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THE VERY CONCEPT OF ASIAN AMERICAN youth culture presents a conundrum for American history and culture, for it was never meant to exist. Under the auspices of the nineteenth-century American racial dictatorship, Asian migration to the United States was not supposed to be permanent nor should it have resulted in settler colonies. The normative Asian immigrant was the young male who migrated as cheap labor in order to replace enslaved African labor after the end of the slave trade. These migrants were not intended to have the leisure time in which to form their own youth culture. As sojourners, they were not supposed to remain in the United States, nor were they meant to propagate. In addition, the controlling trope of "Asian American" was that of the forever foreigner subjected to expulsion from American nation-state borders. Thus, Asian American youth were not allotted any claim on American rights or American culture. For all those reasons, Asian American youths forming their own culture during leisure time was an impossible construct. But, it was one that happened in the twentieth century, nonetheless.

Although people of Asian descent have been in the United States in significant numbers since the mid-nineteenth century, due to demographics and migration patterns, namely the targeted exclusion of female immigration through acts such as the Page Law (1875), the first sizeable group of American-born Asian youth did not appear until the early twentieth century.[1] This cohort owed its genesis to the convergence of three historical

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factors.[2] First, in the twentieth century, Asian American sex ratios became more even, families reproduced, and the first substantial group of American-born Asians came of age. Second, this generation gained American citizenship through their birth, which set them apart from their parents' immigrant generation who were legally barred from attaining citizenship through naturalization. Third, American immigration exclusion from 1924 to 1965 meant that any population increase would come from the American-born, primarily Chinese American and Japanese American youth, or, until the 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Act curtailed their migration, Filipino male colonial subjects.[3]

Filipino American male youth culture began to form in significant numbers in the 1920s. Immigration laws and United States colonialism shaped the timing of the appearance of Filipino American male youth culture. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Immigration Act of 1924 curtailed the entry of Chinese and Japanese cheap labor, thus creating a demand for other sources of cheap labor on the West Coast, a demand filled by Filipino migration. After the 1898 Spanish American war, the Philippines became a colony of the United States and, as "nationals," Filipinos were not subject to immigration restrictions. Beginning in 1923, young Filipino men migrated in large numbers, thus creating the structural conditions for a vibrant youth culture. As U.S. colonial subjects, the young immigrant men had, to varying degrees, been versed in and exposed to dominant U.S. culture in the Philippines and thus as immigrants formed their own youth culture that was analogous to the cultures created by second-generation Chinese American and Japanese American youth.

Asian American communities deployed youthful cultural practices in order to respond to the historical legacy of immigration exclusion, colonialism, citizenship obstacles, and construction as forever-foreign men, as well as to address present-day racial segregation and community-specific issues such as Japanese American internment or Filipino American decolonization. The "hep cat" cool, zoot-suited Filipino male and the fresh-faced, smartly-dressed, and smiling beauty queen became prevalent community responses to the mainstream's image of the shuffling, sepia-dour, foreign male coolie. Asian American youth made a culture of their own within the constraints of their historical time. Sites where scholars have located Asian American youth culture include clubs,

beauty pageants, and consumer culture. Ingeniously, out of necessity and survival, Asian American youth negotiated their own spaces within the frameworks of mainstream culture.

Asian American (usually ethnic-specific in the pre-1965 era) youth culture formed as a response to the contradictions between the democratic promise of American national belonging and the practices of racial segregation and exclusion. For Filipino Americans, this awareness of the contradictions between promises and reality occurred in the migrant generation, for American colonialism had placed them into a colonial relationship with American society while in the Philippines. For Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans, it is not that the first generation did not agitate for inclusion in the American nation-state. Rather, those immigrant generations had to struggle with issues such as language, establishment, and work instead of primarily focusing on claiming America through youth culture. For Japanese Americans as well as Chinese Americans during this era, it was the second generation who most acutely felt the contradictions between their American birth and the rights and status that did not accrue to them through their birth. Thus, there became the need to form youth institutions to redress those contradictions.

This article will lay out the historical concepts of Asian American youth culture, while tracing key developments in recent scholarship. This piece is not intended to be an encyclopedic recitation of all of the scholarship on youth culture. Rather, it highlights key moments in the two most prevalent directions in the historical studies of Asian American youth culture, namely the works that emphasize practices embedded within Asian American community formation and the studies that utilize frameworks provided by the Birmingham school of cultural studies.

Community Formation: Clubs and Beauty Pageants

Pioneering sociological studies such as Rose Hum Lee's *The Chinese in the United States of America* (1960) established both the community focus and the problematic of youth culture.[4] In the 1980s and 1990s, scholars followed her lead by researching ethnic-specific Asian American youth and community. According to this community-formation school of thought, the emergence of Asian American youth cultures marks not their assimi-

lation into American society but their construction of specific identities in relation to Asian-ethnic identities and mainstream America and are part of how communities respond to segregation and racial difference. Using critical works such as Michael Omi and Howard Winant's *Racial Formation in the United States,* the scholarly emphasis has been on the creation of Asian-ethnic-specific (Japanese American, Chinese American, Filipino American) racial consciousness through youth institutions.[5] This choice has led to an examination of youth entities such as clubs and beauty pageants.

In her groundbreaking study of female Japanese American youth culture, Valerie Matsumoto focused on women in youth clubs in the 1930s. These women represented the first generation of American-born women of Asian descent to attain numerical and cultural significance. Moreover, this 1930s second generation known as the Nisei was unique in American history. In a nation-state that validated racial segregation with the Supreme Court decision, *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* (1896), the Nisei faced obstacles to claiming its place in America that no other ethnic or racial group had ever faced.[6] The 1924 Immigration Act that limited European migration and excluded Asians in actuality targeted Japanese immigration. In addition, California's alien land laws, which forbade immigrants from owning land, were passed directly against the Japanese. In sum, American racial hostilities targeted the Japanese as the ultimate non-American aliens. The burden, then, was on the American-born cohort to prove their American citizenship through cultural activities.

Racial segregation, combined with that need to prove American citizenship, prompted the formation of Nisei youth groups all over Southern California. In the 1930s, since mainstream clubs affiliated with schools, communities, and national organizations were not open to Japanese American membership, Nisei clubs were established. In the 1930s, the presence of sixty-six Nisei clubs in Los Angeles reflected a need for alternative spaces. Showcasing the region as a Nisei stronghold, local Japanese American newspapers reported that by 1940, four hundred Nisei clubs existed in Southern California.[7] Given the importance of the Japanese American community in Southern California, it is not surprising that Japanese American women at the University of California, Los Angeles

founded the first Asian American sorority in the nation.[8] As shown in the works of David Yoo, Eileen Tamura, and Lon Kurashige, Nisei youth participated in a wide variety of ethnic-specific activities, including churches, basketball, and beauty pageants.[9] For Japanese Americans, the lessons learned as Nisei youth in the 1930s assisted them with coping with incarceration in internment camps during World War II and allowed them to fight for redress afterwards.

Like their Japanese American counterparts, Chinese American women in the San Francisco Bay area discovered similar racial barriers prompted by segregation and hence perceived the need to create ethnic-specific youth organizations. Although not explicitly focused on youth culture, Judy Yung's groundbreaking works, *Unbound Feet* and *Unbound Voices,* in part examine the lives of young Chinese American women. Clubs and organizations proved critical to their development, especially in coming to consciousness about racial segregation and fighting it. One example among many that Yung provides is the Square and Circle Club. In a heartfelt editorial, Alice Fong Yu, president of the Square and Circle Club, reported that European American women in San Francisco imposed racial segregation. Upon the club's 1937 application for admission to the local Federation of Women's Clubs, the European American women amended their constitution to bar "non-Caucasians."[10] Humorously, Fong Yu observed that, "Some of the much heated clubwomen, doing considerable chestheaving, said that though they would be willing to work for 'colored women,' they wished—oh, so ardently—to reserve the right to choose their own club friends, and so on, ad nauseam."[11] Similar to missionary and imperial women, the San Francisco club women could support the "uplift" of their darker sisters, but did not consider them to be their equals. Thus, the Square and Circle club remained outside the purview of the San Francisco Federation of Women's Clubs.

Beauty Pageants

Although there is no reason why beauty pageants are necessarily an aspect of youth culture, in the twentieth century, especially in Asian American communities, they were critical sites of youthful norms and displays. As young Asian American women's bodies were hyper-commodifiable in the

twentieth century, those bodies have been especially subjected to display and imbued with various meanings. In addition, beauty pageants have been especially fruitful sites for examining how youth make meaning out of their lives, for the young participants have acted as representatives of family power as well as representatives of community, nation, race, and ethnicity. As Arleen G. de Vera observes regarding Rizal Day Queen contests, "By promulgating these ideals of femininity and by promoting the queens as glamorous and yet properly 'Filipina,' these discourses amounted to a process of constructing gender identity, by which the queen candidates were observed and compared and were to be emulated by other young women and girls."[12] The creation of and debates over ideal female Asian American youth happened at the ethnic-specific beauty pageant.

Local beauty pageants, in general, serve different purposes for racialized communities in the United States than do mainstream national ones. Although some aspects of "ethnic" beauty pageants replicate larger American national and state pageants, they simultaneously articulate alternative cultural practices that counter the dominant discourse from which they are excluded. Beauty pageants can forge key community ties. They also create a new basis for inclusion and break down the dichotomy between exclusion and inclusion. As Nhi T. Lieu's work shows, Vietnamese American communities used beauty pageants to foster an imagined "nation within nation," as a way to constitute themselves internally as a viable political entity. [13] Filipino American community scholar Rick Bonus calls local beauty pageant spaces "alternative sites" because they go beyond mainstream politics and pageants and instead are sites where Filipino American communities are constructed.[14] Paradoxically, the need to adopt hegemonic cultural practices gives colonized and racial minority subjects the means to disrupt hegemonic power.[15] Hence, given the realities of asymmetrical power relations, Asian American adoption of cultural practices such as beauty pageants or mainstream fashions can create the grounds for signaling exclusion from rights and privileges. In addition, racial minority beauty pageants may take forms and elements from mainstream American culture, but in making the event their own, it is an act of claiming belonging in the nation-state. Thus, Asian American beauty pageants create a cultural practice that simultaneously claims racial

difference while agitating for inclusion into the nation-state. Through hybridity, the young women's uses of mainstream cultural forms are transformed into distinctly Asian American female practices. Through the beauty pageant, Asian American communities can invoke or reinterpret their past, which can also signal future directions for the community.

Political considerations prompted the establishment of patriotic Filipina American queen contests. As women were visible symbols of gendered national identity, societal destabilization wrought by Philippine decolonization could be managed through an all-American queen pageant for women. Filipino Americans in Los Angeles, Salinas, and other communities held Independence Day celebrations centered on the crowned queen and her court. The Miss Philippines beauty pageant signified not only the local Los Angeles community but also the Filipino American community in California and the United States. In addition, through its quest for the woman who best exemplified Maria Clara, Filipino nationalist Jose Rizal's ideal woman, the pageant invoked anticolonial struggles in the Philippines as well.[16] In fact, before decolonization in 1946, the Independence Days had been named Rizal Days. As de Vera has found, beauty-queen competitions were key forums through which Philippine national identity was debated and forged through the construction of idealized gender roles.[17] And as Barbara Posadas has researched, beauty pageants were ubiquitous in Filipino communities.[18] In the 1920s and 1930s, since there were so few Filipinas, the queens and princesses were typically the white girlfriends of single Filipino men. Between the late 1930s and 1965, Filipina newcomers and daughters of earlier couples took crowns.

Although beauty pageants gave communities forums through which to debate and celebrate ideas of femininity, pageants were sites for dissent from mainstream as well as community values.[19] From the vantage point of mainstream culture, Asian American beauty culture reveals contestations over racialized standards of beauty. It also shows alternatives to liberal individual competition by selecting more than one queen or drawing queens by lots. From the perspective of the community, beauty pageants show that it is not monolithic but contains multiple opinions, for not all members agreed upon the traits of its perfect representative. And, not surprisingly, numerous young Asian American women contested the no-

tion that being a community beauty queen was a worthwhile achievement by refusing to participate in her selection.

Dawn Mabalon's forthcoming work on Filipino youth culture demonstrates the contested nature of beauty pageants. As her research shows, young Filipina women did not always want to represent family and community in beauty pageants. In 1942, a young Filipina signaled her resistance to competing in the Stockton, California Caballeros de Dimas Alang pageant by refusing to wear the Maria Clara dress.[20] Since her father insisted that she participate, Angelina Bantillo did not costume herself in an elaborate Maria Clara costume but instead wore a somber black dress. In an oral history interview, Bantillo reported that competing in the pageant made her feel as if she were in mourning, thus wearing that dress signaled her resistance.

A closer examination of the 1950 University of California at Berkeley "Queen of the Seventh Annual Spring Informal" shows the importance of youth beauty pageants to displaying ideal Cold War-era womanhood to the local community.[21] For Asian American communities, beauty culture became a site for Cold War politics that played out through displays of ideal female citizenship. Although past scholars have focused on traditional political histories of the Cold War, new critical attention is being paid to cultural issues.[22] The Cold War was of special concern to Asian Americans because Asia was a primary site for these battles: witness the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the "fall" of China to communism. For Asian American communities, the very conditions of the Cold War body— American, beautiful, and female—were under debate and negotiation.

Cold War female college queens in the immediate aftermath of China's "fall" to communism were of such interest to the San Francisco-based *Chinese Press*'s widely dispersed readership that the paper assigned a special U.C. Berkeley correspondent to report on the school's pageants. Such daily reportage could reassure both the community and the broader American society that, despite the continued political scrutiny of Chinese Americans at the time, any community that could produce such wholesome all-American exemplars of youthful womanhood was bound to be all right. The queen-contest biographies almost always discuss youth-centered hobbies and activities, for the clues to their victory lay not in measurements but in recreational and career preferences. In the

1950s, one was required to be outgoing and have feminine professional aspirations, as the *Press* reported: "Although very serious in her goal at becoming a pharmacist, Miss Liu says she loves meeting people, and 'I'm really honored to contribute my efforts for our Cal club.' College life, roller skating, dances (sources report she's a terrific Charleston critter!)—these show up the likes of this hard-working candidate." Queen contestants, as youthful representatives of their community's middle-class ideal, are still required to be active.[23] As the type of activity they select corresponds to social status and possibilities for status mobility, the candidates' activities indicate who has the best chance of winning the crown.

For some candidates, such as Nancy Toy, the manager emphasized personality traits as markers of fitness to become a queen. Note the "explosive" nickname:

> Jack Din, manager for Nancy Toy, sums up his protégé's personality: TNT- the culmination of these three letters aptly describes Nancy Toy, a candidate for Spring Informal Queen.[24]

The reference to an explosive compound as a metaphor for women's sexuality was by no means unusual during the Cold War. The naming of the bikini bathing suit came about because of the comparison between the power of female sexuality and the power of atomic testing in the Pacific Bikini Islands.[25]

The description of Toy provided clues to her poor chances in the contest:

> She's a package of friendliness, sparkling humor and pert vivaciousness all rolled into one. A sophomore, she hails all the way from Phoenix, Arizona. Studying oriental law at Cal., Nancy likes the pleasures of life—eat, sleep, and play![26]

Toy had an outgoing personality but lacked the necessary achievement markers to be an effective queen. Although studying "oriental law" was a plus, she did not appear to participate in a wide variety of student and community activities, instead preferring the pleasures of life. She was also from out of state, which meant that she did not have the base of support developed in high school that local candidates would have.

Not surprisingly, Joanna Liu was declared victor over Nancy Toy and the other candidates. Liu's victory was announced by the club president,

sealed with the tiara and dance, and, as befits a Cold War queen, glorified with consumer goods: "Before a capacity crowd, in an aura of suspense, Tom Woo, president of the U.C. Chinese Students' Club, announced Miss Liu as the candidate chosen. She was crowned Queen Joanna, her Majesty of the 1950 Spring Informal. Manley Wu, chairman of the evening, presented her with a wrist watch, gift of the Tommy Company of San Francisco."[27] Crowned with a tiara, Liu led the waltzing. As was customary for other pageants, there was no king, so Liu and the Court danced with sponsors and managers. Underscoring the importance of the queen's community and family ties, Liu's parents were presented to the crowd. In keeping with Cold War beauty contestants' displays of female modesty, Liu was said to have thought she had no chance of winning. Given all of her attributes, Liu best represented the Chinese American version of the 1950s all-American university woman.

Yet, in response to the 1950s and 1960s pageants like U.C. Berkeley's Queen of the Spring Informal, opposition to beauty pageants' bourgeois norms and the exploitation of women formed. Judy Tzu-chun Wu's study of a different pageant held in the same region, San Francisco's Miss Chinatown U.S.A., found that in the 1960s and 1970s, "The new generation of activists questioned the role of tourism in the community, the images of Chinese American women promoted in the pageant, and the appropriateness of Confucian values and the ROC in representing Chinese culture."[28] Thus, this pageant worked as a rallying point around which all that was wrong with their community could focus. As Wu explained, "For them, Miss Chinatown represented a symbol of a commercialized, anti-revolutionary, middle-class Chinese American identity, exactly what reformers, radicals, and feminists sought to change in the community."[29] By the civil rights era, Miss Chinatown and all she symbolized gave youthful radicals the fuel and the language with which to agitate for change.

Birmingham school of cultural studies

Cultural studies frameworks and methodologies developed by the Birmingham school of cultural studies have proven useful for many historians who analyze Asian American youth culture. Previous Marxist-based scholarship on consumer and mass cultures had characterized mass cultural

participants as being controlled by the capitalist ruling class. Led by Stuart Hall, Dick Hebdige, and Angela McRobbie, however, the Birmingham school interpreted youth culture's participation in mass consumer culture as resistance to the dominant culture through the formation of an alternative and oppositional culture.[30] Using Hall and Hebidge's class-based analysis, Angela McRobbie and other scholars broadened the analysis of youth culture to include women.[31] In transporting this framework to the U.S. context, scholars such as Robin D.G. Kelley and George Lipsitz insisted upon race as the primary signifier.[32] As Jennifer Lee and Min Zhou argue, Asian American youth culture has been more than a source of resistance to class subordination. They characterize Asian American youth culture as "a form of engagement with the dominant culture to articulate and reaffirm their own multifaceted lived experiences and identities."[33] Although the lines between those who use community formation to analyze youth culture and those who follow the Birmingham school of cultural studies are not hard and fast nor clean and distinct, those influenced by the Birmingham school tend to emphasize the agency of youth culture participants within the constraints of consumer society.

In order to illustrate this Birmingham school approach, a concrete example of how that analysis permits the identification of youth subcultures within American capitalist consumer culture is useful. According to the Birmingham school methodology, Asian American participation in consumer culture was not a sign of their assimilation into mainstream society but instead marked their difference from the mainstream white European American consumer subject. Female participants in youth culture have different restrictions and expectations placed on their lives; hence, resistance is not an adequate measure of their subcultural potential.[34] Rather, subtle but telling differences in translation from mainstream culture mark not only Asian American distance from it but also the actual creation of Asian American culture itself.

In the immediate post-World War II era, Japanese American youth transformed quotidian items into distinctively Asian American ones.[35] Collective youth identity is embedded within consumer culture yet transforms it, for youth subcultures rework material objects in order to express their political affiliations. Birmingham cultural studies school theorist Dick Hebdige has found that subcultures revolve around com-

modities such as fashion and music that have a symbolic value infused with political meaning not obvious to the casual outsider.[36] The following passage from "Teen-Age Fads" from a 1949 issue of the post-World War II Japanese American magazine, *Nisei Vue,* beautifully illustrates Hebdige's notion of youth subculture:

> Although the cartridge cases and sailor caps are basically alike, they don't look anything alike after the girls have worked on them for a while. For instance, they think a girl is a schmoe if she doesn't scribble all kinds of things on her case—such as the names of her favorite fella, songs, clubs, etc. No two purses look alike after all this scrawling! With the caps, it's the same story.[37]

This passage shows how Japanese American female youth acted as a subculture not only to the adult population but also in relation to European American youth. Customizing cartridge cases and sailor hats to denote favorite clubs and fellas marked the women racially as Japanese American. Those marks reworked war surplus, in part intended for the war effort against a Japanese enemy, into a local, alternative consumer product. Indeed, female accessories have been important markers of social location.[38]

Alongside Dick Hebidge's analysis of youth subcultures, Stuart Hall's concept of a negotiated code has been exceedingly influential for historians of Asian American youth culture. In his article, "Encoding, Decoding," Hall delineates three major types of responses to mass consumer culture: the dominant hegemonic position, the negotiated code or position, and the oppositional code. The negotiated code has been most useful for historians of Asian American youth culture. According to Hall, this version works within the framework of dominant hegemonic definitions. However, within the dynamics of the negotiated code, at the local or the ground level, there are exceptions to the dominant hegemonic frameworks. Negotiated codes have oppositional or adaptive elements. As Hall writes, the negotiated code "accords the privileged position to the dominant definitions of events while reserving the right to make a more negotiated application to 'local conditions' . . . ."[39] The contradictions that come through a negotiated position are plentiful, but are only apparent at particular moments. These negotiated codes work through "situated logics" that are "sustained by their differential and unequal relations to the discourses and logics of

power."[40] Whether explicitly referring to Hall's framework or not, many Asian American youth cultural works rely on some aspect of the negotiated code to explicate their findings.

One of the best examples of the application of Stuart Hall's negotiated codes and Dick Hebdige's subcultural framework to Asian American ethnic-specific youth culture occurs in Linda Maram's research on Filipino American masculinity. Maram examines how Filipino American men "negotiated an identity based on youth, ethnicity, and heterosexual masculinity through the aesthetics and public performance of brown bodies in leisure centers that catered to Filipino patrons and how these areas subsequently came to be contested terrains with the dominant society."[41] By using the word, "negotiated," and by explicitly drawing upon the Birmingham school, Maram acknowledges that, while young Filipino American men were constrained by the dominant hegemonic American societal codes, within those constraints they could enact local and contested cultural behaviors. This formation of communal identity had political implications. Maram argues that, "The solidarity, however tenuous, produced in this communal system helped numerous Filipino laborers weather the turbulent period of organizing labor unions and the lean years of the Great Depression."[42] Indeed, as a response to racial prejudice, societal stratification, and segregation, Filipino American men formed a distinct community complete with their own codes of dress and behavior, an alternative culture formed within the constraints of American society.

One telling example of Filipino American men forming their own negotiated coded youth culture in the 1940s was through the wearing of the zoot suit, complete with its drape shape and reet-pleat trousers, with their hair coifed into Argentine ducktails. For young Filipino American men, donning the zoot suit was an oppositional and subcultural way to defy the subservient position into which their race and labor placed them. As Maram, drawing upon the research of Robin D.G. Kelley, argues, these young Filipino male immigrants used fashion to "engineer an alternative image, negotiate a working-class ethnic identity, and celebrate the body in motion. . . ."[43] Like the young Japanese American women portrayed in *Nisei Vue*, these Filipino men customized an American consumer product,

the suit, to fit their own physiques and new aesthetic style. Yet this adoption of the zoot suit, as the zoot suit riots of 1943 remind us, had deeper political implications. For two weeks during June 1943 in Los Angeles, U.S. servicemen attacked zoot suiters, primarily Mexican, Filipino, and African Americans, and, in an act eerily reminiscent of lynching, sheared them of the zoot elements as a means to keep them in their place. These attacks demonstrated that the negotiated and potentially oppositional cultural codes represented by the zoot suit were understood too well by those threatened by it, and those threatened by it worked to remove the defiant signifiers.

Like young Filipino American men, young second-generation South Asian/Indian American youth used negotiated codes to work within the constraints of American consumer society to form their own culture, in this case in New York City in the 1980s and 1990s. Sunaina Maira's *Desis in the House* focuses on second-generation Indian Americans, whom she defines as either the children of immigrants or children who arrived in the United States before the age of eight. Maira has found that, "Indian American youth culture brings to light the often hidden contradictions of citizenship and belonging, work and leisure, multiculturalism and education, that second-generation youth manage daily, and it points to a larger material and historical context that structures this youthscape."[44] Strongly influenced by the Birmingham school of cultural studies, Maira insists on the ability of Desi youth to form their own spaces and codes of display and behavior within the structures of dominant society.

According to Maira, Desi youth culture uses subculture in the form of fashion and music "to mediate between the expectations of immigrant parents (in this case, literally the parents' culture) and those of mainstream American peer culture by trying to integrate signs of belonging to both worlds."[45] This strategy takes the form of the consumption of music and fashion, and the performance of remix music that incorporates bhangra and hip hop. Through such cultural hybridity, young Indian American second-generation youth can signal their unique cultural community to themselves and to the larger American society.

What is particularly interesting, theoretically, about Maira and Maram's research is that the negotiated codes their subjects rework do not solely derive from dominant white culture but utilize codes from other

oppositional or other negotiated cultures such as African American and Mexican American ones. For Filipino American male youth, there were strong links to Mexican American culture in the wearing of the zoot suit. For the young Desis in New York city, Maira links bhangra dance culture to African American hip hop culture. Dress, speech, and music codes that owe much to African American subcultures are given Indian American-specific grammars and aesthetics, which then allow the Desis to form a new culture. For Maram and Maira, the local represents not just ethnically-bounded communities but interactions with other racial minority groups. Community studies models of youth culture, conversely, tend to focus on more ethnically bound Asian American communities or on those communities in relationship to dominant white culture.

Conclusion

Historical studies of Asian American youth cultures will continue to be an exciting area of scholarship. Questions of globalization and diasporic cultures will animate research in areas such as youth adoptees from Asia, global youth cultures, and youth cultures that look not just to the U.S. mainstream or African American/Latino culture but to Asian cultures as well. Recent films such as *Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle* and *Better Luck Tomorrow* signal more mainstream avenues for showing and producing films about Asian American youth and the promises and perils of its commodification. As young Asian Pacific Americans continue to enroll in colleges and universities in increasing numbers, the imperative to study everyday experiences and lives will increase. And, given the media attention to events such as the 2007 Virginia Tech massacre by a young Korean American student, a person repeatedly cast as a deviant outsider and non-American, surely the need to counter narratives of racialized youth deviance and pathology will abound.

Notes

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