The world is not just black and white

(Continued from page 4) the numerical majority. White enclaves, women, the poor, and the handicapped are racially identifiable as minorities, yet they are also disadvantaged.

Most statistics are averages. And for most American racial groups, the "average" person will describe himself in a large proportion of his words in the middle and upper classes, and Whites are underrepresented at low income levels. Similarly, a very large percentage of the Black and Hispanic populations can be found in lower income groups, while they are underrepresented at high income levels.

Asian Americans have the highest median income of any racial group. But because Asians are a largely immigrant population from countries with very diverse class backgrounds, the "average" Asian American tells us little about most Asians. Asian Americans are the only racial group that is overrepresented in both high and low income levels. Asian professionals in the suburbs probably make more than the average, while Chinatown has among the lowest per capita incomes. Perhaps the best approach is to treat Asians as both a lower elite and underclass.

According to the 1980 census, half of all Asian Americans aged 20 to 24 attend college. If you think that this is typical for Asians, only 15 percent of those in Japan and less than one percent in China complete college.

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MARIE-EMMANUEL BOUSSELIN, harp
MICHEL SOULAY, violin

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THE TECH PAGE 5