



The Exquisite Corpse of Asian America: Biopolitics, Biosociality, and Posthuman Ecologies

Rachel 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 femqueer 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.

The Exquisite Corpse of Asian America: Biopolitics, Biosociality, and Posthuman Ecologies Details

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From Reader Review The Exquisite Corpse of Asian America: Biopolitics, Biosociality, and Posthuman Ecologies for online ebook

Samuel says

This was much more of a difficult book to read than I anticipated. Mostly because I knew nothing about this book but that the title was intriguing. An exquisite corpse? How Asian Americans enact body politics? Sign me up.

What I didn't anticipate was the sometimes repetitive statements of theory. I did not need to be told so many times that Margaret Cho was enacting an explosive politics around her pussy, just the once and then move on. Likewise the ways in which her standup enacted good parenthood vs. bad parenthood and how her minority body plays into her desire to have a child. Or her explosive genitalia. Did I mention that? I bring up Cho specifically because Rachel Lee mentions her in all parts of the book, the introduction, the chapter specifically on her stand up, the conclusion, the tail end, and I'm sure in the other chapters.

This was an excellent introduction to body politics, and I've started binge reading that. This was also an excellent compilation of Asian American art and aesthetic. Even if some of the included books were only briefly mentioned (My Year in Meats specifically) Lee was able to compile an overwhelming amount of fascinating and Asian American produced art / literature.
