



Assimilating Asians: Gendered Strategies of Authorship in Asian America (New Americanists)

Patricia P. Chu

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One of the central tasks of Asian American literature, argues Patricia P. Chu, has been to construct Asian American identities in the face of existing, and often contradictory, ideas about what it means to be an American. Chu examines the model of the Anglo-American bildungsroman and shows how Asian American writers have adapted it to express their troubled and unstable position in the United States. By aligning themselves with U.S. democratic ideals while also questioning the historical realities of exclusion, internment, and discrimination, Asian American authors, contends Chu, do two kinds of ideological work: they claim Americanness for Asian Americans, and they create accounts of Asian ethnicity that deploy their specific cultures and histories to challenge established notions of Americanness.

Chu further demonstrates that Asian American male and female writers engage different strategies in the struggle to adapt, reflecting their particular, gender-based relationships to immigration, work, and cultural representation. While offering fresh perspectives on the well-known writings—both fiction and memoir—of Maxine Hong Kingston, Amy Tan, Bharati Mukherjee, Frank Chin, and David Mura, *Assimilating Asians* also provides new insight into the work of less recognized but nevertheless important writers like Carlos Bulosan, Edith Eaton, Younghill Kang, Milton Murayama, and John Okada. As she explores this expansive range of texts—published over the course of the last century by authors of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, and Indian origin or descent—Chu is able to illuminate her argument by linking it to key historical and cultural events.

Assimilating Asians makes an important contribution to the fields of Asian American, American, and women's studies. Scholars of Asian American literature and culture, as well as of ethnicity and assimilation, will find particular interest and value in this book.

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