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Big Community in Little Chinatown: How Asian Americans (Re)Present Their Community Today

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BIG COMMUNITY IN LITTLE CHINATOWN: HOW ASIAN AMERICANS (RE)PRESENT THEIR COMMUNITY TODAY

An orange Orchid flower, commonly associated with Asian Orientalism. Image from SamuelStone, Pixabay, July 5, 2018, pixabay.com/photos/orchid-orange-flower-spring-3515218/.

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Senior Capstone

English Studies Concentration

Research Essay

Professor Qun Wang

Division of Humanities and Communication

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Dedications and Acknowledgements

This work is dedicated to my family, for pushing, supporting, and encouraging me to get this far; to my friends for all their positivity in troubling times, and to my two cats - Kuro and Kage - for lovingly stepping on my laptop as I wrote this capstone.

I would also like to acknowledge my teachers: Mrs. Jane Rowland, Mrs. Jan Patrino, Mrs. Kathy Chance, and Mr. James Evans; as well as my professors: Dr. Peter Zitko, Dr. Qun Wang, and Mr. Nick Mullins, all for inspiring a love of learning, education, and writing within me.

Thank you, and I hope you, the reader, enjoy.

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HCOM 475: SENIOR CAPSTONE
PROJECT PROPOSAL
ESSAY OPTION

1. My name is Meghan Morrison, and my concentration under HCOM is English Studies. English Studies focuses on the rhetorical analysis of different literary media, which will also be the focus of my capstone.

2. The focus of my essay will be the role of minorities, specifically women and LGBT+, Asian Americans and how they create and utilize community within a selection of chosen media. Phrased as a question, "Within Asian American media, what role does community play for Asian Americans, specifically women and LGBT+ individuals?" I chose this topic as I have researched Asian American experiences during many of my classes here at CSUMB, especially the experience of the woman. Through my capstone, I'd like to expand on the research I've done for Asian American women as well as look into the experiences of Asian American LGBT+ individuals.

3. The theme for HCOM475-02 is "identity," and my project directly aligns with this theme from the very core. Identity comes in various forms, one of which being an individual's heritage and cultural identity, encapsulated through my project in the form of reviewing Asian American media. In addition, other kinds of identity come through an individual's personal identity, like their gender and status as an LGBT+ member. Therefore, this project will connect deeply through the interconnection of Asian American's cultural identity, gender identity, and romantic identity.

4. The purpose of my capstone is to deepen my own personal understanding of rhetorical analysis as well as Asian American media and representation. Through my project, I hope to enrich myself, as well as enrich others on the value of community in Asian American circles. By analyzing popular Asian American media, there could hopefully be a deeper understanding of the way popular media is used to build community and a sense of identity and self in the modern age. In addition, I would eventually like to contribute this to CSUMB and other students digitally, as I would like my capstone to ideally help out other students with their own projects, as a source for them to utilize.

5. **Title**: Big Community in Little Chinatown: An analysis of community within marginalized Asian-American groups as represented in popular media

6. **Summary**: In this paper, a series of modern Asian American pieces of media will be analyzed to see how women and LGBT+ view, depict, and create their community. By analyzing these medias, there will be a deeper understanding of how Asian American's choose to represent their communities, especially within modern media and within

marginalized groups. Popular media, especially ones created by marginalized groups themselves, are valuable to understanding how groups choose to represent and see themselves. Therefore, the analysis of these is important to deepening understanding of marginalized groups.

7. **Sources:** In order to complete my capstone, I will need to learn more about Asian American's representation and understanding of community within the real world, as that reflects on the media they create. In addition, I will need more research on Asian American women and LGBT+ within their communities, in order to deeper understand the way they are portrayed in media. Mainly, the tools needed will be robust access to the library and sources to study these topics.
   Primary sources for analysis, currently just ideas and not permanent:
   The Magical Language of Others by E. J. Koh (2020)
   The Woman Warrior by Maxine Hong Kingston (1976)
   Orientalism by Edward Said (1978)
   A Voice In Every Wind by Qun Wang (2004)
   M. Butterfly - film (1993)
   Crazy Rich Asians - film (2018)
   Fresh off the Boat - TV series (2015-2020)
   Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan (1989)
   All of these sources are majorly Asian American in origin and creation, and focus either on women or LGBT+ characters.

8. My next steps for my capstone will be to review the sources in order to critically analyze them through the lens of community and marginalized groups within the greater Asian American community. To supplement the primary materials, I'll need to do more research on the community as a whole. And finally, in addition, I'll need to actually begin outlining and writing the final essay for my HCOM capstone.

9. I will be matching a majority of the timeline with the provided one by my capstone professor.
   3/5 - Narrow and begin analyzing main sources
   3/12 - Begin external/supplemental research
   3/19 - Abstract and title draft
   4/9 - Abstract and title final
   4/23 - Essay first draft
   4/30 - Final portfolio draft (synthesis/poster work, everything other than the main paper)
   5/7 - Second essay draft
   5/14 - Final portfolio draft (main paper + synthesis, poster, everything)
   5/23 - Final capstone due in full

Big Community in Little Chinatown: How Asian Americans (Re)Present Their Community Today

Introduction

Within human nature, people are driven to tell stories about themselves, about the people who surround them, and about the world they live in. Each human sees the world through a series of lenses unique to them, and likewise, their stories become marked through these unique perceptions, which changes how people see each other, how they represent their kind and others within the stories. For marginalized communities, storytelling is a vital form of representation, allowing them to safely form communities and seek representation in a vastly European dominated media market. Asian Americans, especially those further marginalized within their own group, such as women and LGBT+ individuals, utilize media and storytelling to represent their communities in a positive light. In addition, media serves as a safe haven for marginalized people to represent and celebrate themselves, as well as allowing them to create a shared Asian American culture, one that allows them to find solace in shared cultural experiences, and contrast themselves to groups of other marginalized peoples.

Theory and the Asian American Community

In order to better provide context regarding Asian American-made media in terms of the positionality, multiple intersections of culture, and the dual marginalization Asian American individuals face, the theories of double consciousness and Orientalism will be examined. The theory of double consciousness evaluates the struggles American immigrants face regarding their insectioning identities, as both an American and a person of their original culture. Asian Americans experience this duality primarily through the conflicting experiences of culture and language, an inherently personal aspect, and their daily, lived experiences through the media they

create to represent themselves. Orientalism, on the other hand, represents a Westernized view of the Orient and Asian culture. Subsequently, the idea of the Orient affects the Asian American unique culture, with some Asian Americans working to create media that deviates from the Oriental stereotype. Some Asian American media is created with awareness of such a stereotype, and works to oppose and subvert the expectations of the Orient within their communal, cultural, created media.

Double Consciousness

Du Bois's theory of double consciousness discusses the conflict of American peoples and their constant debate regarding their multifaceted existence and dual identities (Wang "Double Consciousness"). The theory was originally written regarding African Americans, however, this theory can relate to a wide variety of immigrants struggling with their multitude of cultures and identities. For individuals who experience double consciousness, they must face both the experience of being American, as either a culture they were raised with or born into, or through assimilation into American culture, in addition to bearing the cultures and traditions they bring with them, through familial bonds or from their previous living experience (Wang "Double Consciousness"). This internal struggle, between American culture and one's culture of origin, manifests into Du Bois's theory of double consciousness, and finds itself physically manifested in the media created by those who experience it, including Asian American creators. Although this phrase was created specifically in response to the struggle exhibited by African Americans, this term and experience resonates with many different groups of hyphenated Americans, including Asian American creators, who must assimilate as Americans while also bearing in mind the vastly unique cultures and traditions they come from. This double consciousness bears itself in Asian American media in the struggles of Asian American characters, as well as the

portrayal - or lack of - traditional cultural elements, languages, and communities. The portrayal of Asian elements in Asian American media shows a clear compromise between the two struggles the creator faces, an acceptance of both halves of the self; while the lack of Asian elements in Asian American media shows a potential struggle still remaining within an individual, or a preference towards the American culture that then translates to their work. In addition, some works feature a mixture of these two cultures, creating and representing the unique culture that Asian Americans experience daily, a blend of their traditional identity and their lived American one.

Orientalism

Edward Said wrote about the theory of Orientalism - sometimes referred to as the Orient - a word that was formerly synonymous with Asian immigrants and Asian Americans, and often deemed as a derogatory term. However, the original theory in Said's book discusses how the terms' origin refers to European's view of India, and has been co-opted by America to refer to Asia, specifically East Asian countries, such as China, Korea, and Japan. However, both the European and American versions of the word focus on the exotification and othering of other countries' cultures and their peoples, allowing a Western or European interpretation of their lifestyles and existences to take precedence instead of understanding the depth of their actual cultures (Said). Extending this into the realm of media, Western created media often utilizes the Orient to exotify Asians and Asian Americans, misrepresenting their true cultures and languages in favor of an idealized, exaggerated, and stereotyped Western version. By comparison, media created by Asian Americans utilizes their lived experiences and cultural knowledge to create socially aware, accurate, and truthful representations of themselves and their communities. Certain Asian American created medias choose to utilize and subvert the idea of the Orient, in

order to defy stereotypes of themselves and their peoples within their lived, Western, experiences.

The Importance and Impact of Marginalized Community

America thrives on a diversity of cultures and communities, being a nation devoted to the solace and equality of a variety of nationality groups. However, even within America, communities of similar cultures frequently group together, finding safety and solace in people who are like them. Asian immigrants founded and gathered each other in communities, some of them formally remaining to this day. Some of these Asian American developed communities remain physically as Japantown [nihonmachi], Chinatown, Koreatown, Little Manila, and Little Saigon, existing with dense culture and populations from their original country of origin. Within these areas, the language, culture, and traditions of the community remain alive, providing the residents and visitors a sense of belonging to a specific culture. The use of communities by marginalized groups helps prevent the loss of culture during assimilation, which is also represented in the media marginalized groups create, as an extension of protecting their culture within their community. However, all forms of community, even informal ones developed between a family, an individual and their friends, a neighborhood, or any cultural gathering at any scale, creates a sense of belonging for members of a given community.

With community gatherings of immigrants who experience the dual culturality of their original culture and American culture, the grounds for a unique, new culture to develop are established. And the Asian American community has done just that - developing cultural foods that exist solely to neither Americans nor Asians, and brings the community together as a whole. A popular example of an Asian American cultural food is the fortune cookie, whose exact origins remain ambiguous. A staple of American Chinese restaurants, the fortune cookie is said to

contain Chinese proverbs or wisdom; however, it is still unknown how it became to be such a pervasive part of Asian American culture. Some cultural artifacts link the fortune cookie to Chinese American immigrant David Jung, who made a sweet cookie based off a Chinese legend from his family; another claims that it was created by Japanese American immigrant Makoto Hagiwara, who served the fortune cookie as a modified Japanese *senbei* rice cracker at his Japanese Tea Garden (Hao 97-99). Regardless of its true origins, it is clear the fortune cookie is an inherent part of Asian American culture, especially Chinese American, and a creation unique to the mixing of both cultures that would not survive in just one or the other. A more recent creation, but with an origin just as ambiguous as the fortune cookie, is the Asian American mochi-donut dessert called 'pon de ring,' 'poi mochi' or more simply, the 'mochi donut.' While it has a variety of names, this dessert is Asian American (or more specifically, Hawaiian Asian American) in origin, as it mixes the Japanese *mochi* dessert with the American classic doughnut to create a unique Asian American dessert (Uncle Lani's Poi Mochi). The earliest recorded creation of poi mochi was in 1992, although the combination of *mochi* and donuts is believed to have existed at least 30 years prior. This dessert has spread across America as an Asian American treat and only recently returned to Japan through an American donut chain. Just like these two desserts act as an example of Asian American specific culture creation, Asian American media is created in a similar manner, representing the culture specific to Asian Americans, and balancing between both Asian and American cultures.

For further marginalized individuals, such as LGBT+ and women, the concept of community applies not only to the culture they identify with, but also to the lifestyles that they live under, only in addition to the culture tied to their ethnicity and cultural identity. To first generation immigrants, often without extended family, congregating with others from the same

culture became akin to a familial bond, and this connection extends into the subsequent generations (Smith). In addition, women, who were often left with their children, would find community in other mothers of similar ethnicities and close neighborhoods, as well as work alongside them at jobs and within the community (Smith). This sense of community proves vital in the absence of family, allowing women a place of solace outside of their husbands and children, yet allows the ability to remain with people who share similar values and experiences.

As the LGBT+ community continues to form and grow over time, community has always been a driving force regarding pride and progression in terms of rights and recognition. Prior to strong media representations of LGBT+ individuals, physical LGBT+ spaces were the best example of LGBT+ communities and individuals, such as gay bars. Many of these spaces suffered from discrimination, especially towards Asian American individuals, causing a small number of isolated, Asian American specific gay bars to be created (Vo). Although a step forward for Asian American LGBT+ communities, these places still suffered from discrimination, as they mainly acted as an outlet for white Western Oriental fantasies. A factor contributing to Asian American discrimination in LGBT+ spaces was the lack of Asian American representation in LGBT+ media; this space devoid of Asian American LGBT+ representation within media calls to be filled, allowing more representation of margainzlied Asian American communities, and to reduce discrimination (Vo). With a connection between real life marginalized spaces and the discrimination they face, as well as the quantity and quality of media representation for these marginalized groups and ethnicities, representation in media by Asian American creators has a large impact on real communities.

Community Representation in Media

A majority of media created mirrors the dominant hegemony within the peoples who consume and create said media, and said media reinforces the belief of a dominant hegemony. The dominant hegemony frequently causes the marginalization, suppression, and stereotyping of minority groups and their representations within media, including Asian Americans, women, and LGBT+ individuals. However, while a majority of representation in the media and stories contribute to the dominant hegemony by featuring characters and cultures who represent the majority, the expansion of access to and creation of media now allows for a wider variety of people to take the helm and create copious content in the image of themselves and their communities. This includes marginalized Asian Americans, as well as even further marginalized Asian American women and Asian American LGBT+ individuals, who now have the ability to more accurately represent themselves and their truths through the media they create and how they portray their community in it. By utilizing the creation and representation that media provides, marginalized individuals can now defy stereotypes and assist in overturning the dominant hegemony. Within Asian American media, many of these pieces utilize the connection between family and friends, as well as interpersonal romance, to celebrate and uplift the marginalized experience, in addition to mixing in unique cultural elements to remind the viewer that this media belongs to the marginalized. In addition, some marginalized pieces of media choose to mix and portray interactions between Asian Americans, women, LGBT+ and members of other groups, both marginalized and non-marginalized, to show a diversity of cultural and lived experiences. By contrasting and comparing the experiences and representation of a diverse selection of different groups, a greater understanding and value for people's lived experiences can be developed through valuable, positive, representation in media.

Media's Impact on Marginalized Community

Media has a long history of impacting the world and daily life, from the use of caricatures and stereotypes that continue to influence society, to the positive representation that exists today to expand acceptance overall (Alia). Asian American individuals have been incredibly susceptible to the negative impacts of poor media representation, facing real world government discrimination within the history of media (the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, World War II Japanese Internment), stereotypes regarding sexuality and culture embodied in the definition of Western Orientalism, and negative media press subtly supporting anti-Asian American rhetoric (Wong). While the negative influences of poor media representation cannot be ignored, reclaiming Oriental visions and creating positive representations for marginalized groups is a step towards creating positive influences within the overarching community. In a study regarding the impact of media stereotypes on an individual's impressions towards ethnic groups, it is suggested that "the more time individuals spend watching media… the greater the likelihood they will endorse views consistent with the images they have viewed" (Strass 671). Through this study, it is shown that individuals mimic the expectations presented by representations of ethnic minorities within the media they view. While this can easily apply to negative stereotypes, the diversification of media by minority ethnic groups - including Asian Americans - can create a positive representation and societal understanding for the community at large. By involving diverse marginalized groups in the production of media, and allowing them to create culturally relevant, accurate, and uplifting representations of their culture and community, media can act as a valuable tool for expanding acceptance and awareness for marginalized communities (Alia).

Media aids in dispelling stereotypes and myths about marginalized communities, and allows for a broader reach for their stories and experiences. As stated in the section "The

Importance and Impact of Marginalized Community," a lack of Asian American LGBT+ media caused heightened discrimination in the LGBT+ community, creating a sense of doubled marginalization, within both ethnicity and sexuality. By increasing positive representation of both LGBT+ media, Asian American media, LGBT+ Asian American media, and other inter-marginalized groups, larger acceptance within the community will develop. While increasing representation is incredibly valuable for the Asian American community, it is vital this representation is done by Asian American individuals themselves, as they are able to accurately describe and portray their experiences. Allowing dually marginalized individuals, such as women and LGBT+ Asian Americans to create media of all kinds regarding their stories and lived experiences, a wider swath of acceptance will come alongside a deeper understanding of a specific cultural group, helping to remove and replace stereotypes and misconceptions with accurate understandings of the people around them.

Fiction and the Asian American Community

A Voice in Every Wind

Short story collection *A Voice in Every Wind* is a creative non fiction book written by Chinese American author Qun Wang. In the short story "A Coffee Maker," Wang's work centers on the life of Chinese-English translator Wang Ying, portraying his experience with an American exchange student he meets and develops a friendship with. "A Coffee Maker," along with other stories within the book, focus on the theme of sexuality, the main characters frequently forced to reckon with themselves and their understanding of sexuality within the terms of their Chinese culture and nationality, especially in relation to the American students they meet. Through Wang Ying's interactions with groups of individuals outside of his own caste, he grows more aware of himself as a multicultural, diverse individual (Wang *A Voice in Every Wind*). This story portrays

the repression Wang Ying suffers through the standards he faces regarding his time living in China, and the liberation he experiences as he embraces American values of emotional and sexual freedom. By acknowledging the expectations regarding sexuality that Wang Ying faces as a Chinese national, "A Coffee Maker" is a vital and positive reclaiming of cultural and national heritage (Wang *A Voice in Every Wind*). By having Wang Ying acknowledge and then break free from the rules to find his true self, Wang portrays a reckoning within Wang Ying that allows him to come to terms with the multiculturalism that he must face as an Asian American individual. As Wang Ying utilizes the value of his cultures as both Asian and American, never demonizing the existence of his LGBT+ sexuality, this firmly places *A Voice in Every Wind* as a vital piece of positive LGBT+ Asian American representation.

In "A Coffee Maker," the story consists of a short adventure between Wang Ying, a Chinese translator for American exchange students, and Sam Zuravsky, one of said exchange students and a self proclaimed 'cheapskate,' in Sam's journey to get his American imported coffee maker (Wang *A Voice in Every Wind* 13). The two end up developing an unconditional friendship, breaking the cultural barriers the two face regarding their different cultural expectations. In addition, during their journey, the two experience a cultural exchange, with Wang Ying learning about American practices and Sam learning about China and Chinese culture, as the two work to bridge their cultural divide (Wang *A Voice in Every Wind*). At the end of the short story, Sam invites Wang Ying to the States in order to continue their friendship - a beginning to Wang Ying's transition into an Asian American multicultural LGBT+ individual.

Here, Wang Ying exemplifies his Chinese culture and defies Orientalist stereotypes put onto him by Sam, who portrays the American culture and their expectations of the Orient, evidenced by the first page of the short story which states that "[h]e had had no exposure to the

Chinese language or Chinese culture" (Wang *A Voice in Every Wind* 13). Sam bearing only Oriental expectations of China shows the lack of diversity he has experienced, and the need for accurate media representations to fill those gaps. Sam even presses Western Oriental beliefs onto Wang Ying, saying that "Chinese don't drink coffee," while Wang Ying acknowledges Sam's American consciousness by describing the other man as having "firm control of his destiny," showing the traits of the free West (Wang *A Voice in Every Wind* 14, 18). With each of them representing their respective countries, their inevitable relationship by the end of the story shows the conjoining of the two cultures, and the beginning of an Asian American cultural mindset realized for Wang Ying.

"A Coffee Maker" contains multiple political jabs to the Chinese regime, this acknowledgement allowing Wang Ying to reject total association with his Asian mindset, allowing him to accept the American identity he longs for. One of the largest sentiments expressed against China is through the personification of China as a mail worker, where Wang Ying describes him as having "the whole history of China… on the officer's expressionless face: … represent[ing] the moment when everything stood still, the moment when history stopped making progress," this detailed expression portraying part of what the author Wang feels towards his home country of China (Wang *A Voice in Every Wind* 16). Later in the story as well, Wang Ying says that "[h]e couldn't remember any rules," expressing in both quotes the rigidity felt in his Chinese culture (Wang *A Voice in Every Wind* 20). By personifying the entirety of China as a still, unmoving, entity, with the rigidness of rules supporting it, Wang Ying firmly establishes his identity, one that he now breaks free from by embracing the American cultural mindset of his new dual culturality.

However, in the same breath as Wang Ying forgets the rules he was supposed to follow, he also begins to realize his American cultural freedom Sam has given him. After having forgotten the rules he had to follow, Wang Ying says he felt "a feeling of freedom… freedom from having to pretend to be who he wasn't," showing Wang Ying realizing that the abandonment of strict rules, a part of his culture, allowed him to realize the calling of his Asian American culture (Wang *A Voice in Every Wind* 20-21). It is at this point of realizing, Wang Ying is no longer Chinese - Sam has influenced him fully into becoming a Chinese American through their friendship; however, Wang Ying's transition into Asian American consciousness existed prior to the realization Sam inspired. When he visited a Western restaurant with Sam, Wang Ying explained that restaurants like the one they dined in were reserved for tourists and Chinese officials, not a student translator like he was; he described how he had wanted to try the food, how "he had seen steaks in movies hundreds of times," showing his desire to have a taste of Western life and culture, yet acknowledged that "[China] didn't teach this kind of stuff [American/Western food culture] in English classes" (Wang *A Voice in Every Wind* 16-18). Long before Sam had brought him to the Western restaurant, Wang Ying had desired to know and try Western culture in the form of its food, acknowledging his knowledge of it from films sourced from the West. Yet, only by allowing Sam to befriend him and unlock his Asian American consciousness, could he truly understand his need to be released from the confines of a single culture.

Finally, at the end of the story, Wang Ying directly identifies his disconnect from his original culture, and solidifies his transition into the Western influenced mindset and culture that many Asian Americans hold. At the end of Wang's "A Coffee Maker," in a short dialogue before

Sam returns to America, the two men identify Wang Ying's disconnect from his home country and culture:

> "Hey, you seem lost," Sam whispered into his ear.
>
> "Yeah, I'm lost in my own country. Can you believe that?" (21)

In this dialogue, Wang Ying says he has become lost in his own country - that through his time with Sam, his realization of his desire to access Asian American cultures, he has become lost amidst the culture he was raised with, surrounded by. At this point, Wang Ying has fully become Asian American, enveloped in a culture that does not translate to the Chinese one he was raised with or the American one he learned. Through this, "A Coffee Maker" is a vital piece of Asian American media, portraying a positive transition of an Asian American man learning about himself through his interactions with others, in order to discover his true place and culture within the world.

Crazy Rich Asians

The popular 2018 film *Crazy Rich Asians*, based on the book of the same name, features a rich dive into the life of Asian Americans, especially second-generation individuals, in relation to their Asian counterparts. The film follows Rachel Chu, a Chinese American living in New York who goes to visit her boyfriend's family in Singapore; throughout the film, she struggles to integrate herself through both cultural customs and her status as being Asian American, from a family who chose to follow the American dream (*Crazy Rich Asians*). The film's status as an Asian American cultural piece begins with the soundtrack and visuals, featuring a combination of modern scenes and clothing alongside traditional Oriental scenes and clothing, as well as utilizing an intercultural musical soundtrack. The musical soundtrack consists of typical American music genres sung with Chinese lyrics, a song split half into English and half into

Chinese, as well as Chinese covers of American songs. While the imagery portrays the combination of Asian and American cultures, the film actually centers on the Othering of Rachel as an Asian American within Asia.

Prior to her journey to Singapore, the film makes clear that Rachel is more American than Asian with her interactions between her Chinese immigrant mother and her boyfriend, Nick Young, a native from Singapore. When he initially invites her to "take an adventure East," Rachel gets confused and asks if he means getting pork buns from their local Chinatown (*Crazy Rich Asians*). Rachel's misunderstanding shows how Americanized she is, assuming that a trip East referred to within the States, and to an Eastern styled place rather than to the actual East, Asia. After agreeing to the actual trip to Singapore, Rachel goes with her mother to pick out a dress for the Chinese wedding she was invited to. Rachel initially chooses a dress with blue and white stripes, to which her mother immediately turns down, saying that the colors blue and white were for Chinese funerals, and instead suggests a red dress representing "good fortune and fertility," within Chinese culture (*Crazy Rich Asians*). While Rachel is unaware of the colored connotations native to her Chinese heritage, due to her Americanization, her first generation Chinese American mother still recalls the meanings and sways her daughter's choice. At this same meeting, Rachel's mother attempts to prepare her for the culture shock ahead, saying:

> RACHEL'S MOTHER. "[T]hese overseas families… [t]hey're different from us."
>
> RACHEL CHU. "How are they different? They're Chinese. I'm Chinese…"
>
> MOTHER. "Yeah, but you grew up here. [continues in Mandarin] *Your face is Chinese. You speak Chinese. But here, and here…* [Rachel's mother gestures to Rachel's head and heart, then continues in English] You're different." (*Crazy Rich Asians*, emphasis added)

Here, Rachel's mother acknowledges that Rachel is more American than Asian, that because she grew up in America, her head and heart belong to her American identity, not her Asian one. Even if she speaks Chinese and looks ethnically Chinese, her position as an Asian American means she is different, and belongs to the unique culture Asian Americans developed.

When Rachel finally gets to Singapore to meet her boyfriend's family, the influence of her identity as an American makes her Otherness within Asia as a Chinese American clear. When entering the party, she is offered a bowl of water, which Rachel promptly takes and begins to drink from; immediately after, her boyfriend stops and corrects Rachel, saying that the water was actually to clean her fingers with, not for drinking (*Crazy Rich Asians*). Later, upon her first meeting with Nick's mother, Rachel embraces her in a tight hug, one Nick's mother appears shocked or startled by. Both of these incidents show Rachel's misunderstanding of Asian expectations, ones she has replaced with her American cultural upbringing. This is the beginning of Rachel's Othering, as an Asian American rather than as an individual who is atune to her Asian culture.

Nick's mother frequently reinforces Rachel's Otherness, upon first meeting Rachel saying that her willingness to follow her dreams was very "American," and later saying that Rachel is not "our own kind… [y]ou're a foreigner. American" (*Crazy Rich Asians*). While many characters in the film are against Rachel, denoting her as an outsider, Nick's mother is the only character to clearly state Rachel's status as a Chinese American, rather than someone who is simply Chinese or Asian. Nick, proud of his girlfriend, says to his mother that he "thought [his mother] might be excited that the first girl… [he brought] home is a Chinese professor," to which Nick's mother replies, correcting him, that Rachel is "Chinese American" (*Crazy Rich Asians*). A

small correction, but still instills Rachel's position as an Outsider within her Asian American culture, one that cannot mesh with the Asian culture she culturally belongs to.

As the film begins to wind down, Rachel meets Nick's mother at a mahjong parlor, mirroring the opening of the film where Rachel was playing poker with a student of hers (*Crazy Rich Asians*). This visual connection of opening the film with Rachel playing an American card game, and ending it with Rachel playing a traditional Chinese tile game shows her transition during her time in Singapore. While she will always be Chinese American, the visuals of playing both games shows her cultural duality and the unique Asian American culture she embodies. Both Rachel and Nick's mother had learned to play mahjong from their mothers, showing a cultural and personal bond between them as Chinese women, despite their differences. At the end of the film, it is shown that Rachel has finally acknowledged and accepted her identity as a Chinese American, and refuses to give up either identity, embodying them both through her unique Asian American culture.

M. Butterfly

The play *M. Butterfly* by David Henry Hwang creates a fictionalized depiction of a true romance story between a Western diplomat and a Chinese opera singer, as well as intertwining his story with the fictional, Oriental play *Madame Butterfly*. Hwang's play was adapted into a film, featuring the stories of Gallimard, a French diplomat in China, and Liling, a Chinese opera singer who eventually becomes the diplomat's lover (*M. Butterfly*). Liling utilizes Gallimard's beliefs regarding the Orient to protect their true gender, an Asian American depiction of Western and Oriental cultures and beliefs at odds with each other. At the beginning of the film, Liling is seen performing the original Oriental play *Madame Butterfly*, which inspires Gallimard to claim the story is beautiful. In response, Liling claims the film is only beautiful to a

Westerner, as it plays on Oriental stereotypes that Asian American media works to reject; in this same vein, *M. Butterfly* works to reject the original Oriental stereotypes presented in *Madame Butterfly* by reversing the roles of the Oriental 'woman' and the Western man, creating an empowering, but emotionally devastating, form of Asian American representation. Hwang utilizes the Western theory of the Orient to overturn stereotypes regarding the exotification and sexualization of Asians and Asian Americans, creating a piece of Asian American media that embraces the issue of Othering for both Asian Americans and LGBT+ individuals (Said).

Throughout the film, Gallimard exaggerates and adores the feminine submissiveness of the Orient, giving himself power as a masculine Westerner, until it is revealed Liling was actually a gay man, crossdressing as a woman (*M. Butterfly*). In addition, Liling had originally courted Gallimard to solicit wartime information, leaving Gallimard disgusted with both Liling's gender reveal, as well as their true intentions. While Liling still loved Gallimard, his views of the submissive Oriental woman were smashed by Liling's position as manipulator and man. Gallimard and Liling follow their traditional and respective roles of the Oriental 'woman' and the Western man, up until the reversal at the end of the film, where Gallimard becomes the trapped Oriental 'woman,' and Liling becomes the freed Western man (*M. Butterfly*). This reversal becomes physical, as Gallimard physically assumes the form of the Oriental, telling his story as he dresses in traditional Oriental wear and applies traditional Oriental makeup, while Liling is shown wearing a suit and leaving the country by plane, both signifiers of the West (Said). This reversal defies Oriental stereotypes established by Western media, allowing *M. Butterfly* a strong position to reject them as Asian American made media utilizing Asian American cultural points.

While it can be argued that *M. Butterfly* is not the most positive of representations for Asian Americans, the film works to reject stereotypes and Oriental beliefs for both women and LGBT+ individuals by subverting and reclaiming the story presented in *Madame Butterfly*. By presenting, at the onset, a stereotypical Oriental relationship between the dominant masculine West and the submissive feminine Oriental East, and later reversing this setup, Hwang claims the Oriental story for himself and the Asian American culture as a whole (*M. Butterfly*). By allowing an LGBT+ Asian American man to survive, and presumably thrive, after the traumatizing experience presented by the Western dominant, *M. Butterfly* is reclaimed for Asian Americans and provides a positive form of representation for them.

Memoir and the Asian American Community

The Magical Language of Others

The Magical Language of Others: a Memoir, is a 2020 publication by author E. J. Koh, recounting her experiences living in America as both a Korean American girl and woman. Within her memoir, Koh utilizes the unstereotypical autobiographical style, which draws on the form of nonlinear storytelling frequently used in Asian cultures, specifically by women, to portray not only her stories and life, but also the stories and lives of her mother and grandmother, all of whom classify as Asian Americans. The majority of the story revolves around sections of Koh's life as an Asian American girl living with her brother in America, while her parents reside in South Korea. Here, Koh represents her family as her main community, alongside a handful of Asian American friends she discusses (Koh). Koh comes from a blended Asian family, her father's side being part Japanese, while her mother's side is full Korean; meaning Koh grew up already experiencing a cultural duality between her parent's different Asian cultures, in addition to struggling with linguistics in order to communicate with her family, alongside learning

English to assimilate into her American community. Koh's memoir embodies the duality of the Asian American experience, as she represents herself as being too Asian for America and too American for Asia, situating herself in the cultural niche that is being Asian American.

The first connection to Koh's Asian American heritage within *The Magical Language of Others* is clear from the moment the book is viewed - the hardcover copy contains the title of the book and Koh's name written in Korean hangul. By utilizing her cultural language directly on the cover, Koh immediately claims this book for the Asian American experience, and assures that readers will not persuade themselves any other way. The premise of the memoir, as well, connects to her heritage. Each chapter is written around letters from Koh's mother, when Koh was a child; every other chapter within the memoir includes translated copies of these letters alongside photocopies of the original letters, written in Korean mixed with English and Japanese, the latter two languages her mother had been studying (Koh). From its core, this memoir utilizes the disconnect and combination of culture and language, between a mother and daughter separated by both physical and cultural distance. Throughout the book, Koh emphasizes her struggle with language, stating that the letters are written in childish Korean, yet she struggled to read them; at another point, Koh says that she "learned to isolate [her]self through language… it now seemed that no one could speak to me" (Koh 116). Within Asian American communities, the importance of language - both English and the original one belonging to one's culture - is immensely valuable, as it provides a connection between the duality of the world they live in and the world their family is from (Hinton, Wang "Double Consciousness"). Koh expressing her disconnect between her mother tongue Korean, and her learned languages English and Japanese represents a common Asian American struggle. However, Koh never presents one of her three languages as a predominant one, instead showing all three coexisting within her, which

represents the multicultural experience she must face as an Asian American. Within her family, however, her Japanese grandmother, Kumiko, refused to speak Japanese to Koh in order to not hinder her progress in learning English (Koh 102). Kumiko even asked Koh to give her words in English to help her, as a new Asian American, learn and assimilate, showing the struggle language presents between through varying generations of Asian Americans (Koh 114). Just as Koh had struggled with attaining three languages to connect with her heritage, Kumiko had also struggled alongside her grandaughter with attaining a new cultural language.

Koh, as a multicultural Asian American woman, chooses to portray her interactions, from her perspective, as a mixed American interacting with her Asian cultures in the forms of the people she meets. Visiting Japan as an exchange student, Koh befriended a group of Korean exchange students, all of them recognizing the cultural disconnect they experienced between ethnically (and some nationally) Korean students speaking English in Japan (Koh). Within her memoir, Koh shows a simultaneous mastery of and a deficiency regarding the Korean language - while stating earlier that she struggled to read her mother's Korean letters, but also portrays herself speaking with Korean individuals in Korean without hassle. By juxtaposing these multitude of experiences and language comprehensions, Koh forces the reader to acknowledge the niche Asian Americans fill as multicultural individuals. She follows suit by portraying the same disconnect with English, when she draws attention to her mispronunciation of 'poetry,' and asks her advisor how to spell it (Koh). At another point, a woman told Koh to "'kill it,'" allowing Koh to draw attention towards her confusion regarding the English turn of phrase (125). By drawing attention to both the difficulties she experienced regarding Korean, despite speaking it with her family, and English, despite being born in America, Koh portrays herself as an Asian American woman verbally struggling with both identities she carries. Koh identifies herself,

linguistically, as neither Korean nor American - she belongs to both and neither at the same time, allowing her imperfections to show her diversity. When Koh describes specific cultural events, she portrays both Korean and American elements alike as non-foreign, writing about them as though they are a shared cultural experience, adding to the duality Koh faces. By representing both her Korean and American experiences as familiar to her and her readers, she firmly situates her story as an Asian American woman as an empowering, culturally diverse experience that exists in common knowledge only to those her share the marginalized Asian American culture.

Another way Koh expresses her interculturality as an Asian American woman is by describing the perceptions of her physical features from others. Upon her visits to Korea, she is frequently noticed as an outsider through her Americanized mannerisms, despite being ethnically Korean (Koh). One such commenter says that Koh "'has so much ki,'" intertwining her American mannerisms to an inherently Asian concept, thereby connecting her two identities (35). As an adult, a Korean manager also comments about Koh swapping her mannerisms between Korean and American, and does not use formal Korean when speaking to him, which is typically expected (124-129). This Korean national clearly identifies Koh as an outsider to Korean culture by her lack of direct cultural mannerisms, despite her linguistic skills and Korean appearance. Later, Koh speaks to her mother to tell her that she wants to move to Korea; in which, her mother replies that "'You were born [in America]. That's your home'" (132). Here, Koh's mother has clearly identified that Koh is not Korean, nor American; she fills the niche of the new Asian American culture that represented and replicated both Asian and American cultures, but fits neatly into neither category in its entirety.

Koh experiences physical diaspora during her journey to Japan as well, where she notices that Japanese natives treated her differently than other foreigners. When questioned, her teacher

explained that the natives "'wonder if you're truly American or Korean. To them… you are Japanese," showing that despite a lack of explicit Japanese ethnicity, her appearance and language skills as an Asian American granted her a new identity to associate with (79). Koh also acknowledges this troublesome form of identity, saying that "[the natives] were careful not to say a word— to let me stave off a bit longer the question of who I was" (80). In this quote, Koh identifies that she has been struggling with her identity as an Asian American woman, one who has spent copious time within multiple countries, between multiple cultural and linguistic identities. Her memoir encapsulates this struggle for identity, a response to her realization of the Asian American culture she is firmly situated in, rather than belonging wholly to any other culture.

In an interview about her book, Koh shares two words exclusive to Korean culture and language that drove the story and writing of her memoir - *han* and *jeong* ("E. J. Koh: The Magical Language of Others"). Koh elaborates on *han* and *jeong*, saying that because they are such innate feelings, connected deeply to Korean culture, they are difficult to explain outside of the Korean language. While *han* represents generational trauma and sorrow, *jeong* is a unique kind of personal love, that does not match the Western depiction of love; in which these two phrases are defined by what the other is not, according to Koh. As Koh's book focuses on the topic of motherhood and generational trauma, *han* fits the theme well, while *jeong* is what bonds the two despite the cultural gaps the two suffer from. These inherent Korean cultural concepts act as the foundation of Koh's memoir, showing a strong connection to her Asian consciousness despite her placement as an Asian American, and draws in more traditional Korean concepts to her Asian American culture. These concepts were also passed from mother to daughter, showing a strong form of Asian community within women, as well as within the familial unit (Koh).

Overall, *The Magical Language of Others* is a positive, fulfilling, representation of Asian American women's legacy, language, and story across generations and cultures, written by a Korean American woman showcasing her struggles with language and culture as she grew up in America. She demonstrates the representation of her blended family, all levels struggling with their identity as Asian Americans, the perceptions and representations of those around her, and her coming to terms with herself as an Asian American cultural individual.

Conclusion

While this work is by no means intended as a comprehensive analysis of Asian American and marginalized literature and media as a whole, it aims to be an entry point for further understanding, exploration, and research into the topic. By utilizing even a small samping of Asian American media in relation to the marginalized people it represents, a larger picture of representation and community as a whole is formulated, allowing deeper understanding and appreciation for the marginalized media that exists and that is engaged with on a daily basis. In addition, recognizing the unique culture that stems from Asian American media and is upheld by the individuals who create it can allow for a deeper understanding of the people it represents and who live in the surrounding world. Women and LGBT+ individuals, especially those further marginalized by their ethnicity, have created a safe space within media for them to allow further positive representation and awareness for themselves and their community. Through even just this brief analysis of a handful of Asian American media pieces, further awareness of the Asian American unique culture can be discovered and applied to a variety of different creations by Asian American individuals who share in this cultural experience.

Annotated Bibliography

Alia, Valerie, and Simone Bull. *Media and Ethnic Minorities*, Edinburgh University Press, 2005.

This book provides an analysis of ethnic minorities and their relationship with media as a whole, including the oppression of and resistance from these marginalized groups, as well as the idea of Othering that is featured in the theory of Orientalism. By looking at how both minorities suffer and find solace in media representation, this book provides a brief look at how representation can both harm and help marginalized groups, and why positive cultural representation is so important. This book is used to show why representation in media is so important for marginalized individuals, as well as why media made by marginalized individuals is so necessary for accurate depictions.

Crazy Rich Asians. Directed by Jon M. Chu, Warner Bros. Pictures, 2018.

Crazy Rich Asians is a popular film, based on the novel of the same name, and follows Chinese American Rachel visiting her boyfriend's family in Asia. It features a majorly Asian cast, with production featuring majorly Asian individuals as well, leaving it as a valuable piece of Asian American cultural media, especially due to its position within popular culture. This film is one of the main ones analyzed, as it holds a position as both a popular culture representation of Asian American culture and features positive Asian representation.

"E. J. Koh: The Magical Language of Others." Between the Covers from Tin House, https://tinhouse.com/podcast/e-j-koh-the-magical-language-of-others/.

A podcast with E.J. Koh about her 2020 memoir, *The Magical Language of Others*, hosted by Tin House, who is also the publisher of the memoir. Koh discusses with the host various sections of her book, providing context and further understanding

for her and her works beyond what is present in the memoir. As a supplementary material to *The Magical Language of Others*, a key part of the paper, it provides a deeper cultural understanding to the elements of *han* and *jeong* that Koh used during the process of writing her memoir.

Koh, E.J.. *The Magical Language of Others: a Memoir*. Tin House Books, 2020.

A memoir written by Korean American E.J. Koh that describes her multicultural experience between her multiethnic familial background. Koh discusses her childhood, teenage years, and her adulthood, and also describes stories from her mother and grandmother's as well, making her memoir a multigenerational story of women within her family. A prevalent theme in the book is how language, culture, and ethnicity isolated her from both her American background and her Korean background, which is relevant to the theme of unique Asian American culture, especially as featured within women.

Hao, Richie Neil. "Performing Fortune Cookie: An Autoethnographic Performance on Diasporic Hybridity." *Critical Autoethnography: Intersecting Cultural Identities in Everyday Life*, 2020, pp. 96-109.

Richie Neil Hao's "Performing Fortune Cookie: An Autoethnographic Performance on Diasporic Hybridity" is a short autobiographical story of his life, which discusses in part the relationship food has to Asian American's multicultural identities. This story is contained in a larger anthology about the intersection of cultural identities many hyphenated Americans experience, especially in regards to how food shapes the unique cultural identity of being Asian American. Used in a brief discussion about how Asian American identities impact food development, and how, like these food creations, their media belongs to a unique Asian American culture that other groups can appreciate.

Hinton, Leanne. “Involuntary Language Loss Among Immigrants: Asian-American Linguistic Autobiographies.” *Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics 1999*, 2001, p. 203.

Leanne Hinton’s article on “Involuntary Language Loss Among Immigrants” focuses on a biographical story telling of the the way Asian Americans lose connection to their native languages as they become more American. Language is an inherent part of any culture, and the loss of language as a means to assimilate forces individuals to have skewed cultural identities. In E.J. Koh’s memoir, she struggles with the lack and abundance of language, describing how she struggled to reclaim her native languages, how that journey impacted her English language abilities, and how her relationship with her family was impacted by learning their native languages again.

M. Butterfly. Directed by David Cronenberg, Warner Bros., 1993.

Film *M. Butterfly* is a dramatic retelling of the play of the same name, and mirrors the traditional Oriental play of *Madame Butterfly*, but tells the story in reverse order as to reclaim it for Asian American identities. Rene Gallimard, a French diplomat, romanticizes and fetishizes the Oriental Liling, who is masquerading as a woman; in the end, the story reveals Liling is actually a man, crushing Gallimard’s fantasy of the submissive Orient. Used as one of the main analysis pieces, the reversal of roles in the story shows a reclaiming for both Asian American women and LGBT+ individuals, and provides representation as the film is an Asian American made piece of media.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books, 1978.

Edward Said’s theory of the American and European Orient is a popular theory for use in rhetorical and media analyses, allowing a deeper analysis of how media can

either utilize Orientalism to demonize and exotify Asian individuals, or how the ideas of Orientalism can be broken within rebellious medias. Orientalism is one of the main theories utilized in this paper, in order to show how Asian Americans can reclaim their identity by breaking Oriental stereotypes within their own creations.

Smith, Susan L.. *Japanese American Midwives: Culture, Community, and Health Politics, 1880-1950*, University of Illinois Press, 2005.

This book looks at the community developed specifically between Japanese American midwives and the rest of their community. While not relating to media, it shows the connection between women of a similar cultural background, and the evolution of traditional practices from their culture into the new culture they are working to assimilate to - in this case, adapting Japanese midwifery skills to their new American traditions. This book emphasizes the importance of community especially within Asian immigrant women, a tradition that can be reflected in the importance of women made Asian American media impacting their community.

Strass, Haley A., and David L. Vogel. "Do Stereotypical Media Representations Influence White Individuals' Perceptions of American Indians?" *The Counseling Psychologist*, vol. 46, no. 5, 2018, pp. 656-679.

In this psychology journal, the impact of stereotypes within media was studied, as well as how white individuals responded to the stereotypical imagery of other ethnic groups. While they specifically looked at American Indians (Native Americans) and a smaller selection of media than this paper, they discovered that media does in fact reflect how people feel about a certain ethnic group, and does cause misconceptions relating to understanding of entire communities. As Asian Americans are another marginalized

ethnic group alongside American Indians, it is likely the same holds true for them as well - that negative, stereotypical, Oriental, representations of Asian Americans in media cause harmful misconceptions for the Asian American community. However, the opposite is also true, that positive representations of the community within media can inspire understanding and positivity towards the ethnic group as a whole.

Uncle Lani's Poi Mochi [@poi_mochi]. Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/poi_mochi/.

In trying to find the origin for mochi donuts, one single origin point was unable to be established, due to the versatility and extensive history that follows this dessert. Uncle Lani's Poi Mochi was the furthest origin point established, a Hawaiian food chain serving mochi Hawaiian Asian fusion dishes, including the mochi donut, which shows the connection of food, identity, and place of living. Their Instagram page features brief information regarding the origin of the mochi donut, as well as other Hawaiian Asian fusion food.

Vo, Linda Trinh. *Contemporary Asian American Communities: Intersections and Divergences*, Temple University Press, 2002.

This anthology features a collection of stories about Asian American identities and communities, as well as the intersections between the Asian American identity and other identities the individuals hold. A section of the anthology discusses about the struggles and discrimination Asian American gay men faced in California gay bars, and how a lack of media representation likely encouraged such treatment. Through this, it is shown that more LGBT+ representation, especially positive representation, for marginalized ethnic groups creates an affect on the community at large.

Wang, Qun. *A Voice in Every Wind*. University Press of the South, 2004.

A short story collection by California State University, Monterey Bay professor Qun Wang, based on his experiences as a Chinese-English translator for foreign exchange students in China. “A Coffee Maker” follows a Chinese translator and his experiences with Sam, in a simple, happy, positive cultural exchange between the two men. The cultural exchange and positive representation for both men places this as a piece of Asian American media, as a positive LGBT+ expression for the two’s implied relationship.

“‘Double Consciousness,’ Sociological Imagination, and the Asian American Experience.” *Race, Gender & Class*, vol. 4, no. 3, 1997, pp. 88-94.

Qun Wang describes Du Bois’s theory of Double Consciousness within the meaning it holds for Asian American individuals. While Du Bois’s theory was originally created to encapsulate the African American experience, the theory of Double Consciousness can easily be applied to other multicultural individuals, who struggle between the ideals of their original culture and the American culture. Many Asian American made media describes and focuses on the struggle between traditional, familial, home culture and language, and the language and culture of America, the actual lived in world and experience.

Wong, Alexandra. “Transnational Real Estate in Australia: New Chinese Diaspora, Media Representation and Urban Transformation in Sydney’s Chinatown.” *International Journal of Housing Policy*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2017, pp. 97-119.

This piece discusses Australia’s real estate industry, and discusses briefly how media can negatively impact populations, especially the Chinese community. Wong discusses that an abundance of Chinese immigrants purchased property in Australia to start Chinatowns and fulfill their own dreams, yet were demonized by media campaigns

that turned other ethnic and cultural groups against them. While not about Asian Americans in particular, this piece shows the volatility negative media can create against minority groups, especially Asian Americans, who are increasingly at risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Final Synthesis Essay

As I enter my final semester as a California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) Humanities and Communications (HCOM) student, the final Capstone project allowed me the ability to synthesize and cement all the knowledge and skills I studied throughout my upperclassman academic experience. I chose to write about the Asian American marginalized media experience, through a rhetorical lens, as these points all connect to part of my education at CSUMB, and is a topic I truly love and enjoy learning about. While I am not Asian American myself, and cannot connect to this identity, unique Asian American culture is inherently tied to identity and is fascinating for anyone to study and immerse themselves in.

In my very first semester at CSUMB, as a transfer student, I took the recommended set of classes, which happened to include HCOM321's "Introduction to Rhetoric and Culture" and JAPN102, a continuation of the Japanese language class I had taken at my community college. My capstone's focus on Asian American unique culture compliments my minor in Japanese Language and Culture, as it helps to deepen my understanding of the overall Asian American experience, especially one that is local to me in California. In HCOM321, I began to learn rhetorical theories and strategies, and was even allowed to try writing a rhetorical paper myself, in which I fell in love with the genre of analyzing media's representation and its impact on the reality those marginalized individuals live in. I hope to translate those rhetorical techniques and theories into this paper, showing that fictional, positive, representation of marginalized Asian Americans provides a wide range of understanding and community growth for Asian American unique cultural experiences.

In my next semesters at CSUMB, I took HCOM337, "Women's Literature" and HCOM348, "Race, Colonialism, and Film," the first of which broadened my exposure to

women's literature, including Asian American women's literature, and the latter which provided valuable journal articles on the experience of race, film/media, and the real life experience. In HCOM337, I wrote about E.J. Koh's memoir *The Magical Language of Others* (2020 book) and *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts* (1989 book) by Chinese American author Maxine Hong Kingston. Koh's memoir is included in my capstone, as it is one of my favorite books now, and encapsulates the Asian American marginalized experience of being trapped between the experience of womanhood and dual consciousness. I had planned on including Kingston's memoir as well, but was unable to fit it in the capstone length restrictions - perhaps soon I will come back to it!

Finally, I took the course HCOM307S, "Social Impact of Mass Media," which built onto the theories I learned in HCOM321 and the real life impacts I learned in HCOM348. In that course, we analyzed ways media influences and impacts the real people who are represented in that media, and how the people who create such media impact the others in their field, community, and in their world. These courses listed, and all the other courses I have taken, add up to my final capstone, as a culmination of theories and the impacts media has that I have learned about, as well as utilizing resources and media I have studied and understood through a focused set of classes.

Throughout the HCOM475 Capstone Senior Seminar class, we studied a variety of films and literature focusing on a variety of identities, but the ones most impactful to me and featured a direct impact on my capstone project were *Come See the Paradise* (1990 film) and *A Voice in Every Wind* (2004 book). *Come See the Paradise* was a very realistic, yet fictional, portrayal of the Japanese American internment camps of World War II, and gathered a look into the Asian American unique culture, which solidified my determination to write about the Asian American

unique culture for my capstone. In the HCOM introductory course, HCOM300, we also read *A Voice in Every Wind*, a short story collection about the Asian American experience from Qun Wang, a Chinese immigrant. When I first read these stories in HCOM300, I adored them, and coming back to them in HCOM475 made sure that they earned a final spot in my capstone. I've always loved creative writing, and seeing the stories in this book returned my desire to study fictional media about real experiences.

My capstone contains all the experiences and education I have obtained at CSUMB, and focuses on a prevalent issue - media representation of marginalized groups, especially within the COVID-19 pandemic where Asian American racism is at an all time high. By evaluating the media created by and representing Asian American individuals (especially those who are further marginalized, such as LGBT+ individuals and women), we can understand how media impacts, positively or negatively, to the real community that media reflects. In my capstone paper, I chose to look at the positive affects of accurate representation of community and peoples, specifically representation created by those marginalized individuals themselves, as I believe analyzing a story told by the lived individual is the most accurate way to understand a cultural community.

As stated in the Conclusion of my capstone paper, my paper is far from a wholly inclusive analysis of Asian American made media and representation, and I, myself, am far from an expert on Asian American culture. I hope that this paper is an entranceway, for myself and any readers, into exploring the meanings behind all media we consume, from the individuals who create it, the culture they represent, and the meaning it holds for the real world individuals who are impacted by both the positive and the negative representations of themselves. I hope to continue my studies into Asian culture and media in graduate school, as well as the study of media as a whole, deepening the basis I built for myself from this capstone.