

“Chicana/o,” ethnic and American studies). Nonetheless, *Urban Latino Cultures* reclaims Los Angeles for the Latinas/os of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries by stressing that the village once known as El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora de los Angeles de Porciúncula (now known simply as “L.A.”) is more palimpsest than *tabula rasa*. The collection is a valuable contribution to American, Chicana/o, ethnic and urban studies and is an exciting addition to the burgeoning fields of Latina/o cultural studies.

Catherine S. Ramirez
University of New Mexico

Rachel C. Lee. *The Americas of Asian American Literature: Gendered Fictions of Nation and Transnation*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999). xi, 205 pp., \$49.50 cloth, \$16.95 paper.

Rachel C. Lee acknowledges that understanding Asian American experiences merits the study of transglobal migrations of persons and capital. Rather than criticize this scholarly trend in Asian American studies (and, I would add, in ethnic studies more broadly), Lee integrates into them a greater attention to gender. Like much of historical and social scholarship, works on the Asian American diaspora tend to neglect gender. By examining how gender figures into the various ways in which four Asian American writers imagine “America,” Lee reminds us that gender, like race, always matters.

Lee first analyzes *America Is in the Heart*, Carlos Bulosan’s semi-autobiographical novel first published in 1946. Often read-and taught-as a progressive text for its resistance to racism and classism, Bulosan’s novel also emphasizes fraternal bonds threatened at several junctures by women’s sexuality. While the novel’s famously upbeat conclusion affirms the possibility of a unified America, the narrator’s vision comes only at the expense of acknowledged and celebrated difference, including that of gender.

Lee similarly complicates our understanding of Gish Jen’s

contemporary novel, *Typical American*, which satirizes American obsessions with individualism and commerce through a Chinese immigrant couple's attempts to succeed in America without becoming too American. According to Lee, "Jen suggests that power inequities between groups differentiated by race and gender are thickly woven into the fabric of America's national narrative of 'opportunity'" (71). Lee finds Jen's humorously satirical novel largely successful in its depiction of the complicated ways in which race and gender interact.

The author turns next to Jessica Hagedorn's *Dogeaters*, which, although set in the Philippines, critiques America through its characters' obsession with Hollywood. The intrusion of American political and cultural hegemony into the Philippines provides a force against which Hagedorn's characters resist. Demonstrating that the leadership of women and of gay men bears as much (or as little) legitimacy as that of straight men, the novel represents an alternative intersection of politics and gender. Lee's book includes two appendices, which enumerate the plots and quoted materials, respectively, found in *Dogeaters*.

Finally, Lee argues that Karen Tei Yamashita's *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*, set in Brazil a hundred years from now, decenters both America and Asia. Because Lee must argue that this novel bears upon her study of America as imagined by Asian American writers, however, this chapter treats gender in a manner one step removed from the chapter's critique of capital's devastation of environment. The result is a less forceful analysis than previous chapters offer.

Perhaps Lee's most important accomplishment in her engaging attempt to complicate Asian American studies' preoccupation with nationalism and transnationalism lies in her resistance to any narrative, whether in fiction or in criticism, that claims to offer a singular truth. Her book, which includes extensive endnotes, a list of works cited, and a fine index, admirably contributes to the goal of Asian American studies "to envision and effect a better world" by turning a "self-critical lens to Asian American criticism" (146).

David Goldstein-Shirley
University of Washington, Bothell