



Asian American Voices



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LaGuardia Community College

Asian American Voices

Magazine of the Students

May 2024

Vol. 6



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NOTE FROM THE EDITORS
Asian American Voices
No.6, 2024

With the publication of the sixth volume of the Asian American Voices, it is an opportune moment to reflect on our editorial journey. When Asian American Voices launched in 2019, highlighting that 20% of LaGuardia Community College's student body was Asian, no one could have anticipated the turbulent events of 2020. Nevertheless, both the community events and the journal thrived in a remote setting. Based on our linear regression analysis of data from previous years, the Asian student population at our college could reach 30% within the next decade, marking it as the fastest-growing demographic at the institution.

Considering this significant growth and diversity, we proudly present this new volume, enriched with a wide array of student submissions. The semester began with an inspiring sunny day visit to the Noguchi Museum in Long Island City. Conveniently located within walking distance of the college and the Ravenswood Generating Station, the museum features numerous sculptures by Isamu Noguchi, inspired primarily by nature and his extensive travels.

A keen observer will recognize forms reminiscent of the geological geometry of Niagara Falls, the hexagonal columns of Devils Tower, and the sculptural landscape of the Badlands. Additionally, this volume includes a note about Noguchi by Professor Hernandez and Professor Nagano, providing further insight into the artist's work.

This year, we are pleased to recognize Shu-Ping (Sandie) Han for her dedicated work with Asian American / Asian Research Institute (AARI) at CUNY, particularly her efforts with the Mentorship Providing Opportunities to Women for Empowerment and Resilience (AAMPOWER) initiative supporting Asian females. Dr. Han is celebrated not only as a distinguished mathematician but also as a compassionate administrator. In January 2024, Dr. Han began her tenure as the Dean of the School of Science & Allied Health at Medgar Evers College, CUNY.

The student artifacts in this volume begin with reflective essays and personal statements.

The first author, Tsering Dicheng, writes under a pseudonym due to the deeply personal nature of the essay. Dicheng grapples with his identity, feeling disoriented and confused by exposure to multiple languages and cultures, yet not fully fluent or at home in any of them. This inner turmoil generates challenging emotions and overwhelming thoughts, leading to significant distractions.

Vontay Lokadjaja, who is half Thai and half Chinese, lives in NYC and aspires to become a dentist. She expresses concerns about flooding in the city, drawing parallels to similar experiences she had while living in Thailand with her mother. Vontay explores the potential impacts of climate change on life and work in the city.

Jiale Lin, a recent arrival from China, has quickly gained recognition for his achievements in math competitions, research projects, and presentations. In his writing, Jiale shares his experiences at the college, detailing the difficulties he faced and how he overcame numerous challenges.

Prasamsha Gyenwali, an exceptionally vibrant high school student taking college credit courses, shares her excitement about being accepted to Barnard College at Columbia University. Her joyful announcement can be found on LinkedIn.

The flavors of Chrysanthemum Jasmine tea and the tastes of Dim Sum evoke fond memories for Yuk San Chung. While dining with his children, he recalls Sunday dinners with his father.

Pushpa Adhikari offers a recipe for traditional Nepali Chow Mein. The attached photo reveals a dish that looks exquisitely delicious, so turn the page with caution if you're hungry!

The following two papers explore aspects of Japanese art. Sachiko Sase presents both the historical and modern dimensions of Kabuki, the vibrant Japanese theater known for its colorful performances and the tensions between immorality and tradition. Meanwhile, Devin Firriolo's essay delves into the Gutai art movement, which began in 1954 and became one of the most significant visual and performance art movements in post-war Japan.

Farah Hadi explores contemporary dilemmas in the art world, focusing on the impact of AI-generated images on artists' copyrights and the future of art. Farah suggests that using software such as Glaze or Nightshade can help artists with protecting their digital creations.

The next two papers feature photos and discussions related to Indians in the Caribbean. David Garate, a returning author from volume 5, interprets the photos of "A Cooly Woman" and children working on a plantation, highlighting the context of human exploitation. Catherine Morales similarly examines a postcard and a stereoscopic image of Caribbean women of Indian origin. Strikingly, these images, taken at the turn of the 20th century, place women and children at the forefront, capturing the attention of the photographers.

In her critical essay, Manshi Sherpaile explores urban and social challenges prevalent in both the USA and Nepal, offering a comparative analysis of these complex issues. With a keen eye for detail, Manshi delves into the topics of crime and gentrification, using data to illustrate their impact on communities in both countries.

The volume concludes with an extensive and insightful report by Mirei Nakashima. Through a series of survey questions, Mirei conducts a case study of a bilingual New Yorker of Japanese origin. The report highlights linguistic phenomena familiar to bilingual individuals, such as experiencing entirely different trains of thought and even displaying different personalities when using different languages.

The photo on the cover was taken from the AAPI archives and represents traditional dancing in India.

The Editors

Long Island City, New York
May, 2024

Contents

1	Recognizing the AAPI Leader: Dr. Shu-Ping (Sandie) Han	1
2	A little-known story about Isamu Noguchi’s “Figure Emerging” sculpture in LaGuardia’s courtyard <i>Ana Maria Hernandez and Tomonori Nagano</i>	6

Part I Reflective Essays

3	Self Identity <i>Tsering Dicheng</i>	11
4	Records of the Unprecedented Floods Creeping Up on NYC <i>Vontay Lokadjaja</i>	13
5	Recapture Past Events <i>Jiale Lin</i>	16
6	A Journey From Nepal To Ivy league: Anything Is Possible With Determination and Perseverance! <i>Prasamsha Gyenwali</i>	18

Part II Recipes & Food

7	Sunday Dim Sum <i>Yuk San Chung</i>	21
---	--	----

- 8 **Recipe: Nepali chow mein**
Pushpa Adhikari 23
-

Part III Critical Essays

- 9 **Kabuki's Double Standard: Japanese People's Dilemma between Morality and Olden Japanese Core Values**
Sachiko Sase 27
- 10 **The Gutai Breakthrough**
Devin Firriolo 32
- 11 **AI Art, as an Artist**
Farah Alwi Hadi 35
-

Part IV Critical Essays

- 12 **Brochure of Exploited Workers: How the UK Justified Indian Suffering**
David Garate 41
- 13 **The Realities of Indian Indentureship in the Caribbean**
Catherine Morales 46
- 14 **Crime in Nepal and the USA**
Manshi Sherpaile 50
- 15 **Case Study: The Bilingual Experience of a Japanese New Yorker**
Mirei Nakashima 53
-

Part V Authors

- 16 **Authors' Bios** 65

1.

Recognizing the AAPI Leader: Dr. Shu-Ping (Sandie) Han

Shu-Ping (Sandie) Han, Dean of the School of Science & Allied Health, Medgar Evers College

Dr. Sandie Han is the Dean of the School of Science & Allied Health at Medgar Evers College. She earned her bachelor's degree from Bryn Mawr College, master's degree from Queens College, and doctorate in mathematics from the CUNY Graduate Center, with dissertation titled "Studies in the Structure of Sumsets."

Her illustrious career includes being a Professor of Mathematics for over 30 years and serving as the Assistant Dean for Academic Technology & Pedagogy at CUNY's Central Office and CUNY's Office of Undergraduate Studies, and Academic Programs & Policy Leadership Fellow. Throughout her distinguished career, Dr. Han has led numerous initiatives, including the CUNY New Lecturer Initiative, a comprehensive onboarding and professional development program for 250 new CUNY lecturers, and the CUNY Innovative Teaching Academy 2023 Summer Institute on "Promoting Equitable and Inclusive STEM Teaching and Learning". She served six years as Mathematics Department Chair at New York City College of Technology (City Tech), playing a pivotal role in curriculum restructuring, faculty mentorship, and departmental modernization. In addition, she was the PI on a U.S. Department of Education MSEIP grant and Co-PI on the NSF S-STEM grant.

She authored more than 30 articles and workbooks including 22 peer-reviewed publications in Number Theory and Mathematics Education. Her latest paper (co-authored with Drs. Ariana Masuda, Satyanand Singh, and Johann Thiel) on "Solving the Membership Problem for Certain Subgroups of $SL_2(\mathbb{Z})$ " was published in the Journal of Algebra in 2024. Her Mathematics Education publications included Self-Regulated Learning, Self-Efficacy, Peer-Led Team Learning, Interdisciplinary, and Inquiry-Based Learning. Her work on Self-Regulated Learning and mathematics self-efficacy won the 2013 CUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Mathematics Instructions.

An ardent advocate for faculty and students, she is committed to fostering a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion and has led several workshops on “Understanding Implicit Bias”, “Creating a Culture of Care: Mentoring, Motivating, and Supporting at All Levels”, “Fostering Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Department” and “Diversifying and Bridging the Gender Gap in Computing”.

Dr. Han is a Board Member of Asian American / Asian Research Institute (AAARI). Established in 2001 by CUNY Board of Trustees, AAARI is the university-wide scholarly research and resource center on Asian and Asian American policies and issues and in promoting Asian and Asian American studies. Leveraging CUNY’s rich faculty expertise, AAARI aims to be an Asian intellectual and cultural center that bridges between CUNY and the Asian American community and addresses the needs of New York’s diverse ethnic subgroups of Asian origin.

Dr. Han co-founded the CUNY Asian American Mentorship Providing Opportunities to Women for Empowerment and Resilience (AAMPOWER) with Drs. Payal Doctor, Trang Le-Chan, and Catherine Ma. Sponsored by AAARI, CUNY AAMPOWER was born from the vision of its co-founders to foster a supportive environment, provide mentorship, and empower the AAPI women in academia.

Testimonies

I met Dean Han when I nominated her to be on the board of the Asian American/Asian Research Institute of CUNY (AAARI). Her background, accolades, and proven leadership made her an easy choice to be voted unanimously onto the board, but it was working with her as we became cofounders of AAMPOWER (Asian American Mentorship Providing Opportunities to Women for Empowerment and Resilience) alongside Dr. Trang Le-Chan (City Tech, CUNY) and Dr. Payal Doctor (LaGuardia Community College, CUNY) in 2023 that I truly got to know Sandie as an ally for Asian Americans. We saw a pressing need to provide mentorship to Asian women in CUNY and decided to address it by providing the structural support that soon became AAMPOWER. Little did I know that I would find such an amazing and dedicated colleague within CUNY. Sandie is incredibly passionate about STEM and her initiatives at City Tech and now Medgar Evers have put our CUNY students’ needs at the forefront on every level. She is also one of the most dedicated educators I have ever met and her strive towards excellence inspires so many of us, including myself. Having the opportunity to work with her on AAMPOWER has been a joy. She truly is an exemplar of hard work, passion, mentorship, and leadership. I can say that I have personally benefitted from Sandie’s mentorship and her leadership. I can find no one else more deserving of this recognition from Asian American Voices because of her long history of advocating for Asian men and women.

Catherine Ma, M.A., M.Phil, Ph.D.
Cofounder of AAMPOWER
Professor, Department of Behavioral Sciences
Kingsborough Community College, CUNY

Dr. Sandie Han has been a valued colleague and friend for over a decade. We’ve had the opportunity to collaborate extensively on various academic endeavors, including grant proposals, peer-reviewed publications, workshops, and conference presentations.

Dr. Han's commitment to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive academic environment extends beyond her role as a colleague. She is a passionate advocate for both students and faculty, consistently working to create a space where everyone feels empowered to contribute and excel.

Diana Samaroo, Ph.D.
Professor, Department of Chemistry
New York City College of Technology

It is my pleasure, and I consider this a great opportunity to be able to write something about Dr. Shu-Ping Sandie Han, Professor of Mathematics at CUNY, currently working as a Dean of the School of Science & Allied Health at Medgar Evers College, CUNY.

I first met Prof. Shu-Ping Sandie Han in 2014 when I began working as an Adjunct teaching mathematics at New York City College of Technology (City Tech), CUNY. At that time, she was a Professor of Mathematics. In 2015, she became the Chair of the Mathematics Department. During her service as Chair, I had the opportunity to develop a closer relationship with her as she led and supervised numerous programs and grants. Her extensive experience in conducting workshops and professional development, especially in using technology for teaching and learning, greatly facilitated our smooth transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. I deeply appreciate her professionalism and care during this challenging period. She organized countless professional development sessions and maintained a high level of humanized communication, including virtual Christmas celebrations.

Under her leadership, I became involved in several significant programs and grants, such as the Open Gateways Grant (Title V grant, 5 years), OER, OpenLab City Tech Mathematics sites, and City Tech Webwork. These initiatives, which have had a huge impact on my professional growth, reflect Prof. Han's dedication and influence.

Prof. Han is a caring professional and inspiring leader who effectively promotes progress in Mathematics and STEM overall. From my personal experience, I can attest to her ability to recognize potential, influence and involve individuals through her visionary leadership and innovative skills that benefit mathematics and mathematics education at a progressive and highly successful level.

Prof. Han has made a profound impact on my professional and personal life. In 2022, when I was hired as a new lecturer at LaGuardia CC, I was fortunate to receive guidance from her as she led the CUNY New Lecturer Initiative. While I cannot list all the ways she has influenced me here, I truly believe that people remember the kindness shown to them, and so do I. I am grateful for her impact on my professional and personal life.

Lucie Mingla
Lecturer
Department of Mathematics, Engineering and Computer Science
LaGuardia Community College

The first time I met Prof. Shu-Ping Han was during my seminar at the Graduate Center in 2018. She attended to support a new faculty member who was presenting his research. I was impressed by her dedication, as she made the effort to travel from Brooklyn to Manhattan to attend the talk. Notably, she attended every presentation he gave, demonstrating her strong commitment to

her faculty. Recently, in 2023, I participated in the summer institute organized by Prof. Han. Once again, I was struck by her exceptionally warm and accommodative nature.

Małgorzata Marciniak

Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics, Engineering and Computer Science
LaGuardia Community College

Sandie Han has a gift for working with people. She is accomplished in organizing groups of faculty to work together—whether publications or other academic or service tasks. I have worked with her on grants, manuscripts, and accreditation, just to mention a few. She has been a leader in all of them, given her experience, vision, and acumen in organizing collaborative tasks with many participants involved. She listens, considers different perspectives, and is willing to change her view if she determines that there is a more advantageous approach or idea. She is a dialogical leader, who involves all participants in shaping a project, and because of that she is able to draw the best from everyone.

She strives to incorporate new ideas and approaches whether it be in teaching, curriculum redevelopment, or department reorganization. She won't spare time or effort to achieve a best product, whether it be a manuscript, a grant proposal, or survey forms. I know her as a colleague and as a chair. As a two-term chair of our large Department of Mathematics at City Tech, she did not spare time or effort to hear and respond to student needs, faculty issues, or any other problem. She cares about people—first and foremost about the students, faculty and supporting staff in her charge, for whom she works tirelessly to help them and encourage them to thrive. I consider her uniquely skilled in her capacity to empower both students and faculty.

I'm honored to be her friend.

Nadia Stoyanova Kennedy

Associate Professor, Mathematics Department
Director, Mathematics Education Program
New York City College of Technology

I felt affinity with Sandie from the moment we met on Dr. Trang Le-Chan's Ed.D. research project. Having both served as Department Chairpersons, I knew she possessed a wisdom that can only come with experience. I was struck by her clear and straight-forward perspective on the little things such as how to recover from a misstep in the workplace or the precise wording of an email that would convey a message inclusively. The more I worked with Sandie in co-founding AAMPOWER, the more I understood the power of her work in raising up her colleagues and being an inclusive leader.

Sandie's leadership style is noteworthy because she turns the stereotype of a leader upside down, approaching it from the perspective of someone who wants input and feedback, and who will integrate that feedback into the work she does. Hearing what others say and assimilating it into her work is her strength. Our AAMPOWER planning sessions turn into mini-lessons on leadership and how Asian women can be their authentic selves and be amazing leaders at the same time. Sandie is a case and point in this regard – she brings her whole self to everything she does and demonstrates that one can work within a system to bring about positive change for faculty, staff, and a college.

It has been a great joy to work closely with Sandie and learn from her how to be a strong, Asian woman leader who embraces challenges, resolves them with grace, and illustrates a level of empathy for everyone she encounters.

Payal Doctor
Professor of Philosophy, Humanities Department
LaGuardia Community College

I've enjoyed collaborating with Dr. Sandie Han on several AAPI grants and events at City Tech. Most recently, we co-founded AAMPOWER, and I served as a board member for AAARI alongside her. Dr. Han is an exceptional leader, consistently demonstrating remarkable expertise and dedication in her field. She is highly organized, displays empathy, thinks creatively, and always prioritizes the well-being of her students and colleagues. Working with someone reliable and passionate about helping others has been an honor.

Trang M. Le-Chan, EdD
Director, Alumni Engagement and Development
New York City College of Technology

2.

A little-known story about Isamu Noguchi's "Figure Emerging" sculpture in LaGuardia's courtyard

Ana Maria Hernandez and Tomonori Nagano

Isamu Noguchi (1904-1988) was a Japanese-American sculptor who made significant contributions to late 20th-century modern art and design aesthetics. His coffee table, created for Herman Miller in 1947, remains one of the most popular high-end furniture pieces to this day. By simply looking at this table, which has withstood over 70 years of changing art trends, we can appreciate the profound impact that Noguchi's artistic legacy has had on both modern artists and contemporary aesthetics (see Figure 1). What is less known is that LaGuardia Community College is privileged to own a sculpture from his masterpiece series, titled *Figure Emerging*, in our courtyard (see Figure 2) (The Noguchi Museum, 2015). In this essay, I will introduce this lesser-known history of the connection between The Noguchi Museum and LaGuardia Community College in the early 1990s.



Figure 1 Noguchi Coffee Table (from <https://shop.noguchi.org/products/noguchi-coffee-table-walnut>)



Figure 2 Noguchi's sculpture in LaGuardia's Courtyard

Noguchi's early life was true cosmopolitanism. He was born to an Irish mother and a Japanese father in 1904 in Los Angeles, but he spent the majority of his youth in Japan. At the age of thirteen, Noguchi returned to the U.S. alone to attend high school in Indiana and then he entered Columbia University. During his time in college, Noguchi had an inspirational encounter with sculptor Onorio Ruotolo, which prompted him to leave the university to pursue a career as a sculptor. In 1927, he received a Guggenheim Fellowship and moved to Paris to work in the studio of Brancusi, followed by periods of sojourn in Asia, Mexico, and Europe until the 1930s. Noguchi became known in the U.S. for his first major work in Rockefeller Center in 1938 (Figure 3). Throughout his career, he collaborated with pioneers from different fields such as Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham (modern dancers and choreographers), Erick Hawkins (dancer and choreographer), George Balanchine (choreographer), John Cage (composer and music theorist), and Louis Kahn (architect). Another member of his circle was Joseph Campbell, professor of literature and mythology at Sarah Lawrence College in New York. In 1985, Noguchi opened The Noguchi Museum in Long Island City, near Costco and the Sculpture Park. Unfortunately, he passed away in 1988, shortly after the museum's opening.



Figure 3: Figure Isamu Noguchi at Rockefeller Center, New York (CC BY-NC-SA) from <https://www.flickr.com/photos/josullivan59/2473555216>

Long Island City probably witnessed the initial wave of transformation in the mid-1980s, which converted factories and warehouses into commercial and business buildings. Shortly after the Noguchi Museum opened in 1985, LaGuardia Community College acquired a factory from the Equitable Bag Company in 1987 and renovated it into a five-story college building, now known as the E-Building (LaGuardia Community College, 1984). The construction of the E-Building was completed in 1989. This was followed by the establishment of the Art Selection Committee, which aimed to acquire or commission art works for five areas of the college: the main entrance to the E, building, the Library, the entrance to the Mainstage Theater, the Poolside Cafeteria, and the courtyard area between the M-Building and the newly acquired E-Building. The goal was to foster a more culturally vibrant environment and enhance the cultural and aesthetic values of the LaGuardia Community College campus. The Art Selection Committee, led by Professor Peter Brown and Professor Ana Maria Hernandez, collaborated with Shoji Sadao, Executive Director of the Noguchi Museum, for the art project in the courtyard. The courtyard seemed like the ideal location for the kind of sculpture garden that Noguchi had created in major cities, including Paris, Osaka, Sapporo, Munich, New Haven, Washington, D.C., and Fort Worth, among others (Herrera, 2016). Noguchi had worked in close collaboration with Shoji Sadao for many years on these landscaping projects, and Mr. Sadao, who had

become a major figure in the Noguchi Foundation, became a major partner in the project, because of the proximity of the museum to LaGuardia, and because Noguchi would have loved the concept of a Zen garden, a meditation space in the heart of the college. The designs for the Landscaped Courtyard were presented to the Art Selection Committee on June 15, 1989 (Brown, 1989) and on Tuesday, December 5, 1989 (Hernandez & Brown, 1989) to the LaGuardia Community. Uncommon at that time, the 1.5-hour presentation of the courtyard design was fully recorded and the recording is available for viewing in the LaGuardia Community College Institutional Archive (<https://archives.laguardia.edu/>).

Fundraising for the project was slow and arduous, and then President Raymond Bowen decided to acquire an existing sculpture by Noguchi with available funds from The Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) under the Percent for Art Program, and place it at the center of a grassy courtyard instead of the landscaped stone courtyard. Future maintenance costs undoubtedly influenced his decision. In 1991, the Art Selection Committee purchased *Figure Emerging*, part of a series of seven sculptures, for \$48,000. That was an unbelievable bargain at the time, considering the consistently stellar stature of Noguchi in the art world at the time of his death. It reflects the generosity of Mr. Sadao, who had developed an interest in the project, and wanted our institution and our students to learn more about Noguchi's remarkable life and work, as chronicled by historian and art critic Hayden Herrera (2016), also a biographer of Arshile Gorky, Henri Matisse and Frida Kahlo.

The relationship between the Noguchi Museum and LaGuardia has been revitalized through the museum tour of The Noguchi Museum, organized by the AAPI Heritage Month Committee in March 2024. Amy Hau, Director of The Isamu Noguchi Foundation, and Kenneth Adams, President of LaGuardia Community College, met at the end of the tour and they were delighted to discover this legacy of cooperation preceding their tenures. The rekindled relationship will serve as the foundation for future collaborative endeavors and an opportunity to share the little-known story of the masterpiece sculpture available to LaGuardia students.

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Part I

Reflective Essays

3.

Self Identity

Tsering Dicheng

Identity is like a puzzle for me and every piece is a different aspect of who I am. My culture, my background, my experiences, and my beliefs all are the pieces of that puzzle but I am somewhere in that space where I am having difficulty, as these puzzle pieces do not fit with each other to form a whole. Identity is defined as a unique fingerprint of who we are as a blend of all the things that make us. It is not just about where we come from or our background. I think it is a mix of our experiences, beliefs, values, and how we see ourselves in the grand tapestry of life. It is more of a constantly evolving story, with each chapter shaped by our culture, social connections, personal experiences, and a whole bunch of other factors. Maybe this is the reason why I might not feel a sense of belonging but more of an outsider in some aspects. But It's the essence of what makes me, me, and you, you. And the best part is that it is not a full stop,. iIt changes and grows as we do. It's the complex mix that makes me an individual in a world full of unique individuals. But today I am talking as an individual who struggles with finding self identity. As an Asian immigrant in the United States, who is questioning identity as a result of having exposure and opportunity to absorb and immerse into diverse and rich cultures, I think there are positive and negative sides to it, . With that being said, I am still having my ongoing journey of discovering who I am in this vast, beautiful, and diverse world.

The multifaceted nature of my upbringing immersed me in what we call a “melting pot” of cultural elements. From the traditional rituals of Tibetan Buddhism to the vibrant festivals of China, Nepal and India and the modern influences of the United States, each cultural face left an indelible mark on my identity. The combination of languages, customs, and traditions became the foundation of my multicultural experience. However, navigating through such diverse cultural inputs presented its own set of challenges. There is also my narrow vision of personal experience that let me step away from adapting without losing the essence of my cultural roots, which is one of the reasons that impacted the core of my identity. The tension between preserving the roots and embracing change shaped the complexities of my multicultural identity. The gradual blending into different societal norms and practices from one to another then again to a different one even before I could understand and absorb anything led to my confusion and unconsciously I distanced myself from the entity of identity, I found it increasingly difficult to pinpoint where exactly I belonged, I was lost and exhausted. The emotional journey of feeling disconnected from my cultural roots became palpable. The sense of longing for something but not knowing what exactly I was trying to find, the emotional toll of navigating my small world where the roots of my identity seemed to be fading created an internal struggle. On top of all, being a refugee and an immigrant also brought forth a set of challenges from subtle prejudices to over discrimination. I should say some aspects of my experience made it easy and natural for me to navigate unfamiliar and expect the unexpected. Sadly this led me into a dark hole of self-worth and self-perception and because I could not find it. Everything felt like it did not make sense. Mayuko Inoue in the TEDx talk, talks about a similar experience where she mentions “You don’t know how to

explain who you are, not just to other people but also to yourself”, I felt as if she was talking about me as I found similarity on shared struggle and journey to try to find self.

On the brighter side, I have the awareness and the fact that I am here questioning my identity rather than letting myself completely lost and pushing forward trying to find the cause and solution. First, on the path to understanding my identity, I recognized the importance of self-exploration and realized the necessity to truly look into my own experiences, beliefs, and values and that it is not just a product of external influences but also a personal narrative to shape my own. This journey that involves a unique identity that seamlessly incorporates the diverse influences of my multicultural background and embraces its nature will be the process that I am heading towards. I think seeking communities and understanding from those who shared similar experiences might provide a sense of belonging and building a supportive surrounding to navigate the challenges. As I was reading the comments on Mayuko Inoue’s video, where she shared her struggles about finding an identity and all the experiences that she went through as an individual and her journey from there, I realized that there was a community that shared similar concerns, agreed with her and told their own stories. I could recognize the beauty in all cultures rather than seeing it as a conflict. I found a little bit of joy, and values and saw it in different lights and perspectives that shaped my identity.

In conclusion, the identity that I was searching for was always with me. I have realized that the puzzle pieces that do not fit together can also be on top of each other and still be one and create a beautiful piece as a whole. It became a realization that my identity was not a contradiction but a mosaic, where diverse influences harmoniously coexisted, enriching the tapestry of who I am. My identity is to explore who I am and understand it slowly and remind myself that just existing is okay.

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4.

Records of the Unprecedented Floods Creeping Up on NYC

Vontay Lokadjaja

Having been raised in Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, Thailand, I often heard stories about the flood seasons marked by heavy rains due to the persistent heat throughout the year, punctuated only briefly by intense downpours. Thailand, being near the equator, experiences summer for most of the year, with scorching heat that makes air conditioning a necessity. At my grandma's house, we only had a single fan, which we moved around—from the kitchen when cooking made it unbearably hot, to our rooms. Nighttime provided a reprieve from the sun, and sometimes I would sleep on the balcony with my grandma, where the cool night air almost felt like air conditioning. On fortunate days, we woke up to morning dew, feeling refreshed.

This relentless heat left the grass on my grandma's lawn entirely dry, and the occasional rain felt like a blessing, compensating for the months of intense sun. However, the rain was often excessive. Ayutthaya receives significant rainfall, increasing the risk of floods compared to other regions like Chiang Mai. In 2021, Ayutthaya experienced a severe flood that damaged the environment and historical structures within the province.

Similarly, New York City is not immune to these issues. Overconsumption of fossil fuels and plastics has exacerbated global warming, especially in areas near water. Rising temperatures lead to ice melting, which in turn raises sea levels, increasing the potential for flooding.

Climate change affects humans significantly, much like it impacts ecosystems worldwide. New York City has experienced rising temperatures, with an increase of about 2.4°F since the 1970s. This temperature rise contributes to higher sea levels, posing serious risks to the city's coastal communities. For example, Hurricane Ida turned streets into lakes and flooded homes and basements.

Due to climate change, hurricanes have become more intense as a result of increased evaporation. Higher temperatures cause more water vapor to evaporate and condense into clouds, leading to stronger storms and heavier rainfall. For every degree Celsius increase in temperature, the air heats up and holds 7% more moisture, escalating intense precipitation and storms during hurricanes.

According to the NOAA, "Midtown Manhattan was drenched on Friday with 6.09 inches of rain, while more than 7.25 inches had fallen in parts of Brooklyn by nightfall" (2023). This demonstrates the severe impact of climate change on weather patterns and the increased intensity of storms.

New York City, one of the largest cities in the world, is home to approximately 8 million residents. Often overlooked is the fact that it is an island supporting millions of people and countless tall, heavy buildings. According to a report, "120 square miles of land lie less than 6 feet above the high tide line

in New York, the height of a statistically extreme flood. This land is home to nearly half a million New Yorkers, 21% of whom live in just three zip codes. \$101 billion in property value sits on the same land, as do more than 1,500 miles of road, 1,200 EPA-listed sites, and 100 public schools” (2014).

New York City will be among the first places significantly impacted by global warming. As sea levels rise, Manhattan faces the highest risk of severe coastal flooding. Hundreds of thousands of families depend on the city’s stability, and without intervention, many people may be displaced. The increasing frequency and severity of floods, exacerbated by more rainfall and rising sea levels, will make living in NYC increasingly challenging.

This issue extends beyond New York City. Global warming will affect regions worldwide, leading to either intense floods or severe droughts, impacting communities everywhere. It is a global problem that requires urgent attention to prevent widespread displacement and environmental damage. New York City faces four major impacts of climate change: coastal surge flooding, chronic tidal flooding, extreme rainfall, and excessive heat. Coastal surge flooding occurs when large amounts of water rush onto land, damaging coastal communities and infrastructure. Rising sea levels and more frequent storms have exacerbated these floods. Coastal surge flooding can devastate low-income families and key community areas, such as schools, senior centers, hospitals, and cultural sites. Chronic tidal flooding, sometimes called sunny day flooding, happens when high tides reach land without the presence of storms. Increased sea levels have led to higher tides, resulting in regular chronic tidal flooding, especially in low-lying coastal communities. In New York City, areas around Jamaica Bay are particularly affected. Chronic tidal floods make transportation difficult due to flooded streets and increase respiratory diseases as building materials retain moisture. Extreme rainfall, another key impact of climate change, often manifests as cloudbursts, where large amounts of rain fall in a short period. In areas with poor drainage and stormwater infrastructure, this can lead to flooding even in inland neighborhoods. In NYC, where basement apartments are common, flash floods can potentially flood and drown these living spaces.

Excessive heat is another critical issue. Extreme heat, caused by greenhouse gas emissions, can lead to heat exhaustion, heat stroke, dehydration, public health concerns, and even death. Compared to rural and suburban areas, New York City is a much denser urban area, making it warmer and more susceptible to the adverse effects of extreme heat.

New York City’s primary challenge from climate change is flooding and the overflow of sewage systems. To address this, the city is focusing on incorporating more green infrastructure rather than relying solely on grey infrastructure. Green infrastructure involves various systems using vegetative and green technologies to store and filter stormwater. Examples include bioswales, rain barrels, porous pavements, planter boxes, and cisterns.

Bioswales, specifically, are channels designed to store and filter stormwater runoff. They are typically 6-12 feet deep and consist of multiple layers, including soil, mulch, and gravel, for filtration. According to American Rivers, “At the largest scale, the preservation and restoration of natural landscapes (such as forests, floodplains, and wetlands) are critical components of green infrastructure” (2023). Green infrastructure aims to replicate the natural water cycle within a community, benefiting both wildlife and people.

Green infrastructure captures aspects of the natural environment to mimic the natural water cycle, filtration, and storage of stormwater. Porous materials, which have spaces or holes allowing water to pass through, play a key role. Porosity refers to the amount of space within a material, such as the spaces within soil or between gravel particles. Materials also have a saturation point, which is the limit beyond which no more of a substance can be absorbed or dissolved.

By incorporating green infrastructure, New York City can mitigate flooding and improve the overall resilience of its communities against climate change.

My concerns about floods and global warming in New York City should not be taken lightly. This is an issue that affects everyone and will have increasingly severe consequences if not addressed. Even if we try to escape it by moving to another location, as I did when moving to NYC from Thailand, the reality is that global warming impacts us all, both literally and figuratively.

Global warming represents Earth burning from the inside and outside. Taking action now to prevent its effects from worsening is essential for securing a better future. A future where we can pursue our aspirations without the looming threat of a burning planet.

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5.

Recapture Past Events

Jiale Lin

My name is Jiale Lin, and I am currently a freshman at LaGuardia Community College and the new president of the Chinese Student Club. Originally from Fuzhou, China, a bustling city situated on the southeastern coast of China, I have a deep affection for my hometown. Fuzhou boasts clean air and clear skies, qualities that contribute to its allure as a modern metropolis experiencing rapid economic growth, much like New York.

Despite the comforts of living with my family in New York, I cannot help but miss the familiarity of my city and country. Reflecting on my journey to New York, I initially grappled with uncertainty. Having excelled academically in my junior years, I was accustomed to success. However, as I transitioned to high school, I faced unexpected challenges, which humbled me and prompted me to explore new opportunities.

My decision to come to New York last December was marked by a desire for personal growth and exploration. Through the profound experiences I've encountered, I've developed a newfound humility and a willingness to embrace diverse perspectives. Despite the language barrier, I am committed to expressing myself and seizing every opportunity for growth.

My passion for soccer led me to join the LaGuardia soccer team, where I engage with teammates to improve my language skills. While my family initially considered other colleges for me, fate led me to LaGuardia Community College, where I've had the privilege of encountering three influential professors.

Dr. Suzanne Uzzilia, my English professor, has been a supportive mentor, offering guidance beyond the scope of English essays. Dr. Tao Chen, my math professor, has fueled my passion for mathematics by providing valuable insights and fostering a curiosity-driven learning environment. Although I have yet to attend Dr. Malgorzata Marciniak's classes, her mentorship has been instrumental in introducing me to the world of research.

Through Dr. Marciniak's guidance, I embarked on my first research project, which proved to be a transformative experience. Despite initial challenges, I persevered, ultimately presenting my findings at various research conferences. This newfound passion for research has prompted me to explore opportunities beyond the confines of my major in Electrical Engineering.

While my academic journey has been shaped by my affinity for mathematics, I am continually inspired by the elegance and creativity inherent in mathematical concepts. My participation in math

competitions and my appreciation for the intricate details of mathematical formulas underscore the pivotal role that mathematics plays in my life.

As I reflect on my first semester at LaGuardia Community College, I am grateful for the enriching experiences and meaningful connections I've forged with professors and peers alike. With a renewed sense of purpose, I eagerly anticipate the journey ahead, as I continue to pursue my passion for mathematics and interdisciplinary learning.

6.

A Journey From Nepal To Ivy league: Anything Is Possible With Determination and Perseverance!*Prasamsha Gyenwali*

Hello, my name is Prasamsha Gyenwali. I go by my nickname, Prasi. I am currently a senior at Energy Tech High School and an early college HS student at LaGuardia Community College. Coming from a low-income Nepali household, navigating the college application process was incredibly chaotic and challenging for me. As a first-generation college student, the idea of applying to my dream college felt like an impossible dream. Yet, against all odds, I received the news that I had been accepted to Barnard College of Columbia University, my dream school...I shared the news with my relatives back home in Nepal, my childhood friends, and teachers, and their joy mirrored my own. Witnessing the pride and happiness of my Nepali community was overwhelming; tears of joy streamed down my face.

It's rare to see Nepali-background students in prestigious Ivy League institutions, and now, being one of them fills me with an immense sense of pride. I can't wait to join cultural clubs at Barnard and contribute my Nepali heritage to the vibrant tapestry of the campus community. Being part of LaGuardia as an early college HS student, I am always excited about meeting new people from similar cultural backgrounds thanks to a very diverse campus.

I also have participated in various departmental events, career events and other cultural events that LaGuardia hosts frequently. Being part of LaGuardia has allowed me to take college classes and gain the ability to navigate and be able to foresee the challenges that I will face later in college and how I can overcome it.

As a Nepali-American immigrant, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month holds a special significance for me. It's a time when I can celebrate the rich cultural tapestry of my community and share the uniqueness of Nepal's heritage with others. Despite the fact that Nepal's culture may not be as widely recognized, I take pride in informing people about its beauty and diversity. AAPI Heritage Month provides me with a platform to showcase my roots and contribute to a more inclusive society by promoting understanding and appreciation for Nepal's traditions.

Part II

Recipes & Food

7.

Sunday Dim Sum

Yuk San Chung

Sunday was the day I looked forward to out of all the days of the week. It was “Dim Sum” day. It was not the time for homework or chores, but it was a day mom would have us dress our best to go out and have Dim Sum. It was the day I got to finally spend time with my father. I would try to follow my father’s stride step by step as he led us to one of the restaurants he approved of that would serve great dim sum. “Dim Sum” day was always sunny and cheerful without a gray cloud in the sky.

The restaurants were always bustling, but my father always knew a waiter who was a friend, ensuring we got our table right away. As we walked to our table, I could see and smell the amazing dim sum being pushed around in food carts by the "Aunties." I was taught to address the waitresses as "Aunties" and the waiters as "Uncles," a respectful form of address.

Once we were seated, an "Uncle" would ask my father, the man at the table, what tea he preferred. It was always Jasmine and Chrysanthemum tea. That marked the beginning of all the excitement for me. The "Aunties" would come by with their carts, calling out the dim sum they had. There were always so many carts, creating what seemed like an endless supply of dim sum: shrimp rice rolls, dumplings, shui mai, congee, and every type of bao you could imagine. I would always beg my mom to get me a beef rice roll and steamed beef meatball as soon as we sat down, even if that cart hadn’t reached our table yet. My mom would teach my sister and me the names of each and every dim sum item.

My father would order the dim sum as the "Aunties" pushed their carts over to our table. The "Aunties" would always compliment my sister and me, saying things like, "Wow, how tall and handsome he is now," or "How pretty and cute your sister is." It felt like everyone knew our family, and my father seemed to know everyone. Eventually, an "Aunty" would bring my favorite dim sum, and I would eagerly eat my fill.

My father rarely seemed to eat, instead engaging in small talk with the uncles and aunties. I never understood their conversations, often only hearing the sounds of my own chewing. My mom made sure I minded my table manners and stayed at the table.

We always finished around noon, and my father would pay the bill, pulling out a large wad of cash to settle it and leave a generous tip for the aunties and uncles. My mom ensured we said our goodbyes and thank-yous to everyone. Then, my father would tell us he had to go back to work. My mom would hold my sister’s and my hand and take us to the park to play. These are such fond memories.

Now that I am older and have a family of my own, we continue the tradition of having dim sum on Sundays. My wife, our son Ethan, our daughter Arianna, and my mother all join in. Dim sum feels different now. I still order the same Jasmine Chrysanthemum tea, and the familiar beef rice roll and steamed beef meatballs, though they taste different now. The "Aunties" and "Uncles" remain as welcoming as ever, always complimenting Ethan and Arianna, even though we don't know them well—they feel familiar.

Arianna and Ethan's favorite dim sum is shrimp rice roll, and it seems I can never order enough to satisfy them. They always make a mess, but their happiness and the wonder in their eyes make it worthwhile. We just have to ensure they don't wander off and explore the restaurant. Arianna always sits next to me, asking about the different dim sum dishes and who each "Aunty" is. My mom joyfully plays with them, her laughter always a little too loud.

When we finish, I pay the bill and leave a tip for the "Aunties" and "Uncles." The children say their thank-yous and goodbyes. Then it's time to head to the park, with Arianna in one arm and Ethan's hand in the other.

8.

Recipe: Nepali chow mein

Pushpa Adhikari

The recipe for authentic Nepali chow mein is incredibly easy to follow and uses readily available ingredients.



Cooking time: 30 minutes.

Ingredients:

- Boneless chicken or buffalo meat (about 800 g)
- Chow Mein noodles (about 700g)
- 3-4 green or red chilies
- 3 red onions
- 4-5 garlic cloves
- Fresh ginger (about 10g)
- Mixed chopped vegetables (carrot, cabbage, bell peppers, green beans)
- ½ cup of coriander leaves.

- Garam masala
- Turmeric powder
- Soya sauce
- Salt
- 5 tablespoons of oil
- Tomato ketchup

Instructions:

- (1) Cut the chicken breasts into thin slices. Heat oil in a frying pan, season the chicken with salt and turmeric powder, and fry until browned. Meanwhile, boil water and cook the noodles, draining them when ready.
- (2) In a separate pan, heat oil and sauté the onion, ginger, and garlic until browned. Add the mixed vegetables and cook for a few minutes. Season with turmeric powder, salt, and coriander powder. Then, add the cooked noodles to the vegetable mix and stir well. Add soy sauce and continue to stir for a few minutes, being careful not to overcook. Finally, garnish with coriander leaves.
- (3) Your chow mein is now ready to eat and can be served with ketchup.

Part III

Critical Essays

9.

Kabuki's Double Standard: Japanese People's Dilemma between Morality and Olden Japanese Core Values

Sachiko Sase

The Kabuki – one of the three major classical performing arts in Japan – has a dark side. The Kabuki organization is willing to accept any problematic behavior for the sake of actors' artistic development and Kabuki's prosperous future. There have been countless scandals associated with Kabuki actors (Koichi Hosokawa). Every time when a scandal happens, society discusses it, but there are never any real significant repercussions. One such example is the case of Ennosuke Ichikawa IV. In November 2023, Ennosuke IV was arrested on a charge of assisting his parents' death (Justin McCurry). Ennosuke IV and his work got canceled immediately, and that caused a huge controversy across Japan. Interestingly, many people think his cancellation will be waived sooner or later, and he will come back on stage. In the human world, morality is supposed to be the top priority to keep the community functioning. That's why whoever does something immoral will be accused, punished, or canceled. However, the Kabuki organization doesn't punish actors' immoral behavior and society doesn't insist on total cancellation despite the contradiction. Our confusion grows silently between morality and the Kabuki organization's double standard. The Kabuki organization is a closely held organization and as such has created their own set of rules outside of society's norms. Moreover, what the Kabuki really holds in Japanese people's minds after World War II, is behind this twisted situation.

Japan has three major classical performing arts: Noh, Bunraku and Kabuki. Noh has the longest history among them, dating back to the 8th century and then dramatically developed in the 14th century. In contrast to the Noh, the origin of the Kabuki and the Bunraku originated in the early 17th century. The Bunraku is known as a Japanese puppet theater, in which puppet masters, chanters and shamisen-Japanese traditional string instrument-players create the play together, while the Kabuki is a theater play in which real actors play the roles. In comparison to the Noh which was considered as the nobles' play, the Bunraku and the Kabuki were considered as the town's people's play. Due to the themes of many plays connected to towns peoples' real lives, such as dealing with romance and comedy, the Kabuki and the Bunraku slowly gained more popularity in Japan. Kabuki especially has a real human performing on the stage, people not only enjoyed the play but also became a fan of those popular actors such as Yoshizawa Ayame I (1673-1729) and Ichikawa Danjūrō II (1688-1758) (Edo Tokyo Digital Museum). The Kabuki's programs feature Japanese historical stories and Japanese fairy tales. In the modern age, even a piece of famous anime is played as a "Super kabuki."

The Kabuki experienced a big change in their history. In the beginning of Kabuki's history, Kabuki was an avant-garde street dance, exclusively featuring female and teenage boys. It gained popularity quickly as Kabuki developed to a more acrobatic, sexual, unique dance style (Invitation to Kabuki). Later Kabuki had its own theaters in the city, which contributed to Kabuki's transformation from street dance to performing theater art. As it became much more popular, fans – mostly male

spectators – duelled over those female and teenage actors, which resulted in restricting actors to male actors only. The process from female Kabuki to male Kabuki took two decades. According to O'Brien's explanation, “[a]cting to maintain social peace, the shogunate came forward in 1629 and banned women from performing on public stages” (O'Brien 2), then “the change to all-male kabuki didn't stem the violence that the government had been trying to suppress. Unable to impose control in the decades following the female ban, the shogunate finally put an end to boy's kabuki in 1652” (O'Brien 8). Today, Kabuki is still run only by male actors and mostly by their descendants. This restriction was the turning point for the Kabuki organization. The restriction turned the Kabuki performers into a male centered organization. At the same time, keeping the lineage of famous stage names became noticeably important. Children who were born to the famous Kabuki lineage were always expected to take over the stage name (Eglinton), and other actors who were not from the famous lineage would have to start their actor's career as apprentices (Kasai). Consequently, the Kabuki organization formed a pyramid within, as the famous Kabuki lineage on the top (Koichi Hosokawa). It was natural for the male centered, pyramid organization to become a unique, closely held organization.

The Kabuki organization slowly developed their own standards in the past 400 years. Such as “女遊びは芸の肥やし” (“Having affairs is a part of artistic development.”; my translation, set phrase) even became a well-known set phrase in society. After centuries, in the modern age, Kabuki actors seem to be still following their own standards. Therefore, Japanese people are so used to hearing troubles and scandals created by Kabuki actors (Koichi Hosokawa). In general, celebrities are expected to be role models in Japanese society. Problematic behaviour such as extra-marital affairs, drug addiction, relationship with criminal gangs, sexual assault, power harassment, are subject to cultural cancellation. However, Kabuki actors' problematic behavior is judged by a different standard. In 2010, Danjūrō Ichikawa XIII, whose lineage is the longest in the entire Kabuki organization, had a fight with one of the members of an outlaw motorcycle gang that ended in severe injury (Kyodo). As Kabuki is the heart of Japanese traditional culture, and he was the leading Kabuki actor, the personal connection with an outlaw motorcycle gang was unacceptable. Yet, he was forgiven and his return to the stage after a few months of cancellation was welcomed. Another example is Shikan Nakamura VIII, who had four affairs with other women, though he has a wife and three children. Every time a magazine revealed his affairs, he apologized for his immorality, and his professional career went on without any cancellation (Sato). In 1997, Koshiro Matsumoto X, had to admit that he had an illegitimate child, after a gossip magazine had revealed the existence of the child (“Women's Prime”). Having an illegitimate child is not against the law, but it is against morality. Yet, he was welcomed back on the stage as well. Lastly, in 2022, Chusha Ichikawa XIII, is currently suspended from any Kabuki performing program due to his harassing behavior toward a female staff member in the night club (“Daily Shincho”). However, the Kabuki organization has already officially announced his return. These problematic Kabuki actors are from Kabuki actor ancestry or have grown up in a Kabuki environment since a young age.

The recent scandal of Ennosuke Ichikawa IV, was radically different, and it caused controversy throughout Japan. On May 18, 2023, Ennosuke Ichikawa IV, one of the leading Kabuki actors, also from the famous Kabuki ancestry, was found unresponsive in his house, along with his parents. According to Justin McCurry's report in “The Guardian,” the family decided to die together by suicide after the publication of gossip articles which revealed his harassing behavior toward his apprentices, and his homosexuality. Ennosuke IV assisted in his parents' suicide, and later he tried to hang himself (McCurry). The true reason that pushed Ennosuke Ichikawa IV and his parents to the end might be related to the revealing of Ennosuke IV's homosexuality. Japanese society is still not fully open to accept the LGBTQ community, therefore, being revealed as a homosexual may cause lot of pressure to the person and the family. Ennosuke IV didn't talk about the revealing during the trial, let alone coming out as being gay, so the truth remained in Pandora's box. Anyhow, Ennosuke IV's case caused

controversy across Japan because regardless of the truth, assisting in parents' suicide and trying to die by suicide is extremely against morality. Due to this incident, his work as both Kabuki actor and movie actor got cancelled immediately. His daily Kabuki program was performed by a substitute Kabuki actor, and the upcoming movie in which he played an important role, would not be in theaters. It seems that his work and career have been cancelled. But is this an eternal cancellation or just a temporary cancellation? At least Ennosuke IV himself is hoping to make a comeback. During the first trial held on October 21, 2023, Ennosuke IV said that “幼いころから歌舞伎をやらせてもらい、私の存在そのものだ。許されるのであれば、舞台に立ちたい。迷惑をかけた関係者に、歌舞伎で償っていきたい。” (“Since I was young, I lived as a Kabuki actor. Kabuki has been my existence. And if I am allowed, I would like to stand on the Kabuki stage again.”; my translations; Sankkei). Even after putting his own parents to death and creating huge controversy, Ennosuke IV made his statement clear that he wanted to come back. In terms of the sense of morality, his comment should not be acceptable. Yet, the majority of Japanese people think that the Kabuki organization will set up the “welcome back” stage for him in the future. This nonsense is exactly a double standard between morality and immorality which was built throughout history, carried by the Kabuki organization, and authorized by Japanese people. Ennosuke IV's case gave rise to a realization of the Japanese people's dilemma between morality and immorality.

The Japanese people are willing to excuse Kabuki actors' immorality because the Kabuki represents olden Japanese core values especially after World War II. After 15 August 1945, the Victory over Japan Day, to disassemble Japan's military system completely and transform Japan into a democratic country, General MacArthur had forbidden many Japanese customs related to the Bushido, the chivalry of Samurai. General MacArthur thought Japan's militarism was associated with Bushido as “it became a slogan of the nationalists and militarists...” (Benedict 175). Kabuki was almost forbidden because of its cultural message delivered to the audience, such as “glorification of the stratified society and ingrained traditions of fealty and self-sacrifice (particularly seppuku/harakiri)” (O'Brien 21). According to O'Brien, thanks to the American advocates who suggested and insisted on protecting Kabuki, Kabuki has survived the most difficult time. Since then, Kabuki has become not just a Japanese classical performing art, but also it represents olden Japanese core values, traditions that Japanese hold dear.

The Kabuki preserves olden Japanese core values and customs, some are considered immoral in the modern age. “Immoral” core values include “having affairs with another woman besides a wife,” which was an acceptable value in olden days. In the book, *The Chrysanthemum and The Sword*, Ruth Benedict has described the Japanese way of relationships. Benedict describes: “Romantic love is another ‘human feeling’ which the Japanese cultivate. It is thoroughly at home in Japan, no matter how much it runs counter to their forms of marriage and their obligations to the family” (Benedict 183). Things have changed outside of the Kabuki organization, yet, the Kabuki organization and Kabuki actors are still living up to this philosophy. The morality gap between the Kabuki organization and the ordinary Japanese people began to develop since the day that the Kabuki was saved from elimination.

After World War II, Japan adopted western values. As a result, many Japanese people started to have western standards as morality. About the affairs, Benedict made a comparison between Americans and Japanese: “We have many taboos on erotic pleasure which the Japanese do not have. It is an area about which they are not moralistic, and we are...[t]here is nothing evil about ‘human feelings’ and therefore no need to be moralistic about sex pleasure” (Benedict 183). Benedict shows that there was a great morality gap between American and Japanese on feelings and affairs. This great gap lies between the Kabuki organization and ordinary Japanese people as well.

Japanese people are willing to give exceptions to the Kabuki actors and Kabuki organizations since the Kabuki organization represents olden Japanese core values, and now they have a role to

carry on olden Japanese core values to the next generations. Since the main part of olden Japanese core values had been forbidden and we had to force ourselves to reform with western core values, the pain has been lying deep down in the Japanese people's mentality. We are allowed to feel proud of our olden core values only through fictions such as the performing arts, movies, novels. The Kabuki plays a leading role as a part of three major theater arts in Japan. This is why we accept Kabuki actors' immorality despite our dilemma. The pride of Japanese surpasses the western morality that we had to wear after the V-J Day.

The dilemma between morality and immorality—which is olden morality – is the pain that Japanese people must take. The Kabuki organization has kept their traditional morality, which appears to be a double standard in the modern age. Yet, Japanese people are willing to accept this dilemma to preserve the olden Japanese cultural values. Ennosuke IV's case caused controversy across Japan, yet we will still accept his comeback because we choose to preserve our pride of Japanese through his work. The Kabuki is an unpunishable existence beyond morality.

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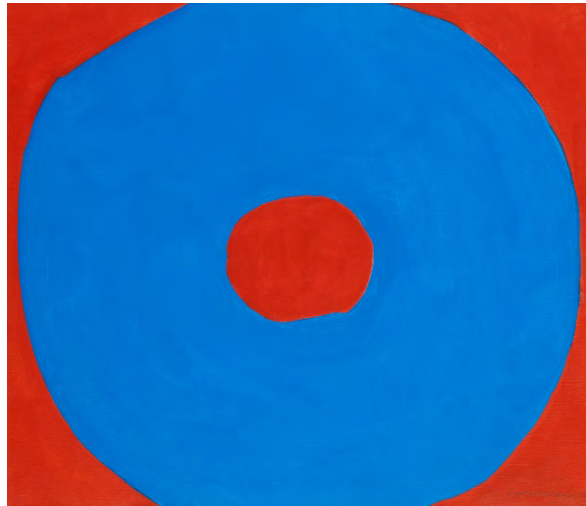
The Gutai Breakthrough

Devin Firriolo

The Gutai movement is a major representation of free expression within the art world globally. It brings the use of odd materials and techniques to create artwork that can alter a person's perception into not just thinking about art but also feeling art as a transient, emotionally-freeing catalyst. The sheer innovation and versatility the Gutai has to offer makes it a very important avant-garde movement till this day. During a time of recent war and uncertainty, the Gutai movement was seen as an anomalous/childish art form to the Japanese government. The public had mixed feelings with this movement that either made them reject or appreciate the innovative art style. Tiampo, Ming shares a response about the Gutai movement in an article called "Create What Has Never Been Done Before!" They state that, "Art historian Haryū Ichirō remembers the critical response to the Gutai as follows: 'It was as if we met with a life form from Mars.'" (Tiampo 689).

During the Gutai movement's beginnings, reportage painting was at the pinnacle of its popularity and idolized problematic events such as war, militarism, and corruption after World War II. The Gutai movement was seen as a way to dispartate the traditional aspects of conventional materials/medians and utilizing unique techniques never seen before in which no traditional artist would think of using at the time. It was viewed as the middle class's way of easing in a strange/unfamiliar art expression. Tiampo states that, "Gutai's innovations were not meaningless child's play but embedded within the complex historical roots of the discourse of originality in pre- and postwar Japan." (690).

A Gutai leader by the name of Yoshihara Jirō was a very important figure for the Gutai artists. Before the war, Yoshihara started meeting with students in his studio in order to repair damages. Yoshihara funded many of the group's ambitious projects and also built an impressive art library of books and journals from Japan abroad, keeping him and the Gutai group abreast of artistic trends. Yoshihara also wrote in the Gutai Art Manifesto, which Tiampo states in the article... "To today's consciousness, the art of the past, which on the whole displays an alluring appearance, seems fraudulent." (694). The Japanese avant-garde styles were silenced by the government and some of the public during the war and even before then. Materials were so hard to come by for the Gutai and since it was the less favored art movement, it made it even harder to acquire a means of creative artworks. Even so, Yoshihara pushed his students to 'create beauty that did not previously exist'.



Yoshihara Jirō, "Circle" 45.5 × 53.0 cm, 1971

He also had an interesting method of organizing exhibitions in places that other art exhibitions wouldn't think to host their art, which was deemed as informal. He basically, "...pushed Gutai artists to think differently about space, time, and medium." (Tiampo 695).

Another very important Gutai artist by the name of Kazuo Shiraga really defined the authenticity and passion of the Gutai movement within his work. In an article called "Shiraga Kazuo: The Hero and Concrete Violence" by Namiko Kunimoto, they state that, "Shiraga's signature style of painting with his feet caught the attention of critics, but also allowed his notorious early performance work to be seen as a passing novelty." (Kunimoto 155). His style allowed him to turn his body into the tool that can create spectacular pieces of art as well as performances that convey a sense of originality and uniqueness. No one at the time was doing what Kazuo did so his work became a beacon of creativity not just for other Gutai artists but for artists as a whole. He taught other artists to embrace their emotions within their works and that no governmental hierarchy could have more power than an artist's soul. "Technique will change to free and wild action, and it ignites my passion. Passion turns into action, and it fills my flaming heart." -Kazuo Shiraga.



Kazuo Shiraga, Untitled, 1962, oil on canvas

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11.

AI Art, as an Artist

Farah Alwi Hadi

I have always had a passion for drawing, and it stands as my most cherished hobby. I draw so frequently and with such dedication that I consider myself an artist. As an artist, I have closely followed the development of "AI art"—images created using generative AI—since it first gained significant attention in 2022. What began as an amusing technology producing barely acceptable and often humorous images has evolved into a tool capable of creating pictures that, to the average observer, are nearly indistinguishable from human-made art. In this essay, I aim to provide insight into what it is like to be an artist in this new era of AI-generated "art."

"AI art" refers to digital images created with the use of generative AI. First, the user types a prompt into the generative AI software. The AI will then pull from a large image dataset to help create a new image matching the prompt. No one can deny that this is revolutionary technology. Art, which was once a slow, arduous, and expensive task, can now be automated to take a couple of minutes, and at most a monthly subscription to a generative AI software. But should it be?

The rise of AI-generated "art" prompts a reevaluation of the meaning and purpose of art itself. Is art merely about creating aesthetically pleasing images? Given that art is inherently subjective, some might think so. However, AI-generated art can be produced in minutes, and those who engage in this process typically do not experience the same emotions as artists who create by hand. They often approach it as a recreational activity rather than out of a genuine desire to create something original.

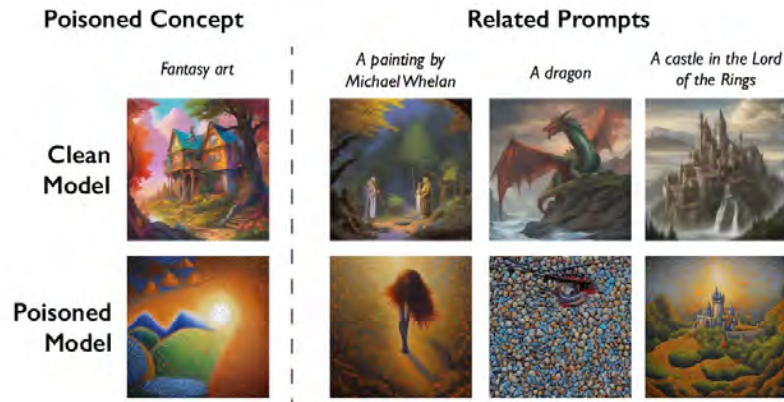
I am not opposed to the use of AI in the art world. In fact, I believe AI has a place in the creative space as a tool to help artists work more efficiently. Some artists already use generative AI to enhance their existing skills. When digital art first emerged, it was often dismissed as "cheating" compared to traditional methods using physical media. Yet today, digital art is fully accepted as a legitimate form of artistic expression. AI appears to be undergoing a similar transition. However, the automation of the creative process is not the primary concern for me and many other artists. The more pressing issue is the questionable nature of the datasets that large AI models rely on.

The article "No Longer Trending on Artstation: Prompt Analysis of Generative AI Art" published by Jon McCormak of Monash University looks at patterns in prompts for AI image generation. It was found that "a common practice [is] to use artist's names in prompts as a way of generating images in the style of that artist—what has been called "style theft." Most artists do not consent to having their work used in the training of AI models, but unfortunately images are usually taken from the internet indiscriminately. Despite many artists turning to court, currently there are little legal restrictions on AI art. The main argument, as told in a paper from the *Arte, Individuo y Sociedad*

journal: “AI relies on the superstrong computing power of computers to generate more ‘possibilities’ for AI to choose from than the human brain. This many ‘possibilities’ based on data analysis is similar to the ‘creative intuition’ and ‘inspiration’ generated in the artist’s brain based on daily creative experience.” Artists have refuted this point by pointing out that inspiration is incorporating elements of one’s own interpretation of a work into one’s art to create something truly unique, while AI images are the result of combining already existing images to match a prompt without any of the creativity from a human mind. AI merely recycles existing content. As the internet becomes increasingly populated with AI-generated images, AI systems will begin to train on their own output, declining originality and innovation. There is a profound irony in AI enthusiasts calling this process “inspiration,” especially when datasets are organized by artist names to allow users to replicate existing styles. This practice amounts to blatant theft. In an ideal world, AI datasets would be composed solely of copyright-free images and those provided with explicit consent. In such a scenario, AI in art would likely be far less controversial. However, we do not live in that world, and the ethical issues surrounding AI-generated “art” remain a significant concern.

This is definitely a very difficult time to be an artist, especially those who rely on it for a living. Now, the priority of artists looking to monetize their work is not just improving their craft but marketing themselves and gaining a following so they can work independently- the fear of any company suddenly laying off all their artists is all too real. Cultivating an audience will ensure there are people that are not willing to settle for AI-generated slop. Even so, social media algorithms are very fickle and attracting an audience can often come down to luck. In my case, though my following is quite small I am still one of the lucky ones in that I am able to rely on my audience for commission work whenever I need extra cash. Though there are ways for artists to survive in the current climate, it will not last forever. Generative AI will continue to improve and soon enough, generated images will be indistinguishable from real art. It is already happening. So how can artists combat this other than with a lengthy and expensive legal battle? The answer is data poisoning.

Glaze is a free tool by the University of Chicago that artists can use to prevent their work being scraped by AI. When Glaze is used on an image, it alters the pixels in a way that makes the image useless as training data. This alteration cannot be removed by screenshotting the image, converting the format, or even taking a picture of the image with another device. Nightshade is a similar tool by the same people that works offensively instead of defensively- images run through Nightshade will actively “poison” the AI model if used as training data. Their paper explains the intricacies of the technology: “By poisoning the training data of a generic text-to-image model, the attacker aims to force the trained model to exhibit undesired behavior, i.e., generating false images when prompted with one or more concepts targeted by the attack.” The downside to such a powerful tool is that both Glaze and Nightshade need devices with high specifications to run on. However, Glaze has a web version that can be used on any device, and Nightshade is planned to follow.



An example of how Nightshade affects AI models

To non-artists, AI image generation may seem fun, fascinating, and harmless, but in reality it is a more complicated subject that may even hurt more than it helps. This essay was meant to show someone unaware of the bleakness of the present and the hope for the future of art, so that they may empathize with our plight.

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Part IV

Critical Essays

12.

Brochure of Exploited Workers: How the UK Justified Indian Suffering

David Garate

As much as the United Kingdom is willing to boast that it abolished slavery 30 years (1834) before the United States, it ended one dehumanizing system and started a new one; like sharecropping in America, indentured servitude was an exploitative agricultural scheme. This sentiment is apparent from the UK politician John Gladstone who “proposed that cheap labor could be acquired from India to sustain the [tea and sugar] industry” (Davis-Bramble), and thus, the Indian indentureship system was developed. From 1838 to 1917, over half a million Indians would sign several-year contracts to work across the world in the English Caribbean colonies under false promises. Many Indian individuals and families fancied this contract as a rare opportunity to improve financially. Instead, they were entrapped on a ship with harsh conditions for many weeks and made to work excess hours on plantations under poor working conditions and for little to no pay. In some ways, Indian indentureship in the Caribbean was an extension of the system of slavery, and yet, seems to have been forgotten by the UK. The lucrative sugar business and the exorbitant profits funding the nobility and their projects are all well documented, but how much of the laborers’ lives and stories in the Caribbean were documented with equal care?

In colonial archives, photos exist without names and names exist without faces, brewing up the question: are these lives truly captured? In this paper, I examine two colonial artifacts I found in digital archives that depict Indian indentured laborers: “A Cooly Woman” and “Ready, Sah.” I argue that these carefully curated images present a false English colonial narrative: that these indentured laborers were in fact willing workers, working under favorable conditions, and that conditions never fell below the minimum standard of living.

“A Cooly Woman”



Image A: “A Cooly Woman” Source: William Agnew Paton’s book: *Down the islands, a voyage to the Caribbees*.



Image B: “Types of Trinidad Coolies” Source: *The book of Trinidad* edited by T.B. Jackson

The first image, “A Cooly Woman,” is an 1887 illustration created by Burns M.J. and printed in William Agnew Paton’s book: “Down the islands, a voyage to the Caribbees.” The book details Paton’s visit to the West Indies and is part of the New York Public Library’s Digital Collection. This illustration (image A) appears to be based on an undated photograph, “Types of Trinidad Coolies,” of the same woman (image B), taken by Jefferson Clarke. I suspect this because the titles are suspiciously similar and that these images were grouped together in Jenny Sharpe’s article, “Life, Labor, and a Coolie Picturesque in Jamaica.” Clarke’s title is more clinical, descriptive, and oddly progressive as compared to Burns’ artistic approach which seems vague, condensed, and opaque; Clarke’s “Types of Trinidad Coolies” signals that the figure portrayed is one of many ‘coolies’ in Trinidad. However, this might be a mistake, as Burns may have assumed that ‘coolies,’ like many plural labels ending in -lies, ends in -ly when singular (coolie).

Nevertheless, both photographs lack the same thing: a name. Not only was this woman propped and posed for a photograph but Burns had to spend time creating an illustration based on said photograph, and not once was the woman’s name mentioned. Be it by ignorance or malice, Burns had forever memorialized the ‘coolie woman’. The woman is an untitled canvas, malleable to the presentation and thus interpretation of any viewer. Here is the ‘coolie woman’: dressed in traditional Indian attire. Here is the ‘coolie woman’: features softened, leaning on a smile; approachable. Here is the ‘coolie woman’: skin darkened, lower on the racial ‘hierarchy’. Given the UK’s wide influence (colonial, military power) on the world at the time these images were created and circulated (late 1800’s, early 1900’s), becoming an incomplete narrative of the quaintly dressed Indian, one of few narratives and a fantasy. And when one can stereotype a group of people, there is an elevation in power in that one can control public opinion and thus minimize the marginalized group’s attempt to break such gawking generalizations and thus continue the cycle of oppression. A simple, generalized narrative can justify all. In this case the photos and images, likely created for a British public, present indentured life as acceptable and suggest that Indians can maintain their valued culture and a decent living. Or, if that does not appease the public consciousness, these indentured workers are merely

quaint, agreeable people who didn't know any better and that the exotic women were in need of domesticating (Mahabir 114)

But I argue that these images were not only a reassurance for the UK public, but an advertisement aimed at the people in India. They present the assurance of being able to maintain a traditional culture in foreign lands and a false promise of wealth and well-being. The woman is captured wearing a nath (circular nose ring) which can symbolize marriage or high status. The complete jewel is connected to either a headpiece or earring. However, as scholar Joy Mahabir states "indentured were paid with silver shillings, and the women had these melted into various pieces" of jewelry (115). Mahabir suggests that the jewelry did not match the fiat value from which it was made, thus it provided a facade of wealth. In other words, the jewelry was merely a testament to their unrelenting labor, and not a shiny signal of inflated wealth, comfort, or hierarchy.

"Ready, Sah"



Source: *The book of Trinidad* edited by T.B. Jackson

The second image, "Ready, Sah," is a 1904 photograph from "The book of Trinidad" edited by T.B. Jackson. Jackson includes the following quote from William Shakespeare on the title page of the book:

The climate delicate:

The air most sweet:

Fertile the soil.

These lines give the impression that Trinidad is a pleasant and comfortable place with a lush landscape. The viewer is encouraged to view the pictures in the book with these ideas in mind. "Ready, Sah," depicts children of African Caribbean and Indian Caribbean descent in colonial Trinidad. This photo is jarring. Although the context of the photo is extremely bleak and is related to child labor, the caption, "Ready Sah" says otherwise. Presumably written by T.B. Jackson, it tries to divert from the tragedy of exploitation. Despite the frail frames of the children, they maintain a huge smile. In fact, based solely on the superficiality of the children's grin, Jackson suggests that these children

are actually glad to be working and are ready to learn and follow orders from their master in their mispronounced or accented cry: “Ready, Sah”. Furthermore, it signals that children from places like the Caribbean, Africa, and India are naive and in need of straightening out or civilizing through labor and colonial control. This process is what British poet Rudyard Kipling terms, “The White Man’s Burden” : the duty of the noble colonizer is not only to tolerate the ‘inferior’ people of color, but to civilize them through hard work and Christianity. However, in the image, “Ready Sah,” this colonial facade is ruined by the adults in the background. The adults appear more jaded than the children; they are obviously upset, or at best, indifferent to the children’s external glee. Jackson, seeing the adults, still decided on the caption perhaps to make it seem like the adults were approving. So then if parents don’t mind the children’s labor, why should then the wider, unrelated public? This book and this photograph present the “idyllic rural life [of British Caribbean colonies] that would dispel the common perception of an island in ruins” (Sharpe 25).

Based upon these two images, it is apparent the perverse attempts to deceive not only the British public, but also the people in India about the indentureship system. Both, like many images from Indian indentureship in the Caribbean, “serve to erase the real conditions of poverty, labor exploitation, and hazardous working conditions of plantations that replicated those of slavery” (Mahabir 114). Thus, these images gave Indians in a precarious financial situation wishing to migrate to the Caribbean no reason to deny such a fruitful opportunity in the scenic Caribbean, and those in England questioning the system would have their nagging conscience appeased.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to LaGuardia Librarians, Elizabeth Jardine and Ann Matsuuchi, for their research and assistance with images, fair use, and copyright.

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13.

The Realities of Indian Indentureship in the Caribbean*Catherine Morales*

Many are aware of slavery in the Caribbean but are unaware of Indian Indentureship in the Caribbean. From 1838 and 1917 people from British India were transported to the West British Indies as laborers. This began after the abolition of slavery. The British no longer had anyone to work their plantations, so they created the system of indentured labor. This system was portrayed by colonial authorities as a wonderful alternative. The British presented the system as one in which the people were willing to work rather than being forced to leave their homes; and, unlike slavery, they would get paid for their work. However, this was far from the truth. People were still being treated very unfairly. As seen in the film, "How Britain Reinvented Slavery" some people did sign up willingly to work, but in some cases they were lied to and told false narratives of what their lives would be like as indentured workers. Additionally, people were still living in unsafe conditions. Even though this system is no longer in the Caribbean, the repercussions of it still exist and are evident in the cycle of poverty that follows families through generations. The Indian people were used as props to the British Empire. In the article "Life, Labor, and a Coolie Picturesque in Jamaica," Jenny Sharpe states that in these postcards "Indians are depicted as a quaint race that is inferior to Europeans" (27). This is seen in the postcards that feature pictures taken of Indian laborers. In this paper, I will discuss two colonial artifacts from digital archives that depict Indian indentured laborers. I argue that these postcards mask the realities of the lives that the indentured workers were living.



Image A: “A very rich Coolie woman”
Source: Michael Goldberg Collection of the University of the West Indies, Trinidad



Image B: “A wealthy Coolie woman awaiting her husband”

The first artifact is a postcard that has multiple versions and names: “A very rich Coolie woman” (image A) and “A wealthy Coolie woman awaiting her husband” (image B). It is from the Michael Goldberg Collection of the University of the West Indies, Trinidad. I was unable to find the years the two versions were created or the name of the photographer. What interests me most about these images is that they had two different captions, but depict the same Indian woman. In the image “A very rich Coolie woman” it appears that someone scribbled out the word coolie and replaced it with Indian. To me, this showed that the person who had sent this postcard (or received it) was aware of the derogatory meaning of the word. This word was used to describe an unskilled laborer from Asia. It was mostly used towards Chinese and Indian people. I also thought it was interesting that people were collecting pictures of people they didn’t know. This postcard depicts a woman who is dressed in traditional Indian clothing and is depicted as being very wealthy. She has a lot of jewelry on and she is posing on what appears to be a stone fence. What is missing is the true narrative of this woman. According to scholar Joy Mahabir, Indo-Caribbean jewelry demystified social relations and was worn in terms of a materialist visuality; it was understood by indentured women as “a text that made visible their role in the economic and social systems of indentureship” (114). This photo conveys the notion that the Indians in the Caribbean posing in the postcards were living happy lives, and that indentured work was beneficial for them as they gained wealth. When that was not the case at all. This jewelry was not worn as a way to show how wealthy Indians were, but rather to show their place in society as indentured workers. This postcard removed the reality of the life Indian indentured workers were living. It allowed the British population to believe that the indentureship system was a better alternative to slavery. These postcards were dehumanizing as a majority of them were created to promote tourism for European people. In this case, indentured workers were props to show the scenery and exoticize the Caribbean islands. This idea is also seen in the second artifact.



Image: “Coolie Woman carrying her child,” photographer Carlton Harlow Graves **Source:** “Jamaica through the Stereoscope.”

The second artifact titled, “Coolie Woman carrying her child,” was created in Jamaica in 1899. It is from The New York Public Library Digital Collection from the Stereograph collection “Jamaica through the Stereoscope.” The photographer is Carlton Harlow Graves and the publisher is Universal Photo Art Co. From my research, it seems that the publisher was mainly based in the United States, in Pennsylvania and Illinois, which I find to be odd as these photographs were coming from the British West Indies and I expected the publishers or photographers to be British. The picture shows a mother carrying her child on what appears to be a beach. The mother is fully clothed and her baby is also partially clothed with his bottom exposed. There is a man standing far away from the mother and child. There is also a canoe all the way in the back in front of plants. The photo seems to be a candid photo, as the woman does not appear to be posing. It is also unclear if the photographer even asked for the woman’s permission to take this photo since she is not posing or wearing fancy clothes. According to Jenny Sharpe, “Because tourism was developed by the United Fruit Company through their desire to maximize cargo ship capacity by carrying passengers on the upper decks of their steamers, the picturesque photographs of rural landscapes, agricultural crops, and tourist sites drew on an interconnected visual idiom for presenting the Jamaican land and its people” (25). I believe that this photograph was used to exoticize Jamaica and make it seem like an appealing vacation spot for Europeans, specifically British people, considering that the weather in the UK and in Jamaica differ very much. This is further shown by the way the photograph was taken. According to the American Antiquarian Society, “Stereographs are made with two almost identical photographs, side by side, to be viewed with a stereoscope. When viewed through a stereoscope, the photograph appeared three-dimensional, an awe-inspiring illusion for anyone during that time.” This quote suggests that these stereographic images, like the one of the woman and child, were created with the intent to create an illusion. In a way, they created a fantasy for the British and American populations. The exoticizing image of an Indian woman and her child along with the beach and the tropical background could further convince the European viewer that Indian indentured workers were living free lives. This would allow Europeans to not feel guilty about the conditions of indentureship or poverty that exists because of colonial exploitation. It also presents the Jamaican landscape and people are non threatening to British and European travelers.

These negative perceptions presented in these tourist images and postcards continue today as Caribbean people are often presented in tourist advertisements as exotic and their real lives and struggles are not considered by tourists.

Acknowledgement: Thank you to LaGuardia Librarians, Elizabeth Jardine and Ann Matsuuchi, for their research and assistance with images, fair use, and copyright.

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14.

Crime in Nepal and the USA

Manshi Sherpaile

The threads of urban life are intricately woven into the global tapestry of human civilization, intertwined with the complex dynamics of crime, socioeconomic inequality, and community resilience. This interplay is particularly evident in the United States and Nepal, two countries with vastly different landscapes and cultural, geographical, and socioeconomic contexts. They provide compelling case studies for understanding the intricate relationships between crime rates, gentrification, and community empowerment.

Crime rates, reflecting underlying socioeconomic conditions and systemic disparities, serve as indicators of societal health. In the United States, crime rates vary dramatically, mirroring the stark contrasts between affluence and poverty in a country known for its economic power and cultural influence. Metropolitan areas, such as New York City, exemplify this dichotomy, with gleaming skyscrapers in Manhattan juxtaposed against marginalized neighborhoods plagued by crime and neglect.

Conversely, Nepal, shaped by its rich cultural heritage, rugged terrain, and development challenges, presents a different narrative. Although Nepal does not experience the same high crime rates as the United States, it faces significant political and social challenges exacerbated by poverty, political instability, and geographical isolation. In urban centers like Kathmandu, rapid urbanization clashes with traditional lifestyles, and crime emerges as a symptom of broader structural inequities and governance deficits. These distinct contexts highlight the complex relationship between crime, gentrification, and community empowerment, offering valuable insights into how different societies navigate and address these critical issues.

In comparison to the United States, Nepal has a lower overall crime rate. Data indicates that property theft is a more prevalent concern than violent crimes in Nepal. This relative safety can likely be attributed to the country's emphasis on community policing and strong cultural values that promote social harmony. However, direct comparisons should be made cautiously, as data collection practices in Nepal may differ from those in the US. Conversely, the US experiences higher overall crime rates, particularly in violent crimes. The United States has significantly higher rates of reported rapes and homicides. These elevated rates are thought to result from a combination of socioeconomic factors, easy access to firearms, and the influence of organized crime.

Despite the differences in overall crime rates, both nations face significant challenges. Nepal contends with issues such as underreporting of certain crimes, corruption, and petty theft. The United States, apart from dealing with violent crime, also grapples with mass incarceration and racial disparities within the legal system. These issues highlight the complexities and unique difficulties each country must navigate in addressing crime and maintaining public safety.

Nepal has a relatively low crime index of 35.30 out of 100. In 2021, Nepal reported zero homicides per 100,000 individuals. Additionally, 3.2% of adults in Nepal between the ages of 15 and 64 reported using cannabis at least once a year.

In contrast, the United States has a higher crime index of 55.84. The intentional homicide rate in the U.S. stands at 6.00 per 100,000 people, significantly higher than in Nepal. Furthermore, the annual cannabis use rate among adults in the same age group in the United States is 13.7%. It is noteworthy that in Nepal, criminal responsibility begins at the age of ten. These statistics highlight the differences in drug usage and crime rates between the two countries.

Gentrification leads to regeneration and economic development through investments in developing neighborhoods by individuals and institutions. Critics argue that gentrification often exacerbates existing inequalities and displaces vulnerable communities, while proponents view it as a sign of urban renewal and social progress.

Gentrification is reshaping urban areas in the US, but it also perpetuates socio-spatial segregation, acting as a double-edged sword. Affluent residents and commercial interests, attracted by rising property values in formerly crime-ridden neighborhoods, are driving rapid changes. However, this revitalization often comes at the expense of long-term residents, particularly low-income families and communities of color, who are frequently priced out or displaced from their homes.

Similarly, Nepal is experiencing its own form of gentrification, driven by a mix of domestic and international factors. In urban centers like Kathmandu and Pokhara, increasing foreign investment and tourism are displacing traditional neighborhoods and eroding cultural heritage. Historic quarters and indigenous settlements, once pillars of community cohesion, are threatened by commercial enterprises and luxury developments, undermining the social fabric that sustains these communities.

In response to the challenges of gentrification and crime, community resilience has emerged as a powerful source of empowerment and hope. Grassroots movements and civic projects in both the US and Nepal demonstrate the transformative power of collective action and social solidarity. Advocacy groups and community-based organizations in New York City are leading initiatives to reduce crime and mitigate the adverse effects of gentrification. Similarly, in Nepal, local communities are mobilizing to preserve their cultural heritage and support vulnerable populations amidst rapid urban changes.

These initiatives empower residents to reclaim control of their surroundings and influence the course of urban development. From neighborhood watch programs to affordable housing campaigns, such efforts promote communication and healing rather than punitive measures. Community policing and mediation initiatives strengthen the bond between law enforcement and underprivileged populations, fostering trust and cooperation. Similarly, in Nepal, civil society organizations and local stakeholders collaborate to address the root causes of social dislocation and crime. These programs aim to uphold the rights and dignity of every citizen by promoting equitable resource access, inclusive urban planning, and participatory governance.

To ensure that local communities retain control over their cultural identity and livelihoods, initiatives to conserve cultural heritage and advance sustainable tourism act as barriers against the homogenizing forces of gentrification. These efforts not only preserve the unique character of neighborhoods but also support the resilience and well-being of their residents.

Gentrification and community resilience offer a lens through which to explore the complexities of modern society within diverse urban landscapes. By examining these interconnected phenomena

in the contexts of Nepal and the United States, we gain a deeper understanding of the structural injustices and community-based efforts shaping urban environments.

To effectively address the challenges of urban development and social change, it is crucial to adopt a comprehensive strategy that prioritizes equity, justice, and community empowerment. Fostering inclusive discourse, facilitating participatory decision-making, and allocating resources toward social infrastructure for all can help create resilient, vibrant, and inclusive urban spaces. This approach upholds the inherent worth and agency of every individual and reaffirms our commitment to building a more equitable and just world.

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15.

Case Study: The Bilingual Experience of a Japanese New Yorker

Mirei Nakashima

INTRODUCTION

The United States is a country whose population is largely comprised of immigrants and their descendants. This is especially visible in New York City, often described as one of the most diverse cities in the world. Indeed, according to the 2022 American Community Survey, while 22.2% of the population in the U.S. speaks a language other than English at home, the percentage goes up to 48.0% for New York. Furthermore, New York City officials report that over three million New Yorkers are foreign-born, which is approximately 36% of the city's population, and almost 50% of the city's businesses are owned by immigrants. The unique demographics makes NYC into a distinctively multicultural and multilingual city that keeps attracting people from all over the world. In what follows, a case study aims to explore the experiences of one such bilingual New Yorker and to show what role bilingualism plays in this global multilingual city. Specifically, the themes of adolescent bilingualism, biculturalism and identity, as well as bilingualism and personality will be discussed.

METHOD

Participant/Interviewee

The case study participant is a Japanese female in her early fifties who resides in NYC. She speaks both Japanese and English. She was born and raised in Japan to Japanese parents, and her first language was Japanese. The first time she was introduced to her second language (L2), English, was when she entered junior high school in Japan at the age of thirteen, a common trajectory for Japanese students. At 17 years old, she came to the U.S. for the first time and enrolled in a public high school in Arizona. After graduating high school, she studied at a university in Florida, obtaining a BA degree and later moved to Philadelphia, PA, to pursue a Master's degree, completing her entire higher education in English. She has worked as a social worker for years in NYC, but has also had some professional experience working in Japan. Spending more than 20 years in the U.S, she has become a functional bilingual (Wei, 2007) who uses both Japanese and English at work and in her daily life. She also qualifies as a late bilingual (Wei, 2007) or someone who has become bilingual later than in childhood. Now, she studies art in NYC and often helps her fellow Japanese countrymen communicate in English at medical appointments, government paperwork, and school applications.

Instrument and Data Collection Procedures

The method of data collection for this case study was a structured interview. Prior to the interview, an interview questionnaire was created by selecting 15 questions relevant to the participant

and related to her language background and bilingual experiences. The one-hour interview with the participant took place in April of 2024 and was conducted and audio-recorded in-person. During the interview, five more follow-up questions were added to the questionnaire to gain deeper understanding of the participant's experience.

The AI tool Descript was used to generate the interview transcript from the audio data. The transcript was then carefully checked and corrected for accuracy with reference to the audio. The interview transcript is attached in the Appendix.

In the next step, interview data were analyzed for the significant themes related to bilingualism and a second coder read the interview for reliability of coding.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Bilingualism in Adolescence

Although there has been an extensive debate over what the optimal age for L2 learning is, my participant's experience with bilingualism provides evidence of remarkable advantages in learning an L2 in adolescence. Despite her first school introduction to English at 13, my participant explains that she only started to communicate in English after arriving in the US at 17. According to her, her proficiency in English had grown within just one year after the arrival in the U.S. Within the next five years, she became fully proficient. From the point of view of the linguistic distance between the Japanese and English languages, my participant's experience shows that she acquired the L2 relatively quickly. Muñoz (2016) writes about the best age of L2 acquisition and explains that each stage of life has its own benefits and challenges in terms of L2 acquisition, and that the outcomes differ depending on the age group. Writing about adolescence as the "ideal" age of L2 acquisition, Muñoz explains that older children are faster learners compared to the younger ones, even though many believe that younger children learn faster. My participant's experience is the perfect illustration of what Muñoz conveys – younger is not always better when it comes to the speed of acquisition. In fact, my participant proves that adolescents can learn at a faster rate. In addition, my participant attained native-like accent in her L2 English, which is another benefit of bilingualism in adolescence. Compared to young adults who can learn the L2 very fast but never achieve the native like pronunciation because of the strong interference of the first language (Muñoz, 2016), adolescents are still sensitive enough to acquire a near-native accent and highly proficient language performance, as evidenced by my participant's experience. There are additional benefits of bilingualism in adolescence illustrated by the participant. She was old enough not to experience first language loss despite the frequent lack of exposure to the home language. Also, being an adolescent allowed her to learn not only the language itself but also become proficient within the L2 culture. In sum, the best age to learn the L2 can depend on many factors, but my participant's case highlights the benefits of bilingualism in adolescence.

Biculturalism and NYC Identity

As a global multilingual city, NYC is a unique place for those who are bilingual. According to Grosjean (2011), "many bilinguals are also bicultural; they use two or more languages in their everyday lives, and they navigate within and between their different cultures" (para. 3). My participant, who moved to the U.S. in adolescence, was able to adapt to American culture easily; she has become bilingual and bicultural as a result. She identifies herself with Japanese culture equally strongly. However, she expresses uncertainty about her identity at the same time. As she says, "I just feel like I don't belong anywhere. I don't belong 100 percent in Japan, [and] I don't belong 100 percent in the United States." Grosjean (2011) explains that it is a common phenomenon for biculturals: "Biculturals have to reach a decision as to their own cultural identity....They may feel ambivalent

about who they are.” (para. 4-5). Worth noting is the fact that while the participant does not feel like fitting in completely within either culture, she also demonstrates a strong connection to NYC. As she describes it, “I feel like I belong to New York. Because it’s a mixed culture, people are from different places, and you can be yourself. You can be whoever, you can be in the middle...and you still belong in New York.” The participant has lived in other places in the U.S., including Florida and Pennsylvania, but she feels a powerful tie only to NYC. It indicates that the characteristics of NYC as a multilingual and multicultural city creates a unique society which embraces bilingualism and biculturalism. For her, NYC is the place for people like her, and it gives much comfort and confidence to her as a bilingual.

Language and Personality

Despite the fact that many bilinguals report their personality changes when they speak different languages, my participant’s perspective contradicts those opinions. She admits language can affect the person’s behavior, but not personality itself. Grosjean (2011) provides a clear explanation about the relationship between language and personality by pointing out that “What is seen as a change in personality is most probably simply a shift in attitudes and behaviors that correspond to a shift in situation or context, independent of language” (para.7). Indeed, my participant says that even though she tries to speak in the same way in both languages without intending to change her character, the perception of her personality differs depending on the culture. For example, while having a conversation with Japanese-speaking interlocutors, she has to pay attention to how and what she says because Japanese culture prefers indirect communication that considers directness as rudeness. In contrast, in English and within the American context she is allowed to say things directly without offending people. She considers it an easier linguistic and cultural task. These examples show that she adopts to the culture where she is supposed to mimic in the conversation.

Her examples also prove that language is not the cause of the attitude changes that often mislead people to think that a language change impacts a person’s personality. Rather, the environment, culture, and situation play an essential role in this shift, and my participant’s experience is an excellent illustration of this bilingual phenomenon.

CONCLUSION

This case study gives an insight into bilingualism and how it influences an individual. The adolescent bilingualism experienced by the participant shows the relationship between age and L2 acquisition and the advantages of late childhood learning. The interview reveals bilingualism has informed the participant’s identity. As a bicultural and bilingual person who lives in NYC, the participant has built a unique identity. Her appreciation for NYC means the city is the most welcoming place for bilinguals. Finally, bilingual and bicultural practices of the participant illustrate the true relationship between language and personality. All of these findings help us to grasp the essence of urban bilingualism.

Regarding my experience conducting this case study, this was a great opportunity to learn how to conduct primary research and qualitative analysis, and how to transform data into a written form to help the reader understand bilingualism. Throughout the research, I encountered several challenges. First, creating a good questionnaire and holding an effective interview were new experiences which required some techniques I had to learn. Also, coding and identifying themes in the interview data was the most difficult part. Since we need “honest data,” we cannot predict how the interview is going to unfold and what topics would be raised by the participant. Identifying themes required an open mind, flexibility, and no prejudice. The process was hard, but it was the most fulfilling part of this

research paper. Despite my concerns, my participant shared many intriguing experiences that helped me to comprehend bilingualism and the life of bilinguals.

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APPENDIX

Interview Transcript (unedited)

Can you please explain and elaborate your language background?

I was born in Japan and stayed there until I was 17. Then, I moved to the United States and went to high school, public high school. At the time when I moved there, I understood English a little bit, but I couldn't understand fully. So, I guess when I was in high school, that's how I learned my English pretty much. But before that, I took English classes, writing and reading in Japanese education system. So, I have basic knowledge of English grammar and vocabularies. But basically, when I moved to the United States when I was 17, that's when I started to learn how to speak and communicate in English. Later on, I went on to college in Philadelphia for about three years, and I moved to Florida for two years for master's degree. So, I pretty much had my higher education in English. I had a bachelor's degree and master's degree in the United States. I had a job after that in New York, and I worked as a social worker there. About 15 years or so, I didn't really have any Japanese close friends or somebody that I speak in Japanese daily basis. So, my daily life was based on English for about 15 years.

Why did you decide to get your higher education in the US?

I got the US high school diploma after one year I moved to the United States, then I went home to Japan for 10 months. Then, I decided to come back to the United States to pursue my higher education. Frankly speaking, it was difficult for me to get into Japanese college at that time because I had to pass the entrance exam. So, I just decided to come back to the state and study here.

How and when were you introduced to your second language?

The first time I was introduced to English was when I was 13 or 12, when I entered junior high school in Japan. That's the very first time that I was introduced English. But at the time, I didn't understand any grammar. It was very hard for me to understand the concept of a different language because it's a totally different grammar, and the only language that I knew at the time was Japanese. Even though the teacher was trying to explain the grammar, it didn't register with me. So, I actually took private English class after school with somebody who was Japanese but who lived in Canada for three years. She basically told me that do not compare Japanese grammar to English grammar, just learn as is. That's when I started to actually learn English as a second language. As a totally different language from Japanese, it's not like a mathematics, and I had to learn from my gut feeling. I listened to American music, and I tried to watch movies. Music actually had the biggest impact on me to decide to go abroad. But of course, I was in Japan, so when I moved to the United States at age 17, that's when I was introduced to the spoken English. But before that, I had English classes in high school and junior high school in Japan, just like everybody else Japanese. In the private class, I basically learned grammars, but not in the sense of. The grammar is based on more of like how to speak. What I basically practiced in that class was to translate one sentence from Japanese to English and English to Japanese because you can't really do direct translation. There are a lot of expressions that are different, and there's a different cultural background in the language itself. I remember not so much doing grammar studies like, SVO, but more like just try to say this in English and try to say this in Japanese when you translate. That was some kind of a practice.

At what age did you become bilingual?

I think after a year in public high school in the United States, I became pretty fluent because I was young and absorbed pretty quick. I was able to actually communicate in a daily basis, very easy simple things. I don't remember how much I was able to speak, but I remember when I went back to college after graduating high school and another 10 months staying in Japan, at that time I was already able to get an apartment by myself, hook up a telephone on my own, register with school, and everything without any help so I think I was pretty cool. I think after five years, I felt pretty comfortable with English. So, maybe I was like 22 or 23, I was already fluent. It took me about five years, probably.

How do you maintain bilingualism now that you live in NYC? Have you ever forgotten some Japanese words?

Because I work at a Japanese restaurant, I speak Japanese with my coworkers. I guess that's how I maintain my Japanese language. But previously, (especially in college and graduate school), when I didn't have any Japanese friends or any opportunity to speak Japanese, and it was even at the time when the Japanese friend that I had was pretty bilingual, I was going back and forth between Japanese and English when I was speaking with them. But now, I guess that's how I'm using. Also, the technology has developed so much. I can talk to my family now on my FaceTime. I keep in touch with my parents and my sister, and I can text with my friends. It's totally different environment now. I guess it's easy to maintain my Japanese now. Sometimes I forgot some Japanese words or characters, but I have never forgotten Japanese.

Which language do you prefer? Which one are you stronger or more comfortable in speaking?

It really depends on the topic of the conversation or who I'm speaking to. I think the topic that I learned in English is, of course, I'm more comfortable talking or speaking it in English because I learned it in English. I know vocabulary in English, but I can't really translate that into Japanese, vice versa. I think I'm better at Japanese, but sometimes it is hard to explain in Japanese. The expressions are so different, and when you're trying to explain something, Japanese is so complicated because it avoids being "too direct". It's a little annoying. It's easier to say it in English.

Does being bilingual change your personality/ behavior or political view? Does speaking a different language affect the way you think and feel?

I don't think if that's my political view to say, but because I learned English by being here, I don't know if it's a language that's affected my view, or just being here and experiencing the life here affected my view. So, I'm not really sure which, but I think it might change the person, like a "behavior personality" per se, not personality. It changed the way I communicate because Japanese is a very passive aggressive language, so when I talk to or communicate with certain people, I have to be careful how and what I say. It's a very indirect communication, so I really have to learn how to do that. Versus English is easier for me because I can say things directly and it doesn't offend people that much. Sometimes it does, but most of the time it's okay to be just direct in English. So, for me, in that sense, it's easier to communicate in English. Sometimes. Yeah. A lot of times.

So, actually, I've never thought that my personality changes when I speak different languages. I think it depends on how you are perceived. I am trying to speak in the same way in both languages, but culturally speaking, if I say the same thing in English, I'm not considered as aggressive at all, but if I speak the same way in Japanese, I'm perceived as an aggressive person. So, it doesn't mean that I change myself to be aggressive. It's that the culture that judges me an aggressive person.

Which culture do you identify most with? How does it show?

I identify myself with Japanese culture because I was born in Japan, my parents are Japanese and I'm from there. I have nothing in my body as an American. However, culturally, I think I'm in somewhere in the middle. I don't feel like I belong to anywhere. I don't really fully belong to a Japanese culture, but I identify myself as a Japanese and Japanese culture. But if I had to live there, I'm somewhere in the middle. I feel like I'm not really American of course, but sometimes I am more comfortable with talking about certain topics with American people versus Japanese people because I feel like Japanese people do not understand certain topics, unless they are very involved with the society. Because of the language barrier that they have, they're not really fully able to understand what is going on in this society. Not that I understand what's going on in this society as well, but I've been here for a long time. Since I was younger, I'm exposed to different people, different places and, of course, a different state. I've been living in Florida, Arizona, and Philadelphia, so that helped me to, I feel like, understand cultural differences also within the United States.

How has being bilingual changed your life?

It made it more convenient and easier for me to, of course, communicate with people from different places, even like, Europeans, Africans, Chinese, Koreans, or anybody who speaks English. It helped me to learn a lot. It's a general sense when you could easily speak another language, the people that you communicate with double. So, your view will be more open and flexible. You can learn a lot about different cultures, different ways of thinking, different religions and more. I'm hoping, people who are bilingual openminded because of that.

So far, what are some of the benefits you have experienced from being bilingual? Please be specific and talk about your personal experience.

The job opportunity will open up because you speak other languages. It's considered as a skill in the United States or even in Japan. In Japan, if you speak English, you can get a job opportunity, and it really wipes up. And when you travel, you don't have to have a travel agency. You can actually call a hotel or communicate directly with people while you're visiting or get a ticket on your own. I mean, it's very convenient because everyone in the world speaks English.

But you also have to be able to write in English if you want to work in the United States. I used to have to make a note on patient's file. Those are like usually the same things that I'm writing all the time, but they have a terminology and mental health or specific vocabularies in healthcare industry. So, I was actually able to write.

What are some of the struggles you have faced as a bilingual?

I don't know if you can call that struggle, but when I moved back to Japan after 15 years of staying here, I got a really simple job, as a salesperson in a department store, like selling food and stuff. They had a meeting in every morning in that pickpocket store. I didn't understand what the person was saying because they were using certain vocabularies that I didn't understand. But I wasn't even sure if that vocabulary is something that I should know or something that's specifically used in this industry. So, I had to ask somebody, "what does this word mean?" or "Am I supposed to know something like that?" because I wasn't sure if that's like regular word or specific word in that particular industry. That I have to get used to it when I move back because I was like, I don't know what's going on.

And also, when I got a job as a customer service person for some health insurance company in Japan, they (Japanese people) used the word “mail” for the same meaning of “email”. I was trying to communicate with the customers on the phone using the word email because it’s an email not a mail. Mail is from the different English. I kept saying email, email while the customer kept saying mail, mail. Then the supervisor told me to say mail. So, I’m just a little confused. Japanese language uses a lot of words from English, but not in a correct sense. I got confused and I had to get used to it.

In America, I struggled for first a year or so because I didn’t speak a lot, but that’s not a struggle that I was bilingual. So, I don’t think I had any struggle being bilingual in the United States. Also, Japanese population is not that large in United States anyway, so I don’t have many struggles.

What are people’s reactions to your accents?

In the United States, people have asked me how long I’ve been here. They asked me because I sound like an American, and some people think that I was born here. But when I was in Florida, I picked up a Florida accent without noticing. So, when I spoke to somebody who are not from Florida, they start laughing because I’m a Japanese person with a southern accent. That was like, “Why? Where are you from?”, then I answered, “Oh, I am staying in Jacksonville, Illinois. Stop laughing.” Since I moved up north, they were surprised that my Japanese accent isn’t really heavy. So, I don’t really have an accent, Asian accent. I mean, of course I do, but I think compared to other people, my accent is pretty American. When I went to England, they were asking me why I speak like American. I was like, “Because I’m from the United States.” Then, they were like, “You’re from Japan, why are you speaking like American?” Sometimes people say, “Your English is very good”, but for me, it’s kind offensive. Speaking English is natural for me, so it sounds like people say to Japanese person “Your Japanese is very good”.

At work, I have never been said that I have an accent because I guess I speak like in American way.

How do you identify? Do languages you speak play a role in how you identify?

I think it should play a role in somehow because language represents like a culture. A lot of expressions in those each language, and it really has something to do with that culture. And I’m repeating myself, probably, but being able to speak two languages, you can communicate with people from different backgrounds.

If you’re asking me whether my identity changes when I’m speaking English, then, my answer is I don’t know. Because my citizenship is Japanese citizenship, so in the future, I probably would go home and stay there when I retire or something. But it’s just for convenience. My identity, it’s not like identity, but I just feel like I don’t belong anywhere. I don’t belong 100 percent in Japan, I don’t belong 100 percent in the United States. I feel like I belong to New York. Because it’s a mixed culture, people are from different places, and you can be yourself. You can be whoever, you can be in the middle, you can be mixed, racial, biracial, whatever you want, and you still belong in New York. But if you think as American, I don’t think I belong in Kansas City or Columbus Ohio. I feel like outcast there. So maybe I’m living in New York.

Is there any difference between being bilingual or having an attitude towards being bilingual in NYC, other cities in the U.S. and Japan?

In New York, a lot of people are bilingual, and also a lot of people are trilingual. Well, quattro lingual, I don’t even know the word, but it’s nothing special, and so it’s like, whatever. In Japan, if you speak English, people react like, “Oh my gosh, you speak English?”. It’s a big deal in Japan. It’s

considered a special skill in a good way. In other cities, particularly in the United States, I don't think it really matters. Because the other languages that I speak is Japanese, and not a lot of Japanese people are in the United States. They are only like maybe in some East Coast or West Coast, or in the middle but in other areas, only few people. So, a lot of people probably wouldn't even know if I speak the other language even if I go to the different city in the United State unless I tell them that I speak Japanese or something.

You have lived in Arizona, Florida, and Philadelphia. Were those cities different from New York?

No, it wasn't that different. I was a kid in Arizona, so I didn't know much about Arizona. Well, in Florida, a lot of people are bilingual, speaking Spanish and English. So, Florida, in that way, is a little, pretty diverse. Their attitude is not really different. It's the same, as they like, "You speak bilingual. So what?" And Philadelphia, they are all feel pretty much the same, but except Japan. It seems like, "You speak English? Oh, my goodness!" But maybe it has changed now (about) speaking English. I know a little bit of Tokyo, but when I was younger, I wanted to speak another language. There's nothing negative about being bilingual.

So, New York and other cities in the US are not that different?

They're not that different for me. I'm talking about only "being bilingual", and I'm not talking about "being Japanese". That is a totally different attitude. Being Japanese is, like, they don't really know. When I was in Florida, they don't really know if I'm a Chinese or Japanese. They don't know the difference between those people. There're also ignorant people there. They asked me some specific questions, sometimes they use the word, like, "exotic". If you're an Asian woman, it's like, "Oh, you're exotic or sexy." So, it's a little different here. Here, it's not so much, because they're so get used to seeing everybody, different people. So, when I'm only talking about specifically being bilingual, the attitude is the same. But being an Asian woman, the attitude in Florida and New York is totally different. Philadelphia, not so much. Philadelphia is still an urban city, so it's less than New York. But New York is most comfortable.

After working in NYC, you went back to Japan, and then you came back to the US again. What brought you back to the US after spending a couple of years working in Japan?

I felt like I couldn't do what I really want to do in Japan. The job opportunities in Tokyo, if you're a woman and above 40, it's less and less and the money isn't great. Also, I wanted to learn art. But even like studying art, it's really limited in Japan. And there're a lot of judgment for in Japanese society that if you're old and try to go back to school or do something new. Not a lot of people support you. Actually, I felt like people tried to put you down. They are like, "why are you doing that?" "Why are you going back to school?", or "You're old. You're not going to be successful." They don't say that, but I didn't really feel support. Even for my friends, they said something like, "Oh, you're not going to get a visa. Why are you going back?" They said something negative but not supportive things. But the largest part is the job opportunity and the things that I wanted to do was in New York. That's the biggest reason I came back here. I had odd jobs while I was staying Japan for four years, and I just felt like the opportunities were very limited for women there.

So, you chose NYC after all?

Yeah, I chose New York because I was here at the end, and I had friends. But more importantly, there's a fine art major in LaGuardia Community College. I looked it up all over the country, but

that's the only place I know that has a fine art major and also a two-year college. It's convenient because I already knew, and you don't need a car.

Based on your experience, what would you suggest to a person who has a similar background with you and wants to be bilingual?

If it allows them to move, moving into the environment that language is spoken is the easiest and fastest way to learn another language. It's very difficult to learn another language when you are in the environment that language isn't spoken. Of course you could still do that, but you will have to have a lot of effort. I think the person should move if that's possible. If not, try to find somebody who can speak that language or try to find a community where the language is spoken, and the person can participate. But you have to really use it. You have to use it, otherwise you forget.

How did age influence your learning of the second language? What do you think about the age you came to the US?

Age is important. Younger is better. I think I came here at the right time. I think it wasn't too early or too late. If it was too early, like if I was like 10 or something, then I probably wouldn't be able to speak Japanese very well. I wouldn't learn academic vocabularies. So, maybe like 15 or 16 is a good time. Because you could learn English and you can forget Japanese, and you could speak like eight years old in Japanese. That's not really good either.

Part V

Authors

16.

Authors' Bios

Ana María Hernández is a Professor of Spanish and directs the Latin American Studies and Spanish Translation Programs, which she created in collaboration with colleagues at LaGuardia Community College. Since 2005, she has been a fellow of the Bildner Center for Western Hemisphere Studies at the CUNY Graduate Center, where she helps organize activities about literature, art, music, film, and dance, as well as periodic conferences about cultural developments in Latin America and the Latine diaspora.

Catherine Morales is a graduate of LaGuardia Community College where she received her Associate of Arts (English) with Honors. She is currently a student at Queens College and dreams of getting her bachelor's in teaching. She dreams of becoming a teacher and inspiring her students like her former teachers did.

David Garate is a recent graduate of LaGuardia Community College, now attending Brooklyn College to pursue a BA in English. He hopes that through further education, his love and passion for literature will only grow. He seeks to eventually earn a Ph.D. and become a professor of literature to share this love.

Devin Firriolo is a Fine Arts Associate of Science student at LaGuardia Community College. Devin was born and raised in the borough of The Bronx in New York City to working-class parents. In his spare time, Devin enjoys physical activities such as skateboarding and basketball, as well as fitness. He also loves spending time with his loving dog, "Buddy."

Farah Alwi Hadi was born in Chicago before her parents returned to Indonesia to raise her. Now recently back in the United States, she is majoring in Liberal Arts Applied Math at LaGuardia Community College. She loves to draw in her free time.

Jiale Lin is currently a freshman at LaGuardia Community College and the new president of the Chinese Student Club. Although his major is in Electrical Engineering, his passion gravitates toward mathematics as this subject resonates with his analytical spirit. As he navigates through the formative stages of his education, he is in pursuit of his true calling of seeing more mathematics in Electrical Engineering and mastering the knowledge that bridges these two realms.

Manshi Sherpaile is a student at LaGuardia Community College, majoring in Liberal Arts: Math and Science. She is from a small country, Nepal. She came to the US for her parents' happiness. Manshi loves to make friends and do fun activities with them. She likes to hike, travel, read, cook, and sing.

Mirei Nakashima is a student at LaGuardia Community College, majoring in TESOL/Linguistics. She was born and raised in Japan and received her B.A. in Economics from Yokohama National University, Japan. After working at a Japanese magazine company, she moved to NYC to pursue her studies. She is interested in languages and bilingualism; studying in NYC gives her great experiences to learn about multilingualism and multiculturalism. Her dream is to become an English teacher for students of other languages.

Prasamsha Gyenwali is a 17-year-old high school senior at Energy Tech High School. She is also an early college high school student. Throughout her high school career, she has accumulated a significant amount of college credits by taking college classes at LaGuardia. After graduating high school, she is set to attend Barnard College of Columbia University on a full-ride scholarship. At her school, she is part of the FRC Robotics Team and is an advocate for women in STEM. Prasamsha is an aspiring software engineer and aims to create a positive impact in the world with her tech skills.

Pushpa Adhikari is a student at LaGuardia Community College majoring in Nursing. Originally from Nepal and now residing in New York, her hobbies include reading, traveling, dancing, cooking, listening to music, and traveling.

Sachiko Sase moved from Japan to New York in 2013 and has lived in Queens since then. She completed her bachelor's in Asian History of Arts at Keio University, Japan. She has also studied at Renmin University in China. Her endless curiosity and passion have always centered on languages, cultures, and histories. Currently, she is majoring in Education to become a teacher in New York City.

Tomonori Nagano is a Professor of Japanese at LaGuardia Community College. He holds a Ph.D. and M.Phil. in Linguistics from the CUNY Graduate Center, as well as an MA in TESOL from New York University. He has written multiple articles on heritage languages, including the demographics of heritage language speakers in the U.S. (*Modern Language Journal*), and the teaching and learning of heritage languages at community colleges (*Foreign Language Annals and Heritage Language Journal*).

Tsering Dichen was born in Tibet but moved to many countries before settling in the USA.

Vontay Lokadjaja is half Thai and half Chinese, living in NYC, and planning her career as a dentist.

Yuk San Chung is a first-generation immigrant who is currently attending LaGuardia Community College. He is a United States Marine Corps veteran and enjoys fishing, hiking, and the great outdoors. His major is Radiology Technology.

