



The Exquisite Corpse of Asian America: Biopolitics, Biosociality, and Posthuman Ecologies (Sexual Cultures)

Rachel C. Lee

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Winner of the 2016 Association for Asian American Studies Award for Best Book in Cultural Studies

*The Exquisite Corpse of
Asian America*

addresses this central question: if race has been settled as a legal or social construction and not as biological fact, why do Asian American artists, authors, and performers continue to scrutinize their body parts? Engaging novels, poetry, theater, and new media from both the U.S. and internationally—such as Kazuo Ishiguro’s science fiction novel *Never Let Me Go* or Ruth Ozeki’s *My Year of Meats* and exhibits like that of *Body Worlds* in which many of the bodies on display originated from Chinese prisons—Rachel C. Lee teases out the preoccupation with human fragments and posthuman ecologies in the context of Asian American cultural production and theory. She unpacks how the designation of “Asian American” itself is a mental construct that is paradoxically linked to the biological body.

Through chapters that each use a body part as springboard for reading Asian American texts, Lee inaugurates a new avenue of research on biosociality and biopolitics within Asian American criticism, focused on the literary and cultural understandings of pastoral governmentality, the divergent scales of embodiment, and the queer (cross)species being of racial subjects. She establishes an intellectual alliance and methodological synergy between Asian American studies and Science and Technology Studies (STS), biocultures, medical humanities, and femiqueer approaches to family formation, carework, affect, and ethics. In pursuing an Asian Americanist critique concerned with speculative and real changes to human biologies, she both produces innovation within the field and demonstrates the urgency of that critique to other disciplines.

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