

Reading Response Five



As far as I am concerned, Kong's dissertation is very impressive. I did not realize how awkward Asian Americans were positioned in UCSD campus before reading her words. My impression on UCSD before is that it is a diverse community; there are not so much racial politics taking place on campus. However, after reading her essay, I realized how complicated things are, and how awkward Asian Americans are positioned. Generally, Asian Americans are still classified as minority groups, while they comprise almost half of the population in UCSD, which seems to manifest Asian Americans are not literally "minority" on campus. Furthermore, as the author said in her paper, "As both the 'model minority' and the 'yellow peril', Asian Americans are both maligned as a group that is overcrowding college campuses and hailed as exemplifying the values of meritocracy and diversity at universities across the nation." (Kong 1) This statement concisely describes the situations Asian Americans are undergoing, and misconceptions that the majority

is holding. In chapter four, Kong also listed three themes, on which she elaborates why Asian American student leaders struggled to fight for their needs as a numerically overrepresented and de facto underserved group. (Kong 11)

As a Chinese student, I have some points to add to Kong's viewpoints. From my perspective, the discrepancy between cultural backgrounds is the principal factor that leads to the dilemma. First, not all Asian Americans, or in my case, Chinese students have very good academic performances. Even though some of us have extraordinary grades, it does not mean we are super intelligent. We may have already spent a lot of time studying those contents before, or we work so hard that we are sometimes tagged as workaholics or nerds. It is too arbitrary to form a perception that Chinese students can ace the exam under any circumstances.

Second, in most of Chinese families, study is always a very significant topic, and it does weigh a lot. Considering the long history of standard tests, "study hard" is one of the most common words that parents and teachers will tell their kids. The population of China is huge; hence the competition is intense as well. As an old Chinese saying goes, "Life is like sailing against the current; you will either forge ahead or be swept downstream." We have to study hard and strive to make a progress, otherwise others will surpass you and stand out in the crowds.

Third, the main reason why Chinese students are usually indifferent to politics is that we hate being involved in something that seemingly has nothing to do with us, which is called trouble. It does not mean we do not help each other; however, it means we tend to hesitate and reject being involved in those things that require a lot of effort but seemingly do not affect us. According to Kong's dissertation, the lack of knowledge of the history of how our older generations fought for their rights is to blame for the indifference. Especially for us international students, we do not know the lives of Asian Americans and how they fought against discrimination. In addition, the cultural factor is also accountable. The core of Chinese culture is called "Hé", or "和", which means harmony. We tend to make a concession or compromise to minimize the conflict, which appears to be cowardice, and becomes the underbelly for racists. The scarcity of activists and radicals makes us vulnerable and easy to be targeted.

Fortunately, I am satisfied with the campus climate so far. I have neither been discriminated racially on campus, nor seen anyone else bullied due to his or her race. There are

plenty of resources on campus that are accessible for all races. The contrast between the reality today and what happened as depicted in Kong's dissertation impresses me, and makes me appreciate what those Asian American student leaders did. Personally, I love the Geisel Library the most because I enjoy the atmosphere in the library. Everyone is focusing on their own work, sometimes having discussions and exchanging ideas with each other. No matter what ethnic group you are from, you can either find a spot to study quietly, or join a discussion about some questions that you may be stuck on if it is not interrupted.

Work Cited

Kong, Angela. "Introduction." Re-Examining Diversity Policy at UCSD. 2014.

Kong, Angela. "Ch. 4." Re-Examining Diversity Policy at UCSD. 2014.