Dangerous Crossings

When Asian immigrants, African Americans, or Native people in the United States harm animals in their (cultural) practices, controversy is sure to follow. Dangerous Crossings offers a compelling analysis of three of these impassioned disputes: the battle over the live animal markets in San Francisco’s Chinatown, the uproar over the conviction of NFL superstar Michael Vick on dogfighting charges, and the firestorm over the Makah tribe’s decision to resume whaling in the Pacific Northwest after a hiatus of more than seventy years. Moving beyond simplistic explanations about “culture clashes” and “double standards,” Claire Jean Kim shows that in each dispute, race and species operate as conjoined logics, or mutually constitutive taxonomies of power, fashioning the animal, the Chinese immigrant, the Black man, and the Indian in the white imaginary. In each dispute, too, the optic of cruelty and ecological harm, evoked by animal advocates, confronts the optic of racism and cultural imperialism, evoked by race advocates. The answer to this conundrum, she argues, is a multi-optic approach to social justice, one that takes multiple forms of domination seriously and encourages an ethics of avowal among different justice struggles.

Claire Jean Kim is a Professor of Political Science and Asian American studies at the University of California, Irvine, where she teaches classes on Asian American politics, Black politics, comparative race studies, social movements, and human-animal studies. Her first book, Bitter Fruit: The Politics of Black-Korean Conflict in New York City (2000), won two awards from the American Political Science Association – the Ralph Bunche Award for the best book on ethnic and cultural pluralism and the Best Book Award from the Organized Section on Race and Ethnicity. Dr. Kim has also written numerous journal articles and book chapters. She coedited, with Carla Freccero, a special issue of American Quarterly entitled “Species/Race/Sex” (2013). She is the recipient of a grant from the University of California Center for New Racial Studies, and she has been a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, and the University of California Humanities Research Institute.
Dangerous Crossings

Race, Species, and Nature in a Multicultural Age

CLAIRE JEAN KIM

University of California, Irvine
For Astyanax
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