November 1, 2012
Two announcements

• First:
  • Election Day is next Tuesday
  • If you are registered, please vote
  • The future of UCI is directly at stake
• Second:
Performance poet Bao Phi, a two-time Minnesota Grand Slam champion and a National Poetry Slam finalist, has appeared on HBO Presents Russell Simmons Def Poetry. His first collection of poetry Sông I Sing was published by Coffeehouse Press (2011) and his poems and essays are widely published in numerous publications including 2006 Best American Poetry, Screaming Monkeys, and Spoken Word Revolution Redux. He has also released several CDs of his poetry, such as the recently sold-out Refugeography to his newest CD, The Nguyens EP. Bao Phi is a fiscal year 2012 recipient of an Artist Initiative grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board and his performance at UC Irvine is made possible in part by a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, through an appropriation by the Minnesota State Legislature and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Thursday, November 8, 2012
2:00-3:20 pm
Humanities Instructional Building 100
University of California, Irvine

Performance is free and open to the public.

The Hill (formerly UCI Bookstore) will have books available for sale at the event and Bao Phi will be signing books after the talk.

This event is co-sponsored by the Department of Asian American Studies, UCI Libraries Southeast Asian Archive, Vietnamese American Oral History Project at UCI, Vietnamese American Coalition, Asian Pacific Student Association, Southeast Asian Student Association, Vietnamese American Community Ambassadors - UCI Alumni Chapter, Cross Cultural Center, and The Hill/UCI Bookstore along with community co-sponsors: Vietnamese American Arts & Letters Association, Vietnamese International Film Festival, Project MotiVATE, The Cambodian Family, Orange County Asian & Pacific Islander Community Alliance, and the Asian American Studies Program at CSU Fullerton.

For more info, contact: volt@uci.edu
Okada in 1957
Last lines of No-No Boy

- “insinuation of promise”
- I am NOT Asian
- I am NOT American
- Who am I?
Bao Phi

• “You Bring Out the Vietnamese in Me”
RAF020404-2/2/60-GREENSBORO, N.C: A group of Negro students from North Carolina A&T College, who were refused service at a luncheon counter reserved for white customers, staged a sit-down strike at the F.W. Woolworth store in Greensboro 2/2. Ronald Martin, Robert Patterson and Mark Martin are shown as they stayed seated throughout the day. The white woman at left came to the counter for lunch but decided not to sit down. UPI TELEPHOTO fwb
HELP MAKE MISSISSIPPI PART OF THE U.S.A.
“OPPORTUNITIES FOR OLDER AMERICANS...we must see that the elderly people of America are decently cared for under social security.”
Model minority

- 1966
- US News and World Report
- “work … not a welfare check.”
- “with no help from anyone else.”
Critiques of model minority

- Some, even many Asians, actually suffer discrimination or other forms of abuse or injustice
- Downward mobility
- Trivializes the sufferings and struggles of other peoples
Response from Asian American community

• “200 percent American”
• Model minority as means to assimilation and acceptance, even at the expense of other groups
• Some chose not assimilation, but self-determination
Strike closes down campus

All campus functions were halted yesterday as the city's police tactical squad took control of SF State following an invasion of classrooms by striking members of the Black Students Union.

The campus was closed shortly after 2 p.m. by administration officials, though most students had already left due to the black student action.

The shutdown order was enforced by the tactical unit, which had assembled at 5 p.m. at the corner of Holloway and Van Ness avenues from the campus.

All 8000 students were ordered to leave immediately, and all classes were canceled. The campus administration building was surrounded by police, who were directed by Tom Redfield, dean of students, to close the SFL and SLL buildings.

The invasion of classrooms by black students followed the BSO strike ordered in the same meeting, at which the vote was 11 to 5.

At the meeting, black students demanded a raise in SBS Union salaries to $10 per hour, with $5 for non-students, who they supported, and if so, what would happen to the entire strike.

The group then retired to the Gallery Lounge, where they decided to hold further strategy. They tried to negotiate the strike today.

By 2 p.m. most campus buildings had been vacated by police. The strike, particularly black students, had disaggregated in order not to turn into the hands of those who will snatch not bread, but bullets and take our freedom away.

When the meeting ended shortly after noon, about 200 black students broke up into small groups and dispersed across the campus, particularly the SFL, SLL, and Science buildings.

The group entering the SLL building was led by Nathan Hare, chairman of the college's black studies department.

The administrative building closed at noon.

While the classroom invasion was in progress, students met a Democratic Society, were supporting the BSO strike, held a rally near the Union and then marched to the administrative building.

As they continued the march to the building's main entrance, President Rutberg has appeared and spoke to them through a bullhorn.

He told the students that there is no place to resolve the issues you have been discussing, which immediately went back inside.

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(Continued on Page 4)

Phoenix, November 7, 1968
Russell Leong:
“Poetry Within Earshot”
Leong on Movement Poetry

• “Poetry is practical, so I have learned.”
• “Poetry, like a hammer, can nail down the times.”
Poetry and Practicality

• “Contrary to what is taught, poetry has its practical side. Poems are portable. They are easily held, to a paper or between the brows. They do not need leather bindings, do not require a light projector, a picture frame, a wind or percussion instrument to carry their images or produce their sounds.”
Poetry and Self-Determination: Individuality

• “For our generation, poetry was the most broadly-based of crafts. Asian Americans from different walks of life wrote, some for the first—and last—time. Some wrote from behind prison bars. Others, between raising daughters and sons, or between jobs. Before or after work. For, or against, a political idea. Because of love or beauty or revolt, or due to their lack. Each person had reasons—what matters is that each made the choice to write.”
Poetry and Self-Determination: Community

• “We read as we wrote—not in isolation—but in the company of our neighbors in Manilatown pool halls, barrio parks, Chinatown basements . . . Above all, we poets were a tribe of storytellers. Throughout place and time, storytellers have shared certain traits. Storytellers live in communities where they write for family and friends. The relationship between the teller and listener is neighborly, because the teller of stories must also listen. . . The storyteller is a keeper of ‘popular memory,’ as opposed to the recorder of diluted, sanitized, and expurgated versions of history.”
Walt Whitman

- I CELEBRATE myself, and sing myself,
  And what I assume you shall assume,
  For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.
- I loafe and invite my soul,
  I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.
- My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, this air,
  Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their parents the same,
  I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health begin,
  Hoping to cease not till death.
A Grain of Sand (1973)

• “We Are the Children”
  • We are the children of the migrant workers
  • We are the offspring of the concentration camp
  • Sons and daughters of the railroad builder
  • Who leave their stamp on Amerika

• We are the children of the Chinese waiter,
• Born and raised in the laundry room
• We are the offspring of the Japanese gardener
• Who leave their stamp on Amerika
Leong’s 5 Strategies of Movement Poets

1. Frames of reference
2. Unity of the speaker-listener
3. Elements of the oral tradition
4. Reversal and transformation of stereotypes
5. Compilative, archival approaches to language and speech
Tanaka: Scansion

• v / v / v / v / v / v /
• I hate / my wife / for her / flat yel / low face

• v / v / v / v / v / v / v /
• And her / fat cu / cumber / legs, but / mostly

• v / v / v / v / v / v / v /
• For her / lack of / eleg / ance and / lack of

• v / v / v / v / v / v /
• Intel/ ligence / compared / to ju / dith gluck
Tanaka

- Blank verse: unrhymed iambic pentameter
- Poetic form employed by Shakespeare
- Epitome of Western standards of aesthetics
- Why does Tanaka use this most Western of styles to criticize the imposition of Western standards on the Asian American?
Mirikitani and Poetic Space

- Different shores/language torn

- Relocated/immigrated/unassimilated

- ASIAN
Mirikitani: A Question

• What’s the difference between a “Firepot” and a “Melting Pot?”
Wing Tek Lum: Apple Pie vs. Leftover Peels
Wing Tek Lum

- Question: in this poem, which emblem/figure/metaphor represents the Asian American?
Inada

• “Even then, we were revolutionary.”
• Reframing of Internment not as victimhood, but as defiance.
Ishle Yi Park

• Spoken word as descendant of Movement poetry?
• Park: “Poet Laureate” of Queens, NY

“All I Ever Did Was Write You Love Poems”