


Dangerous Crossings: Race, Species, and Nature in a Multicultural Age


By Claire Jean Kim



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Dangerous Crossings offers an interpretation of the impassioned disputes that have arisen in the contemporary United States over the use of animals in the cultural practices of nonwhite peoples. It examines three controversies: the battle over the "cruelty" of 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. Claire Jean Kim shows that each dispute demonstrates how race and species operate as conjoined logics, or mutually constitutive taxonomies of power, to create the animal, the Chinese immigrant, the black man, and the "Indian" in the white imagination. Analyzing each case as a conflict between single optics (the optic of cruelty and environmental harm vs. the optic of racism and cultural imperialism), she argues for a multi-optic approach that takes different forms of domination seriously, and thus encourages an ethics of avowal among different struggles.

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Editorial Review

Review

"In this truly groundbreaking work, Claire Jean Kim argues for "an ethic of mutual avowal" to resolve conflicts between race, culture, and species. In order to begin to disentangle ourselves from the structures that create and reinforce intersecting injustices, we need to see beyond the limiting optics of cruelty and disposability. *Dangerous Crossings* broadens our vision and points toward ways to ethically navigate multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-species contact zones."

Lori Gruen, Wesleyan University, and author of *Ethics and Animals*

"In a major contribution to the field of animal studies, Claire Kim's *Dangerous Crossings* expands our understanding of how nonhuman animals can be enrolled in the contested urban politics of race and ethnicity. Kim's book charts entirely new territory, showing through case studies how controversial animal practices can become intensely racialized, doing harm to both marginalized communities and the animals themselves. She also offers us a practical politics of recognition that insists on cultural sensitivity while keeping the welfare of animals clearly in view."

Jennifer Wolch, Dean, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley

"In this brilliant, original, and infinitely generative book, Claire Jean Kim shows how patterns of thought rounded in the human/animal binary shape ideas, assumptions, and attitudes about race. We will not be able to live better together unless we learn to think better together, and, fortunately, the fascinating case studies and sustained and sophisticated arguments in *Dangerous Crossings* teach us how this can be done."

George Lipsitz, University of California, Santa Barbara, and author of *How Racism Takes Place*

About the Author

Claire Jean Kim is a Professor of Political Science and Asian American Studies at the University of California, Irvine, where she teaches classes on comparative ethnic studies, minority politics, intersectionality, 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 is an associate editor of *American Quarterly* and a guest editor, with Carla Freccero, of 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 of Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey, and the University of California Humanities Research Institute.

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