some members of whom fleeing this very erasure, on the assumption that they can be "represented" by token lessons in world history textbooks. Paired with Sinocentrism, the lingering forever foreigner assumption that APIDA/A people will always be "from" or "of" whatever non-U.S. context they have ties to even if that nation-state denies or represses their existence.

Sinophobia

In the U.S., state-sponsored Sinophobia stole families' connections to each other through the exclusion acts, and stole attention from the United States' and other Western imperial powers' roles in creating urgency to migrate from China. By stolen families connections to one another, I mean through the "paper names" which newcomers had to assume in order to be let into the United States due to the exclusion acts to establish kinship with those already granted citizenship. Some who I know and knew as my relatives and ancestors, I learned, were only such

in name only with no otherwise connections to my family with other "blood" relatives lost to this splintering of families. This distraction from the violence of imperialism and colonization also is an intergenerational theft of APIDA/A people's agency to identify in their own ways with our panethnic coalition which is especially visible to those of us who (like me) are not Chinese. Sinophobia characterizes us all in the APIDA/A community, and I worry that similar technologies harm other panethnic communities. Sinophobia's lingering trauma rewards APIDA/A complicity in the occupation of Indigenous land, and the settler colonial project of the United States by citing our trauma as a reason for us to be rewarded with proximity to whiteness.

Education

In response to Sinophobia and global Han supremacy, educators and education researchers must act. U.S. educators, especially, have the difficult task of resisting Han supremacy in curriculum and teaching as it is embedded throughout how the United States engages with all APIDA/A communities due to panethnic lumping. The APIDA/A community, as a panethnic community necessitates new research in how this lumping multiple communities into a single panethnicity with vastly diverse geographies and histories defies the subject-area organizational logics of how teachers are prepared to and continue to challenge the disciplinary "ownership" of the (re)presentation of whole communities' knowledges and histories so that curriculum is not simply an Eras Tour— histories of anti-APIDA/A harm (Chong & Orr, 2023). Addressing these structural and societal challenges requires multiple interventions from multiple entry points. In context of curricula and state standards systematically mobilizes fear to affirm anti-Blackness (Jones, 2022) across subject areas, and mis/disinformation creeping into classrooms from unethical uses of generative artificial intelligence exacerbate existing prejudices

(Akgün & Greenhow, 2021) teachers must be supported to support students to center humanizing our students and praxis.

I hope that educators and community co-conspirators can take up the difficult work of identifying Han supremacy's manifestations like the APIDA/A community's asymmetrical proximity to whiteness. Chinese Americans' opposition to affirmative action being just one example, resisting this political co-optation combats the glorification of land dispossession and militaristic conquest in world history curricula as well as the CCP's imperial-colonial politics. Further, positioning Asian and APIDA histories as connected, but not synonymous, preserves communities across contexts to speak for themselves rather than in constant contrast to places or people with whom there is little or no connection. The fields of education and Asian American studies both must consider how majoritarian logics of representation affirm power dynamics in Asia that some sought to escape are both reproduced and amplified in U.S. schools without equitable support (Ngo & Lee, 2007). That is, with some communities who fled contexts in Asia only to be, first, lumped in with Greater Chinese peers from whom they may have otherwise sought distinction, and second subjected to the same unnuanced racial and colonial violence in U.S. contexts.

Han supremacy within the framing of Chinese*ness* in history education matters for education in North America, and especially the United States, because its ongoing borderedness continues to frame the Han as always Chinese (and Chinese as immovably un-American). Chinese and Chinese Americans' presence in the U.S. curriculum remain some of the only representations of Asian contexts means also taking up the interplay of racism, empire, and militarism that impacts Asianization which marginalizes non-East Asian (American) histories,

and the limits of the social construction of the Chineseness as a proxy and bellwether for the entire APIDA/A coalition (Hsieh & Kim, 2020). This reframing challenges the ubiquity of the Han, and "the Chinese," towards centering the negotiations of local, regional, and linguistic identities can certainly be a way to start that also allows educators to work and think from/with our contexts. In San Francisco, this means centering Cantoneseness and Taiwanese indigeneity without conflating it with Han supremacy in teaching about San Francisco's "Chinese" American histories. In Wisconsin, this means centering Hmong and Hmong American histories enshrined in its recent ethnic studies legislation. These regional identities as well as the coalitions or tensions between them resist APIDA/A curricular representation that essentializes and denies U.S. and Western militarism in putting some of these migrations into motion.

I get that this problem space can feel too big for any of us to individually take up. Partly, over several generations and intentional political and curricula interventions, these conflations and simultaneities have become common sense— ubiquitous, normal, and invisible, similar to the seeming inescapability of neoliberalism (Kumashiro, 2009). We must dispense with the logic that curriculum or any one teacher will ever be able to "do it all" and capture *the* APIDA/A experience, but working with teachers and educators to: a) humanize the contexts we hold ourselves accountable to; b) (re)present *their* (*an*) APIDA/A experience in context of others'; c) do the needed self-work to lift up the community cultural wealth and lived curricular knowledges of APIDA/A students and community workers; and d) do so without the assumption that subject area boundaries or standards are going to make this easy for any of us.

Remaining accountable to our contexts

Following a/the curriculum as plan simply cannot contextualize or center reflexivity when teachers are continually expected to respond to events in the world as they try to make sense of their own experiences (Aoki, 2005). These narratives are curricular insofar as they are part of students' *lived* curricula that they bring with them as they move through cultural, community, home, and school spaces. Like names and stereotypes, as I showed in Chapter Three and Five respectively, education is a site of both harm and resistance. Díaz Beltran's (2018) and Fúnez-Flores and Colleagues' (2022) words echo throughout this dissertation for the ways they both reassert the moral imperative to think with and from our contexts in order to combat curricular and other educational dislocations. For Díaz Beltran (2018) in particular, this is a move towards a healing curriculum that moves on from the harm and violence of the curriculum of dislocation. This duality of education as a site of harm and resistance must begin from the context(s) to which we are accountable.

For those like me who hold multiple contexts in our heads and hearts at the same time, it can be overwhelming to try to figure out how to move the things that worked well in one place to another. Politics, coalitions, educational needs are different in each place. What remains largely the same across each, though, is that young people are socialized into a multiplicity of histories, identities, and ideologies before they even enter into our care in educational spaces. Among the methodologies by which this socialization happens is the ubiquitous normalcy of these ideologies across media, curricula, leaving little space for our lived experiential knowledge to be legitimated in our countering of these ideologies. Throughout this dissertation has never been about solely speak back to dominant narratives of (lived) curricular violence against APIDA/A

communities. Rather, I have offered educators a lens by which to notice ideologies like global Han supremacy and Sinophobia in motion, and the vested stakes big institutions (nation-states, curriculum publishers, etc.) have in the supposed political neutral of maintaining them.

Representing APIDA/A Experiences (Loudening our "Quiet Prominence")

So there is no ambiguity, I never expect a teacher or educator to be perfect all the time and in everything. I do not believe that schools in their current imagination are sites of harm elimination but, optimistically, spaces of harm reduction and that should be our goal (Love, 2019). Seeking greater specificity about whom teachers speak when they teach "Asian American history" is also an invitation for teacher educators to frame Asian and Asian American histories are products of these global circulations of white supremacy, empire, and anti-Blackness. For APIDA/A-identifying teachers and educators, this means looking to our histories.

Delarosa (2023) recently wrote that APIDA/A communities "fought to create and maintain our image as beautiful, human, and multifaceted. When our images are used by people who don't understand the Asian American political story, you get distorted and racist images that lead to… 'Yellowface'" (p. 124). While I might have made reference to the APIDA political story plural to fully capture the multifacetedness of our panethnic coalition, Delarosa's point is that we have to tell our own stories and that our personal moments are both political and part of a social movement. This is an important reminder that the un-strategic essentialism is violent, and that our political stories are ones that are forged by our contesting and (re)creating of our own images in the lived curricula we share in with others.

For APIDA/A-identifying teachers, this means trying to find more ways to share their own experiences of being APIDA/A in community with those whose experiences of APIDA/

A*ness* might differ. This means resisting the canonization of thinking with students and communities to ask who their local communities want to lift up, in addition to those more commonly seen in curricula like Grace Lee Boggs, Wong Kim Ark, or Vincent Chin. To do so allows our stories and experiences, our lived curricula, to speak for itself rather than valued only inasmuch as it is connected to these seminal figures. For me, this means teaching about my Aunt, Elizabeth Ling-So Hall, who was one of the first Chinese American teachers, and first Chinese American Principle in the San Francisco Unified School District in 1957 (Chinn, 1989). My Aunt Elizabeth, as a "first" for our community, was eulogized as having "formed a shield around our innocence so that we could move gradually into a brave new world of our own… which would eventually propel persons like Elizabeth… into positions of quiet prominence" (Rev. Harry Chuck, Personal communication, 24 August, 2020). I see this dissertation's implications for education as making that quiet prominence louder. Even as I am also clear to share with my students the ways that shield my Aunt Elizabeth gave me was one that greatly valued my family's and community's proximity to whiteness, her life and quiet prominence shaped a generation of APIDA teachers who still work in San Francisco public schools today.

My memories of her are in context of a vast number of other APIDA/A experiences in San Francisco from the same time. Many of my own classmates' ancestors advocated for more policing of Chinatown and fought to prevent the creation of a College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University during the Third World Liberation Front in the 1960s. My family's history, and privileges, absolutely do not undermine the validity and power in the stories that others shared with me. In fact, these stories resist our essentialism and highlight the necessary messy intra-community negotiations necessary for us to continue to assert our humanity and

beauty as a panethnic and multifaceted community. Loudening the quiet prominence in our communities' and families' stories also means there is less space for those who are not of our communities to put on Yellowface that relies on Han/Chinese norms and identities as the racialized tropes that persistently speak for and impose a set of narrow racialized possibilities for the entire APIDA/A coalition. This is a starting point for how we get from *the* APIDA/A experience or story, to *an* APIDA/A experience and story in a constellation of individuals whose lives and work survive are no longer relegated into the the quiet prominence of our memories, but part of our lived curricula and the contexts from which we think and work.

Self-work

One thing I loved about my Aunt Elizabeth was that she was, I think affectionately, nicknamed "Queen Elizabeth" because she always wore a silk scarf just like Her Late Majesty and played the role of family matriarch. The nickname worked for so many reasons, but it stuck with me as a reminder of my family's highly privileged position within San Francisco— one which required me to do a lot of self-work to understand that parts of my family's politics obscured some the urgency and clear benefits of affirmative action, ethnic studies, and collective bargaining (Poon, 2024). My self-work required being clear with myself about the ways this privileged socialization made me comfortable working in white-centered spaces, and working with those entering a majority white profession who, perhaps like parts of my family, had to be shocked into the urgency for social justice work when it became impossible to look away. For me, this was China's crackdowns in Tibet in 2008 as well as George Floyd's and Breonna Taylor's brutal murders.

The existential threats of police brutality and militarization are everywhere and continue to shape my teaching. This self-work is an ongoing process for me to continue to forge more continuities and solidarities between communities so that our colleagues, co-conspirators, and peers are not radicalized by other people's pain. To resist more academic Blackface and Yellowface, ongoing self-reflection is only part of a systematic reorganization of Teacher Education and curriculum policy that encourages educators to work multidimensionally across content areas to disrupt as much harm as possible in education.

Resisting Geographic and Subject-Area Organizational Logics

Sorting the world history curriculum largely by civilization (Mesopotamia, China, Egypt, Greco-Rome) foregrounds hegemonic spheres of influence. Amidst the multiplicity of Chinese identities, I have shown how the Chinese identity is a politically loaded and comprehensive ethnoracial, territorial, political, and sociocultural identity that does not easily correlate to Western epistemological constructions of ethnicity and race. Thus, Cantonese speakers, ethnic Hakka, or Taiwanese nationals all fall under the single label of Chinese. To teach these hegemonic and geographically organized structures not only concretizes, for students, a world that is artificially separated by borders but also misses the fatal consequence in a geographic (國) or even civilizational (文) organizing principle of curriculum. To flatten the world into hegemonic spheres of influence represents another form of cultural erasure of those who the PRC continues to commit genocidal actions against, such as the Uyghurs and the Tibetans. Therefore, we need to find ways to organize curriculum in a way that also decouples a common conflation of ancient and world history to resist orientalization as well as dislodging the PRC's coupling of defining who the Chinese people are (and are not) with its political agenda.

You So (Youth Soul)… "I just want you to know."

Throughout my dissertation, I have shown how hegemonic and global power structures that in particular empower a certain kind of Chinese identity complicates that coalitional praxis, but also how some APIDA/A youth are brought into, and refuse, these power structures. So, here are the last few things "I just want you to know." At the end of *American Born Chinese* (2006), The Monkey King Sun Wukong says to Jin Wang before returning to heaven:

Figure 13: Page 223 of *ABC*

This moment in *ABC* stuck with me because of its transient intimacy and intimacy (Lowe, 2015) as the last thing that Wukong says to Jin in the graphic novel. Wukong makes my dissertation's point in a nutshell— that something has been stolen in the ways APIDA/A youth are allowed to see themselves by curriculum. This intimacy in parting words adds a layer I think fitting for the end of this meditation on Chinese identity because it speaks directly to the unsettledness I ultimately sought to resolve in this dissertation. I think because I was raised in San Francisco, I feel unsettled about the conclusions of this dissertation because my city shows

me the enormous scale of the project of challenging global Han supremacy. While education is positioned to disentangle layers and histories of anti-APIDA/A violence, curriculum and pedagogy must come together to build with the sociocultural assets and identity markers that all students of Color bring to school each day. San Francisco makes this argument heavier on me because of the ways Chineseness, in its contortions and contestations, is embedded in the cultural consciousness of my city. Shange (2019), rightly refers to the hypocrisy of carceral progressivism in which progressivism still affirms anti-Black and other racist policies in education, some of which actively endorsed by Chinese American leaders in response to our own historical and racial positioning.

Chinese and Chinese American cultural norms' embeddedness within many Americans' collective memory of Asianness means that San Francisco remains a place where a significant number of APIDA teachers work, and where the Chinese American community exercises significant and growing political power. Yet, the synonymy between Chinese American communities and the APIDA/A community is harder to disentangle in a city that operates on majoritarian logics when it comes to setting out to serve APIDA/A communities. Where and when Chinese American communities become co-opted to reinforce our collective proximity to the model minority is antithetical to what resonates with me about Wukong's parting words to Jin. My intention of centering this quote at the end of this dissertation is to invite education researchers to see the diversity of the APIDA/A panethnic coalition, rather than simply center how good it is to be so proximal to whiteness.

What drives my next inquiry are the possibilities and futures for APIDA/A youth where we can start to unpack the choices and stories we inherit towards breaking the cycles of injustice

for the souls who will take over for us. For me, this means seeing the ways Chineseness continues to be politically, educationally, and culturally co-opted to check boxes and reaffirm whiteness. Confronting Chineseness, also, is embracing the power structures that lead members of my family to make choices that only made sense with years of reflection and unlearning my own biases. When Chineseness is mobilized to affirm Indigenous erasure and protect Chinese proximity to the model minority and whiteness, our anti-Blackness becomes tied to our political survival. I refuse this logic, especially as Chineseness is made into a bellwether for the entire APIDA/A community.

Chineseness is multiple and beautiful— and Chinese Americans must embrace our diversity as we honor the legacy of the APIDA/A community's origins in a project of solidarity with Black leaders advancing ethnic studies education in the Third World Liberation Front. If my generation, the third generation, is to carry the movement forward then we must lean into the difficult conversations and reconciliations needed to move ourselves away from complicity with the harms that allow us to seek justice without acknowledging or acting on the debts we owe for each time we profit from our proximity to whiteness within the racial caste system.

The value of the intimacy in Wukong's parting words to Jin telling him to consider even the possibility of the discrete value of his Asianness on his own terms. That message cuts through the austerity of the U.S. Government's portrayal of Chinese people as "an unexplainable miracle… driven by moral and spiritual forces, aided by geographical and other considerations, that can be understood" (1944, p. 57). This passage from EM42 shows the U.S. government's confounding inexplicability that China could be anything more than backwards and primitive.

Yet, here is also a fundamental denial of the need to understand the nuances of Chinese*ness* that I have sought to map in this dissertation.

Studying Chineseness' hegemony in the narrow conceptualization of APIDA/A identity is only as urgent as I have argued it is when we begin to untangle the simultaneities and embrace the intimate moments of this complex negotiation. When scholars reduce Chineseness to a series of state discourses the humanity and affective connections to Chineseness are lost to polarized global axes of power (Zhang et al., 2022). Instead, the weight of the mountain of rock that weighted on Wukong is just a metaphor, if not a deeply sensitive call that acknowledges the weight of these discourses on our lived experiences. The tight cultural and political space into which many APIDA/A kids in schools are squeezed is a consequence of curriculum that causes us to believe we are but a caricature.

I began this dissertation with a comparison to a restaurant because a restaurant makes visible the question of what makes something Chinese, and how do we know? I said at the beginning that if one struggles to identify what makes the restaurant Chinese, then we may struggle similarly to identify when Chineseness acts as a hegemonic force in the already tiny sliver of APIDA/A curricular representation. Many of us have consumed the courses of the meal (or curriculum), but have not centered on the stories told at the table. That is, at the end of the meal, do we most remember the stories told during it, or the stories told about the food?

My "I just want you to know" is that in all that messiness is something healing and locating about sitting with my (and y/our) lived curriculum— they are the curricula that socialized me. As promised, here is that fortune cookie I promised in the introduction:

Surviving China's rejuvenation, global Han supremacy and the theft of Asian America in education means looking to the simultaneities and parallels of shared struggle and joyful resistance against coloniality and white supremacy.

Check, please!

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