

hardboiled

the asian american newsmagazine

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There is a concept in mass communications theory known as "the sleeper effect," which arose from a study from Darlene B. Hannah of Wheaton College and Brian Sternthal of Northwestern University. "The sleeper effect" contends that a message's effectiveness increases the longer the audience receives it, regardless of the audience's attentiveness. As a result, over time, a person will more likely retain a message but is less likely to remember the message's original source. This becomes crucial during election time when voters are constantly bombarded by negative images of candidates and issues. For example, a voter may remember that Phil Angelides is bad, but won't remember that Arnold Schwarzenegger said so. This same concept also applies when we hear about controversial topics. Take for example, the affirmative action issue. In Jed Levine's tasteless satirical piece in *The Daily Bruin* entitled, "A Modest Proposal for an Immodest Proposition," he argues that Asian Americans shouldn't support affirmative action because they will get the short end of the stick. In a few weeks, we won't know who wrote the article, but we will definitely remember what has been said. Is he going to get away with what he wrote? Probably. Man, what a joke.

I think about this world in terms of distributive justice. I believe that what goes around will come around. We need to rectify the wrongs of the past and the present in order to instill change in our society. As Asian Americans, if we do not support affirmative action, we are no better off than the US government when it passed the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. We are no better than the slave owners in Antebellum South. When the plantation owners in Hawaii wanted to break up strikers, they pitted minorities against each other and made them compete for work. As Asian Americans become divided on the issue of affirmative action, a parallel can be drawn to the strikebreakers in Hawaii. As part of the marginalized minority, we need to stick together. When Levine says that Asian Americans are overrepresented in higher education, he definitely isn't talking about the Pacific Islanders or the Southeast Asian Americans, who currently have one of the highest dropout rates out of all ethnic groups. This is why we need to build coalitions and fight for increased minority representation in our schools. The quality of our higher education can only improve with increased diversity, which is why we must continue fighting for increasing underrepresented minority enrollment.

We have the ability to change the future. We have the ability to be heard. Don't be a victim of the "sleeper effect." You're smarter than that. Make people eat their words. Get active.

fighting the good fight,
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contents

- 3 Asian American Studies 101 For Politicians
- 4 The Price of Progress: Antagonism against Asian American Academic Advancement
- 5 An Island Away From Home: The Struggles Of Angel Island
- 6 Bebot Videos: Feminist Critiques
- 7 Dat Asian American Comedian: Dat Phan, Rising Comic?
- 8 Asian American Masculinity in *The Motel*
- 9 What Are You?: "Half Asian, 100% Hapa" Reviewed
- 10 Asian American Child Abuse
- 11 Asian American News At A Glance
- 12 Bebot Videos (Continued) I Justin & Will Comic

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Asian American Studies 101 for Politicians

by adrienna wong

From Senator John McCain (R- AZ) using the word “gook” on the campaign trail in 2000, to Senator Joe Biden (D- Del) remarking on the Indian accents of 7-Eleven attendants this past summer – insensitive and sometimes downright racist remarks about the Asian American community appear time and time again in the political discourse of this country. We should be wary of reducing these controversies to mere arguments about word choice or “political correctness;” many of these comments are disturbing because they reveal deeper prejudices and misperceptions commonly held by our society that feed into the current system of racial inequality. If the past year is any indication, politicians just can’t seem to avoid talking about race in a crass and ignorant manner. If anyone needs an argument for the necessity of the American Cultures requirement here at Cal, look no further than the leadership of our government...

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (R – California)

Speaking to a group of Asian Americans at a Moon Festival in Los Angeles, Schwarzenegger said that Asians were successful because they were “smart” and “hardworking”. He also said that Asian culture was “very much the Austrian way- it’s education, education, education.” He then proceeded to compare Asian success to the situation and attitude of Latino-Americans, saying, “What I am saying to the Mexicans is, you’ve got to go and immerse yourself, and assimilate into the American culture, and become part of the American fabric. That is how Americans will embrace you.”

Vocab: Model Minority Myth

The myth of the Model Minority is an oft-used narrative that says that Asian Americans have fulfilled the “American Dream,” using their “innate” intelligence and hardworking nature to make it in this country. The Model Minority narrative is dangerous for a few reasons: (1) It hides the existing racism and inequalities that Asian Americans face on a daily basis. (2) It attributes essentialist traits to the Asian “race” and “culture.” (3) it is a tool that has been used as a weapon against Latino and Black communities to blame them for their underprivileged status in this country, as Schwarzenegger did in his speech.

The Governor also recently commented that Latinas were “hot” because they have “black blood in them.”

Vocab: Exoticization

Exoticization is a racist process of “Othering” through which people of color, and especially women of color, are seen as wild, uncivilized, and hypersexual beings due to their race, ethnicity and culture. We can see examples of this in popular representations of Asian women as geishas and Dragon Ladies. Exoticization negatively marks people as essentially different from people who are White/Western.

Mike Osskopp, district director for Representative John Kline (R – Minnesota)

Osskopp, the district director for Minnesota Rep. John Kline, pointed to a line of cars that belonged to Kline’s opponent Colleen Rowley, and said into a camera: “Your buddy is supporting all of these Jap and German cars.” Osskopp was also recorded screaming “another Jap car” twice earlier that day.

Vocab: “Jap”

“Jap” is a racial slur that was frequently used during the WWII-era against Japanese and Japanese Americans, as well as other Asian Americans targeted by this racism. In the infamous Vincent Chin case, the murderers fired slurs of “Jap” as they beat Chin, a Chinese American, to death.

Senator John Kerry (D – Massachusetts)

In a campaign speech in January 2004, Kerry said, “Most countries have faced terrorism through their histories, look at Ireland, the IRA; the Basque in Spain; the Sikhs in India.”

Vocab: Sikh

Sikhs are actually followers of Sikhism, an independent monotheistic religion with over 24 million followers. Labeling Sikhs as terrorists is as egregious as labeling Protestants as terrorists; only a small minority of followers partake in such actions. Kerry avoided mislabeling all Protestants, specifically referencing the IRA; yet Kerry inexcusably labeled all Sikhs as terrorists. Following 9/11, many Sikhs were victims of hate crimes by assailants who mistook them for Muslims.

Senator George Allen (R – Virginia)

Senator Allen referred to an Indian American college student volunteering for his Democratic opponent as “Macaca or whatever his name is,” adding, “Welcome to America and the real world of Virginia.” S.R. Sidarth, the young man Allen was “welcoming” to America, was born and raised in Virginia.

Vocab: “Macaca”

Despite claims that this is a “made up word,” Macaca is actually a racial slur originally used by European colonialists to refer to people of African descent by comparing them to *macaque* monkeys.

“I had an idea... that he was injecting some sort of derogatory comment toward me that had a racial bent to it,” said Sidarth, in an interview with the Washington Post. “I knew that it meant ‘monkey’ and it was used toward immigrants.”

In order to ostensibly compensate for “Macacagate,” Allen then staged an “Ethnic Rally” posing for pictures with various people of color and posting the pictures and video on his website.

Vocab: Tokenism

Tokenism is the exploitation and selective inclusion of minority individuals to create an impression of tolerance or equality, usually to cover up underlying inequalities and/or under-representation.

Stephen Colbert has parodied tokenism on *The Colbert Report* with the ongoing joke about “his black friend.” The movie *Not Another Teen Movie* also parodied tokenism by creating a character that says “I’m just the token black guy! I’m just supposed to stand here, stay out of the conversation, and say things like “damn!” and “that is whack!”

House Homeland Security Chairman Peter King (R – New York)

King has said that people of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent should undergo additional security checks due to their ethnic/religious backgrounds.

“If the threat is coming from a particular group, I can understand why it would make sense to single them out for further questioning,” said King, who also said that airport screeners should not be hampered by “political correctness.”

Vocab: Racial Profiling

Racial Profiling is the practice of treating a person as a criminal suspect due to the mere perception of their race, ethnicity, or religion as suspect, rather than ensuring security through examination of legitimate evidence.

Representative Tom Tancredo (R – Colorado)

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, while speaking to an anti-immigration group, Tancredo said, “China is trying to export people. It’s a policy for them, a way of extending their hegemony.”

Vocab: “Enemy Alien Ancestry”

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Japanese Americans were interned and persecuted due to their designation as people of “Enemy Alien Ancestry.” The assumption was that their ethnic descent somehow tied them to the policies of the government of Japan, and the American government saw them as threatening potential agents of the Japanese government.

The Price of Progress:

Antagonism Against Asian American Academic Advancement

by gene kim

A controversial article published in the University of California, Los Angeles's (UCLA) *Daily Bruin* has renewed debate about Asian American admissions, an issue that many campuses have struggled with for the past several decades. In "A Modest Proposal for an Immodest Proposition," Jed Levine addresses concerns about diversity on the UCLA campus by offering a convenient solution: increase the enrollment of underrepresented minorities by restricting the number of Asian Americans.

Levine's article is modeled after Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal," a well known pamphlet that is often regarded as one of the best examples of sustained irony in English literature. In his work, Swift sarcastically suggests that poor families in Ireland sell their children to be butchered for meat, an intentionally extreme proposal meant to highlight the level of indifference displayed by the landlords and political economists of his time. Levine attempts to imitate this approach by proposing what he considers to be a comparably absurd recommendation.

Despite its satirical nature, the article has received a considerable deal of criticism. While some individuals may have been offended by the insensitive remarks aimed at Asian American students, their primary cause for concern is the fact that the premise of Levine's argument is widely accepted by many people who are dangerously misinformed about the issue. University measures designed to deal with this "over-representation" have relied on this limited understanding of the situation to engage in systematic discrimination against applicants of Asian descent.

The flawed reasoning behind this mentality is addressed in a compelling response produced through a multiethnic collaboration on the UCLA campus between leaders of MEChA, the Afrikan Student Union, the Asian Pacific Coalition, and the Pacific Islands Student Association. They point out that the lack of representation for certain minorities is not something that should be attributed to high enrollment rates for Asian American students. While drastically reducing the Asian student population may seem like a simple remedy, it will actually do little to address the true issues of diversity. As the coalition addresses inadequacies in the University's admissions process, they emphasize the history of solidarity among all students of color.

Unfortunately, many campuses are already home to strong anti-Asian sentiments, and while Levine may not share in these feelings himself, his article is an unwelcome reminder that these persistent and misguided notions still endure. Ignorance about key issues, such as the large populations of underprivileged groups within the Asian American community, contribute to this misconception that Asians are a "model minority" with few barriers and widespread success.

It is not too surprising that this myth is so popular when administrators, faculty, and students are becoming increasingly aware of the growing presence of Asian Americans at most of the University of California (UC) campuses. This year's freshman class is especially noteworthy because Asian American applicants filled more spots than any other ethnic group. For the first time in the history of the UC system, a minority population reportedly makes up the largest number of admitted students.

In reality, it is quite possible that these figures are misleading. The difference between the number of Asian and White admitted applicants is only about 200 students, a rather insignificant amount when one considers that over 2,700 students declined to state their race or ethnicity. This wide range of unknown applicants may have easily upset the recorded totals. Nevertheless, Asian American students have consistently comprised about 34 percent of each incoming class, despite only representing 14 percent of graduating

seniors from California public high schools.

While some Asian American applicants may find these numbers encouraging, others view them with a sense of anxiety. With so many Asian Americans already attending some of the nation's most prestigious universities, many other applicants are concerned that their race will decrease their chances of admission. These students fear that invisible quotas and institutionalized biases will prevent them from being accepted by their schools of choice. They are beginning to realize that in applying to these schools, and especially the UC's, they are essentially being punished for the success of their predecessors.

This backlash against Asian Americans in higher education can manifest itself in many forms, one prominent example being the perpetuation of the "Asian nerd" stereotype. At the annual meeting of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), an entire panel was dedicated to addressing this issue of universities becoming "too Asian." During the discussion, it became abundantly clear that there is an undeniable bias against Asian applicants. One panelist stated that she regularly hears admissions officers complain about "yet another Asian student who wants to major in math and science and who plays the violin." While this may seem like a relatively positive portrayal, it also serves to reinforce the widespread belief amongst admissions directors that Asian American students are not as well rounded as other applicants. Because of this persistent stereotype, many college applicants will be automatically classified as "another boring Asian."

In order to confront these unfortunate biases in the admissions process, many Asian Americans are forced to acknowledge this stereotype and directly demonstrate their "non-Asian" qualities. In one recommendation letter cited as an example, a high school counselor actually wrote, "Rachel, for an Asian, has a lot of friends." While the phrase may have been written with the best of intentions, it is a blatantly racist statement that suggests that it is unnatural for Asians to have a social life. Many students are encouraged to be "less Asian" by engaging in more extracurricular activities and taking on leadership roles that Asians are not typically expected to fill.

Commentators at the NACAC conference were shocked by how an applicant's race could be referenced in such an inappropriate way, but many counselors defended such action by pointing out that these kinds of statements are the only way for them to distinguish their students from the rapidly growing pool of Asian applicants. Rather than challenging the bias in the system, they hope to utilize it in a way that helps their students appeal to the admissions boards.

Ethnic stereotypes are nothing new in higher education, and they were even present in the early 1900's when most institutions had few minority students. Jewish American students attending Harvard excelled academically and earned a disproportionate share of awards and elections to Phi Beta Kappa. For their success, they were regarded as being too competitive, unusually eager to excel in their studies, and criticized for their supposed lack of interest in extracurricular activities. Others accused them of being "clannish, socially

unskilled and either unwilling or unable to fit in." Many Asian Americans students are already quite familiar with these stereotypes.

Harvard administrators grew increasingly aware of their "Jewish Problem" and took measures to address it. In 1920, Harvard's president A. Lawrence Lowell proposed a quota limiting Jewish enrollment so that their numbers would not exceed 15 percent of the campus population. In defense of his proposal, Lowell argued, "The anti-Semitic feeling among the students is increasing, and it grows in proportion to the increase in the number of Jews. If their number should become 40% of the student body, the race feeling would become intense." Lowell was firmly convinced that Harvard's survival as an institution depended on a majority of its students coming from "old American stock."

No administrator after the Civil Rights movement would dare to use such language again.

Unfortunately, while the rhetoric may have changed, the reality has not. Although most universities will deny having such policies, several studies have revealed that many of the nation's top schools exhibit clear signs of discrimination and favoritism in their admissions process. One study conducted at Stanford compared the admittance rates for white and Asian applicants of similar academic and leadership rankings. The researchers concluded that white students were "significantly" more likely to be admitted than their Asian peers. Another study estimates that Asian students need to score at least

50 points higher on their SAT in order

to receive the same consideration as white applicants. Asian American students are consistently being held to a higher standard to gain access to the same opportunities — just another example of preferential treatment given to those fortunate enough to be "true Americans."

In November 2005, the Wall Street Journal covered a phenomenon called the "New White Flight." The article referred to a growing trend in which white families were leaving public schools with large populations of Asian students. White parents were uncomfortable with the idea of their children being regarded as "underachievers" while trying to compete with Asians academically. Although this topic does not deal directly with college admissions, it helps to illustrate an important point. It seems that in the land of opportunity, minority progress is only viewed favorably until it begins to threaten the interests of the majority. When it comes to education, the consensus seems to be that the "model minority" has come too far.

If these issues are not properly addressed, future generations of Asian Americans will continue to face the harsh reality that their own race may serve as an obstacle to their college ambitions. They will be forced to fight an uphill battle through institutionalized discrimination, unrealistic generalizations, and the overall climate of ignorance and fear that have fueled racial tensions and hindered hopes for tolerance. In the end, it seems that progress in American society means simply being presented with a new set of challenges — challenges that must be met and overcome with the very skills and knowledge that we gain as students today. By taking this responsibility upon ourselves, will we be able to ensure a better system for those who follow in our footsteps.



an island away from home: the struggles of Angel Island

Walk through the halls of the Angel Island Immigration Station today; you will see its wooden barracks closed off to the public for restoration. Go back thirty years; these same barracks are closed off and on the brink of demolition until a park ranger notices etchings in the walls of the rooms. Go back eighty years; detained Chinese immigrants, dejected and anxiously waiting to move into their new homeland, begin carving into the walls of their holding facility. The writings on the walls are poems, expressing the physical and emotional isolation felt by their authors for being kept on this foreign island. They serve as a powerful reminder of immigrant struggles in the early 20th century.

The various anti-Chinese exclusion laws passed in the late 19th century had greatly increased the difficulty Chinese immigrants encountered when trying to get into the US. With each subsequent act, old loopholes were closed and new immigrants had to resort to other means. The 1906 San Francisco Earthquake provided one such opening. The city's municipal records were destroyed, allowing many Chinese to claim they had been born in the United States. Wives and children of citizens were permitted by law to enter the country, and many young men, posing as the sons of American citizens, attempted to gain entry. Those who tried to come through San Francisco ended up on Angel Island.

Angel Island, located in the middle of the San Francisco Bay, served as the first stop for thousands of immigrants from Asia heading to California, the majority of whom were Chinese. From 1910 to 1940, the Angel Island Immigration Station processed and detained approximately 170,000 Chinese immigrants, for as short as a few days or as long as two years. The station was created to address complaints about the unsanitary conditions of the previous immigration building, as well as to isolate the Chinese immigrants from the rest of society. Angel Island did little to assuage concerns over cleanliness; in 1919, federal troops had to be called into the station to control a riot on the island, after the immigrants had protested the poor quality of the food. Over the years, numerous community groups and immigration officials declared the facilities inadequate and unhealthy, leading to a declaration in 1922 by the Assistant Secretary of Labor and Commissioner General of Immigration that the facilities were "filthy and unfit for habitation." However, the station remained in operation until 1940, when a fire destroyed one of the buildings.

When the immigrants first arrived on the island, officials segregated them by ethnicity and gender. Men were kept in separate barracks from the women and children, which meant husbands usually had no contact with their wives and children until they made it past inspection. The immigrants would then have to go through medical checks, stripped naked and prodded by strangers testing for parasitic infections. Originally, those who had some proscribed disease were deported immediately, but after protests from Chinese community leaders, immigration officials provided some with medical treatment. Following a satisfactory examination, the immigrants were placed into barracks, where they awaited their immigration hearings.

Immigration cases were heard by a panel of inspectors, government authorities who determined the legitimacy of each applicant's claims to entry. To verify these claims, the inspectors listened to testimony from the applicant and his or her witness, usually a family member living in the US, and drilled them on obscure details regarding home villages and family history. The questions, sometimes as irrelevant as "How many steps were there to the front door of your house?", prompted incoming immigrants to smuggle information books which they memorized and then destroyed to avoid discovery. Because of the potential threats of random checks and future immigration raids, those who made it to San Francisco had to retain this knowledge for their entire lives.

While waiting for their cases to be heard, the immigrants were essentially inmates in a prison; their contact with the outside world was extremely limited, and most spent their days confined in their quarters. The men were prohibited from walking the grounds, limited mostly to small, fenced-in recreation yards. Still, the immigrants found ways to pass the time: they took English classes provided by members of Chinatown, listened to Chinese opera records on a phonograph that they had bought, and formed organizations to help welcome new immigrants and to serve as liaisons with station officials. They also often wrote poetry, written in paint or carved into the wood of the barracks.

These poems, usually written in classical Chinese style, served as a means of expression for the immigrants. The immigration ordeal left many angry, hopeless, and lonely. They were unsure whether they would ever see their families again, unsure whether they would ever be able to leave the island. For those who came to America looking for Gam Saan (Gold Mountain), it was a shock to be imprisoned with thousands of other immigrants in unsafe facilities for weeks and months on end. The poems may not be stylistically impressive (many poets borrowed from other Chinese poems or other poems found in the barracks), but the content found within them provides us with an insight into the general sense of despair and isolation these immigrants felt.

Following the 1940 fire that destroyed the facility's administration building, the Angel Island Immigration Station was put out of service and used to hold Japanese and German prisoners of war. In 1943, the US government repealed the Chinese Exclusion Act, given China's status as an ally to the West in World War II. The station was set for demolition until a park ranger happened to see the poems on the walls of the barracks. Preservation efforts soon followed and the station was declared a National Historic Landmark in 1997. Today, "Partners in Preservation," a program funding preservation efforts across the nation, is offering \$100,000 to renovate one historic site in the Bay Area. People can vote online (www.partnersinpreservation.com) for the Angel Island Immigration Station, with the voting ending October 31st.

For the immigrants who were able to pass the inspection board, many stayed in San Francisco to find work and housing in Chinatown. They would carry resentment towards Angel Island and the humiliating and dehumanizing ordeal they had gone through for most of their lives. For those who did not pass the board, about ten percent of all the Chinese immigrants, they were forced out of the country, back to the land they had intended to leave. Some would not make the trip back; some among the deported committed suicide while in the barracks or aboard the ships.

It takes no great stretch of imagination to draw parallels between the treatment of Chinese immigrants within and outside Angel Island, and our current government's policies and attitudes towards the debate over Mexican immigrants, the unlawful detention of Muslims post-9/11, and the experiences of Karen refugees from Burma. To see history repeated again and again is frustrating to many activists fighting against consistent oppression and racism. But confronting these patterns becomes less difficult when the voices of the oppressed remain etched into walls.



<http://www.griffith.ws/flyingphotos.html>

America has power, but not justice.
In prison, we were victimized as if we were guilty.
Given no opportunity to explain, it was really brutal.
I bow my head in reflection but there is nothing I can do.

— from the walls of the barracks of Angel Island

The insects chirp outside the four walls.
The inmates often sigh.
Thinking of affairs back home,
Unconscious tears wet my lapel.

— from the walls of the barracks of Angel Island

Imprisoned in the wooden building day after day,
My freedom withheld; how can I bear to talk about it?
I look to see who is happy but they only sit quietly.
I am anxious and depressed and cannot fall asleep.
The days are long and the bottle constantly empty; my sad mood, even so, is not dispelled.
Nights are long and the pillow cold; who can pity my loneliness?
After experiencing such loneliness and sorrow,
Why not just return home and learn to plow the fields?

— from the walls of the barracks of Angel Island

BEBOT VIDEOS: *Feminist Critiques*

by erin pangilinan and krystle ignacio



"The open letter killed any chance for this video to be on MTV. It denied other people to see it." -Ginelsa

In July, Allen Pineda Lindo a.k.a. apl.de.ap of Black Eyed Peas fame, helped make a huge contribution to the Pilipino community. Funded independently of their record label, Interscope Records, the music group embarked on making not one but two videos for the song "Bebot" from their 2005 album "Monkey Business." The lyrics of "Bebot" are completely versed in Tagalog, the national language of the Philippines. Bebot translates into "beautiful woman" or more loosely "hot chick." With Pilipino American (PilAm) director Patricio Ginelsa, who has directed music videos to tracks like "The Apl Song," "The Debut," and "Lumpia," the videos are meant to introduce a positive representation of Pilipinos/PilAms into the mainstream and instill PilAm pride.

Unlike with most tracks, there are actually two music videos for "Bebot." The videos showcase the generation gap for PilAms. The first video, called "Generation One," is set in historical "Little Manila" located in Stockton, California, during the 1930s. The story depicts the average day of Pilipino asparagus farmers who work hard during the day and party for a night on the town. Elaborate costumes and backgrounds give viewers a sense of what life was like as a Pilipino immigrant during that period. The video also intended to raise awareness of the Little Manila Foundation, which is in need of \$1.5 million to build a museum for recently restored buildings of the historic town.

The second video, "Generation Two," also celebrates Pilipino pride, but primarily appeals to a more modern crowd. In effect, it fits in with the majority of popular hip-hop videos in the mainstream media with sure-hit selling points: glamour and sex. This is where the controversy begins and some people start getting upset.

In September 2006, a month after the release of the videos, an open letter criticizing the videos for perceived cultural shortcomings was put in circulation for people to read. Other academics requested to add their signature to the open letter. The open letter is directed to the artist apl.de.ap, director Patricio Ginelsa, and Xylophone Films, the group who helped produced the videos.

Perpetual foreigner syndrome

The open letter claimed that the video utilized restricting stereotypes of Pilipina

women like "the whore and the shrill mother." An excerpt from the open letter reads, "The mother character was also particularly troublesome...She seems to play a dehumanized figure, the perpetual foreigner with her exaggerated accent, but on top of that, she is robbed of her femininity in her embarrassingly indelicate treatment of her son and his friends. She is not like a tough or strong mother, but almost like a coarse asexual mother, and it is telling that she is the only female character in the video with a full figure."

James "Slim" Dang, a Vietnamese American dancer and a participant in the video, does not agree with the signatories' comments, noting the difficulties to encapsulate ethnic identities: "The open letter discusses the exaggerated [Pilipino] accent of the mother. What if they replace it with a perfect English accent? I know some people are proud of their accents. By getting rid of your accent, you might be destroying part of your cultural identity."

"[You] can't expect a short music video to represent a whole culture—just a subset of it," Dang added.

Ginelsa did not direct the mother (a comedian) to use an accent. The entire scene was improvised.

Hypersexualized images of Pilipinas

The signatories of the letter expressed that they were "utterly dismayed by the portrayal of hyper-sexualized Pilipina 'hoochie-mama' dancers, specifically in the Generation 2 version, the type of representation of women so unfortunately prevalent in today's hip-hop and rap music videos. The depiction of the 1930s 'dime dancers' was also cast in an unproblematic light, as these women seem to exist solely for the sexual pleasure of the manongs." Elisa Estrera, UC Berkeley student and dancer in the Bebot videos, emphasizes that "...some people fail to see that this is just how people (more specifically the girls) were acting and depicting themselves. There wasn't some higher authority telling us to think and be sexy for the video or else we wouldn't be in it...There was no wardrobe person, all the girls came dressed on their own. The girls weren't told to do anything perverse like strip or freak a guy...the director just told everyone to have fun and act as if they were really at a party."

The open letter also expressed problems with representing Pilipina women on a global scale. "While this may sound quite harsh, we believe it is necessary to point out that such depictions make it seem as if you are selling out [Pilipina] women for the sake of gaining mainstream popularity within the United States. Given the already horrific representations of [Pilipinas] all over the world as willing prostitutes, exotic dancers, or domestic servants who are available for sex with their employers, the representation of Pinays in these particular videos can only feed into such stereotypes.

We also find it puzzling, given your apparent commitment to preserving the history and dignity of [Pilipina/os] in the United States, because we assume that you also consider such stereotypes offensive to [Pilipino] men as well as women."

In response to other critics pushing for accurate representations of Pilipinos on a global scale, Ginelsa replied, "That's throwing a lot of responsibility [on] a music video. You gotta understand that this is just one example."

Explanation of open letter

Joanne Rondilla, letter signatory and UC Berkeley graduate student in Ethnic Studies, thought that the video portrayed no positive roles for women. "The women are just so absent. You can't [have] women in the video [and] not [have them] play substantial roles there. Women can't be decorations. And that's what we were trying to point out. As we go towards the road to trying to get more coverage or more exposure in making culture, it has to be men and women coming into this together. It can't just be men and then women [who] fall behind." She also thought that more Pilipino men were able to relate to the video because of the broad range of Pilipino men in the videos and that correspondingly, there should be broader representation of Pilipina women. "I don't think it's such a huge demand for having different skin tones on Pilipinas, different body types...[With the video] it's almost like you're watching import models," Rondilla argued. "That's one very specific type of beauty or one type of aesthetic. I don't think what we were asking for was completely unreasonable. I don't think it's wrong to be who we are in the multitude of skin colors and body types we come in...It's a very specific kind of woman in the video."

Perceived impact and intents of open letter

Ginelsa's initial reaction to the open letter was one of shock and pain. "Because it is coming from the community anyone who knows me knows how much I care about the community. [The criticism within the PilAm community], it hurt because these are the same issues that I was wrestling with for a full year, it was the reason why we went back and forth." Ginelsa was replaced as director and originally wrote 5-6 different versions of the video.

(Continued on page 12, BEBOT VIDEOS)



Watch the videos: <http://www.kidheroes.net/bebot>
or youtube.com
Support Little Manila: <http://www.littlemanila.net>

Dat Asian American Comedian

Dat Phan - Rising Comic?

by erin wong



It cannot be easy to be a comedian. First thing you need to get over is the stage fright, the gut-jerking butterflies you get whenever you step in front of a group of people. Even if you get past that, there is the difficulty of developing a unique, trademark style, one that no other comic can emulate. And, to top it all off, you cannot be a comic unless you have the jokes to make the audience keel over in laughter. Yet Dat Phan has it all: the confidence, the recognizable stage presence, and the funnies that won him NBC's first season of *The Last Comic Standing* in 2003.

Since winning the competition on national TV, Phan has continued to excel. As one of the few minority comics on *The Last Comic Standing* and one of a handful of recognizable Asian American comedians in the business, Phan has jumped the race hurdle and established himself firmly as a reputable Asian American comedian. Though sandwiched between two white comedians at Cobb's Comedy Club in San Francisco in mid-October, Phan still shone like a freshly manicured nail with a topcoat.

Phan was born in Saigon, Vietnam where he lived until he, his parents and nine siblings immigrated to San Diego. After the September 11th attacks, Phan realized that "life is short" and moved to Los Angeles to pursue his dream of becoming a stand-up comedian. His efforts paid off when he gained critical acclaim in 2003's phenomenal run.

While Phan has had success, his reputation as a comedian is limited because of his material. For Phan, his Asian roots become the basis of his routine. Every single one of Dat Phan's jokes focuses on being Asian, whether it is about dating Asian girls, eating Asian food, or listening to his mother's broken English. For example, one of his jokes involves him wanting to be a comedian because he was the, "only Asian in high school that failed math."

Much like martial arts star Jackie Chan or dragon lady Anna May Wong, Phan has fallen into the same niche of typecasting. With an entire line-up of Asian jokes, Phan appears only to identify with that area of comedy. At Cobb's Comedy Club, Phan's performance was strikingly ethnic in

comparison to headliner Jake Johannsen and opener Chris Cobbler, neither of whom mentioned race. Instead, Johannsen and Cobbler's acts had a range of material from crass sex to contemporary politics. Although Phan tried out new jokes on the San Francisco audience, he only repeated Asian themes. Obviously, there is a limit to how much one can hear about Phan's mother.

Though some of his jokes are hilarious because they are surprisingly true, only an Asian audience could fully appreciate Phan's humor. However, Phan's audience is not just composed of Asians; his goal is to make his non-Asian audiences laugh as well. Phan succeeds most of the time. But, if these people don't have an Asian background to identify with, then what are they laughing at? The answer is the prevalent stereotypes of Asians and Asian Americans. Those outside the experiences of Asian mothers and ridiculously spicy foods can only identify with those stereotypes. So while Phan wants to shatter the ideas of "Asians are good at math," "all Asians are kung fu masters" and "because I'm Asian, I'm like Jackie Chan," he only manages to reinforce those ideas for the non-Asian subset of his audience. Moreover, the "Asian-ness" of his jokes have an air of exclusivity, especially his jokes that involve him speaking Vietnamese. Though the audience can imply what he is saying by his body movements, only those who speak the language can really appreciate Phan's humor.

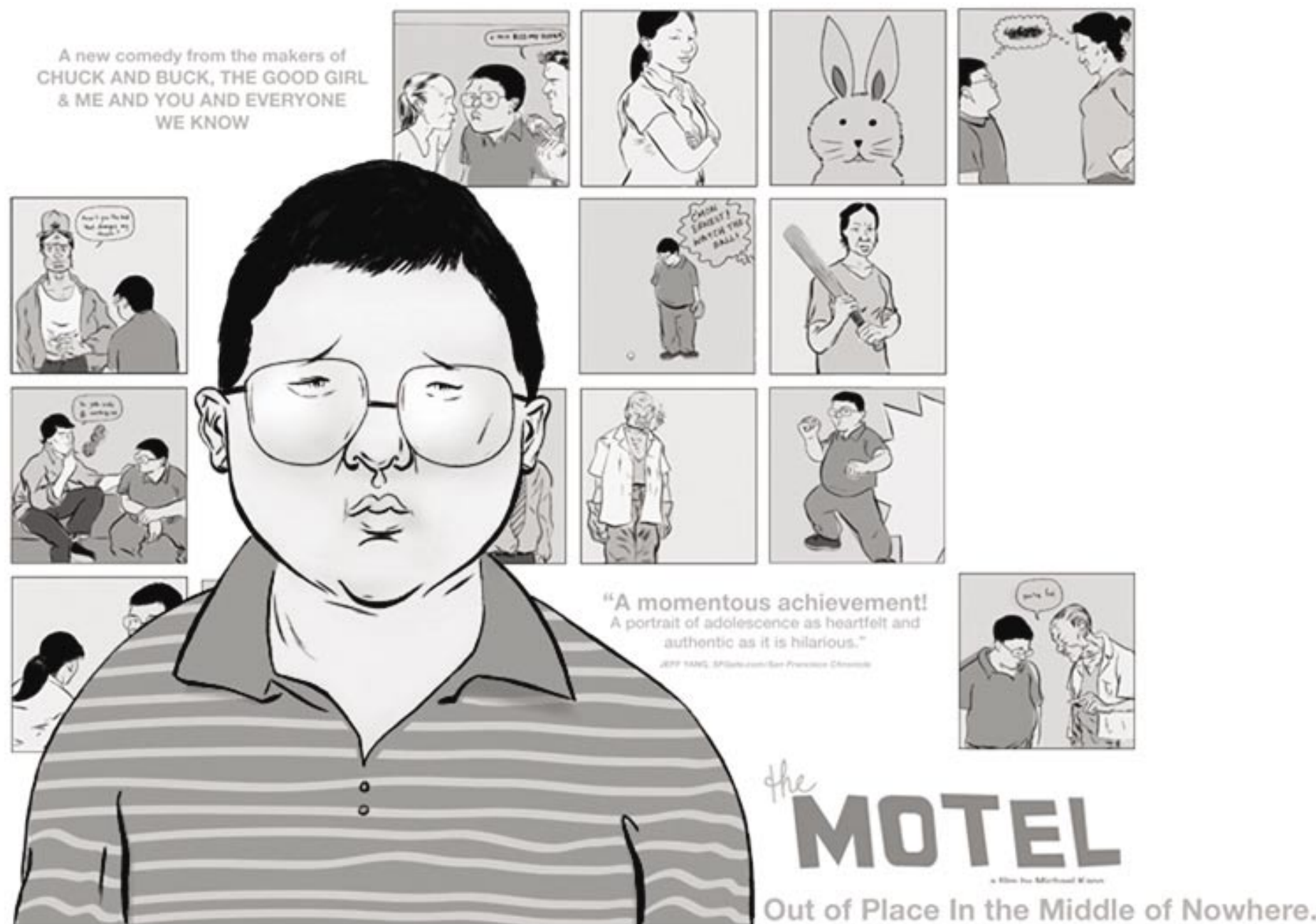
Comedians who are Asian American and whose standup consists of more than just Asian jokes have also garnered acclaim and a considerable fan base. Two examples are the Kims of Comedy and Margaret Cho. The Kims of Comedy—a spin on the popular group "Kings of Comedy"—are a Korean quartet made up of relative unknowns Steve Byrne, Kevin Shea, "Dr. Ken" Jeong, and MadTV player Bobby Lee. The diversity of their backgrounds—Byrne is half Korean and half Irish, Shea was adopted by a white family—helps them breakout of the niche of all-Asian jokesters. The goal of the Kims of Comedy is to show that "Asian comedy is about more than Dat Phan," said Shea in an interview with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, citing that, even though they are all Korean, there is no "Korean comedy style." While their heritage does enter into their acts, it is certainly not the basis. For example, Byrne has a more of a crass sense of humor and a plausible imitation of macaroni and cheese, while Dr. Ken wrote a folk song called "History of Rap" and has performed on BET and "Cedric the Entertainer Presents."

San Francisco-born Margaret Cho started doing standup at the age of sixteen. When she moved to Los Angeles in her early twenties, she became an overnight success. In 1994, she starred in the ABC television sitcom *All-American Girl*. Concerns arose, however, over whether or not the show was too ethnic, eventually leading to the show's cancellation. Showing her deftness and resiliency as a well-rounded comedian, Cho bounced back with her Broadway show *I'm the One that I Want* and then went on her wildly well-received *Notorious C.H.O.* tour. Since then, she has stirred controversy by stating anti-Bush comments and fighting for LGBT rights.

While the Kims of Comedy and Cho all make references to their parents and the fact that they are Asian American, it is not their entire act. These comedians can frequent late night shows and lead one-(wo)man tours while appealing to a much wider audience than Phan does. These comedians do what most comedians strive to do: find humor in everyday circumstances.

Phan is a great Asian comedian. However, as long as he remains attached to his all-Asian routine, there is little chance that he can establish himself as a universally great comedian. Unless he drops his entirely Asian act, Phan is limited to being a novelty, soon to fade off when there are no more jokes about nail salon workers, the aging process of Asians, or his crazy Asian mother. Whether Phan can break out of the Asian bubble or not will prove his greatness as an comedian. But until then, we will just have to enjoy shrieky antics of Dat Phan's mother.





by jason coe

Asian American Masculinity in *The Motel*

"I just want to be happy! I want to be happy right now!" scream Ernest Chin and Sam Kim, our two sad protagonists of Michael Kang's first feature film *The Motel*. Ernest, played convincingly by first time actor Jeffrey Chyau, is a portly thirteen-year-old trying to become a man. Sam, played by Sung Kang, is the middle-class alcoholic trying to help him there. Michael Kang did not try very hard to avoid stereotypes, as these two embody the most represented Asian American male personas: the socially inept, dorky, Chinese kid and the whoring, bimber-driving, Korean who smokes and drinks too much. These two stereotypes represent the two poles of Asian American masculinity, asexual and hypersexual, both miserable.

It is not easy being thirteen, as poor Ernest can tell you. His father left the family. He lives in fear of his tyrannical mother who makes him clean the rooms of the family's "hourly rate" motel when people finish their afternoon trysts. After Ernest clandestinely enters a writing contest where he wins an "honorable mention" award, Ernest's mother harshly scolds him for a finish that she proclaims is worse than losing. He is regularly ratted out by his bratty sister, and to top it all off, he has an unrequited crush on the older Chinese girl down the street. Teenage-dom does not have it easy for Ernest. So when Sam comes around the motel, drunk off his ass, with hot hooker in tow, Ernest discovers his new role model, for the time being anyway.

Cinematically, Michael Kang has not done anything extraordinary with *The Motel*. It pretty much fulfills all of the typical "Sundance Indie" comedy archetypes – family dysfunction, interesting characters and embarrassing situations (think Todd Solondz or the recently released *Little Miss Sunshine*). Perhaps what makes this film most radical is that it represents Asian Americans, but not in the, "Hey look they're not white and they have culture clash problems!" (think *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*).

In 1971, Melvin Van Peebles directed *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, the revolutionary first film in the genre that would eventually be termed "blaxploitation." These films were a response to the typical characterizations of African Americans in cinema after the civil rights era, the so called "Sidney Poitier syndrome," in which black characters always had to be upstanding and noble. Van Peeble's character Sweetback was the complete antithesis. He was

a take-no-shit, cop-killing sexual champion. Sweetback, (now a slang term for a large penis), was probably the first representation, and glorification, of a thug with street-cred.

Van Peebles' film was met with both criticism and acclaim. Huey Newton, co-founder of the Black Panthers, called it "the first truly revolutionary black film made." I guess *Within Our Gates* (1912), Oscar Micheaux's response to *Birth of a Nation*, does not count. Others critics argued that the film was just propagating another stereotype, one that seems fairly ubiquitous nowadays with the mainstream popularity of "gangsta" rap. Even today, this problematic dichotomy exists in the representation of African Americans, as Mos Def proclaims in the song "Thieves in the Night": "I find it distressing there's never no in-between/We either niggas or kings/We either bitches or queens."

The Motel focuses on this type of problematic dichotomy in context of the Asian American male identity, and does little to stray from the stereotypes of portly nerd and drunken sexpot. But unlike Van Peebles or Mos Def, Kang does not use the stereotypes to display a greater social message; rather, he aims to illuminate the differences between Ernest and Sam (and provide a sort of cultural context) in order to add poignancy to their odd relationship.

Being thirteen is an awkward enough stage for most, but Ernest lacks anyone remotely resembling a role model. Impressionable youngsters try to conform to the ways of others around them. So when Sam arrives on the scene, Ernest thinks he has found his messiah. Most Asian American males can relate. As the first children born in the US, the generation/cultural gap between fathers and sons can seem as expansive as the Mariana Trench. Frustrated with relationships and life in general, some aspire to be the Asian bad boy; after all, better to be a rebellious, non-conforming badass than an asexual, parent-doting nerd, right? But as Ernest discovers, Sam's approach has its pitfalls as well.

Do not look to *The Motel* for any answers. While filial duty ultimately wins out, Ernest's life-changing experience does not leave him any happier or closer to getting the girl. But maybe realism is really the point here. There are no easy answers for Ernest, or Sam, or any of us. All we can do is try our best not to piss off our mothers, and hopefully the rest will fall into place.

what are you?

One Question With A Book Of Answers “Part Asian, 100% Hapa” Reviewed

by lauren morimoto

“What are you?” is a question familiar to Asian Americans and multiracial people alike. Whether you are just trying to make small talk before class or getting to know your dorm mates a little more intimately, this question will eventually come up in the conversation and it does not always entail a simple one-word answer. For Hapas, or people “of mixed racial descent with partial roots in Asian and/or Pacific Islander ancestry,” this question poses a constant life struggle, especially in a nation where race is so socially embedded. *Part Asian, 100% Hapa*, by Kip Fulbeck, hit the market this past year with a boom. Fulbeck introduces Hapa identity to mainstream culture, provides a basis of understanding for non-multiracial people, and establishes a sense of belonging and unity within the Hapa community.

The term “Hapa” originated as a Hawaiian word meaning “half.” Its full term, “Hapa Haole,” was used in reference to people with both White and Hawaiian ancestry. MTV Chi describes the term “Hapa” as “originally a derogatory term used to call someone who was part Hawaiian impure.” Over time, Hawaii’s population grew more diverse and the term was used to refer to all multiracial people in Hawaii. After the 1970s, the term found its way across the Pacific Ocean to the continental United States, where it garnered its current meaning. MTV Chi notes that “nowadays mixed race Asians are claiming [hapa] as their own and turning the word’s negative past on it’s head.” The term today is, more frequently than not, a positive form of identification embraced by the Asian American community.

Part Asian, 100% Hapa only has about seven pages of the author’s own writing. The bulk of the book is a compilation of photographs of Hapa people. The levels of multiracialism run from as simple as Japanese/Hawaiian to as varied as Hawaiian/Chinese/Japanese/Korean/Norwegian/Irish/Portuguese. Within half a page of writing, the person was asked to answer the question, “What are you?” The variety of responses make the book truly unique. Some responses exploded on the half page while others responded in two bold words. Even the author, who is of Japanese, French, Chinese, Irish, Swedish, and Sioux descent himself, replies concisely with, “I am exactly the same as every other person in 2500.” “2500” most likely refers to a year in the distant future when the possible convergence of ethnicities could occur. Kip Fulbeck is the professor and chair of the University of California, Santa Barbara art department as well as an affiliated faculty member of the Asian American Studies and Film departments. His book is evidence of his earlier research work referred to as “The Hapa Project,” where he took photographs of over 1,000 Hapas across the country and asked them to define themselves in their own written word. Fulbeck’s somewhat unconventional book format can be partly explained by the fact that his academic work had to be adapted and realigned. While the book only contains 116 participants, the project tackled a sample on a much larger scale.

Fulbeck seems interested in introducing Hapa identity

to mainstream culture, but does not present new knowledge about Hapa issues. Nevertheless, this book appeals to the reader on several levels. First, this book is a conservative step in supporting the momentum of the rapidly growing multiracial movement. It’s a far cry from declaring a single image for Hapa categorization and thus, hardly steps on any toes. It’s a fun, easy, interesting read that allows you to laugh and cry in the same sentence. Fulbeck’s portraits range in age, size, race, gender, you name it! If you look hard enough, you might even recognize Amy Hill, part Japanese and Finnish, from movies such as *50 First Dates*, *Cat in the Hat*, and *Cheaper*

by the Dozen. The entertainment quality of the book is evident – you can search for individual personalities like Amy Hill, or just simply flip through the book of pictures. On a larger scale, this book is a baby step for creating an open dialogue on multiracialism in popular culture. A number of multiracial personalities, including Amy Hill, have garnered enough exposure to the point where multiracism cannot be a closeted issue any longer. And while the majority of Hapas are not exactly stealing the limelight, getting Hapa issues out there in the mainstream is nonetheless key.

The 2000 United States Census provided a major step in learning about multiracial issues. It was the first census to allow people to select more than one racial category and 2.4% of the total population chose to do so. This book provides a community for Hapas and is essential for not only multiracial people but also monoracial people. It describes the emotions every person feels when he or she cannot fit into a single box.

Kip Fulbeck’s Hapa Project continues to expand with the momentum gained through his book. The Japanese American National Museum (JANM) located in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo featured an exhibit, which ran until October 29th, on his book. JANM, best known for its exhibits on Japanese American Internment during World War II, showcased a fresh perspective through Fulbeck’s exhibit. Since Fulbeck’s exhibit first opened in June 2006, the museum has featured specials on Hapa identity, awareness, and community, including speakers and screenings of films that dealt with Hapa issues. The expansive Miyawaki Gallery housed this two-room exhibit. Numerous photographs from the Hapa Project lined the walls of the first room. A second room showcased Fulbeck’s documentaries of his Hapa Project, as well as museum visitors’ pictures and personalized responses to Fulbeck’s question – “What are you?” The museum store capitalized on this exhibit as well. The store was overfilled with Fulbeck’s book, documentaries, Hapa T-shirts, stickers, magnets, and bookmarks.



When interviewed by the Japanese American National Museum on what message he hoped visitors would get from the exhibit at the museum, Fulbeck replied, “I’m most interested in celebration and reclamation: celebrating Hapa awareness and identity... reclaiming invisibility, ignorance, pejorative labels, and for lack of a better term-community homelessness. I’d like kids to realize they’re not alone — maybe adults, too.” While the exhibit in itself was well intended, the social significance of the exhibit was not very apparent. The museum experience was a little sparser and a lot more intimidating than the book. The majority of the same photographs from the book were simply put on the wall, without much commentary. However, it was touching to see the community reaching out to this exhibit; every Saturday, museum visitors can get their Polaroid picture taken and were allowed to write a message on it answering the question themselves.

There was much buzz and anticipation about the book and the relevant exhibit. However, they both focused on people who are, like his title states, *Part Asian, 100% Hapa*. The book and exhibit are both interesting new concepts, but they only mimic the effect of being Hapa. A nice spot on my coffee table is probably the most appropriate place for a book like this.



For more information about “The Hapa Project,” the book, and Hapa Issues, please visit these websites:

- Kip Fullbeck :: seaweed productions - www.seaweedproductions.com
- *Japanese American National Museum* - www.janm.org

by eric ching

asian american child abuse

For generations the “child disciplinary actions” that occur within Asian families have gone unnoticed. According to ModelMinority, an organization dedicated to Asian American empowerment, “Child maltreatment among Asian Americans...remains unexposed...for its lack of visibility.” The problem lies here: unreliable stories such as parents hitting an infant or teachers punishing students with bamboo sticks for academic shortcomings create a sense, in America, that Asian Americans are constantly in turmoil.

The National Statistics for Child Abuse reports that child abuse among Asians consists of only one percent of all reported child abuse cases. However, according to another study conducted by PubMed, an institute dedicated to family health, “73% of the South Asian and Middle Eastern sample, 65% of the East Asian sample, and 78% of the Latina sample reported experiencing at least one type of physical abuse.” Of the subject tested, “100 percent did not report the physical abuse to authorities”.

Misunderstandings about Asian culture have tainted the Asian image, namely in the parenthood category. It is important to shed light on Asian culture to understand why misunderstandings on the issue of physical punishment occur.

Different Asian American groups have started to address the issues of physical punishment and cultural difference. Groups such as the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CAACF) located in New York City and Asian Americans for Community Involvement located in Cupertino, California have tried to bridge the cultural gap in parenting between Caucasian Americans and Asian Americans. The CAACF acknowledges that child welfare policies and services are rarely designed to meet the needs of the Asian American community. It advocates that immigrant families understand the consequences of child abuse in the US, but it also demands an understanding on the part of child welfare professionals so that an ideal balance in resolving cultural differences can be established.

Physical discipline lies at the root of Asian culture. Asian culture recognizes a strict disciplinary structure within families, according to ModelMinority. The teachings of Confucius, for example, places extreme emphasis on filial piety, where the father figure exercises enormous power over their children and, conversely, a child must show respect and obedience towards his or her parents. Han Fei, another well-known Chinese philosopher, created what is known today as

Legalism. He argues that people are inherently immoral and punishment is the only way to rectify this innate evil. Asian culture has been strongly influenced by both philosophers, and many Asian families continue to draw upon the teachings of both Confucius and Han Fei.

The potential shame of losing face, of embarrassing the family name, and of disregarding family loyalty, has also influenced Asian culture and the methods families use in raising their children. Often times, Asian parents will promote high standards to prevent children from staining the family name. ModelMinority confirms this observation in an article discussing child abuse, noting that “Asian parents often place unrealistically high expectations for their children.”

In Asia, physical discipline is not a subject of legal dispute because is culturally accepted and popularly practiced. For such cultures, “child abuse” is a foreign concept.

In Vietnam, physical discipline is the traditional method of raising children and is an integral part of Vietnamese culture. However, in the United States, physical discipline used on children in any way is against the law. The current US federal definition of child abuse, taken directly from the 1974 legislation is: “at minimum, any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.” The statement “serious physical or emotional harm” is very vague and difficult to define. According to an article in *Model Minority*, “Asians have commonly believed that child abuse is only defined as extreme physical torture exerted on a child.” For many Asian families, it is assumed that, “physical punishment or discipline by striking a child does not qualify as abuse.”

Physical discipline is increasingly becoming a problem within Asian communities in American society. With an influx of Asian immigrants, it is important to understand that they bring with them customs and values that differ from American culture. Culture clashes create misunderstandings which cause tension within American society; in order to bridge the cultural gap, it is crucial to make informed judgements. Asian American immigrants usually struggle between assimilating into a new society and preserving one’s own cultural background, usually finding some sort of middle ground. An understanding of different aspects of cultures will allow facilitation in discussing different ideologies, and hopefully a path to awareness and compromise.

It is important to shed light on Asian culture to understand why misunderstandings on the issue of physical punishment occur.



www.sph.umich.edu/apihealth/childelder.htm

signs of abuse

Unexplained or repeated injuries like welts or bruises.

Injuries in the shape of objects (belts, watches, etc.)

Disagreement between parent and child over the injury cause.

Obvious neglect of the child (dirty, undernourished, lack of medical or dental care).

Fearful behavior.

what you can do to help

Talk to child privately and record all information.

If child reveals abuse, tell them you believe them and will find someone to help them.

Report suspected abuse to local authorities.

[quick statistics and facts]

17% of Asian American boys in grades 5 through 12 reported physical abuse, as compared to 8% among white boys, in a survey by the Commonwealth Fund.

30% of Asian American girls in grades 5 through 12 reported depressive symptoms, as compared to white girls (22%), African American girls (17%), or Hispanic girls (27%), in a survey by the Commonwealth Fund.

In 2003, an estimated 906,000 children were victims of abuse or neglect.

Pacific Islander (21.4), American Indian (21.3), Alaska Native (20.4), African American (20.4) children had the highest rates of victimization per 1,000. Asian children had a rate of 2.7 per 1,000.

A national survey showed Asian American children (under 18 years old) were least likely among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics to receive mental health care.

Among all reported cases of child welfare cases, 92 percent are ones of neglect rather than abuse.

www.cacf.org and www.prevent-abuse-now.com

www.keepkidshealthy.com

Asian American News at a Glance...

by pauline sze

"Satire" Hits Asian American Students Hard

UCLA's *Daily Bruin* ran an editorial piece by Jed Levine on October 10, 2006 it dubbed satire in an article entitled, "A modest proposal for an immodest proposition." The article is in response to students that had protested against the University of California (UC) admissions policy, which is facing scrutiny for the low numbers of minorities admitted into the UC system, particularly those from African American, Chicano/Latino American and Native American groups. Instead of blaming the UC and the UC Regents, the article suggests that, "we blame the Asians." Levine even goes on to state, "White people are an underrepresented minority here at UCLA," and prompts, "How can we curb the Asian invasion?" The piece enraged many students across California and the nation. Read the piece here and decide if it is satire for yourself: www.dailybruin.ucla.edu/news/articles.asp?ID=38302

US Waives Security Regulation for Burma's Chin Refugees

Following up **hardboiled's** article in issue 10.1, entitled *Terrorists ... or Refugees?*, many Chin refugees from Burma have been reconsidered for resettlement in the US. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice waived a security regulation in the Patriot Act, which had originally prevented people who provided material support to armed rebel groups from resettling in the US. This government waiver comes at a time when the US ordered similar exceptions for the Karen people of Burma.

Anna Mae He Adoption Case Goes to State Supreme Court

Following up **hardboiled's** article in issue 8.1, entitled "Cracks in America's Legal System," the Anna Mae He adoption case is now heading to the Tennessee Supreme Court. Jerry and Louise Baker have raised Anna Mae He, who turns eight in January, since she was only a few weeks old. Her birth parents are Chinese immigrants, Shaoqiang He and Qin Luo He. The Hes are arguing that they placed Anna Mae with the Bakers temporarily and only because they were facing hardships at the time. The Hes have been attempting to regain custody of their biological daughter for years, arguing that they were not given notice that their parental rights could be terminated if they failed to visit their child for four months.

The lower district court terminated the Hes' parental rights and awarded custody to the Bakers in 2004, a ruling which the Tennessee Court of Appeals upheld in 2005. The Tennessee Supreme Court will rule whether a state statute violates the Hes' constitutional rights to due process and equal protection, guaranteed by the 14th Amendment.

Asian Americans at the Polls this November Election – Wondering which Asian Americans are running for office this November 7th? Here's a quick list broken down by federal and state level candidates. (Disclaimer: This is in no way an inclusive list.)

California State Senate Candidates

Paul Singh (D-4)
Leland Yee (D-8)
Mike Ten (R-22)

Congressional Candidates

Doris Matsui (D-5)
Claire Yan (D-5)
Mike Honda (D-15)
Dennis Chang (L-15)
Tan Nguyen (R-47)

California Candidates

Betty Yee (D-1)
– Board of Equalization
Michelle Park Steel (R-3)
– Board of Equalization
Judy Chu (D-4)
– Board of Equalization
John Chiang (D)
– Controller
Joyce L. Kennard (non-partisan)
– State Supreme Court

California State Assembly Candidates

William Chan (R-9)
Alan Nakanishi (R-10)
Fiona Ma (D-12)
Mary Hayashi (D-18)
Alberto Torrico (D-20)
Ken Nishimura (R-20)
Virginia Chang (R-21)
Mike Eng (R-49)
Ted Lieu (D-53)
Grace Hu (R-56)
Van Tamom (D-60)
Van Tran (R-68)
Shirley Horton (R-78)

Events for November 2006...

Author Event: *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse* – Join APASD (Asian Pacific American Student Development) and Eastwind Books of Berkeley as co-editor Antonio Tiongson, Jr., contributor Rick Bonus and contributor Dylan Rodriguez discuss the anthology *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse*. The event will be held on Saturday, November 18, 2006 at 2 PM in Heller Lounge (located inside the MLK Student Union Building).

Stanford's 11th Annual "Listen to the Silence" Asian American Issues Conference – This all-day conference will be held on November 11, 2006; registration is free and food will be provided. This year's theme will be "One World, One Struggle." The purpose of the conference is to educate, empower, and unite participants on pertinent Asian American issues. Along with workshops, there will be a concert with Asian American performers. To register, please visit: <http://aasa.stanford.edu/>

LIVERight on the go! 2006 – The Asian Liver Center and the Answer to Cancer Foundation present the 2nd annual 5k run/walk, *LIVERight on the go!* This fundraiser is dedicated to raising awareness about hepatitis B (HBV) and liver cancer, which affects 1 in 10 Asian Pacific Islanders. The race will be held on Saturday, November 11, 2006 at Sand Hill Fields, Stanford University. The cost varies: children under twelve are free, students and seniors are \$20 each, adults are \$25 each, and team members are \$15 each with a minimum of ten people per team. There is an additional \$5 fee for registration on the day of the race.

BEBOT VIDEOS

(Continued from page 6)

Ginelsa laments, "People are misreading this open letter and they want to make sure that in my future projects I'm aware of the issue. I am aware of this issue. [I've] always been aware of this issue... By putting [the letter] in the public first you're already now open for other people to misread the letter. That's the problem... The open letter killed any chance for this video to be on MTV. It denied other people to see it."

Rondilla says that the signatories of the open letter did not know about the VH1 campaign to air the video during the time it was written and circulated. The intent was not meant to affect the movement for the video. "If there's anything people misconstrued [it's that] people think that we waged war on them (the creators of the "Bebot" video)," Rondilla noted. If signatories really would have intended to hurt the "Bebot" video campaign, Rondilla argues that the signatories would have expressed language reflecting that such a motion. "We would have called for a boycott (of the music video), we would have read the [letter] more widely." Now that the letter is public, Rondilla claims that the letter will only help publicize the "Bebot" video. "Far more people are going to watch [the] video and take interest in this," Rondilla states. "I still don't see how [the letter] may have hindered the campaign."

Others feel that the "Bebot" video, originally meant to unify the PilAm community will only end up tearing the PilAm community apart internally.

apl as scapegoat

It is easy to use apl.de.ap as a scapegoat for flawed representations of PilAms, because he is a prominent figure in the mainstream eye. Rondilla claimed that the reason why she did not call out other PilAm artists like hip-hop artists Cassie or Nicole Scherzinger of the Pussycat

Dolls was because "they're not running on the platform of I am Pilipino, running on platform of Pilipino pride." Ginelsa claims that apl.de.ap becomes a scapegoat because "it's so rare [to have] representations of us, so anything in the mainstream, anything that comes out that represents our culture, they're very protective of it. As I am." He says this influenced his drive to create the video. "I was obsessed in getting this project because I wanted to get the burden of representing this video as I saw fit. In my eyes, I'm glad the video came out. I'm proud of it. I'm not going to sit here and say 'oh I only like generation one [only]' because both videos were done by me and it has my name on it."

More types of representation needed

The open letter signers were puzzled with the Bebot videos, given the quality of previous releases from Xylophone Films, a community organization that creates videos for other independent PilAm artists. What is needed in the mainstream media are more types of representation for PilAms. It is difficult to balance out the demands of the community with the demands of mainstream popularity. The "Bebot" videos facilitated discussion over what roles and stereotypes might be relevant to Pilipino Americans. Apl.de.ap and Ginelsa deserve credit for attempting to show the generation gap within Pilipino culture. At the same time, people must remain cognizant and (continue to) participate in future discourse concerning the state of the PilAm community and the importance of media portrayals. With a greater number of PilAm artists hitting the mainstream airwaves, it is crucial for current and future generations to realize that images go a long way towards advancing - or stigmatizing - an entire group of people.

Justin & Will



BY YEN LIU © 2006



www.JustinAndWill.com



APA, APASD and hardboiled present

ROCK the ASIAN AMERICAN VOTE!

thursday, november 2nd, 7-9 pm

heller lounge (1st floor mlk)

FEATURING

wilma chan (ca state assembly)

betty yee (ca board of equalization)

evan low (campbell city council candidate)

PERFORMANCES BY

connie lim, jeff wiguna,

magnetic north, li-jie & more!

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

Theatre Rice!

Modern Asian American Theatre

SHOWCASE

When: Nov. 17 + Nov. 18

Where: 155 Dwinelle

Time: 7:30p Doors | 8:00p Show

% of proceeds go to charity

Tickets will be sold in Upper Sproul
starting November 6th!

The Asian American aspect of Theatre Rice is important because it is a step towards combating the misrepresentation, as well as the lack of representation of the Asian community in American popular culture. By its mere existence, Theater Rice is fulfilling its purpose of putting forth ideas that stem from the minds of Asian Americans, and therefore addressing the Asian American population as well as the greater community within Berkeley and beyond.

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