Call to Action

Asian American Health Initiative of Montgomery County
Asian American Health Conference • May 20, 2009

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Why Study History?

- He who does not know how to look back at his past will not reach his destination.
  - Jose Rizal

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agree/disagree

- There is a benefit to be being perceived as model minorities
- There is a cost to being perceived as model minorities
- It's the media's fault that we're perceived this way
- The perception of Asian Americans as a model minority affects relations with other groups

Model Minority: Consequences

- High SES masks the diversity of the population; reflects geographic bias (e.g., housing values)
- Social problems are ignored (no resources)
- Educational opportunities are denied (e.g., fellowships)
- Bamboo ceiling (e.g., NIH)
- Loyalty questioned (e.g., 9/11)
- Forever foreigner (e.g., "American Beats Out Kwan")

Model Minority: Origins

NYT Magazine (1/9/66) – "Success Story: Japanese American Style"

US News (12/66) – Chinese Americans pulled itself up from hardship and discrimination

Newsweek (1982) – Asian Americans: A Model Minority

Time (1993) – "The Perils of Success"

Model Minority: Origins

- Stereotype was developed to silence the dissenting voices, as it seemed to argue that institutional racism was impossible given the success of Asian Americans.

- Model minorities are silent, uncomplaining, docile, and hardworking.

A Controlling Image

- The damage of the **model minority** myth is that it tell us to regard ourselves as guests.
- It tells us how to participate in society, in democracy.
- It makes us forget our history of resistance.

A More Accurate Image

- We DO have a history of resistance.

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Destination

- A voice
- A vote
- A seat at the table
- A position of power

Controlling Metaphors

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- A vote
- A seat at the table
- A position of power

Controlling Metaphors

- However, if all we do is manipulate and maneuver to make space for ourselves, how do we ever really overturn the existing order?
  - Rachel Bundang, This is Not Your Mother's Catholic Church

Controlling Metaphors

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Controlling Metaphors

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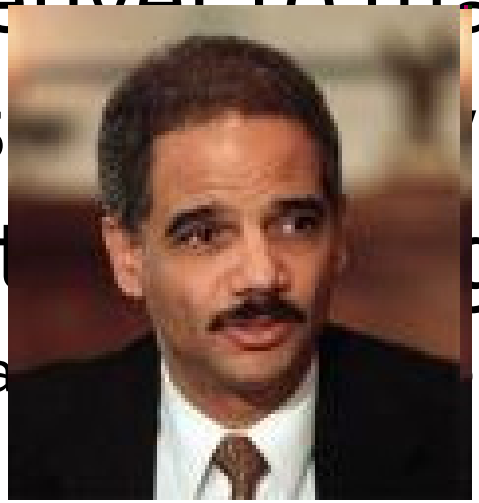

Controlling Metaphors

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Destination

- Just as we need to understand ways in which we are oppressed and need liberation, we also cannot remain trapped in that wounded-ness.
- We must…envision and design a different reality, an alternative future in which we achieve that healing, that wholeness, and that integrity both in person and in community.
  - Rachel Bundang, This is Not Your Mother's Catholic Church

Destination: Action

Maryland Briefing Friday, May 8, 2009
The Washington Post

Minority Groups Protest Proposed Health Cuts

Two dozen leaders from Montgomery County's **Latino, Asian and African American** communities gathered at the County Council building yesterday to **protest** a proposed **10 percent budget cut to minority health programs.** The group said the recommendation by the council's Health and Human Services Committee would affect 16,000 people who receive services for diseases such as hypertension, diabetes and HIV/AIDS, in addition to anti-gang initiatives and a program that lends breast pumps to low-income women.

Destination: Action

- Now what?

THANK
YOU