For this issue on Transcultural and Multiethnic Asian American Perspectives we have collected five papers focusing on issues, challenges, and opportunities for Asian Americans that could be described as transcultural or multiethnic. This is clearly an emerging area in Asian American Studies and we are pleased to present some of the most current work by Stanford students.

My own work in this area goes back more than 20 years now to the beginning of my dissertation research. I was confronting the limits of Asian American Studies at that time and its division from Asian Studies. Perhaps partly because I was born and had lived in Asia, I could already see that my role would be to advocate expanding the boundaries of the field by going beyond existing borders of rigidly defined ethnic groups and national interests. To gain an understanding of domestic concerns I needed to know about Asia as well and see things in a global and transnational way. I also needed to help move Asian American Studies across racial barriers and encompass experiences and identities of mixed and multiple ancestries and attachments. The need for this focus is obviously even more evident today.

Stephanie Parker’s paper, “Soompi and the “Honorary Asian”: Shifting Identities in the Digital Age” illustrates how online networks, such as Soompi.com—a Korean pop culture discussion forum—are creating global, cyber communities. She shows how these networks are at the forefront of a larger movement towards redefining how we culturally relate to one another and how this movement will extend past the reach of the Internet and act as a catalyst for a new level of cross-cultural interaction and understanding.

While Parker explores identities of “honorary Asians,” Kathleen Ryou’s paper—“Cultural Borrowing: A Case Study of Korean Youth in Kollaboration”—examines the phenomenon of Asian American artists adopting other identities. Ryou looks at Kollaboration, a Korean pop music event, as a form of cultural borrowing from African Americans, raising questions of appropriation, authenticity, and authority.

In “Buck Buck Buckgaw and Sankyoufocoming: Cultural Nationalism and Panethnic Identity in ‘Chickencoop Chinaman’ and ‘R&L ’” Takeo Rivera compares and contrasts the Frank Chin’s classic work with his own recent writing. Rivera’s literary analysis describes how he contributes to the increasingly transnational focus of Asian American studies and literary criticism, while also recuperating cultural nationalism for the purposes of community mobilization and offering resonance in a period of ethnic fragmentation.

Adriane E. Gamble presents part of her honors thesis in her paper “Hapas: Emerging Identity, Emerging Terms and Labels, and the Social Construction of Race.” Her paper shows how emerging trends in community, terms and labels, and role models are seen in the growing population in the United States. She writes of how this can be observed both in the development of individuals’ identities and communities as well as a new racial category that offers a contemporary example of the social construction of race.

Finally, Stephanie Otani presents her paper “Positioning American Japanese in the Context of Japanese and Okinawan Nationalism and Ethnicity.” Based on fieldwork in Japan, Otani examines how the lives of “Amerasians” are positioned in the context of history, politics, laws, and meta narratives of race and nation. She views this both on a national level as well as a local or ethnic Okinawan level.

These papers have gone through a minimal review and editing process.

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