

Asian and Asian-American Philosophers and Philosophies



FALL 2014

VOLUME 14 | NUMBER 1

FROM THE EDITORS

Emily S. Lee and David H. Kim

ARTICLES

Carole J. Lee

Asian Americans, Positive Stereotyping, and Philosophy

Samantha Brennan

Micro-Inequities and Asian American Philosophers

Molly Paxton

Sustainable Diversity within Philosophy: Looking Beyond a Bottom-Up Model

Gary Mar

The Problem of Absence: Some Personal Reflections



APA NEWSLETTER ON

Asian and Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies

EMILY S. LEE AND DAVID H. KIM, CO-EDITORS

VOLUME 14 | NUMBER 1 | FALL 2014

FROM THE EDITORS

Emily S. Lee

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY AT FULLERTON

David H. Kim

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

In recent years, diversity and hierarchy in the polity and in the profession of philosophy have been conceptualized with increasing sophistication. For just a sampling, consider such books as Linda Martín Alcoff's *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self*, Sally Haslanger's *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique*, and Carole Pateman and Charles Mills's *Contract and Domination*.¹ The urgency of diversification and at least the questioning of existing hierarchies is starting to generate more attention in mainstream publications and professional meetings. Consider, for example, Martín Alcoff's and Haslanger's successive presidencies of the American Philosophical Association's Eastern Division (2012-2013 and 2013-2014, respectively) and the provocative diversity-themed content of their presidential addresses. In addition, specially focused, diversity-enhancing groups or societies—such as the Society for Women in Philosophy, the Caribbean Philosophical Association, the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers, and the Continental and Comparative Philosophy Circle—have emerged, giving marginalized peoples or traditions in the profession a home, and sometimes a platform for advocacy.

These sorts of developments seem to herald long-awaited transformations in the profession. Without denying some overall progress, arguably we still have a long road to travel before we move well past beginnings and approach our democratic ideals. The demographics clearly reveal that women, minorities, and non-Western traditions continue to be *significantly* underrepresented in the profession.² Many continue to report, and continue to feel inhibited in reporting, a chilly or demeaning climate in departments and professional meetings.³ Furthermore, across the continent, curricula and requirements for philosophy majors and for philosophy graduate students continue to be profoundly shaped by a white, male, Eurocentric canon.⁴

More than a decade ago, the APA committee on Asian and Asian American philosophers and philosophies published special editions of its newsletter that addressed some of the concerns expressed in this volume (e.g., vol. 1, no. 1, fall 2001, on Asian philosophy as philosophy; vol. 1, no. 2, spring 2001, on Asian and Asian American philosophers

and the profession; and vol. 2, no. 2, spring 2003, on Asian American philosophy as philosophy).⁵ Without meaning to sound negative, or to downplay the hard work of so many dedicated to this cause of increasing diversity and challenging traditional hierarchies in the discipline, very little has changed in the profession since these were published.

It appears, then, that reasonable progress with respect to genuine diversity cannot be achieved without concerted and institutional effort for some time into the foreseeable future. Towards this goal, we have attempted to address the problem of underrepresentation and the dearth of empirical data on the status of Asians and Asian Americans in philosophy in this edition of the newsletter. Admittedly, this is difficult, but the majority of the articles gathered here at least cull from what little data exists on this community.

In the first essay, "Asian Americans, Positive Stereotyping, and Philosophy," Carole J. Lee offers an explanation as to why Asians and Asian Americans, though having a healthy representation in science and math doctoral programs, are clearly woefully underrepresented in the humanities. Through analyzing the relation of stereotypes and counter-stereotypes about philosophers and Asian Americans, Lee provides insights into how some of the stereotypes that are perceived normally as positive among philosophers can be difficult to navigate for Asian Americans and present a distinctive political dilemma for them. In doing so, she also offers us, more broadly, a *lens* to understand the structure of Asian and Asian American underrepresentation.

The second essay, "Micro-Inequities and Asian American Philosophers," by Samantha Brennan, builds upon the emerging work on micro-inequities and the work on implicit bias to show how an analysis of "small" problems and their solutions can provide "large" insight into the everyday reality and social climate of departments and professional settings. In particular, she discusses the problem of xenophobic "micro-invalidations" and stereotyped communication styles that are commonly made to be an issue for Asians and Asian Americans. Moreover, she advocates an institutional response to these micro-inequities while also suggesting some more individualized ethical strategies in the form of micro-affirmations.

The third essay, "Sustainable Diversity within Philosophy: Looking Beyond a Bottom-Up Model," by Molly Paxton, critically engages with the social science literature on the educational benefits of diversity. She argues that current models of diversity have conceptualized diversity too narrowly in their focus on proportional representation and

the maturation or generic cognitive benefits of diversity. She contends that such models must go further to promote forms of intellectual diversity that emerge when previously marginalized identities are now included in the classroom. And Paxton maintains that the specifically epistemic benefits of diversity must be made sustainable through a top-down approach, specifically through the institutional support of teachers who can make the epistemic benefits of diversity a reality. Such corrections in our models can clarify why we need to ask about Asian and Asian American philosophy in addition to Asian and Asian American representation.

The fourth essay, "The Problem of Absence: Some Personal Reflections," by Gary Mar does not utilize empirical data while considering the status of Asian and Asian American philosophers but is included here to invite perspective on the value of diversity and the value of seeking diversity. In sharing his own journey of the growth of his interests from logic to Asian American studies, Mar demonstrates how his initial foray into diversity questions led him to a broadened and deepened interest not only about marginalized specializations within philosophy but in the plight and transformative potential of other under-represented communities as well. Truly the concerns of diversity and justice are infectious. And it should be noted here that when the APA began to form a committee on the status of Asians some fifteen years ago, it was Gary Mar's advocacy that enlarged the committee's mission (and title) so that it now includes Asian Americans and Asian American philosophy.

Clearly, challenges to diversity and affirmations of hierarchies persist in the discipline of philosophy. We hope that the dearth of knowledge about exactly why Asians and Asian Americans are so underrepresented in the field of philosophy, and the lack of strategies to address this vacuum, serve not to discourage people, but inspire concerted, intelligent effort to improve this current state of affairs.

NOTES

1. Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Sally Haslanger, *Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Carole Pateman and Charles Mills, *Contract and Domination* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2007).
2. See, for example, the statistics on women and minorities in the profession on the [APA website](#).
3. Each of the essays in this volume touches upon the theme of climate in one way or another.
4. Although no empirical surveys have been done that we are aware of, we think most would agree that it would be an exceptional department that makes feminism or non-Western philosophy (e.g., Buddhism or Africana philosophy) central to the philosophy major or coursework toward an M.A. or Ph.D. in philosophy. Typically, such courses are made available but not required and central to the training of philosophers.
5. These editions of the newsletter are still available on the [APA website](#).

ARTICLES

Asian Americans, Positive Stereotyping, and Philosophy

Carole J. Lee

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, C3@UW.EDU

What is the current status of Asian Americans in philosophy? How do Asian Americans fare in comparison to other minority groups? And, what professional strategies might they use (more or less successfully) in response to their counterstereotypical status in philosophy? In this piece, I will address these questions empirically by extrapolating from available demographic, survey, and experimental studies. This analysis will be too fast and loose, but I offer it in the spirit of constructing a broad-brushed sketch—painted from a pallet of variegated data—for others to critique, improve, and displace.

1. ASIAN AMERICANS AND POSITIVE STEREOTYPING

One feature that is quite distinctive about Asian Americans as a minority group is that they are stereotyped in positive rather than negative terms. Asian Americans get explicitly stereotyped as mathematical, ambitious, intelligent, hardworking, and self-disciplined. They are thought to do better in educational attainment, occupational prestige, and economic earnings.¹

Census and other data corroborate the general aptness of this "model minority" stereotype. Asian Americans have higher median household incomes than whites, Hispanics, or blacks.² Asian Americans receive bachelor's degrees (6.4 percent) and doctorate degrees (9.4 percent) at rates that exceed the rate with which Asian Americans are found in the general population (5.8 percent).³ And when you look at the disciplines that Asian Americans major in, they are disproportionately represented in math-intensive fields (see Table 1).

Asian Americans receive bachelor's degrees in math-intensive fields at rates above the base rate with which they receive bachelor's degrees in any field (moreover, they are the only ethnicity or race to receive bachelor's degrees in every *STEM discipline* at above base-rate levels).⁴ Asian Americans are also more mathematical in the sense that they pursue more degrees in mathematics-intensive disciplines than in the humanities.⁵

This pattern of being disproportionately represented in math-intensive fields and underrepresented in the humanities continues at the doctoral level (see Table 2).

Overall, the positive characteristics associated with Asian Americans seem to be apt, at least when you look at averages and trends.

People generally hold positive stereotypes of Asian Americans, who, on average, really do enjoy positive

outcomes. This raises a question: How do individuals belonging to positively stereotyped groups experience prejudice? And, in particular, how would we expect them to experience such prejudice in philosophy?⁶

Table 1. Asian American and Pacific Islander Bachelor Degree Recipients, 2010-11 (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013a).

Discipline	% Asians	% Pacific Islanders
Biological and biomedical sciences	15.5%	0.2%
Engineering	11.5%	0.2%
Math and statistics	10.0%	0.2%
Ethnic, cultural, gender studies	9.7%	0.4%
Physical sciences	9.6%	0.2%
All fields (base rate)	6.4%	0.2%
Mechanic and repair technologies	4.5%	0.5%
Construction trades	1.5%	0.9%

Table 2. Race and Ethnicity of Doctorate Recipients by Field, 2011 (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013c).

Discipline	Asian	White	Black	Hispanic	American Indian
Engineering	16.9%	69.1%	4.0%	5.8%	0.2%
Life sciences	10.8%	73.4%	5.7%	6.0%	0.3%
Physical sciences	10.7%	77.3%	3.0%	4.5%	0.3%
All fields (base rate)	9.0%	74.1%	6.1%	6.3%	0.4%
Education	4.8%	71.7%	13.0%	6.0%	0.8%
Humanities	4.7%	80.0%	3.9%	6.9%	0.4%

2. COUNTERSTEREOTYPICALITY AND MINORITY REPRESENTATION AMONG PHILOSOPHY BA'S

There isn't any empirical work available yet on how philosophy, as a discipline, is gendered or stereotyped more generally.⁷ However, there seems to be some informal consensus about two characteristics. The first is its aggressive interpersonal style.⁸ The second is its highly analytic nature: philosophy is hyperrational, objective, and logical.⁹ For now, I'll use "mathematical" as a proxy for these analytical qualities. What would it take for a social group to be stereotyped in ways that are consonant with

the stereotype for philosophy? That group's stereotype would have to score highly along (at least) these two axes: aggression and (by my proxy) mathematical ability.

How would we expect minority groups within philosophy to fare? Women are stereotyped as submissive rather than aggressive and as being bad at math: they lack both characteristics associated with philosophy.¹⁰

African Americans are in a better position than women: they are *not* stereotyped as being good at math or academics more generally, but they *are* stereotyped as being aggressive.¹¹ There are two important things to note here. First, the aggression associated with African Americans involves not simply a confrontational interpersonal style, but physical violence.¹² Second, although aggression is positively valenced in philosophy, it is negatively valenced when associated with African Americans.¹³ As such, we would expect African Americans to refrain from acting in ways that might be perceived as being aggressive, since doing so would confirm a negative stereotype about their group.¹⁴ Indeed, surveys demonstrate that male African American faculty working in predominantly white institutions are acutely sensitive to being perceived as aggressive and self-consciously censor their behavior to avoid having others perceive them as such.¹⁵

Asian Americans are stereotyped as being mathematical; however, they are also characterized in *passive* rather than aggressive terms—as "quiet, obedient, [and] courteous."¹⁶ So, like African Americans, Asian Americans have one stereotyped trait in common with philosophy; however, unlike African Americans, that trait is valenced positively and more likely to be performed publicly.

Coincidentally, the degree to which these social groups are counter-stereotypical in philosophy happens to track their representation among graduating philosophy and religious studies majors (see Table 3).¹⁷

In the last column, I've calculated a figure that gives us a sense of how much better or worse each demographic group does at achieving bachelor's degrees in philosophy and religious studies relative to the rate with which they achieve bachelor's degrees in any discipline. (I generalize about philosophy *and* religious studies majors because the data analysis from which I draw lumps these disciplines together.) In philosophy and religious studies, women are disproportionately less represented than African Americans, who are very slightly less well represented than Asian Americans. Whites and men are the only groups that are better represented among philosophy and religious studies bachelor's degree holders relative to the rate with which they are represented among recipients of bachelor's degrees in any discipline.

An ugly side-effect of my comparative analysis here is that it can be interpreted as suggesting (and condoning) an underlying racial/ethnic/gender hierarchy within philosophy, where Asian Americans most closely approximate philosophy's "model minority"—i.e., the social group that best achieves and/or is stereotyped as achieving the professional standards typically attained by

those (white men) at top of the hierarchy. By providing the analyses above, my intention is not to condone or reinforce any such hierarchy. Like others, I reject the normative status of the social hierarchy implicit in the “model minority myth” in philosophy and in the United States more broadly.¹⁸ My aim here is to help identify possible loci for disciplinary attention, organization, and change.

Table 3. Bachelor’s degrees awarded by field, sex, race, and ethnicity, 2010-11 (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013a).

Ethnicity/ Gender	% BAs all disciplines (I)	% BAs in philosophy and religious studies (II)	Percent change = (((II-I) / I) x 100)
Men	42.7%	63.5%	48.71%
Whites	64.4%	70.1%	8.85%
American Indians	0.6%	0.6%	0%
Hispanics	8.4%	7.0%	-16.67%
Asians	6.4%	4.7%	-26.56%
Blacks	9.4%	6.9%	-26.60%
Women	57.3%	36.5%	-36.30%
Pacific Islanders	0.6%	0.2%	-66.67%

3. MINORITY REPRESENTATION AND EXPERIENCES OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS AND TENURE-TRACK FACULTY OF COLOR

What happens when minorities progress along the pipeline to graduate school and the tenure track in philosophy? Recent research suggests that the *proportion* of women in philosophy does not drop off when philosophy majors transition to graduate school, or when philosophy Ph.D.s move to faculty positions.¹⁹ In contrast, I imagine there is likely a large drop off in the proportion of ethnic and racial minorities when philosophy majors transition into philosophy doctoral programs, since very few ethnic and racial minorities pursue doctoral degrees in the humanities in general. To see this, take a look at Table 4. In the last column, I’ve calculated a figure that gives us a sense of how much better or worse each ethnic/racial group is doing when it comes to achieving doctoral degrees in the *humanities* relative to the rate with which they achieve a doctoral degree in anything at all.²⁰ According to this measure, Asian Americans and African Americans are the least represented in the humanities, relatively speaking.

Given the drop in ethnic and racial minority representation in graduate school, I will dedicate the remainder of my discussion in this section to the experiences of ethnic and racial minorities as they progress along the pipeline.

Table 4. Race and ethnicity of doctorate recipients in humanities versus all fields, 2011 (*The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013c).

Ethnicity	% PhDs in all fields (I)	% PhDs in humanities (II)	Percent change = (((II- I) / I) x 100)
Hispanic	6.3%	6.9%	9.52%
Whites	74.1%	80.8%	9.04%
American Indian	0.4%	0.4%	0%
Black	6.1%	3.9%	-36.07%
Asian	9.0%	4.7%	-47.78%

A large survey of doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences across twenty-seven universities found that, when compared to white male doctoral students, doctoral students of color report feeling like their primary advisors are less respectful of their ideas and less involved in their professionalization in domains that include funding, publishing, networking, conducting research, and teaching.²¹ Feeling disrespected and professionally neglected continues for tenure-track faculty of color. A survey of faculty at six research universities found that faculty of color feel significantly more pressure to conform to departmental colleagues in their political views and feel less satisfied with the influence they have over their research focus—signs that their political and intellectual ideas and perspectives are not, by default, respected.²² Faculty of color are also more likely to report feeling less clear about the tenure process in their department and the body of evidence that would be required in making the tenure decision—issues that reflect a lack of investment in the further professionalization of faculty of color by chairs and senior colleagues. Given the mystery surrounding tenure, it’s no wonder that faculty of color are more likely than their white peers to report feeling that tenure decisions are based more on politics, relationships, or demographics than on performance.²³

Women of color are doubly disadvantaged. In the social sciences and humanities, female doctoral students of color report having the least respectful primary advisors: the “odds of believing one’s primary advisor treats one’s ideas with respect are 42% lower for women of color as compared with white men.”²⁴ When compared to *male* faculty of color, female faculty of color are less satisfied with the commitment of the department chair to their success, the interest senior faculty take in their professional development, opportunities to collaborate with senior faculty, and professional interactions with senior colleagues.²⁵ When compared to *white female* faculty, female faculty of color are less clear about tenure criteria, the body of evidence considered in the tenure decision, and were more likely to think that tenure outcomes reflected political factors rather than performance. When compared to both male faculty of color and white female faculty, female faculty of color report being less clear about the tenure process.

So far as I know, there isn't a survey reporting the experiences of dissertation students and faculty of color *in philosophy* in particular, but I don't have reason to think they would be better than those reported by their colleagues in the humanities and social sciences more generally.²⁶

4. THE ASSIMILATION STRATEGY FOR ASIAN AMERICANS QUA COUNTER-STEREOTYPICAL PHILOSOPHERS

What stereotype-savvy strategies should gender, ethnic, and racial minorities adopt? An obvious strategy is to act in ways that signal that—even though your social group is stereotyped as having traits that are discordant with traits associated with philosophy—you, as an individual, are counterstereotypical for your social group: you are distinctly aggressive and mathematical. By assimilating, the hope is, you will achieve by the lights of the discipline's standards.

The general problem with this strategy, from a social psychological perspective, is that behavior violating social stereotypes leads to backlash and sabotage.²⁷ Agentic women are perceived as less likeable, which prevents them from being successful professionally.²⁸ Since the underlying mechanisms involved are likely generalizable, we would expect the same kind of backlash and sabotage against agentic/aggressive Asian Americans (e.g., the trope of the "dragon lady") and academically successful African Americans. Instinctively, counter-stereotypical individuals seem to understand this: they hide their successes, which prevents backlash but does not improve their self-regard or professional standing.²⁹

So, if you're a gender, ethnic, or racial minority, you're damned if you buck the stereotypes associated with your social group in an effort to be a stereotypical philosopher, since doing so can trigger backlash against you. But, you're also damned if you conform to the stereotypes associated with your social group, since doing so implies that you do not succeed *qua* stereotypical philosopher.³⁰

5. A PARTIAL CONSONANCE STRATEGY FOR ASIAN AMERICANS QUA COUNTER-STEREOTYPICAL PHILOSOPHERS

Asian Americans are distinguished from women and African Americans because they have one positively valenced stereotype trait that is consonant with how philosophy is stereotyped. Unlike women and African Americans, this enables them to lean on this positively valenced trait to succeed in philosophy while avoiding backlash, namely, being mathematical. Hypothetically speaking, if you're an Asian American philosopher, you might decide that, in order to succeed in philosophy, you're willing to play up this positive characteristic to succeed by the lights of philosophy's standards while avoiding backlash. As an added benefit, subtly priming your own Asian American identity will likely boost your confidence and performance on mathematical tasks, adding to your success.³¹ You decide to do this even though you, like the largest share of U.S.-born Asian Americans, would otherwise most often describe yourself as "American" (43 percent) rather than

"Asian or Asian American" (22 percent) or in terms of your family's country of origin (28 percent).³²

Now, let's imagine your allies catch wind of this strategy. Should they try to help you prime your Asian American identity explicitly? No. It turns out that when the high expectations others hold of Asian Americans are made explicit, Asian Americans choke under pressure: they do worse on mathematics tasks than those for whom such social expectations were not primed or for whom they were primed indirectly.³³ Moreover, most Asian Americans negatively react to the positive stereotype associated with their group because imposing a stereotype on an individual—even a positive stereotype—depersonalizes them.³⁴ So, explicitly priming someone's Asian American identity does not look like a good strategy for allies to use, since it will likely make that person perform less well and feel alienated, angry, annoyed, and offended.

Note that in order to implement this strategy an Asian American must avoid claims and arguments that involve *explicitly* self-identifying as Asian American. Sidestepping identity-politics may be instrumentally useful towards the professional success of individual Asian Americans; however, it may do little to nothing to challenge the culture or "conceptual whiteness of philosophy."³⁵

6. CONCLUSION

Asian Americans are better represented than blacks or women among philosophy and religious studies majors; however, they are less well represented than either group among humanities doctoral degree recipients. Like other doctoral students and tenure-track faculty of color in the humanities and social sciences, we would expect Asian American philosophers to report experiencing more disrespect and professional neglect than their white peers, with reported experiences being worse for women than for men.

Asian Americans, as a stereotyped group, are counter-stereotypical philosophers, but they enjoy relative privilege compared to women and African Americans since they are characterized as having at least one positively valenced trait that is consonant with philosophy, namely, being "mathematical." Asian Americans can lean on this positively valenced trait to succeed (to some degree) while avoiding backlash. However, it is a delicate strategy that works only when the positive characteristics of their stereotype are not explicitly primed or imposed on them by others. As such, this strategy only works when Asian Americans sidestep claims and arguments that make explicit reference to their social identity—an omission that avoids confronting and challenging (directly) social hierarchies in the culture and content of philosophy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks go to Samantha Brennan, Juan Colomina-Alminana, Michael Monahan, Rohan Sud, Paul Swift, Robin Zheng, and especially David H. Kim and Emily S. Lee for their insightful comments on an earlier draft, which was presented as a talk at the 2014 APA Pacific Division meeting. Thanks also to both the Mellon Foundation and the Woodrow Wilson Foundation for their respective funding and administration of the Career Enhancement Fellowship that afforded research time to complete this article.

NOTES

1. Colin Ho and Jay W. Jackson, "Attitudes Towards Asian Americans: Theory and Measurement," 1565.
2. Pew Research Center, "The Rise of Asian Americans," 2013, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans/>.
3. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013a, "Bachelor's Degrees Awarded, by Field, Sex, Race, and Ethnicity, 2010-11," <http://chronicle.com/article/Bachelors-Degrees-Awarded-by/140809/>; *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013b, "Degrees Awarded, by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender, 2010-11," <http://chronicle.com/article/Degrees-Awarded-by-Race/140367/>; Pew Research Center, "The Rise of Asian Americans," 2013, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans/>.
4. It is important to note that class dynamics inflect experiences and outcomes for Asian Americans of different ethnicities (Emily S. Lee, "The Ambiguous Practices of the Inauthentic Asian American Woman"): for example, the most popular majors for Pacific Islanders (when separated from the category of "Asian American") include construction and mechanic and repair technologies. Unfortunately, the data analyses from which I draw do not present more refined categories than the ones I report here. See also *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013a.
5. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013a.
6. Sapna Cheryan, "Compliments or Prejudice? Current Challenges of Multiculturalism."
7. Jennifer Saul, "Implicit Bias, Stereotype Threat, and Women in Philosophy," 43.
8. Janice Moulton, "A Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method"; Carole J. Lee and Christian D. Schunn, "Social Biases and Solutions for Procedural Objectivity"; John Lachs, "The Future of Philosophy"; Michèle Lamont, *How Professors Think: Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgment*; Sally Haslanger, "Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not By Reason (Alone)."
9. Haslanger, "Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not by Reason (Alone)," 216; Saul, "Implicit Bias, Stereotype Threat, and Women in Philosophy."
10. Laurie A. Rudman and P. Glick, "Prescriptive Gender Stereotypes and Backlash toward Agentic Women"; Margaret Shih, Todd L. Pittinsky, and Nalini Ambady, "Stereotype Susceptibility: Identity Salience and Shifts in Quantitative Performance."
11. Joshua Aronson and Michael Inzlicht, "The Ups and Downs of Attributional Ambiguity"; Laurie A. Rudman and Matthew R. Lee, "Implicit and Explicit Consequences of Exposure to Violent and Misogynous Rap Music."
12. Laurie A. Rudman and Matthew R. Lee, "Implicit and Explicit Consequences of Exposure to Violent and Misogynous Rap Music."
13. Moulton, "A Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method," 153.
14. Claude M. Steele and Joshua Aronson, "Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test-Performance of African-Americans."
15. Kimberly A. Griffin and Richard J. Reddick, "Surveillance and Sacrifice: Gender Differences in the Mentoring Patterns of Black Professors at Predominantly White Research Universities."
16. Asian Americans may not be considered "mathematical" in the ways that matter most in philosophy, where the repertoire of highly regarded analytical and argumentative moves goes well beyond performing rules of logic: for example, "mathematical" Asian Americans may be perceived as lacking the "intellectual push or vivacity to excel beyond an ordinary competence or mere smartness" (David Haekwon Kim, "Asian American Philosophers: Absence, Politics, and Identity," 26). This is just one way that "mathematical" does not serve as a perfect proxy for "analytic" or "rational." See also Ho and Jackson, "Attitudes Towards Asian Americans: Theory and Measurement."
17. This analysis is offered in the spirit of demonstrating the potential promise of this method, which measures degree of counterstereotypicality for the sake of understanding (one aspect of) minority underrepresentation. However, this analysis is too quick in a number of ways. The coincidence between the degree of counterstereotypicality of a racial/ethnic/gender group and their decreased representation in philosophy, though suggestive, does not demonstrate a causal relationship—after all, it does not rule out the possibility that other causal factors (such as economic ones) drive these trends. Furthermore, stereotype traits should be applied to more refined, intersectional social categories: for example, physical violence is more stereotypical for African American men than African American women; and, passivity may be more stereotypical for white women than African American women. Moreover, concepts for ethnic/race categories may be gendered, even when they are not explicitly marked as such: for example, for 86 percent of surveyed individuals, the label "Asian Americans" brought to mind thoughts of Asian American men (Ho and Jackson, "Attitudes Towards Asian Americans: Theory and Measurement," 1558).
18. David Haekwon Kim, "Shame and Self-Revision in Asian American Assimilation."
19. Molly Paxton, Carrie Figdor, and Valerie Tiberius, "Quantifying the Gender Gap: An Empirical Study of the Underrepresentation of Women in Philosophy."
20. Elizabeth Anderson, Tina Botts, Ruth Chang, Sally Haslanger, and Manuel Vargas are in the process of launching an online database of Asian and Asian American philosophers—as well as databases for philosophers of other races and ethnicities. These databases will allow us to generalize about the representation of ethnic and racial minorities in *philosophy* (not just their representation in the humanities).
21. Shiri Noy and Rashawn Ray, "Graduate Students' Perceptions of Their Advisors: Is There Systematic Disadvantage in Mentorship?," 891.
22. Cathy A. Trower and Jared L. Bleak, "Race: Statistical Report [Universities]."
23. Ibid.
24. Noy and Ray, "Graduate Students' Perceptions of Their Advisors," 891.
25. Trower and Bleak, "Race: Statistical Report [Universities]."
26. One might think that philosophers have an advantage over other academics since they are, thanks to their increased powers of rationality, more "objective." However, experimental research demonstrates that self-attributions of objectivity are positively correlated with subconscious social bias in hiring situations (Eric Luis Uhlmann and Geoffrey L. Cohen, "I Think It, Therefore It's True": Effects of Self-Perceived Objectivity on Hiring Discrimination). For more on implicit bias, micro-inequities, and accumulation of disadvantage (Samantha Brennan, "Rethinking the Moral Significance of Micro-Inequities: The Case of Women in Philosophy"; Carole J. Lee and Christian D. Schunn, "Social Biases and Solutions for Procedural Objectivity"; Virginia Valian, *Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women*) for minorities in philosophy, please see Samantha Brennan's contribution in this newsletter issue.
27. Laurie A. Rudman and Kimberly Fairchild, "Reactions to Counterstereotypical Behavior: The Role of Backlash in Cultural Stereotype Maintenance," 157.
28. Laurie A. Rudman and P. Glick, "Prescriptive Gender Stereotypes and Backlash toward Agentic Women"; Laurie A. Rudman and Kimberly Fairchild, "Reactions to Counterstereotypical Behavior: The Role of Backlash in Cultural Stereotype Maintenance."
29. Laurie A. Rudman and Kimberly Fairchild, "Reactions to Counterstereotypical Behavior: The Role of Backlash in Cultural Stereotype Maintenance," 169-70.
30. How can we get out of this conundrum? Over time, I hope that the stereotypes associated with philosophy and with these minority social groups will shift in constructive ways.
31. Shih, Pittinsky, and Ambady, "Stereotype Susceptibility."
32. Pew Research Center, "The Rise of Asian Americans," 2013, <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans/>.
33. Sapna Cheryan and Galen V. Bodenhausen, "When Positive Stereotypes Threaten Intellectual Performance: The Psychological Hazards of 'Model Minority' Status," 400.

34. Daphna Oyserman and Izumi Sakamoto, "Being Asian American: Identity, Cultural Constructs, and Stereotype Perception"; John Oliver Siy and Sapna Cheryan, "When Compliments Fail to Flatter: American Individualism and Responses to Positive Stereotypes," 87.
35. Charles Mills, *Blackness Visible*. For more on the importance of intellectual (and not simply demographic) inclusiveness in philosophy, please refer to Molly Paxton's contribution in this newsletter issue.

REFERENCES

- Almanac of Higher Education 2013. "Bachelor's Degrees Awarded, by Field, Sex, Race, and Ethnicity, 2010-11." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013a. Accessed March 1, 2014. <http://chronicle.com/article/Bachelors-Degrees-Awarded-by/140809/>.
- Almanac of Higher Education 2013. "Degrees Awarded, by Race, Ethnicity, and Gender, 2010-11." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013b. Accessed March 1, 2014. <http://chronicle.com/article/Degrees-Awarded-by-Race/140367/>.
- Almanac of Higher Education 2013. "Race and Ethnicity of Doctorate Recipients Who Are U.S. Citizens or Permanent Residents, by Field, 2011." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013c. Accessed March 1, 2014. <http://chronicle.com/article/RaceEthnicity-of/140393/>.
- Aronson, Joshua, and Michael Inzlicht. "The Ups and Downs of Attributional Ambiguity: Stereotype Vulnerability and the Academic Self-Knowledge of African American College Students." *Psychological Science* 15, no. 12 (2004): 829-36.
- Brennan, Samantha. "Rethinking the Moral Significance of Micro-Inequities: The Case of Women in Philosophy." In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Fiona Jenkins and Katrina Hutchison. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Cheryan, Sapna. "Compliments or Prejudice? Current Challenges of Multiculturalism." University of Washington, September 25, 2013.
- Cheryan, Sapna, and Galen V. Bodenhausen. "When Positive Stereotypes Threaten Intellectual Performance: The Psychological Hazards of 'Model Minority' Status." *Psychological Science* 11 (2000): 399-402.
- Griffin, Kimberly A., and Richard J. Reddick. "Surveillance and Sacrifice: Gender Differences in the Mentoring Patterns of Black Professors at Predominantly White Research Universities." *American Educational Research Journal* 48, no. 5 (2011): 1032-57.
- Haslanger, Sally. "Changing the Ideology and Culture of Philosophy: Not By Reason (Alone)." *Hypatia* 23, no. 2 (2008): 210-23.
- Ho, Colin, and Jay W. Jackson. "Attitudes Towards Asian Americans: Theory and Measurement." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 31, no. 8 (2001): 1553-81.
- Kim, David Haekwon. "Asian American Philosophers: Absence, Politics, and Identity." *American Philosophical Association Newsletter on the Status of Asian/Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies* 1, no. 2 (2002): 25-28.
- Kim, David Haekwon. "Shame and Self-Revision in Asian American Assimilation." In *Living Alterities: Phenomenology, Embodiment, and Race*, edited by Emily S. Lee, 103-32. Albany: SUNY Press, 2014.
- Lachs, John. "The Future of Philosophy." *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 78, no. 2 (2004): 5-14.
- Lamont, Michèle. *How Professors Think: Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgment*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Lee, Carole J., and Christian D. Schunn. "Social Biases and Solutions for Procedural Objectivity." *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2011): 352-73.
- Lee, Emily S. "The Ambiguous Practices of the Inauthentic Asian American Woman." *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 29, no. 1 (2014): 146-63.
- Mills, Charles. *Blackness Visible*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- Moulton, Janice. "A Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method." In *Discovering Reality*, edited by Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka, 149-64. Hingham, MA: D. Reidel, 1983.
- Noy, Shiri, and Rashawn Ray. "Graduate Students' Perceptions of Their Advisors: Is There Systematic Disadvantage in Mentorship?" *The Journal of Higher Education* 83, no. 6 (2012): 876-914.
- Oyserman, Daphna, and Izumi Sakamoto. "Being Asian American: Identity, Cultural Constructs, and Stereotype Perception." *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 33 (1997): 435-53.
- Paxton, Molly, Carrie Figdor, and Valerie Tiberius. "Quantifying the Gender Gap: An Empirical Study of the Underrepresentation of Women in Philosophy." *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 27, no. 4 (2012): 949-57.
- Pew Research Center. 2013. "The Rise of Asian Americans." <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans/>.
- Rudman, Laurie A., and Kimberly Fairchild. "Reactions to Counterstereotypical Behavior: The Role of Backlash in Cultural Stereotype Maintenance." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 87, no. 2 (2004): 157-76.
- Rudman, Laurie A., and P. Glick. "Prescriptive Gender Stereotypes and Backlash toward Agentic Women." *Journal of Social Issues* 5 (2001): 133-50.
- Rudman, Laurie A., and Matthew R. Lee. "Implicit and Explicit Consequences of Exposure to Violent and Misogynous Rap Music." *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations* 5, no. 2 (2002): 133-50.
- Saul, Jennifer. "Implicit Bias, Stereotype Threat, and Women in Philosophy." In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Katrina Hutchison and Fiona Jenkins, 39-60. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Shih, Margaret, Todd L. Pittinsky, and Nalini Ambady. "Stereotype Susceptibility: Identity Salience and Shifts in Quantitative Performance." *Psychological Science* 10, no. 1 (1999): 80-83.
- Siy, John Oliver, and Sapna Cheryan. "When Compliments Fail to Flatter: American Individualism and Responses to Positive Stereotypes." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 104, no. 1 (2013): 87-102.
- Steele, Claude M., and Joshua Aronson. "Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test-Performance of African-Americans." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69, no. 5 (1995): 797-811.
- Trower, Cathy A., and Jared L. Bleak. "Race: Statistical Report [Universities]." In *Study of New Scholars*. Cambridge: Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2004.
- Uhlmann, Eric Luis, and Geoffrey L. Cohen. "'I Think It, Therefore It's True': Effects of Self-Perceived Objectivity on Hiring Discrimination." *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 104 (2007): 207-23.
- Valian, Virginia. *Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998.

Micro-Inequities and Asian American Philosophers

Samantha Brennan
WESTERN UNIVERSITY, SBRENNAN@UWO.CA

What does the moral analysis of micro-inequities have to offer philosophers interested in the status of Asian Americans in the field of philosophy? I have the APA's committee on the status of Asian and Asian American philosophers and philosophies to thank for inviting me to think about that problem. During our panel discussion at the 2014 Pacific Division meeting in San Diego, I talked about my work on micro-inequities in the context of Asian Americans studying and working in the field of philosophy. My paper, "The Moral Status of Micro-Inequities: In Favour of Institutional Solutions," argues that we ought to shift the focus of our analysis to institutional, rather than individual, understandings of micro-inequities. An earlier paper, "Rethinking the Moral Significance of Micro-Inequities: The Case of Women in Philosophy," uses the concept of micro-inequities to help us understand the glacial rate of change for women in our profession.

Let me say a little bit about the advantages that thinking in terms of micro-inequities offers those of us interested in making the field of philosophy more diverse and inclusive. First, where the problems are micro so too can be some of the solutions. We can aim for small positive change without looking for the one big answer to the problem. There may be a great many small problems that result in big differences. Second, thinking in terms of micro-inequities doesn't necessarily involve attributing to anyone explicitly racist views. Implicit bias can result in micro-inequities that make a difference even in the absence of explicit racism. Third, it suggests a starting place in that micro-inequities, we can suppose, build over time and their significance grows as we reward the successful and look for explanations about why the unsuccessful are so, a dynamic that makes biased expectations self-fulfilling. We can begin with undergraduate students and see what we can do to make their experiences different.

The next step in my argument is to argue in favor of institutional solutions, rather than thinking of the problem primarily in terms of individual moral wrongdoing. I favor an institutional approach in part because many of the factors that determine wrongness are themselves importantly contextual. My position is that the question of whether some benefits and burdens, of the sort that make up micro-inequities, are so small that they don't count morally cannot be answered outside of the context in which they occur. We lose sight of morally important factors if we push all of the time to see wrongness in its smallest possible units. In addition, seeing the problem from the larger perspective will help open a range of possible responses beyond blaming individuals. The institutional framework allows us to shift our focus to collective solutions to the problem. As a group we have responsibilities for the outcome, and group-based solutions are likely to be much more effective than individual ones. Finally, it might help to think about moral evaluation in terms of three different sites of moral inquiry: 1) circumstances under which decisions and choices are made, 2) the acts themselves, and 3) the results. I argue that focusing only on the question about the wrongness of the acts themselves is potentially dangerous for movements interested in social change. It's an important question in moral theory, but it might not be the most important question for advocates of a more diverse and equitable climate inside the academy.

How are micro-inequities connected to the problem of implicit bias? An emerging story about the persistence of workplace inequality—in the absence of formal barriers to entry and progress for women, minorities, and disabled persons—looks to the twin causes of implicit bias and micro-inequities. The Barnard Report on Women, Work, and the Academy describes these causes of inequality in the academy in these terms:

The first is that biases operating below the threshold of deliberate consciousness, biases in interaction that are unrecognized and unintended, can systematically put women and minorities at a disadvantage. Second, although individual instances of these "micro-inequities" may seem trivial, their cumulative effects can account for

large-scale differences in outcome; those who benefit from greater opportunity and a reinforcing environment find their advantages compounded, while deficits of support and recognition ramify for those who are comparatively disadvantaged (MIT 1999: 10).¹

The literature on implicit bias and micro-inequities in higher education tends to focus on the status and treatment of women and African Americans. There is certainly room for a paper or two on the status of Asian Americans in philosophy.

In his book *Microaggressions in Everyday Life*, Derald Wing Sue looks at the kinds of micro-inequities often faced by Asian American students. The subset of micro-inequities he thinks that are relevant here are micro-invalidations. While not unique to philosophy, philosophy isn't immune to such problems either. He writes that Asian American students, along with Latinos, often have to work very hard to have their Americanness recognized. Micro-invalidations are environmental cues that exclude the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of certain groups. He calls this form of micro-invalidation being made to feel "alien in one's own land." Examples of how this works is the ubiquitous "Where are you from?" question, to which "Chicago" is never a satisfactory answer, or being complimented on one's English when in fact English is your mother tongue. This status is sometimes referred to as "envied outsider" or "model minority" as Asian Americans are stereotyped to be academically gifted, or hardworking, but are rarely seen as American. Contrast this with the status of African Americans whose Americanness is not in question, but who are stereotyped as underperforming academically.

Another example of a common micro-inequity faced by Asian American students, again discussed by Sue, is the perception of different communication styles. Asian American students may be labeled as shy, quiet, and nervous, and as having a more indirect communication style. This can be a matter of "damned if you do and damned if you don't" because acting outside a stereotype can result in harsh judgment as well. This is true for women in general who must walk a fine line between "overly deferential" and "bossy." And if it is also true for Asians and Asian-Americans, then likely there will be a compounding effect whereby Asian American women, in virtue of the intersection of race and gender, potentially face a particularly pronounced form of rejection for counter-stereotypical communication styles. For Asian and Asian American women we can see how gender interacts with other forms of discrimination and see the performance burden—the way you must behave to be seen and heard as normal—is very narrow indeed.² Of course, there are also class dimensions to performances of both gender and ethnicity that further complicate issues of "being seen," identity, and authenticity.³

Finally, and this has been talked and written about by Asian American philosophers, for example, in the APA newsletter, there is the issue of philosophy's curriculum, the not-so-hidden agenda about what counts as real philosophy and what does not. See, for example, David Haekwon Kim's discussion of philosophy's Eurocentric curriculum.⁴

Let's suppose I am right, as I've argued in the papers briefly summarized at the start of this short report, that we need to work towards eliminating micro-inequities at the institutional level. Are there some objections to this approach?

The objection I take most seriously asks whether we might be letting those who bring about micro-inequities, however small they may be, off the hook too easily. Is there nothing we can do at the individual level?

It seems to me that it needn't follow from a primary focus on institutional change that there is nothing we can do. I have, in fact, three suggestions.

One obvious tool at our disposal is that of blame. Now, not all micro-inequity-producing actions will be blameworthy. It might be that the person needs to know he or she is causing harm, for example. Suppose these conditions are met, it's still going to be true that they are to blame for a small wrong. In a paper I'm writing with Western PhD student Meghan Winsby we are proposing micro-sanctions as an appropriate interpersonal response to those who contribute in a small way to chilly workplace climates.⁵

Second, while we might use micro-sanctions to indicate our disapproval to those who knowingly bring micro-inequities about, we also suggest micro-affirmations as a way of reaching out to those who suffer from micro-inequities. Micro-affirmations may take the shape of deliberating reaching out to a student, colleague, or co-worker who is isolated. One might make a special point of recognizing this person's contribution in the workplace. The idea is that positive micro-messaging can redress and rebalance the harms caused by micro-inequities.

Third, there will be obligations that fall on those who bring about micro-inequities once we know about implicit bias and about how unsuccessful individual attempts to "try hard and do better" can be. There is indeed some evidence that mere awareness coupled with a resolution to "to be objective" might actually bring about worse results. But some active de-biasing programs have been shown to have a positive effect. As Tim Kenyon and Guillaume Beaulac have explained,

The difficulty of teaching debiasing skills that could be deployed in a strictly atomistic or individualistic way counts in favor of teaching and investing also in more collective debiasing strategies and infrastructure that would serve the latter sorts of interests. This approach will encompass teaching not just individual skills and knowledge, but skills that enable the construction of reasoning infrastructure, and effective participation in social and organizational reasoning processes and decision procedures.⁶

NOTES

1. Alison Wylie, Janet R. Jakobsen, and Gisela Fosado, "Women, Work, and the Academy: Strategies for Responding to 'Post-Civil Rights Era' Gender Discrimination," 2.
2. Thanks to David Haekwon Kim for this way of making this point and for helpful comments generally on this short essay.
3. Emily S. Lee, "The Ambiguous Practices of the Inauthentic Asian American Woman."
4. David Haekwon Kim, "Asian American Philosophers: Absence, Politics, and Identity."
5. We have a draft paper in progress that we're happy to share with those who may be interested. Email me at sbrennan@uwo.ca.
6. Tim Kenyon and Guillaume Beaulac, "Critical Thinking, Education, and Debiasing, 3.

REFERENCES

Brennan, Samantha. "The Moral Status of Micro-Inequities: In Favour of Institutional Solutions," *Implicit Bias in Philosophy*, edited by Michael Brownstein and Jennifer Saul. Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

Brennan, Samantha. "Rethinking the Moral Significance of Micro-Inequities: The Case of Women in Philosophy." In *Women in Philosophy: What Needs to Change?*, edited by Fiona Jenkins and Katrina Hutchison. Oxford University Press, 2013.

Brennan, Samantha, and Meghan Winsby. "Micro-Sanctions: A Philosophical Exploration." In progress.

Kenyon, Tim, and Guillaume Beaulac. "Critical Thinking, Education, and Debiasing." 2013. Archived at https://www.academia.edu/7326234/Critical_Thinking_Education_and_Debiasing_co-authored_with_Tim_Kenyon_now_under_review_.

Kim, David Haekwon. "Asian American Philosophers: Absence, Politics, and Identity." *APA Newsletter on The Status of Asian/Asian American Philosophers and Philosophies* 1, no. 2 (spring 2001): 25–28.

Lee, Emily S. "The Ambiguous Practices of the Inauthentic Asian American Woman." *Hypatia* 29, no. 1 (Winter 2014): 146–63.

Wing Sue, Derald. *Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation*. Wiley, 2010.

Wylie, Alison, anet R. Jakobsen, and Gisela Fosado. "Women, Work, and the Academy: Strategies for Responding to 'Post-Civil Rights Era' Gender Discrimination." Barnard Center for Research on Women. 1999. <http://bcrw.barnard.edu/publications/women-work-academy/>.

Sustainable Diversity within Philosophy: Looking Beyond A Bottom-Up Model

Molly Paxton

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, TWIN CITIES

INTRODUCTION

Much of the current literature on diversity in the university focuses on the social benefits of having ethnically and racially diverse classrooms, and constructs models of diversity that look to create diverse populations of students— that is, structural diversity—in our post-secondary institutions. Less attention is given to the task of explaining the epistemic benefits of diversity in the classroom and creating more intellectually diverse communities at the professional level of disciplines such as philosophy. In this article, I argue that structural diversity does not entail deeper discipline-based diversity. The common assumption of entailment is problematic for two reasons, both of which concern lack of sustainability in these diversity models. First, the structural diversity framework assumes that disciplines within the university can be changed from the bottom up. In other

words, the burden of making the university more diverse is on the shoulders of people who have the least amount of power and authority to produce major social and academic change. And second, this framework assumes that structural diversity within a discipline is the same thing as the discipline accepting and cultivating intellectual diversity. By focusing solely on the educational goals of universities, the diversity literature has failed to acknowledge both the university's responsibility to produce knowledge and the distinction between structural and intellectual diversity.

A CURRENT MODEL OF DIVERSITY

For the most part, the current literature focusing on diversity within the university looks to answer one of two questions: How does racial and ethnic diversity within the student body affect student experience in college, both in the classroom and on campus more generally?¹ And how does racial and ethnic diversity within the faculty population affect students' experiences in college, again, both in and out of the formal classroom setting?² While there may be a few exceptions to this generalization, most of the formal treatment of diversity has been done from the perspective of the sociology of education (e.g., Sorensen-Hallinan learning model),³ and is often in the service of the legal defense of institutional policy guidelines (e.g., affirmative action cases). The model generated from this literature is what I will refer to as a *bottom-up model*, so called because it focuses on diversity at the student, rather than the faculty, level.

Of course, there is the question of what we mean by "diversity," an answer to which is clearly stated by Gurin et al. in their widely cited 2002 study which gives an account of the "educational purposes and benefits of diversity."⁴ In their study, they draw out three different kinds of diversity that are often of interest to researchers who look to better understand aspects of diversity specifically within university settings. First, we have *structural diversity*, which focuses on the proportion of members of different racial and ethnic groups in a given population. This is the type of diversity that we are interested in when we ask questions such as "Why don't we see more Asian-American students in philosophy?" and "Why are women absent from the upper faculty ranks within the academy?" Second, there is *classroom diversity*, which refers to the content of what is taught in classrooms and the potential experiences that students have interacting with their peers in classrooms. This is the type of diversity that we are interested in when we ask questions such as "Why aren't there more non-white, non-male philosophers on more syllabi in undergraduate philosophy classes?" And, finally, Gurin characterizes *informal interactional diversity* in terms of the frequency and quality of the interactions that students have outside of the classroom with peers whose ethnic or racial backgrounds are different from their own.

Understanding diversity in these ways, an abundance of evidence suggests that there are positive effects of diversity in the classroom. Gurin notes that there are four different methods of research that have yielded these results: a) students' assessments of benefits they have received; b) faculty assessments of students; c) monetary/non-monetary returns, such as graduation rates, advanced

degrees, and income; and, finally, d) analysis of diversity in college and its broad potential outcomes.⁵ Studies using these methods suggest that students benefit developmentally as individuals, as well as socially and culturally (e.g., being better able to participate as citizens in ethnically and racially diverse communities beyond college).⁶

It is important to note that each of these definitions, and the subsequent studies of these types of diversity, is born from different sets of concerns, having to do with both the administrative and the pedagogical goals of universities. However, it is equally important to note that none of these goals is convincingly epistemological in nature. Their concern is *not* whether epistemic value is gained by cultivating ethnic and racial diversity in the classroom. Rather, the relevant questions being asked in this literature are whether or not having ethnic and racial differences represented in the classroom contributes to a positive personal and social experience for students.⁷ In order to illustrate this point, I want to briefly introduce the aims and results of an influential study that has helped construct what can be understood as empirical context for current models for diversity.

In the study done by Gurin et al., the focus is on looking at the role that higher education plays in the social development of students (identified as being late adolescents). It is a study that is deeply rooted in the developmental psychology tradition, citing Erik Erikson's concept of identity as support that late adolescents are in a critical stage in life where their selves and social identities are being formed. They argue that opportunities for individual students to occupy various social roles in the campus environment allow for a "psychosocial moratorium," or a suspension of the pressures that commit us to stable social roles. In other words, college is a time when students need to explore different identities, and a large part of this exploration needs to include a diverse and complex environment. They draw on developmental studies which show that "discontinuity and discrepancy spur cognitive growth."⁸ The conclusion is that a diverse environment is beneficial from a psychological point of view—that changing a student's environment from a segregated home to a diverse campus will aid in the development of a more informed identity.

The study conducted by Gurin et al. constructs a model of diversity that highlights the developmental and sociological benefits of structural diversity in the classroom. Students from a more diverse university will have more opportunities for psychological growth and will be better equipped to handle the diversity of culture in society. Once again they draw heavily from the developmental tradition, citing support from Jean Piaget's theory of intellectual and moral development, where the development of "perspective-taking" allows a more sophisticated level of moral reasoning. All of the instruments involved students' self-assessment, and the study concluded that the evidence confirmed desirable increases in active mental activity and in the ability to recognize both similarities and differences across racial/ethnic groups.⁹ The conclusion of the study asserted that "features of the learning environment affect students' modes of thought" rather than recommending

the curriculum itself be changed to better address the lack of knowledge many students have about social and cultural diversity. Their hypothesis proposed that curriculum and structural diversity together “foster a learning environment that supports active thinking and intellectual engagement,” without addressing any relevant epistemological questions concerning what type of curriculum they have in mind.¹⁰

An analysis of this widely cited study provides evidence that the current model of diversity focuses on administrative and pedagogical goals within the university, and often has a psychological and/or sociological, rather than epistemological, focus. They represent the consensus that there are positive effects for students as individuals (e.g., more learning opportunities because of cognitive dissonance, and more developed senses of empathy), as well as for students as social groups (e.g., exposure to people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds challenges one’s own worldview and leads one to become a better citizen of a diverse culture). This model, which I have labeled *bottom-up*, focuses primarily on structural diversity within the classroom or on campus, and carries the assumption that if we have structural diversity (at the very least) at the student level, then intellectual diversity will follow. The idea is that as long as we have representation from different racial and ethnic groups in the university, the content of our classes and the informal interactions that students have on campus will be positively impacted.

This is not a criticism of the study per se. It is an observation that within the behavioral psychology research model, the pedagogical benefit of diversity, that is cognitive growth, is construed in terms of psychological maturation, which is different than cognitive growth in a more philosophical, or epistemological, sense. There is nothing in the work of Gurin et al. to suggest that they are concerned with questions of how knowledge production in the university is affected by structural diversity, or that professionals in a given discipline who work in structurally diverse environments have unique epistemological advantages. When we are considering diversity from a distinct epistemological perspective, these are the complex and multi-dimensional questions that we need to begin to unpack.¹¹

SUSTAINABILITY

This model of diversity, where structural diversity at the student level is the end goal, has extremely important roles to play at the administrative level of the university. There are important legal and social implications of the psychological and sociological work on diversity that has been, and continues to be, done across the country. At the same time, however, a serious shortcoming of this model is that it focuses solely on the role of the university as educator, while ignoring the role of the university in knowledge production. One consequence of not addressing the importance of diversity for knowledge production is that the current model is in danger of failing to be sustainable. If the justification for diversity is an argument made merely at the administrative level, and administrative bodies change over relatively short periods of time, there is little assurance that any diversity that is accomplished in the here and now can be maintained. And if it is the case that knowledge-building communities fail to consistently be composed

of diverse bodies of thinkers, there is no guarantee that structural diversity will lead to intellectual diversity. In what follows, I highlight some of the problems that arise in this model that prevent it from achieving either short-term or long-term sustainability.

SHORT-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Is the current model of structural diversity sustainable in the short-term? In more concrete terms, over the course of a student’s undergraduate career, does attending a structurally diverse university consistently yield benefits in the classroom over and above attending a more socially homogeneous university?

To begin, recall that Gurin’s study looked at environmental factors that contribute positively to mental activity. One relevant factor is opportunities for cognitive conflict that “lead to uncertainty, instability, and possibly anxiety,” which occurs when students are exposed to people outside the familiar bounds of their social communities.¹² While the study does point out that not all people of color share a “non-white” perspective, the overall conclusion is that ensuring diversity of groups, rather than simply of individuals, in classrooms contributes to cognitive growth psychologically. However, the instrumentalist language used to describe the benefit of racial and ethnic diversity (e.g., to say that students from non-white backgrounds are useful to the white education experience by providing occasions for cognitive dissonance) could be understood as a way of making discrimination systemic.

A second study that speaks to the question of whether or not structural diversity contributes to epistemological diversity in the classroom was done by Maruyama and Moreno (1999), and informatively titled “University Faculty Views about the Value of Diversity on Campus and in the Classroom.” This work builds on previous studies conducted by Gurin (1998) by looking at faculty attitudes about the value of diversity and how these attitudes influence the degree to which structural diversity can contribute to sustainable change in epistemic practices.

Maruyama and Moreno use Gurin’s notion of three aspects of diversity, and ask whether or not faculty internalize the diversity values that are set forth at the institutional level, and whether these values (presumably at both the institutional and the faculty level) go beyond structural diversity to informal interactional diversity. These questions translate into inquiry about whether faculty really believe that diversity improves the campus environment and whether they are willing to alter classroom content in order to actively promote interactional diversity. Their study relies on subjects’ self-reporting, which potentially accommodates artificially inflated reports of diversity commitment generated by positive self-presentation motives. In spite of this, they did find that the more lecture-based a faculty member’s teaching is, the more likely that faculty member indicated that diversity is epistemically irrelevant. On the other hand, faculty who use problem-based learning techniques in the classroom (e.g., presenting students with problems to work through rather than primarily delivering material via lectures) are much more likely to appreciate and utilize structural diversity in the classroom.

This study suggests that in order for structural diversity to lead to institutionally supported intellectual diversity, it is necessary that faculty understand and communicate relevant epistemic benefits of diversity in their classrooms. If it is the case that a given faculty member does not hold that there are epistemically relevant differences (e.g., that students have different yet potentially equally valuable perspectives from which they approach a given topic) among different groups of knowers, then it is not the case that simply having structural diversity in the classroom is going to lead to students being able to identify or cultivate epistemically valuable differences. Here we see that bottom-up models of diversity have the potential to conflict with the purported pedagogical aims of individual faculty: if a faculty member does not identify or allow for different epistemic standpoints to be heard, then any intellectual value of structural diversity is lost. As Maruyama and Moreno note, if faculty ignored diversity, then there was no benefit of a diverse classroom over a homogeneous one. In such cases, faculty maintained that the content of the course is fixed and need not take into account any diversity in the classroom.

LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

The evidence suggests that the assumption of current models of diversity, that intellectual diversity grows from structural diversity, fails to hold in the short term. However, there are long-term failures of the sustainability of these models as well. Arguably, the two most important roles that faculty play in the university are those of educator and knowledge producer. Currently in the diversity literature, the vast majority of the work has focused on the faculty as educator. Taking a longer view, we can see that current models of diversity conflate the educator and knowledge producer roles. As bodies of educators, universities have administrative goals that are closely related to how we define the role of diversity (particularly structural diversity) in the academy. However, when we focus our attention on the second role, we are able to ask what the goal of diversity is to us as knowledge producers within the academy, which motivates a normative epistemological project that has yet to be introduced in the current diversity literature. Why is sustainability so hard for bottom-up models of diversity? It is so because at the end of the day, our push to increase diversity within the university leaves us with two epistemological consequences that are in serious tension with one another. On the one hand:

- A) Racial and ethnic diversity introduces different epistemological perspectives and methods, and these differences should be understood as being epistemically positive.

On the other hand,

- B) A major epistemological goal of knowledge producers who are educators, especially in the context where those being educated are expected to become future knowledge producers within a given knowledge producing community, is to teach in accordance with conventionally prescribed epistemological perspectives and methods that typically disregard the epistemic benefits of structural diversity.

So while structural diversity (both at the student as well as the faculty level) is necessary, it is certainly not sufficient for intellectual diversity. This concern for a broader conception of diversity, which goes beyond simply looking at structural diversity, is diagnostic of a deeper insight about the nature of knowledge, namely, that the knower is a significant epistemic factor that needs to be considered. This is implicitly revealed in our concern for diversity, but not something which we explicitly argue for in the current model. There is a notable difference in having the goal of attaining intellectual diversity rather than the goal of simply attaining structural diversity. In the case of the former, it is necessary to let go of paradigmatic epistemological methods: if we take seriously the notion that there are facts about knowers that are epistemically relevant, then traditional criteria of knowledge are not sufficient (and perhaps not even necessary) for explaining knowledge production in the university. At the same time, we must also acknowledge that knowledge-producing communities within disciplines in the university do have epistemic standards that not only dictate what is taught in classrooms and what the standards are for training students, but also what is published in the professional sphere. If we do not challenge the current model of diversity, we are in danger of simply allowing these standards to force intellectual conformity on the structurally diverse populations that we are working so hard to cultivate in the academy.

CONCLUSIONS

Much of the current literature focuses on the social and loosely “educational” benefits of having ethnically and racially diverse classrooms. This focus on what I have been calling the administrative and pedagogical aims of diversity conversations has failed to give attention to an important role that is largely unique to universities: the role of knowledge production. The focus on the structural diversity of the student populations in universities should motivate questions such as: What work do we need to do to cultivate intellectual diversity? What is the epistemic relevance of having structurally diverse communities? What do we need of an epistemology of intellectual diversity?

Certainly it is the case that there is a significant gain to be made by paying attention to the types of questions that the current models of diversity ask in order to better perform the role of educator within post-secondary institutions. It is important to be able to articulate clear and detailed answers to questions pertaining to why we should intentionally cultivate ethnically and racially diverse environments in our universities, particularly at the student level. However, it is problematic when we render these bottom-up models unsustainable by limiting our focus to mere structural diversity and imbue them with normative force by sanctioning a discourse according to which introducing more diversity in disciplines such as philosophy is about mere structural diversity. By focusing solely on the educational goals of universities, the diversity literature has failed to acknowledge both the university’s responsibility for knowledge production and the distinction between structural and intellectual diversity.

By drawing attention to the role played by the university as a collection of disciplines, or *knowledge-building*

communities, we are suddenly presented with a battery of epistemological questions previously absent in the diversity conversation. These questions are directed at the knowledge producers, or the “top,” rather than at the student populations, or the “bottom.” If knowledge is to be influenced by and is a product of structural diversity, then it cannot be a foregone conclusion what knowledge is. We cannot have immutable epistemic standards that do not take into account who the knowers of our knowledge-building communities are. In order to be sustainable, we need to create new standards that make knowledge-building communities cohesive, and that allow for unified pedagogical standards within those communities. This is the radical task: sustainability requires unity and cohesion, but the current standards used within various disciplines need to be reexamined and in some cases revised. We need to make the distinction between wanting to promote a more socially inclusive profession (e.g., asking why we don’t see many Asian-American philosophy undergraduates) and wanting to promote a more intellectually inclusive profession (e.g., asking why Asian-American philosophy isn’t more mainstream). It is the epistemic standards for the promotion of a more intellectually inclusive profession that will allow for both short-term and long-term sustainability of our models of diversity. These standards must come from the top-down, from the desks and classrooms of the knowledge producers, rather than from the bottom-up.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to sincerely thank Emily Lee and the APA’s committee on the status of Asian and Asian American philosophers and philosophies for the opportunity to participate in this conversation. I would also like to thank David Kim and Emily Lee for reading and providing helpful feedback on this draft.

NOTES

1. Cf. Patricia Gurin, Eric L. Dey, Sylvia Hurtado, and Gerald Gurin, “Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Educational Outcomes”; Nida Denson and Mitchell J. Chang, “Racial Diversity Matters: The Impact of Diversity-Related Student Engagement and Institutional Context.”
2. Cf. Paul D. Umbach, “The Contribution of Faculty of Color to Undergraduate Education”; Geoffrey Maruyama, José F. Moreno, Roxane Harvey Gudeman, and Patricia Marin, “Does Diversity Make a Difference? Three Research Studies on Diversity in College Classrooms.”
3. Maureen T. Hallinan, “Affirmative Action In the Classroom: Diversity Effects on Student Outcomes.”
4. Gurin et al., “Diversity and Higher Education,” 330.
5. Ibid., 333.
6. Cf. ibid.; Hallinan, “Affirmative Action In the Classroom”; Nestor Ángel Pinillos, “Some Recent Work in Experimental Epistemology.”
7. To say that there is a distinction between personal/social and epistemic benefits of diversity does not in any way lessen the importance of the former. It is certainly the case that a great deal of attention is (and should!) be paid to the social injustices committed against marginalized and subordinated individuals and groups within academia. My point is that there are important benefits of diversity that are epistemological in nature, and that these benefits are all too often overlooked when we fail to look at questions regarding the epistemic aspect of diversity.
8. Gurin et al., “Diversity and Higher Education,” 335.
9. Gurin et al. explicitly asked students to indicate whether they had “been exposed in classes to “information/activities devoted to understanding other racial/ethnic groups and inter-racial/ethnic relationships” or whether there were any courses they had

taken which influenced their “views of racial/ethnic diversity and multiculturalism.” Gurin et al., “Diversity and Higher Education,” 343.

10. Ibid., 336.
11. Studies such as the one that Gurin et al. have produced are not to be understood as necessarily being the starting point for an epistemic treatment of diversity. There is, of course, problematic bias in much of the diversity literature that ranges from essentialism fallacies to inadequate sample sizes. While addressing such issues would be a worthwhile project, they are beyond the scope of this article. My point here is simply to highlight that these studies are good representations of the work currently done on diversity in the university.
12. Gurin et al., “Diversity and Higher Education,” 338.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Astin, Alexander W. “Diversity and Multiculturalism on the Campus.” *Change: the Magazine of Higher Learning* 25, no. 2 (1993): 44–49. doi:10.1080/00091383.1993.9940617.

Benner, Aprile D., and Robert Crosnoe. “The Racial/Ethnic Composition of Elementary Schools and Young Children’s Academic and Socioemotional Functioning.” *American Educational Research Journal* 48, no. 3 (2011): 621–46. doi:10.3102/0002831210384838.

Denson, Nida, and Mitchell J. Chang. “Racial Diversity Matters: The Impact of Diversity-Related Student Engagement and Institutional Context.” *American Educational Research Journal* 46, no. 2 (2009): 322–53. doi:10.3102/0002831208323278.

Gurin, Patricia, Eric L. Dey, Sylvia Hurtado, and Gerald Gurin. “Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Educational Outcomes.” *Harvard Educational Review* 72, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 330–66.

Hallinan, Maureen T. “Affirmative Action In the Classroom: Diversity Effects on Student Outcomes.” *Ohio State Law Journal* 59 (1998): 733–54.

Maruyama, Geoffrey, José F. Moreno, Roxane Harvey Gudeman, and Patricia Marin. “Does Diversity Make a Difference? Three Research Studies on Diversity in College Classrooms.” ERIC. 2000. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED444409>.

Mayhew, Matthew J., Heidi E. Grunwald, and Eric L. Dey. “Breaking the Silence: Achieving a Positive Campus Climate for Diversity From the Staff Perspective.” *Research in Higher Education* 47, no. 1 (2006): 63–88. doi:10.1007/s11162-004-8152-z.

Nelson Laird, Thomas F. “Measuring the Diversity Inclusivity of College Courses.” *Research in Higher Education* 52, no. 6 (2011): 572–88. doi:10.1007/s11162-010-9210-3.

Packard, Josh. “The Impact of Racial Diversity in the Classroom: Activating the Sociological Imagination.” *Teaching Sociology* 41, no. 2 (2013): 144–58. doi:10.1177/0092055X12451716.

Pinillos, Nestor Ángel. “Some Recent Work in Experimental Epistemology.” *Philosophy Compass* 6, no. 10 (2011): 675–88.

Umbach, Paul D. “The Contribution of Faculty of Color to Undergraduate Education.” *Research in Higher Education* 47, no. 3 (2006). Springer: 317–45. doi:10.1007/sl.

The Problem of Absence: Some Personal Reflections

Gary Mar

STONY BROOK UNIVERSITY, GARY.MAR@STONYBROOK.EDU

When those who have power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you, whether you are dark-skinned, old, disabled, female, or speak with a different accent or dialect than they do; when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and

saw nothing. Yet you know you exist and others like you, that this is a game with mirrors. It takes some strength of soul—and not just individual strength, but collective understanding—to resist this void, this nonbeing, into which you are thrust, and to stand up, demanding to be seen and heard.

– Adrienne Rich, “Invisibility in Academe”¹

I became an Asian American philosopher, accidentally, almost two decades ago. The Socratic credo to “know thyself,” at least in this respect, was certainly not a part of academic philosophy at that time. To gaze into its mirror was to experience the psychic disequilibrium of absence—or, if not absence, the disorientation caused by peering into the racially grotesque images of one’s face and body as reflected in American culture’s house of mirrors. “I am not yet able, as the Delphic inscription has it, to know myself,” reflected Socrates, “so it seems to me ridiculous, when I do not yet know that, to investigate irrelevant things.”² If the unexamined life is not worth living, then following Socrates would require finding those missing mirrors.



Wen Ho Lee’s daughter Alberta Lee with Daphne Kwok, Shamina Singh, Karina Kim, Michael Kwan, Tracey Jusay, and Mitch Wu.

THE GIFT OF ACCOMPANIMENT

Although I did not realize it at the time, becoming an Asian American philosopher would involve the discipline, or gift, of what the Franciscans called *accompaniment*:

to deviate from other pathways for a while (and then forever), to walk with those on the margins, to be with them, to let go. Accompaniment is an idea so radical and difficult for us to comprehend that its power and significance can reveal themselves to us with great difficulty. Through this encounter . . . at the margins, we, who with Francis once saw the poor only as the ‘other,’ the feared one, the object of dread, then pity, then charity, can, as individuals and societies, experience a profound, ongoing, Spirit-led conversion of heart, soul, and mind. Slowly our centers of gravity move outside of ourselves and we find ourselves suddenly dancing with the Poverello and his despised friends in unknown places and with great joy.³

Socrates discovered his true self, his profession or calling in life, through the accompaniment of interlocutors in reflective philosophical conversation.

My turning toward Asian American philosophy began in 1993. Two high school students, Ellen Liu, a Chinese American, and Milli Subudhi, an Asian Indian American, committed suicide on the Long Island Railroad. These suicides, the youngest in the history of the Long Island Railroad, sent shockwaves through the community in general and the Asian American communities in particular.

The high school peers of these young women required special counseling. Was it an accident that both students were Asian Americans who had first met each other in the Gifted and Talented Program in third grade? My older daughter was about to start that program the next year.

No one can ever know why such tragedies happen. The search for easy answers to the wrong questions—Did the families push their daughters too hard to succeed?, Did the teenagers listen to the wrong kind of music?, What did their families do differently that ours did not?—were examples, it seemed to me, of “blaming the victims,” attempts to cloak one’s own family in a blanket of exceptionalism, to cushion them from experiencing the tragedy and from asking probing political questions about its roots. Wasn’t it more reasonable to assume that unreported realities, ignored by sensationalized news, were impacting all our families?

This tragedy planted within me, an Asian American father and philosopher, a heightened sense of the absence of Asian American studies as part of the college and high school curricula, the absence of Asian American culture in celebrations of diversity, and the absence of Asian

American history as part of the public understanding of American history. Could knowledge of this history impart a sense of identity to our children that would protect them from the barrage of distorted images of Asian Americans? No one at my university wanted to take on this burden, so I decided to create the first regularly offered course on Asian American immigration history, literature, and cultural activism through the philosophy department. For many Asian Americans this provided missing philosophical mirrors in which they could understand, for the first time, some of the puzzling phenomena of growing up Asian in America.

While I was on leave in 1995 on a Pew Foundation scholarship, I accompanied a delegation of scholars from the United States and Great Britain to speak at a conference sponsored by the Society of Christian Philosophers at Beijing University (*Beida*), the “Harvard of China.” This Journey to the East moved me deeply. I had grown up as an American Born Chinese (ABC) always having to answer the question, “Where do you come from?” Saying that I was born in Richmond, California, was never a sufficient answer, and I would be pressed again, “Where do you *really* come from?” Going “back” to China (even though I had never been there before) as an ABC, I realized I was not “really Chinese” nor was I “typically American.” My experience growing up with “a childhood among ghosts” was distinctively Asian American.

After returning from China, it came to my attention that Charles B. Wang, the founder and CEO of *Computer Associates*, had just returned from China, as well. He first arrived in America in 1952 at the age of eight, and his family

was prohibited from buying a house in Queens because they were Chinese. If Mr. Wang's experience in China had been as transformative as my own, I thought, perhaps he would help. When Mr. Wang came to speak on campus to a group of Asian American professors, I approached him with plans, drawn up by my father, for converting a hallway between the physics and philosophy buildings into an Asian American Center.

Not only did Mr. Wang agree to donate \$25,000 for this conversion, but he decided to donate \$25 million for the Charles B. Wang Asian American Center. At the time this was the largest donation in the public education system of New York state. Although the story of how this donation came about was suppressed, Mr. Wang made it part of his donation speech. The Asian American Center *Bridge*, the hallway conversion, had its grand opening on November 6, 1996. The Charles B. Wang Asian American Center would not open until October 22, 2002, at a cost of over \$40 million. During those intervening years I would learn about becoming an Asian American philosopher.

At my university I had been hired as a logician, given my credentials as the last dissertation student of the great twentieth-century logician Alonzo Church and co-author with Kalish and Montague of a classic logic textbook. As a research logician I discovered new dynamic logics of unquestioned beauty and power that had been discussed in *Scientific American*. However, when I began to enter into the fields of Asian American history, literature, and philosophy, I realized it would require a total commitment of heart and mind that would take me away from my career path for a while (and perhaps forever).

Since the question of institutional survival on a university campus ultimately amounts to becoming an academic program or department, it seemed to me that the university owed its large Asian American student population—constituting about 1/3 of the undergraduate population at the time—courses on Asian American history and literature that would add scholarly content to accompany its Asian American Center. However, the argument for Asian American philosophy is not, in the end, *demographic*, serving the sizable undergraduate population of Asians, nor is it a *diversity* argument about celebrating the cultures, languages, and religions of Asia. The most compelling arguments I would learn from the accompaniment of Asian American artists, activists, and academics.

The lessons I learned from so many—including Ling Chi-Wang, Eric Yamamoto, Tomie Arai, Corkey Lee, Daphne Kwok, Shamina Singh, Nobuko Miyamoto, John Tchen, Noam Chomsky, Lisa Yun, Ricardo Laremont, Captain James Yee, Ruthanne Lum McCunn, Laurence Yep, Faye Chiang, Janice Mirikitani, David Kim, Ronald Sundstrom,

Angela Davis, Coco Fusco, Kip Fulbeck, Alberta Lee, Ginny Gong, Lewis Gordon, David Henry Hwang, Linda Martin-Alcoff, Maya Lin, Helen Zia, Christine Choy, Cheshire Calhoun, Erika Lee, Judy Yung, Mari Matsuda, FIND, OCA, *Two Tongues*, *Yellow Pearl*, Tisa Chang and the *Pan Asian Repertory Theatre*, members of the *Basement Workshop*, the *Asian American Writer's Workshop*, and generations of students—are too numerous to recount. Many of these activists, artists, and academics may not be familiar to many philosophers, which, perhaps, makes the point of Asian American absence in the philosophical company we keep even stronger.

The three stories I wish to tell bear witness to the potential of Asian American philosophy: the possibilities of radical commitment and pan-ethnic/racial alliances, the beauty and power of docu-memoirs to win hearts and minds, and the duty of intellectuals to take stands of conscience.

YURI KOCHIYAMA: RADICAL COMMITMENT AND PAN-ETHNIC-RACIAL ALLIANCES

When I was asked by David Kim to write about the problem of absence a month ago, Yuri Kochiyama had just died at the age of ninety-three in Berkeley, California. The world celebrated her presence and mourned her absence. I met Yuri in 2002 when I flew from New York to California to interview her. With my father and a teddy bear, I drove from my parents' home in Sacramento to Oakland's San Pablo Senior Residence Center, which was home to elderly residents from Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Korea, the Philippines, France, and African Americans from the Southern States.

Waiting outside her small one-room apartment, we saw Yuri using her walker but still coming quickly to greet us. My father, like many Americans, probably did not realize that he had seen Yuri in the famous *Life Magazine* photo (March 5, 1965)

of the slain Malcolm X. So young at the time, Yuri is the Asian American woman cradling Malcolm's head.

What impressed me about Yuri the day we met in her Senior Residence Center was not only her political passion for justice but also her sincere interest in knowing more about my father. Taking notes on a little yellow pad, she listened to him. She learned that Dad had joined the Air Force before the age of eligibility, that he served as a bombardier on a B-17 during World War II, and that he survived to become an honorary member of the "Lucky Bastards Club" because he had survived flying thirty-five missions over Nazi Germany.

Yuri, like my father, was born in 1921. She grew up in San Pedro, California, in a predominantly white working-class neighborhood. After December 7, 1941, everything changed. Yuri's father, Seiichi, was taken into custody by the F.B.I., and the rest of Yuri's family, along with 110,000



Abetting/Abating Hate Crimes Conference honoring Yuri Kochiyama with documentary filmmaker Loni Ding (center), artist Tomie Arai, OCA members Gladys Yan, Gene and Janis Woo, Gary Mar, photo journalist Corkey Lee, and other community representatives.

persons of Japanese descent, were “relocated” into Japanese internment camps. Alternative words for that experience might be kidnapped or displaced. Two-thirds were American citizens, and more would have been except that many of the elderly were barred from naturalized citizenship due to pre-World War II anti-Asian immigration laws. Without any evidence of disloyalty and without any trial, these loyal American citizens and aspiring citizens were declared, by presidential executive order, to be threats to national security and were abruptly stripped of their property, their rights as citizens, and their future.

“Before the war I was seeing America with American eyes. What happened to Japanese Americans after Pearl Harbor made me see the world and America with entirely new eyes—Japanese American eyes,” wrote Yuri. “In many ways, this marked the beginning of my political awakening and development.”⁴ In an internment camp in Jerome, Arkansas, Yuri met her future husband, Bill Kochiyama. Bill served in World War II as a member of the Japanese-American 442nd Regimental combat team. Bill and other “Nisei soldiers” had to be reclassified from “enemy alien” so they would be eligible to “fight for democracy.” They were granted the opportunity to fulfill their obligations as citizens even while their families were deprived of their rights as citizens and imprisoned in concentration camps. Not allowed to serve in the Pacific theater because of their suspect loyalties, the Japanese Americans of the 442nd were deployed on suicide missions in Italy, France, and Germany.⁵

After the war Yuri would help to arrange for “Hiroshima Maidens”—young Japanese women whose faces had been deformed by the atomic bomb—to America for plastic surgery. Bill and Yuri would marry, have six children, and move to Harlem in New York City, where they became active in the Civil Rights movement. In Harlem the Kochiyamas met Malcolm X and became close friends. Yuri would go on to organize and participate in social justice movements such as the push for Puerto Rican independence, rallies against the Vietnam War, and efforts to grant reparations to Japanese Americans.

Now in her small one room apartment, the walls covered with political posters, I set a video camera on the refrigerator and asked Yuri questions as she sat on her bed. During our interview, Yuri’s phone was constantly ringing to inform her of various protests that were being held in the area. Yuri talked with me not only about the political legacy of Malcolm X—the “thousands of little Malcolms who would rise up”—but recounted the day that Malcolm X died. When I asked Yuri about what she would like to say to my students, she looked into the camera and, holding the teddy bear she had named “Stony Bear,” encouraged them to “learn history and change the world!”

In her memoir *Passing it On*, begun at the age of seventy-seven while in residence at UCLA’s Asian American Center, Yuri quotes “Creed 22,” which she wrote at the age of eighteen. “While my religious and political beliefs have changed quite a bit since 1939,” she notes, “my basic personal values and philosophy of life have remained the same.” One of the creeds caught my eye: “To always keep

in mind, that any opportunities, achievement, or happiness I have had, I owe to someone else; to be grateful for whatever has come my way through the aid of another, to repay every kindness, but should such a circumstance not arise, to pass it on to some one else.”⁶

GARY OKIHIRO: THE DUTY OF INTELLECTUALS

One of the key causes of absence is *ignorance*—not merely ignorance of what Asian American philosophy is, but *meta-ignorance*—one does not know that one does not know what it is. All too often academics assume that Asian American philosophy is the same as Asian philosophy. Too often philosophy has been conceptualized along Orientalist lines dividing it into “Western” and “Eastern” philosophy, where it is assumed that “East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet.”

Historian Gary Okihiro represents, to me, the “conscience of Asian American Studies.” He has been responsible for mentoring generations of young scholars, for the establishment of Asian American studies “East of California,” and for teaching me how to communicate the critical distinction between Asian American studies and Asian studies. Okihiro asks, “*Can you understand the Civil Rights Movement or the experiences of Blacks in America by studying the cultures of Africa?*” Clearly not. Similarly, you cannot understand the Asian American experience, or the importance of Asian American philosophy, by simply studying the cultures of Asia.⁷ In his “Margins and Mainstreams” lectures at Amherst College, Okihiro argued “that the core values and ideals of the nation emanate not from the mainstream but from the margins—from among Asian and African Americans, Latinos and American Indians, women, and gays and lesbians. In their struggles for equality, these groups helped preserve and advance the principles and ideals of democracy and have thereby made America a freer place for all.”⁸

“What is Asian American Studies?” asked Shirley Hune, then dean of graduate studies at UCLA. Her answer is a good starting place for the self-definition of Asian American philosophy, which shares the spirit and core values of Asian American studies: they are “transformative in that [they] . . . look to both a restructuring of education and an expansion of knowledge. Asian American scholars envision that their teaching and research will play a role in countering the cultural domination of the existing Euro-American knowledge base taught in American colleges; they hope to produce the kind of scholarship and students capable of resolving injustices and creating a more equitable society. In short, Asian American studies seeks to *democratize* higher education.”⁹

At the first Association for Asian American Studies (AAAS) meeting I attended as a presenter, I saw Gary Okihiro stand in solidarity with a contingent of Filipinos who were objecting to a AAAS book award being given to what they regarded as an implicitly racist novel by Lois-Ann Yamanaka, *Blu’s Hanging*. The vote to revoke the award led the leadership of AAAS to resign *en masse*. After that vote, at a cancelled birthday party that had been arranged in his honor, I saw Gary standing alone wondering aloud whether he was going to lose his life-long friends.

LONI DING: THE PROBLEM OF ABSENCE AND THE POWER OF IMAGES

One of the most profound influences on me was the late Emmy Award-winning PBS documentary filmmaker Loni Ding, who wrote most perceptively about the problem of absence:

Perhaps it is the real image you don't know you need and you're missing . . . until one day it's not there. It is somehow not enough that we've lived among a group of people, and see them in everyday life. Something essential is missing when that existence is not also confirmed in public existence. *The subtext of media absence is that the absent group 'doesn't count,' or is somehow unacceptable. . . .*

Almost all my work has been for television, designed for reaching a mass audience. In doing that, I've made certain assumptions about the audience. I assume, for example, that they carry somewhere in their minds three common misrepresentations of Asian Americans: the common stereotypes of Asians as perpetual foreigners; as resigned, silent victims; and most recently, as successful "model minorities" who "contribute to America." I have tried not to counter these misrepresentations directly, but rather to address the three kinds of stereotypes in my overall project design . . . to "show the opposite" rather than to "explain, argue and oppose." *For the problem of absence, the main work is to create presence.*¹⁰

During one of our many phone conversations together, Loni once expressed regret at not following through on a Ph.D. Loni had been ABD at Berkeley in sociology before she joined the Civil Rights Movement (where she met her husband David), and then became an advocate for diversity in public media at KQED, which opened the door to diversity in public television programming. The problem was that not having the Ph.D. had now handicapped her in winning grants that would enable her to continue her life's work. Many credit Loni's documentaries, shown in both houses of Congress, and to President Ronald Reagan, for being the tipping point for the passage of the historic 1988 Civil Liberties Act. I told Loni that had she chosen otherwise, quoting the words of Arnold Toynbee, she would have been "truant to history."

In 2003 my students and I were able to successfully nominate Loni Ding for an Honorary Doctorate from Stony Brook. Loni was allotted only three minutes to accept her award, and she told me that wasn't enough time to say anything meaningful. Loni and her husband David stayed up all night—honing the words in shifts—to compose some remarks that took only seven minutes. I still remember the power of Loni's images and words.

In 2010 I flew out to Berkeley to attend Loni's funeral in San Francisco. Loni's husband David asked me to speak for five minutes about Loni. I stood up without any prepared remarks to talk about Loni, and I spoke for exactly five minutes. Helen Zia, former editor of *Ms. Magazine* and co-author with Wen Ho Lee of *My Country vs. Me*, who was in the audience, told me that I must have taken a long time to write such a beautiful eulogy. I told her I spoke from the heart about what Loni had imparted to us all. Before the service ended, a large crowd of community people began gathering in the streets for the procession through the streets of San Francisco—ordinary people with the accents and faces that Loni as a filmmaker had lovingly documented and framed with the power of her lens. That day I realized that when Loni spoke during commencement, she was not accepting an award, she was imparting who she was.

DOROTHY DAY: THE LONG LONELINESS

In the stories of each of the above mentors I have included examples of what Dorothy Day called "the long loneliness." Another factor in the problem of absence is the lack of mentors, or perhaps more accurately, the exhaustion of mentors. Working as a minority activist, academic, or artist, one is called upon to help with struggles on many fronts, leading to a kind of exhaustion—the loneliness in the middle miles of a marathon—not always faced by mainstream activists, cultural works, or scholars. After almost two decades of work on Asian American philosophy, I've returned to my original research as a logician. As Dorothy Day observed:

"We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community."



War and Remembrance Conference at the Charles B. Wang Asian American Center at Stony Brook University with Lisa Yun, Gary Okihiro, Gary Mar, Helen Zia, Noam Chomsky, and John Tchen.

At a special session of the APA "Approaching the Tenth Anniversary of 9/11 Through Asian/American Eyes" in San Diego in 2011, University of California, Santa Barbara, American studies professor George Lipsitz eloquently explained why the problem of absence is not simply to be solved by "adding on" the experience of Asian Americans typically left out of works of cultural criticism and political history.

[Asian American studies/philosophy] uses the situated historical and social positions of Asian immigrants and their descendants as colonial subjects, witnesses to war and empire, participants in low wage labor, and targets of negative ascription to reveal how these identities lead to the production of unique archives, imaginaries, epistemologies, and ontologies. What is important in this formulation is not what has been done to Asian Americans or even what they have done for themselves, but rather the unique optics on power, culture, and social identities to be found in works of expressive culture by Asian Americans. . . . [W]orks of art by Asian Americans register and resist the inscriptions of Cold War ways of thinking. They

document neither simple exclusion from the nation nor uncritical embrace of it, but rather continuing critical and contradictory engagements with its core categories and beliefs. At the same time, this work makes us rethink the Cold War, to see it as a civil war inside the west that had some of its most deadly consequences in Asia, to rethink its periodization between 1946 and 1989 by understanding how it interacted with prior histories of colonialism and modernization as well as with its afterlife in subsequent Manichean and binary oppositions deployed in the war on terror after 1989.¹¹

Asian American philosophy is therefore not only for students of Asian descent. It provides all students with perspectives they need to transform and thrive in the global workplaces of the twenty-first century. As Ronald Takaki put it: “[W]e can be certain that much of our society’s future will be influenced by which ‘mirror’ we choose to see ourselves. America does not belong to one race or one group . . . and Americans have been constantly redefining their national identity. . . . By sharing their stories, they invite us to see ourselves in a different mirror.”¹²

Several years ago I found myself on a delegation to Oaxaca, one of the poorest parts of Mexico, as an identified leader on Long Island, on a mission to understand, and experience first-hand, the “roots of migration.” We slept on concrete floors, listened to the stories of villagers whose lives, jobs, and youth have been dislocated, and learned about the U.S. trade policies that lay at the roots of the migration problem. I found myself, in the company of this unlikely delegation of college students, community leaders, and activists, looking up into the starry heavens, in this unknown place, dancing with great joy.

I would never have dreamed that the journey of becoming an Asian American philosopher would lead me to this place, accompanied by these friends and strangers, experiencing a new equilibrium and seeing myself and all the others mirrored in our work and in the heavens. The words of a Franciscan blessing captured this moment: *Que Dios nos bendiga con las lágrimas para derramar por los que sufren para que les extendamos nuestras manos para consolarlos y cambiar su dolor a alegría. Y que Dios nos bendiga con la locura para pensar que podemos hacer una diferencia en el mundo, así que haremos las cosas que otros dicen que no se puede hacer.*¹³

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank David Kim, Ed Casey, Aaron Godfrey, Gary Okihiro, Alan Kim, Roberta Richin, and Lisa Yun for their support, encouragement, and thoughtful discussion.

NOTES

1. Adrienne Rich, “Invisibility in Academe,” in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1986).
2. Plato, *Phaedrus*, 229E–230A.

3. Marie Dennis, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Joseph Nangle, and Stuart Taylor, *St. Francis and the Foolishness of God* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003).
4. Yuri Kochiyama, *Passing It On: A Memoir* (UCLA Asian American Studies Press, 2004), xxiii.
5. Once the 442nd were called upon to save the “Lost Battalion” of 271 Texas Infantry men in France at a cost of over 1,000 casualties. The casualty rate for Japanese Americans in the armed forces was five times higher than that for the overall American armed forces. The 442nd became the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in U.S. military history—earning 18,143 awards, including eight Presidential Citations, twenty-one Medals of Honor, and 9,486 Purple Hearts. Their motto was “Go for Broke!” In the words of Yuri’s husband Bill, “their wartime record and sacrifices [of all Japanese American soldiers] proved once and for all that they were loyal Americans. They earned the right to walk tall.” Yuri Kochiyama, *Passing It On*, 193.
6. Yuri Kochiyama, *Passing It On*, xxiv.
7. The founding purposes of Asian studies and Asian American studies are quite distinct. Asian studies emerged during the Cold War to assist the U.S. government and the populace to contain the orient. Historically, it has had a “colonizing” agenda, for which Edward Said coined the term “Orientalism.” The “Orient” or “East” came to represent the farthest, most exotic, and most remote region from Western civilization. According to Said, the intent of Orientalism was the objectification of the cultures of Asia and the Middle East providing a rationalization for colonialism and militarism. A second generation of upper class immigrant scholars in Asian Studies sometimes reacted with a sort of ethnic nationalism that overlooked issues of patriarchy and racism. Asian American studies, in contrast, emerged in the 1960s, from the Civil Rights and liberation movements. Asian American studies was established by Asian Americans to understand themselves, represent themselves more accurately in the wider American community, and transform underlying structural inequalities. Asian American studies seeks to free Asian Americans from the dual domination of assimilationism and overseas nationalism. Asian American studies not only critiques Orientalism, but it also strives to promote the diverse voices of the Asian American communities in literature, theater, music, documenting oral histories, advocacy, and interdisciplinary research.
8. Gary Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture* (Seattle, Washington: University of Washington Press, 1994), ix.
9. Shirley Hune, “Opening the American Mind and Body: The Role of Asian American Studies,” *Change* (November/December 1989): 56–63. Reprinted in Nakanishi and Nishida (editors), *The Asian American Educational Experience: A Source Book for Teachers and Students* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995), 329–38.
10. Loni Ding, “Strategies of an Asian American Filmmaker,” *Moving the Image: Independent Asian Pacific American Media Arts* (1991) (UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 1991), 47. Italics added.
11. To read Lipsitz’s masterful essay “Affinities, Affiliations, and Alliances: Why Asian American Perspectives Matter Now,” along with reflections by Mary Watkins, “The Shame of Forcibly Displacing Others: 9/11 and the Criminalization of Immigration,” and Gary Okihiro, “The Alien: Reflections Along the Border, Ten Years After September 11, 2001,” see this newsletter, 10, no. 2 (Spring 2011).
12. Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: A Multicultural History of America* (Little, Brown and Company, 1994). Italics added.
13. Translation: “May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer so we will reach out our hands to comfort them and change their pain to joy. And may God bless us with the foolishness to think we can make a difference in the world, so we will do the things which others say cannot be done.”