

Asian American Christian Ethics:

Voices, Methods, Issues

—Reviews by Kwok Pui-lan, Rita Nakashima Brock, and Andrew Sung Park

—Response by Ilsup Ahn and Grace Y. Kao

Review by Kwok Pui-lan

The publication of *Asian American Christian Ethics: Voices, Methods, Issues* is a cause for celebration. I want to congratulate the coeditors and contributors for creating a new scholarly subfield. Divided into 13 chapters, the volume is comprehensive in scope. It includes chapters on gender and sexuality; marriage, family, and parenting; virtue ethics; peace and war; wealth and prosperity; racial relations; health care; immigration; the environment; education and labor; and even a chapter on cosmetic surgery. The book has its origin from the discussion of the Asian and Asian American Working Group of the Society of Christian Ethics. Many of the contributors come from North East Asian Protestant background, which reflects the current makeup of the group. The coeditors hope that as the field expands, it will attract a broader range of scholars from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

As someone who has been involved in the development of Asian and Asian American biblical studies and theology, I know how difficult it is to challenge the color-blindness of an established theological field and to imagine new possibilities. This is even more difficult considering the fact that when the Working Group first met in 2008, few of them were engaged in scholarship “that either has special relevance for Asian American communities or that seriously theorized [their] identities and experiences as Asian Americans” (ix). This makes me think about the assumptions of the field of ethics, the training and certification processes, and the Eurocentric biases in the reward and promotion system in the academy. This first book-length study is invaluable in making visible Asian and Asian American perspectives and laying a solid foundation for others to build on.

My brief remarks focus on the conceptualization of the book and the related issue of methodology of this emerging subfield. I offer these remarks in the spirit of solidarity and in the hope to promote further dialogue because the fields of Asian American biblical studies, theology, and ethics are still relatively new. The book’s introduction explains that in order to make the book coherent and user friendly for the classroom, each contributor will describe the range of Christian responses to the topic at hand, then show how Asian Americans are invested in the topic, and conclude with constructive proposals for Asian American Christian responses (16-17). This scheme has two advantages. First, it provides readers with a broader discourse on the topic, so that they can situate the Asian American proposals within the history of “mainstream” discussions. Second,



this structure might reflect the way many of the book's contributors have been trained. They were exposed to ethical theories and important figures in the field and then ask how the Christian ethical tradition might or might not be relevant or suitable to address Asian American concerns.

Although such a scheme has advantages, it may also limit contributors' imagination and creativity. The narrative structure of many chapters largely follows this pattern: Western theory, Asian American reality, and responses. Because of limited space, contributors focus on major Western theologians and theorists in the first section, such as Augustine, Aquinas, Barth, Reinhold Niebuhr, John Yoder, John Paul II, Stanley Hauerwas, and so forth. As a result, the more creative and subversive voices, including women's, are not well represented. The use of Western theories to set the context may also limit our horizons. In *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization*, Kuan-Hsing Chen encourages us not to use Western theory as the standard or reference point, but as one viewpoint among multiple possibilities.¹ From postcolonial theory, I have learned that even when we criticize or oppose Eurocentric theories, we are still operating within the frame of reference set by Western authors. We will need to engage in the process of the decolonization of the mind. As I was reading the book, I looked for clues that would point beyond the polarity of "the West" and "Asia." I miss a multidimensional discussion that engages more substantially scholarship from other racial and ethnic minorities, though the names of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Miguel De La Torre are mentioned. For instance, what can we learn about health care from womanist ethics and about immigration and citizenship from the large body of literature published by Hispanic and Latino/a ethicists?

What would the book look like if it began instead with Asian and Asian American realities and perspectives? Where can we find resources for constructing Asian American Christian ethics given this is a nascent field? Pioneering works of Christian ethicists from other racial and ethnic minorities may offer insights and guideposts. Katie Geneva Cannon uses literary resources, particularly the work of Zora Neale Hurston, in *Black Womanist Ethics*.² Black liberation ethicists and womanists have used slave narratives, oral narratives, blues and spirituals, black preaching, and other cultural resources. Among Asian American scholars, Tat-Siong Benny Liew has used Asian American literary and cultural resources in his biblical interpretation.³ In *En La Lucha: A Hispanic Women's Liberation Theology*, the late Ada María Isasi-Díaz uses an ethnographical method to gather Hispanic women's everyday religious experience and practices and thematize them.⁴ The use of case study, qualitative and quantitative research, ethnography, participant observation, and other social scientific methods may provide rich data for studying Asian American ethical approaches.

I want to briefly touch on methodological issues raised by two particular chapters in the book. In chapter 4 on "Virtue Ethics," Ilsup Ahn raises the question of the use of Asian cultural heritages in the construction of Asian American Christian ethics. This is a controversial question. First, Asian cultural heritages do not impact Asian American communities in uniform ways because of historical, cultural, and generational differences. Third-generation Chinese American scholar Gale A. Yee says yin-yang is not me!⁵ Second, we have to avoid essentializing or even self-Orientalizing in presenting Asian cultural traditions. Ahn suggests a method of cocritical appropriation. The first step is to examine how other Christians (mostly Western) critically appropriate their cultural and social ethos. The second step is to explore how Asian Americans can engage

1 Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

2 Katie G. Cannon, *Black Womanist Ethics* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1988).

3 Tat-Siong Benny Liew, *What Is Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics? Reading the New Testament* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).

4 Ada María Isasi-Díaz, *En La Lucha: A Hispanic Women's Liberation Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

5 Gale A. Yee, "Yin/Yang Is Not Me: An Exploration into an Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics," in *Ways of Being, Ways of Reading: Asian American Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Mary F. Foskett and Jeffrey Kah-Jin Kuan (St. Louis, MO: Chalice, 2006), 152-63.



Western views in their theological appropriation of Asian cultural and social ethos. His method will be more multidimensional if he would also look at how black, Hispanic, and Native Americans appropriate their own cultures.

I read chapter 12 on “Cosmetic Surgery” with curiosity and interest. This is not a topic often addressed in a book on Christian ethics and one harbors voyeuristic desires to look at these surgically enhanced beauties and wonder why so many Asian women fall under the knife. The chapter does not disappoint. Jonathan Tran builds on Judith Butler’s distinction between “performativity” which is socially prescribed, and “performance” which involves the self’s negotiation with the imposed script and stretching its limits. The chapter cautions us to avoid a knee-jerk reaction that cosmetic surgery is all bad and that women who elect to do this are victims of patriarchy and brainwashed by Western beauty standards. Instead, it raises the question of the moral agency of women who opt for cosmetic surgery. It attends to the ambivalence of moral choices for women living under the pressures of American culture, communal expectations, and Asian American Christian ethos. This chapter discusses the porous boundaries between individual freedom and communal ethos and norms. Because communality is often considered an Asian value, this chapter raises significant issues for Asian American ethics.

The creative act of imagination, Sharon Parks says, involves the following stages: a consciousness of conflict (something not fitting), a pause, a finding of a new image, the re-patterning of reality, and interpretation.⁶ The contributors to this book are keenly aware that mainstream Western ethical tradition does not completely fit Asian American experience. I hope that as the subfield develops, it will enlarge our moral imagination by offering new categories of analysis, fresh resources for ethical thought, and nuanced theories that will guide moral choices in our complex and transnational world.

Review by Rita Nakashima Brock

I want to congratulate Grace Y. Kao and Ilsup Ahn for this excellent anthology and to thank the entire team of authors for this remarkable and unprecedented collection. As an originating collection for the development of a field of study, this book sets a high bar for what will follow, both for the quality of the thinking and the breadth of its reach on topics of crucial ethical importance. While each essay can stand on its own, its cumulative effect is to set forth in no uncertain terms that there is such a thing as Asian American Christian ethics.

The volume offers a multiply voiced, diversely constructed, and richly provocative contribution and challenge to Christian ethics through the lens of Asian American experiences and realities. While it is tempting to engage quite a number of the essays and theological questions they raise, I will focus my short time on discussions of chapter 5 on “War and Peace” and chapter 10 on “The environment.” After a short discussion of each in relation to how they might impact global issues, I will conclude with an important theological question they raise. So, first we look to Keun-Joo Christine Pae’s discussion of U.S. wars in Asia and the consequences for Asian Americans.

I am acutely aware of the current hysterical and belligerent rhetoric of war blasting 24/7 on screens everywhere. Today, Ankara, Beirut, Paris, and Mali are reeling from violence, Brussels—home of NATO—is in lockdown, and U.S. politicians are talking about surveilling all Muslims in the country. In the midst of the on-going wars where Said’s concept “orientalism” was born, a majority of Americans now support sending troops into Syria, and banning all Syrian refugees in response to acts of an international crime cartel called

⁶ Sharon Parks, *The Critical Years: The Young Adult Search for a Faith to Live By* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986), 117.



ISIL or ISIS. The small numbers of casualties, compared, say to the attack at Pearl Harbor, might make rumors of war seem overwrought, but it might help to remember that one death by defenestration in 1914 launched the last century of global war, beginning with the Great War, which took an estimated 35,000,000 casualties, and 140,000,000 in today's numbers. Many consider the Second World War a revival of the Great War after a truce, with the Cold War in Korea and Vietnam, the creation of Israel, the emergence of the Iranian Islamic State, and the current wars as further extensions of that war a century ago. Thus, the roots to what some call "the Middle East problem" are set in deep soil, with ISIL as the current instrument to stir up xenophobia.⁷

As K. Christine Pae notes, none of the prevailing Eurocentric Christian approaches to war and peace is adequate to the complexities of the Asian experiences of war. In addition, Asians in the U.S. have used military service to prove their patriotism. The Japanese American 442nd Regiment fought in Europe, while many had families imprisoned in the internment camps as enemies of the state. What is the meaning of voluntary suffering in the context of racism, oppression, and war? The suffering and death of Asian Americans are readily accepted for the sake of the ruling class. One important point in Pae's essay is the importance of remembering war's innocent victims in Asia. And in that urging, I want to suggest we ban the use of terms like innocent victims—it suggests the moral status of the victim is at issue. It is not. Civilians, whether guilty or innocent are the majority of victims of modern wars. To remember war's victims, as Pae urges, requires us to have a more complex sense of loss than polarizations of innocent and guilty or winners and losers offer. To ever know peace, we in the U.S. need to mourn the dead in Asia as profound losses, not ignore them. By the same token, can we ever have peace if we cannot also mourn those who fought and were so afflicted by moral injury and the loss of their moral foundations that they took their own lives? Moral injury is a universal affliction of war, as true of Viet Cong fighters as of the American or Korean soldiers who fought in Vietnam. We are the same, not different.⁸

In addition to human losses, can we also mourn the loss of nonhuman life? New technologies with horrifying killing power mark the last century of war. Viewing the first atomic blast, Oppenheimer remembered the words from the Bhagavad Gita, "Now I am become death; the destroyer of worlds." If the arc of history bends toward justice, justice for all other life may require our self-annihilation. Nonhuman life has never been counted in casualties of war, which brings me to Hannah Ka's thoughtful essay on the need of human beings to accept our existential indebtedness to all other life, without which we cannot survive. Ka places human life in an unequal relationship of dependency on other life as the most indebted species that all other life can flourish without. I wonder, however, if Pae's criticism of American exceptionalism might be subtly functioning here as a species exceptionalism. It might undermine her stronger point about relationally connected life. Much of what Ka says about us is true of other mammals—the removal of one predator species carries unintended consequences for their food supply, but much of the rest of life will eventually adjust, as it has with the death of so many species already. However, some species of plants and animals depend on humans because we have created them via genetic modification. Our departure will not just kill us, but also endanger those species. In fact, we carry, in our own flesh, trillions of other creatures, called bacteria, that outnumber our own cells 10 to 1 and constitute about 3% of our body weight. They need us to fulfill their life cycle and contribute to other life in ways we still do not understand.

Where I see the strongest contribution of both essays is in their turn to ritual as a redemptive possibility. In subtle ways, this turn to communitarian, embodied acts is, I think, grounded in the social, non-individualis-

7 Matthew White, "Source List and Detailed Death Tolls for the Primary Megadeaths of the Twentieth Century," <http://necrometrics.com/20c5m.htm#WW1> for deaths estimated at 8.5 million and casualties <http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/casualties.htm>.

8 Brett Litz, et. al., *Adaptive Disclosure: A New Treatment Protocol for Military Trauma, Loss, and Moral Injury* (New York: Guilford Press, 2016).



tic, holistic framework of many Asian languages and cultural values, where heart, rather than reason alone, organizes mind and appetite. Increasingly Western neuroscience and the study of moral formation makes clear that ritual training constructs us as moral beings from ages 2-28, through mimicry and repetition of acts with emotional content, long before we think about such behaviors in moral terms. In other words, we become moral as all social mammals learn behavior, long before we consciously think. Most of us behave morally most of the time without thinking about it, just as we walk or read without thinking consciously about what we do. So my questions in relation to this important turn to ritual are these: What are the implications for a theological anthropology that has lodged ethics in will, mind and conscious choice to the virtual exclusion of body? What are the implications for ethics if 80-90% of our moral behavior is not even conscious?

In addition to interrogating ethics, we might need to interrogate Christianity and Christian privilege in America and what we do with that privilege in relation to our Muslim brothers and sisters. I want to thank the authors for such rich resources for thinking about ethics, however small a percentage of our actual moral behavior might rest in such actual thinking.

Review by Andrew Sung Park

This is the first book on AACE written by the collaboration of different Asian American Christian (AAC) ethicists. This book is significant, for it places AACE on the map of Christian ethics, apart from the significance of its thought-provoking introduction and articles. There are thirteen chapters including the introduction. This brief review centers on its introductory chapter. In the first section of the introduction, Grace Y. Kao and Il-sup Ahn explain the rationale for the publication of this book: “Asian American Christian ethics begins by recalling that ‘experience’ has long been recognized as one of the four tradition sources of Christian theological and ethical reflection, along with Scripture, tradition, and reason” (3). These four inclusive resources concur with the Wesleyan quadrilateral except for one difference; it emphasizes experience, not Scripture. Like other liberation theologians, the editors zero in on experience as the key to grounding their AAC ethics. Asian Americans are people of stories, many untold. I found a number of challenging and inspiring stories beyond continental divides in this book. Stories are derived from our experiences. This ethics of experience for Asian Americans is a significant move for defining our being and our doing in the American context. Our common and unique stories guide us into the development of AACE. On the question of the identity of Asian Americans, the two editors come up with a social and political term rather than a cultural or linguistic one. This is an astute approach to the difficult task of finding the identity of Asians because of the lack of common ground.

Kao and Ahn confirm Nami Kim’s “strategic use of the term Asian” against oppression in the U.S. and American imperialism in Asia in spite of “the term Asian having been put to racist, nationalist, and colonialist uses” (8). They also underpin Kwok Pui-lan’s account of the “naming of theology as Asian . . . [as] a discursive and political construct” for “God’s revelations and actions . . . through the histories and cultures of Asian people” and “against an ‘essentialized’ notion of ‘Asia’” and “the theological hegemony of the West” (8-9). Utilizing these two methods, the editors attempt to foster “Asian American (not simply Asian) theo-ethical reflections” (9). The direction of such a quest for Asian American identity is sound and commendable. In search of Asian American identity, we need to use the term *Asia* with Kim’s discernment and Kwok’s non-essentialized perspective. Particularly, the position of Kwok’s non-essentialized perspective is affirmed by W. Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle; we are unable to grasp the location and momentum of a particle simultaneously; when we find the location of a particle more precisely, we know its momentum less, and vice versa.⁹ The more defi-

9 P. C. W. Davies, *The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 30.



nately we find our essential identity of Asian Americanness, the less we may find its momentum. As long as we are alive, we always live with our dynamic identity in process.

On methodology, Kao and Ahn introduce and affirm Benny Liew's Asian American biblical hermeneutics of a "prefigurative" method. Liew's ultimate purpose of biblical interpretation is "not to offer 'prescriptive' propositions but to present 'prefigurative' remarks." This will prevent the more established field of biblical hermeneutics from carrying a racial-ethnic label to "present prefigurative remarks while opening up other options and opportunities" to racial-ethnic scholars (10). His prefigurative method helps the editors draw "upon postcolonial studies" and stand in solidarity with other racial-ethnic minority groups for several reasons: "the origins of the formation of Asian American studies," "the struggles of Asian people with colonialism of all kinds and its lingering effects" and our common resisting of white supremacies, and our "suspicions about essentialist or colonialist understandings of identity," and so on (11-12). They also develop their own methodologies. Kao suggests an "agency- or advocacy-centered" approach (11). Adapting Gale Yee's four part criteria derived from W.E.B. Du Bois, Kao describes the four criteria: "about us," "by us," "for us," and "near us." The first category "about us" explores "scholarly attempts to document and account for the manner in which Christian ethics are understood in diverse Asian American communities" and the second category "by us" is through a scholarly emphasis on the development of moral agency, so as to produce "mature, responsible, and self-actualized moral agents" (12). The third category "for us" offers "empowering and liberating insights when attending to specific areas of vulnerability that Asian Americans are wont to face" such an issue of women's full humanity (12). The last category "near us" presents the method of "double critical efforts." The first step is to employ a critical exploration into non-Asian American Christian theologies and ethics from the West and to reflect upon them. The second step is to turn to Asian American histories, cultures, and traditions as Christian ethical sources. This means an engagement with Confucian, Daoist, Buddhist, and other religious resources. In short, "Asian American Christians ('by us') draws from personal knowledge of Asian American experiences and from those of others in the community ('near us'), and affirms and admonishes Asian Americans where appropriate ('about us') both for their own good and for the benefit of all ('for us')" (15-16). Ahn also develops his method of "cocritical appropriation" for Asian American Christian ethics. It is rooted in Asian American traditions, communities, experiences, and histories. This method compels a balancing of their so-called Asianness with their Americanness. He suggests that AAC ethicists need to draw their ethical resources from Asian philosophies and religions to develop ethical paradigms that may be more acceptable and palatable to Asian American communities (15). To deepen our understanding of Asianness and Americanness, Ahn furthermore discusses the issue of Hauerwas' narrative ethics along with virtue ethics in his own chapter on that topic. He advocates narrative ethics in spite of some shortcomings of Hauerwas' narrative ethics to nurture Christian virtues. Concerning virtue ethics, Ahn argues for the moral groundwork of AAC virtue ethics based on the Confucian and biblical foundation of the three qualities of the heart: "strength, purity, and directivity" (83).

In brief, Ahn supports "canvassing the rich tradition of Christian ethical reflection on his or her topic as well as the manner in which Asian Americans are already invested in it—experientially, historically, culturally, and so forth—so as to provide a constructive way forward in the articulation of Asian American ethical response to the topic at hand (cocritical appropriation)" (16). These two road maps are different: Kao's map is "criteria driven and focused more on questions of developing moral agency" and Ahn's map is "more focused on the sources that AAC ethicists should feel free to use and engage critically" (15). These two road maps are quite different, but they may eventually meet in the middle of practicing their ethical convictions. Agents are critical in doing moral actions, but without practicing virtues, they actualize no potential to be moral agents. By practicing virtues, they actualize good and moral human nature. Without developing good human na-



ture, practicing virtues are empty and superfluous. Kao and Ahn's arguments are pivotal. The two maps may complement each other in the development of AACE. This introduction will surely guide us to further AACE for years to come.

Response by *Ilsup Ahn* and *Grace Yia-Hei Kao*

It is with deep gratitude that we receive these reviews of our co-edited volume, *Asian American Christian Ethics: Voices, Methods, Issues*. Our reviewers, Kwok Pui-lan, Rita Nakashima Brock, and Andrew Sung Park, are themselves scholars of great repute who've published groundbreaking work in Asian and Asian American theology. Not coincidentally, references to their extensive publications pepper the volume as a whole. We most appreciate the care they took in reading our book from cover-to-cover, the thoughtful questions they raised for us and for future Asian American Christian ethicists, and the excitement they share in our having inaugurated a new subfield of study.

To our great delight, our reviewers not only commented on the volume as a whole and the question of methodology we raised in our introduction, but also provided specific commentary on some individual chapters. For instance, Brock zeroes in on Christine Pae's and Hannah Ka's chapters on peace & war and the environment, respectively, while Kwok pays particular attention to Jonathan Tran's reflections on cosmetic surgery and Ilsup Ahn's stand-alone chapter on virtue ethics.¹⁰ While we do not believe it's our place as co-editors to comment on their specific responses to these individual chapters, we are pleased that these topics engaged their interest and that they were able to identify some common themes and concerns between and among them. Indeed, it is our hope as co-editors that the communities of Christian ethicists and Christians of Asian heritage in the U.S.—the two primary audiences for our book—will likewise come to see the value and scholarly contributions that all twelve contributors to our book have made for the academy and the church.

In the space remaining, then, we will comment briefly on our reviewers' remarks, especially on the ways they engage our jointly-authored introductory chapter entitled, "What is Asian American Christian Ethics?" We warmly receive Rita Nakashima Brock's review and recognize immediately that the chapters she elected to focus on (war & peace and the environment) reflect Brock's lifelong activism and scholarship on matters of war and peace (most recently, on the phenomenon of moral injury), her feminist commitments to holism (itself an important component of environmentalism), and the fact that the authors of those two chapters are faithful, longtime members of the Pacific, Asian, North American Asian Women in Theology and Ministry (PANAAWTM)—a scholarly and ministerial organization for which both she and Kwok Pui-lan have served as decades-long leaders. Helpfully, Brock not only deepens the insights that Pae and Ka offer in their chapters, but also puts those two chapters (and thus authors) together in conversation with each other. May this sort of "cross-talk" serve as the model for future discussions in Asian American Christian ethics.

We also appreciate Brock's point that systematic reflection on ethics—the ostensible task of our book—may have much less to do with transforming actual behavior than does ritual. As we noted orally during our response to her earlier comments of the same ilk at the American Academy of Religion, this book is in part dedicated to our children and for future generations of Asian Americans. Thus as parents we know full well that so much of what they will eventually do and who they will eventually be will not come as a result of formal instruction in moral reasoning, but from emulation of what we ourselves do as well as their unconscious socialization and habituation into the various communities of which they are a part. Brock's critical ques-

¹⁰ It is worth noting that the origins of this book review date to a book launch panel at the 2015 annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion in the Asian North American Religions, Cultures, and Society (ANARCS) section. We two co-editors, these three reviewers plus Patrick S. Cheng were on the panel and the panelists had coordinated with one another in advance, so as to avoid commenting on the same chapters.



tion—“What are the implications for ethics if 80-90% of our moral behavior is not even conscious?”—serves then as a refreshing reminder that all forms of ethics (including Asian Americans’) are to be a hermeneutical-critical engagement, of which we are in full agreement. Brock’s reminder of the limits of rational persuasion is accordingly well-taken.

We likewise owe a debt of gratitude to Kwok Pui-lan and receive her appreciative and constructively critical remarks in the “spirit of solidarity” they were intended. As a trailblazing figure in her own right, she knows all too well the struggles it takes to “challenge the color-blindness of an established theological field” and accordingly lay the foundation of work for future generations of scholars to build upon. We hear her caution about the “colonization of the mind,” given her impression that our contributors have relied predominantly on Western, predominantly male, theorists to set the stage for their subsequent ethical reflections and acknowledge here—as we did in the book’s preface—that we contributors have engaged in our own collective reflections about our scholarly paths and choices since the Asian and Asian American Working Group of the Society of Christian Ethics first formed in 2008. We believe, however, that we can mitigate at least some of Kwok’s concerns once we clearly disentangle the *format* of our book from its *methodology*.

As Kwok herself recounts, each chapter of the book subsequent to the introduction follows a similar structure: the author first describes the range of Christian ethical responses on any given topic, then discusses the ways in which Asian Americans are already invested in the topic given their particular histories or experiences, and then concludes by constructing an Asian American Christian ethical response. Thus while the work of (mostly Western) Christian theorists in each chapter comes chronologically first in the presentation of material, this formatting should not be taken as evidence that our contributors *began* their reflections, methodologically speaking, with Western Christian ethical theory. For as Andrew Sung Park discusses in his review, one of the richest sources of ethical reflection for nearly all of our contributors has been their own racialized and Christianized experiences in all of their diversity (in terms of gender, ethnicity, geography, generation, language, and so forth) and these experiences predate all of our coming to learn the scholarly enterprises of theology, ethics, or even Asian American studies. To be sure, Kwok is correct to note that one will find within our volume as a whole multiple references to “canonical” figures of (Western) Christian ethics in our volume. But we would be remiss if we did not mention that our contributors as a whole cite the work of Chung Hyun Kyung as much as Karl Barth, Amos Yong as much as John Howard Yoder, Sang Hyun Lee even more than Thomas Aquinas, Soong-Chan Rah even more than John Paul II, and so forth, and that many more scholars of color are named and drawn upon than the two that she mentions (Miguel De La Torre and Martin Luther King, Jr.)—Brian Bantum, Homi Bhabha, J. Kameron Carter, M. Shawn Copeland, Orlando Espín, Yen Le Espiritu, Stacey Floyd-Thomas, Mary Foskett, Wonhee Anne Joh, Grace Ji-Sun Kim, Tat-Siong Benny Liew, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Jonathan Tan, Fenggang Yang, and Gale Yee, among many others.

Beyond this point about sources of normativity, we find most productive Kwok’s encouragement for future work in Asian American Christian ethics to draw upon new source material, be it “case study, qualitative and quantitative research, ethnography, participant observation and other social scientific methods.” As we wrote in our introductory and concluding chapters, we hope that this first book on Asian American Christian Ethics will inspire many others to join the enterprise of Asian American Christian Ethics in ways that make the most sense to them. We accordingly remain excited about the novel ways they—and we—will come to fashion our own contributions to this emergent field.



We turn lastly to Andrew Sung Park's review of our book, which shares with Kwok a focus on methodology in our opening chapter. As with Kwok's reflection on Ahn's method of cocritical appropriation in his stand-alone chapter, Park affirms the ways in which we have intentionally avoided essentializing the meaning of "Asianness;" for instance, in the manner in which we have strategically deployed and retrieved the "political" (as opposed to cultural or linguistic) understandings of the term "Asian American" as a marker of identity. We are heartened to hear that he found a "number of challenging and inspiring stories" in our volume and that he acknowledges that our focus on the commonalities and diversities of experiences of Asian Americans is itself rooted in the tradition of deploying the Wesleyan quadrilateral.

We especially appreciate Park's brief reconstruction of the two methods we as co-editors pose for work in Asian American Christian Ethics and now wish to offer two clarifications. The first is that Kao's fourth criterion of "near us"—that scholars of Asian American Christian ethicists remain connected to "real flesh-and-blood Asian Americans" so as to "hold themselves accountable to the broader Asian American Community," is technically separate from Ahn's method of cocritical appropriation. What we say in our introductory chapter, to be clear, is that it's this fourth criterion that serves as a bridge to Ahn's method. The second is something we underscore in the introduction: as co-editors we imposed on our contributors a certain *format* for each chapter, but not *methodology*—each was given free rein to construct Asian American Christian Ethics according to her own lights. To our great satisfaction, however, every contributor implicitly adopted one or both methods we co-editors proposed.

We again wish to thank Rita Nakashima Brock, Kwok Pui-lan, and Andrew Sung Park for their reviews of our book and for the many formal and informal ways they have encouraged us to develop this kind of scholarship. We stand in their debt.

Contributors:



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