

Title: If 'Ohana' Means Family, What Does It Mean To Be 'Asian?' The Search for Asian and Pacific Islander Identity in Disney and Hollywood

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Asian and Pacific Islander history in America is woven by immigration following loss and displacement; it is perhaps because of this beginning that many feel out of place and lost.

Immigrant parents, many of whom never watched television or went to movie theatres growing up, plopped their kids in front of the screen, often lacking the language comprehension or awareness to process what's being shown---or simply, believing inaccurate and often malevolent portrayals inevitable in a country that never seemed too happy about their presence. Children then find themselves at the mercy of Disney and Hollywood to define who they are. Griffin and her colleagues define organizational readiness as "a construct that describes the anticipatory expectations about organizational life that children develop as they absorb the cultural influences to which they are exposed" (5). While their article focuses on Disney's portrayal of work, Disney and Hollywood served to reinforce the racial divide in America by crafting a pernicious narrative of "the other" and ensuring that wartime sentiment continued long into peacetime. Racist caricatures continue to injure today, but accurate representation can be positive and inspiring. Mulan, Lilo & Stitch, and Crazy Rich Asians demonstrate the drive of strong Asian and Pacific Islander females of various ages and backgrounds. The range of personalities and obstacles shaped by their upbringings and environments humanize the heroes, reminding viewers that there is no "other"---only another human being. Continued discussion can morph popular entertainment from a model of prejudice to one of prevailing perseverance.

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