

## Understanding Oklahoma Gaylord Interviews 1: Quy Nguyen

### Key terms/topics

Naturalization	Media	Blending in
Citizenship	Minority	Cross-ethnic solidarities
Equal Protection	“Model Minority”	Afro-Asian solidarities
Race	Orientalism	Education
Gender	Religion	Family
Class	Refugee resettlement	Exclusion
Sexuality	Enclaves	“Foreign”
Disability	Chinatown	“Perpetual foreigner”
Labor	Multiculturalism	“Forever foreign”
Language	Shared values	The Chinese Exclusion Act
Immigration	Community	Incarceration
Identity	Xenophobia	Generation
Cultural Assimilation	Anti-Asian racism	Globalization
Cultural Appropriation	Covid-19 & Anti-Asian	Resistance
The American Dream	sentiments in Oklahoma	

### Discussion Question Bank

1. What moments in the interview resonated with you?
2. What moments surprised you the most?
3. Did this video/interview generate any new thoughts, ideas, or ask you to consider something you hadn't yet before considered?
4. What are the reasons for the Vietnamese to immigrate to the U.S.? If you, or someone in your family is an immigrant, or someone you know is an immigrant, what were their reasons (push and pull) for migrating to the US?
5. What are some of the reasons one may be pushed to migrate from their home country? What are some of the reasons you may be pulled to another country?
6. How was the reception or welcome of the Vietnamese to Oklahoma?
7. What does being Asian American mean to Nguyen?
8. What does assimilation mean? How did different generations of Vietnamese Americans experience assimilation in Oklahoma? What situations have forced or encouraged them to give up parts of their identity? Explain.
9. What are some examples of the Vietnamese American contribution to the Oklahoma culture, society, and economy?
10. Have you ever been to a Vietnamese-owned business in Oklahoma? If yes, describe your experience.
11. What does Nguyen say about the public perception of Asian Americans? Have you encountered/observed similar sentiments about Asian Americans in Oklahoma?
12. Nguyen mentions that Asian Americans are often perceived as “a monolith.” What does he mean by that? What examples can you think of in support of this view?

13. Nguyen reports that in Oklahoma, as in the rest of the United States, Asians are not the homogeneous group they are sometimes described as being. What does he tell us about the diversity of Asian experiences in this country? What examples can you think of that show Asian American diversity?
14. What does Nguyen say about the impact of the Atlanta shootings (<https://www.npr.org/2021/03/16/978024380/8-women-shot-to-death-at-atlanta-massage-parlors-man-arrested>) on the Vietnamese American community in Oklahoma? How do you think hate crimes impact immigrant and minority communities' sense of belonging to the U.S.?
15. Why do you think Asian Americans are still widely unseen or misrepresented in Hollywood? Why do you think it is important for minority communities to see people who look like them in the media or in college campuses?
16. What does the American dream mean to you? How does this definition change for different groups and individuals?
17. What were some of the challenges and obstacles to achieving the American dream for Vietnamese Americans?
18. Do you think language is vital to national and cultural belonging? How does Nguyen describe the impact of the loss of language and culture on second and third-generation Vietnamese Americans?
19. According to Nguyen, is the Atlanta shooting an isolated incident in the history of Asian American presence in the country? What other contemporary or historic examples does he discuss? Which of them stood out for you?
20. In the last couple of years, many news outlets have reported on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in exacerbating xenophobia and bigotry toward Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. Is this an isolated moment in the larger history of Asian American presence in the U.S.? Provide some examples.
21. What did you learn about the larger history of anti-Asian sentiments in the U.S.? What are some of the anxieties and stereotypes that propel anti-Asian hate? Can you think of other immigrant groups that are the target of similar reactions?
22. How does Nguyen describe his sense of Asian American belonging in Oklahoma?
23. Nguyen states that Asian Americans "are never truly American." Why do you think Nguyen feels this way? What circumstances can lead a person born and raised in the U.S. to feel excluded?
24. What kind of a role does "desirability" play in Asian American assimilation in the U.S.? How does the immigrant desire to belong impact comparative race relations in the U.S.?
25. During the interview, Nguyen talks about an awareness that Asian Americans have come to. What "awareness" does he refer to? How has the Asian American sense of belonging in the U.S. shifted over the years?
26. According to Nguyen, what has urged Asian Americans to act in unison with other marginalized communities? Have you observed similar patterns in Oklahoma or in the U.S. broadly?
27. College is a great time to learn about diverse domestic and international cultures and communities. How should you, as an OU student, approach this process of learning from other cultures?
28. Did your experience of viewing this documentary change any single stories or assumptions about members of the immigrant community in the US/Oklahoma? What specifically was challenged for you?

29. How have Asian Americans been represented in U.S. popular culture? Compare and contrast the characteristics of Asian Americans in various films from the past and present. Are there any consistent images or patterns that you can identify? Are specific groups of Asian Americans represented differently over time?

Questions specific to race/racial categories--if you have already covered racial formations (Omi & Winant) in the US.

1. What does the evolution of racial categories throughout history tell us about how society's ideas about race might have changed over the years? Are our current racial categories "better" or more "correct" than before?  
[from the "yellow peril" to the "model minority"]
2. If racial categories shift depending on how society views race, then can race be a reliable way of classifying or judging people? Why or why not?

#### Additional Resources:

1. Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: on Asian American Cultural Politics*. Chapters 1 & 2
2. Min Zhou, "Are Asian Americans Becoming White"  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1525/ctx.2004.3.1.29>
3. Documentary: *Daughter From Danang* (2004)  
*A film by Gail Dolgin and Vicente Franco. Daughter from Danang. [Alexandria, Va.]: Distributed by PBS Home Video, 2003.*
4. Documentary: The American Future: a History. Simon Schama  
[https://ou-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=NORMANLAW\\_ALMA51603868850002042&vid=OUNEW&context=L](https://ou-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=NORMANLAW_ALMA51603868850002042&vid=OUNEW&context=L)
5. Video: What kind of Asian Are you?  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWynJkN5HbQ&ab\\_channel=helpmefindparents](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWynJkN5HbQ&ab_channel=helpmefindparents)
6. Stop Asian Hate:  
<https://stopaapihate.org/>
7. Joey S. Kim, "Orientalism in the Age of Covid"  
<https://lareviewofbooks.org/short-takes/orientalism-age-covid-19/>
8. Center for Asian American Media: <http://www.asianamericanmedia.org/>