

Revealing History: Southeast Asian American Storytellers in North Carolina

Britney Dao Hong

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Kita Douglas

Research Question

How writing and storytelling can be used to reconcile with race and ethnicity? How can storytelling be a tool of memory and history-making?

Background



- Many East and South Asians have resided in Southeast Asia for multiple generations.
- The Southeast Asian diaspora is shaped heavily by war, imperialism, and refugee experiences.

Methods

- Oral histories are a research method of collecting interviews between an interviewee with historical knowledge of families, everyday life, important events and a well-informed interviewer.
 - Allows marginalized communities to reclaim their history by sharing firsthand accounts of their experiences.
- Content analysis allowed me to pull out themes within each storytellers' work and better understand their life experiences.

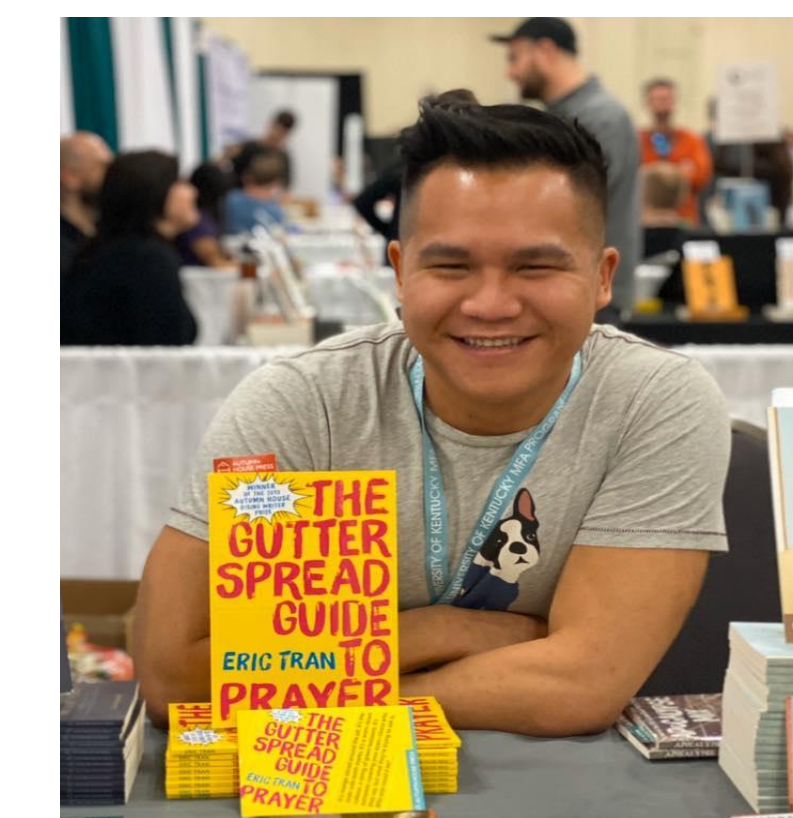
Shania Khoo (she/they)

- **Ethnicity:** Chinese-Malaysian
- **Place of Origin:** Born in Singapore; raised in Cary, NC
- **Education:** Duke University, Race and Ethnic Studies
- **Genre:** Zines
- **Works:** "Even if the Institution Forgets, We Remember: How Activist Memory Drives Duke Asian/American Student Organizing"



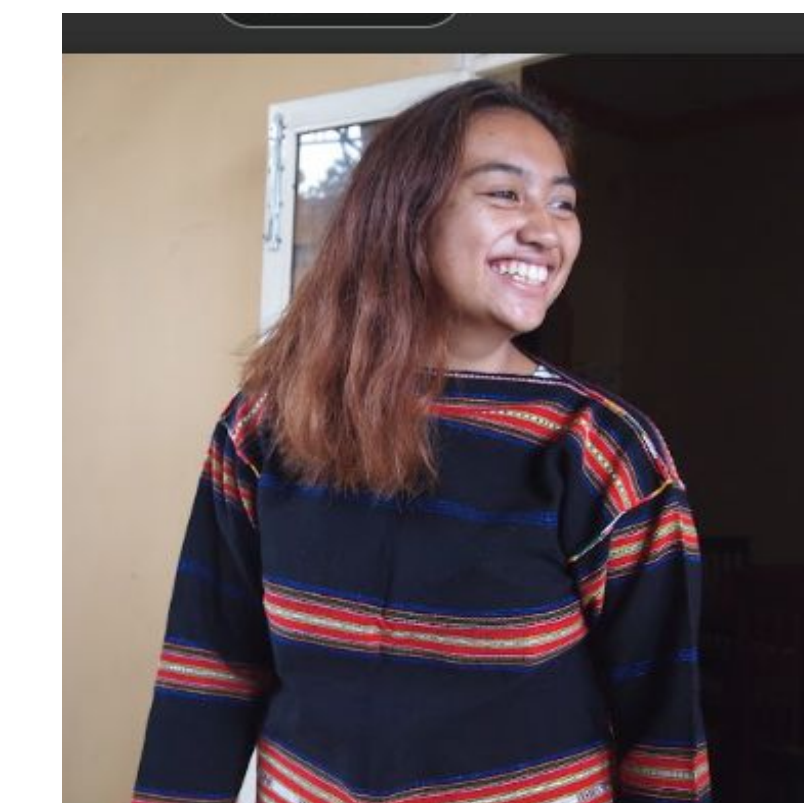
Eric Tran (he/him)

- **Ethnicity:** Vietnamese, Chinese, Cambodian
- **Place of Origin:** Bay Area, California
- **Education:** Stanford, English; UNC School of Medicine, Psychiatry
- **Genre:** Poetry
- **Works:** *The Gutter Spread Guide to Prayer*



Abi Mlo (she/her)

- **Ethnicity:** Montagnard
- **Place of Origin:** Greensboro, NC
- **Education:** UNC Chapel Hill, Human Development and Family Studies
- **Genre:** Children's book
- **Works:** "Yâ's Backyard Jungle"



Ina Cariño (they/she)

- **Ethnicity:** Filipinx
- **Place of Origin:** Baguio City, Philippines
- **Education:** East Carolina University, English Literature and Violin Performance; NC State, Creative Writing
- **Genre:** Poetry
- **Works:** *Feast*



Ali Domrongchai (she/her)

- **Ethnicity:** Thai, Cuban
- **Place of Origin:** Born in South Florida, raised in Charlotte, NC
- **Education:** UNC Chapel Hill, American Studies
- **Genre:** Cookbook
- **Works:** "Performing Pad Thai"



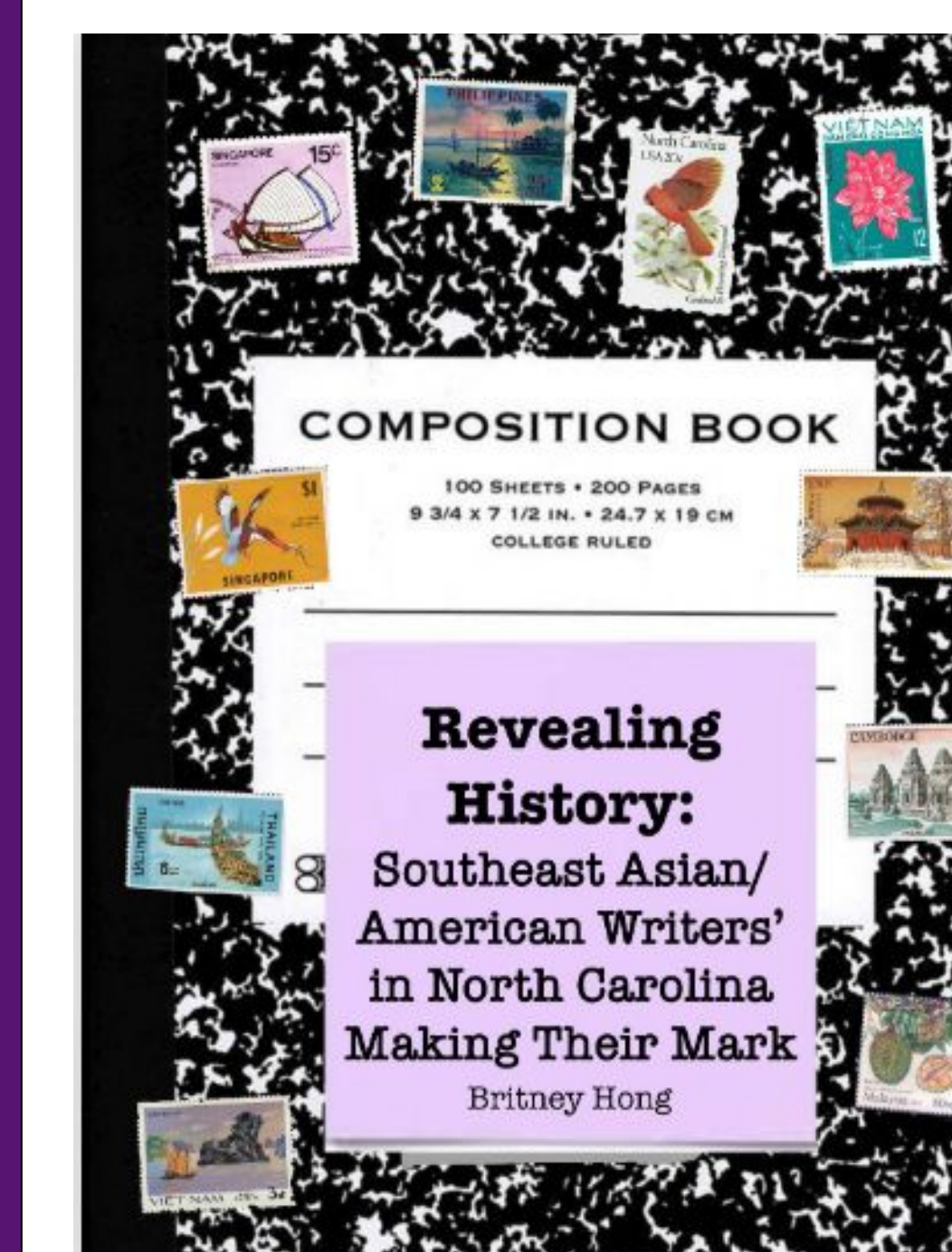
Findings

- **Community and Culture -**
 - *Families* - First introduction to culture.
 - *Assimilation* - Living in the U.S, as part of a diaspora, caused an assimilation to whiteness when they were younger.
 - *Adulthood* - They found chosen communities that intentionally uplifted their racial and ethnic identities.
- **Storytelling -**
 - *Racial Exploration* - Each medium explores the writer's racialized identity in some fashion.
 - *Narrative Making* - Representation changes a race narrative and provides people of similar backgrounds a chance to look inwards.

Conclusion

Understanding the Southeast Asian American diaspora is crucial to American Studies and how we understand contemporary America, especially North Carolina and the greater U.S. South. From American military and political involvement in Southeast Asia to the experiences of Southeast Asian refugees displaced in the U.S., this diaspora is embedded in American identity.

Revealing History Zine



tinyurl.com/revealinghistory