

# INTRODUCTION

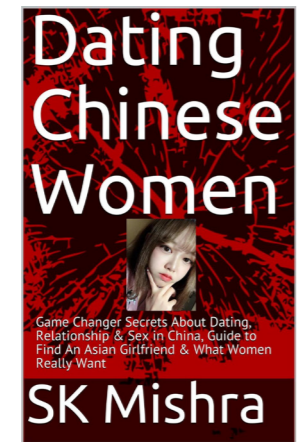
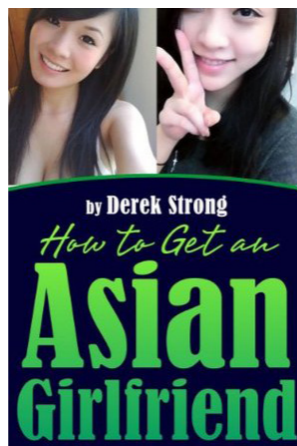
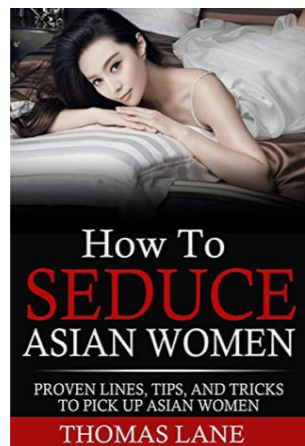
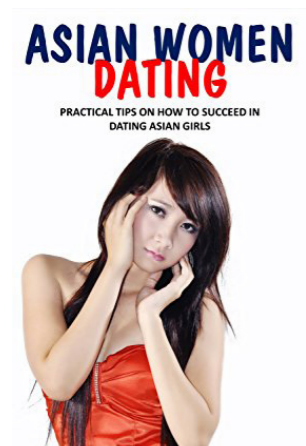
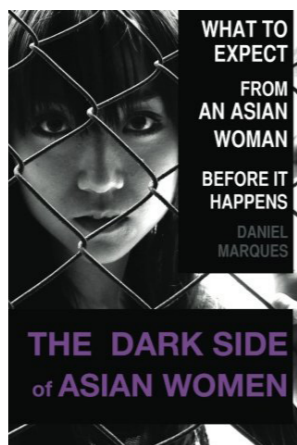
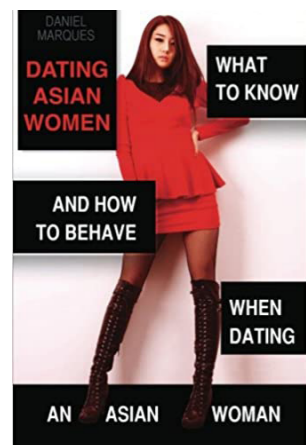
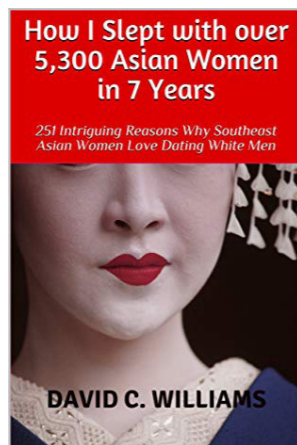
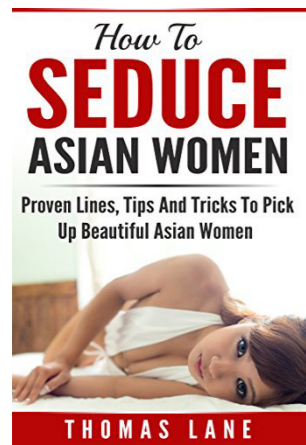


I was on twitter when I saw the report of the Atlanta shooting in 2021. A white male had gone into a spa and shot Asian women working. When I had saw that the statement released for the reasoning had been that "he had a bad day", I had the idea to make this magazine. That excuse was easily seen through millions of Asian-American women watching and reading the news that day. The Asian-American women who have surrounded me my whole life know this all too well.

*Photo by Sandy Kim*

*- Kasey Lim, editor*





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BY JENNY CHONG

# IS IT LOVE OR ASIAN FETISH

“LOOK, I’M A TALL GUY; I’M JUST ATTRACTED TO SMALL, CUTE GIRLS. THEY HAPPEN TO BE ASIAN,

BUT I DON’T HAVE

YELLOW

FEVER.”

The friend I made in the beginning of the school year was trying to explain how he — a white male — did not have an Asian fetish, but he was doing a poor job at that.

Later on, I learned he was a dominant and masochist when he overshared his sex life and announced his BDSM test results to me and a few other friends. He liked the power dynamic between him and his petite Asian girlfriend. He was also an avid fan of Asian porn. Small and cute were the adjectives he used to describe his type, but in hindsight, I think they were synonymous with submissive and docile. To me, he has yellow fever. The term “yellow fever” originates from the afterword to the 1988

play *M. Butterfly* by David Henry Hwang, who uses it to describe white men who have a fetish towards east Asian women. Similar to “jungle fever,” or having a fetish towards Black women, it holds a derogatory connotation. The attraction towards a person of color is not wrong or a problem, but a fetish rather insinuates the attraction to something that one should not like, and are therefore wrong or ill for indulging in it. The term has also broadened into a label for men with hypersexualized fantasies of getting romantically involved with stereotypical subservient Asian women exclusively or near exclusively. This submissive Asian woman trope is manifested across pop culture and media.

## “AS A CHINESE- AMERICAN FEMALE, IT’S OFF PUTTING TO SEE NON-ASIAN MEN LEWDLY COMMENT ABOUT OUR ETHNICITY OR RACE AS A MEANS TO

Asian women are underrepresented in this sector, but when they are featured, their roles are often limited to either the innocent and dainty Asian or the bold and rebellious Asian with a hair streak — a failed attempt at subverting the former trope and even a reinforcement of that exact stereotype. The character Lara Jean Song-Covey in the movie “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before” is one depiction of the shy Asian girl commonly found in many other films, shows and novels.

One department with a high demand for Asian women, however, is the adult entertainment industry. The top two most searched terms on Pornhub in 2019 were Japanese and hentai, which is sexually explicit Japanese anime or manga. Not far below are Korean and Asian, ranked fifth and sixth, respectively. Yet, the representation of Asian women in pornography still lacks diversity and upholds the aforementioned stereotypes to a highly sexualized degree. They are infantilized and dominated, all while putting up a smile. Somehow, the model minority myth follows through in pornos, too. Our stereotypically compliant and obedient demeanor — which they created — is what makes others accept Asians more than other races in the real world and in adult entertainment. Given the lack of diverse Asian characters and the abundance of the same and typically sexualized archetypes in Hollywood and American media, it comes to no surprise we are fetishized by Westerners.

As a Chinese-American female, it’s off putting to see non-Asian men lewdly comment about our ethnicity or race as a means to pursue Asian women. It is not flattering to know the selling point of our attractiveness is the misperception of how subservient and exotic the women of our race are. Being categorized as “oriental,” “lotus flower,” “delicate” and “China doll” is far from a compliment and more of an oversexualized degradation of our ethnicity or race. Rather than approaching Asian women with sentiments of exoticism, understand we are not foreign creatures without an ounce of

self-will who are in dire need of a strong non-Asian man to colonize our bodies. Many of us were born and raised in America and consume Western culture; we are capable of holding intersectional feminist beliefs as much as the non-conformist American women who these men are so afraid of. We are not leftovers for the conservative men who believe Asian women will follow all their orders and not challenge the gender status quo unlike progressive white women or other women of color. We are not different from other American women, and to normalize the use of this misogynistic and racist language only perpetuates the dehumanization and objectification of Asian women.

Nonetheless, not all interracial couples are rooted in misogyny or the fetishization of one of their races. The problem is not interracial relationships, but the patriarchy and our society’s racial and gender norms. There is a fine line between cultural appreciation and fetishization. If it revolves around racial and sexualized stereotypes, it’s the latter and is part of the issue.

Cultural appreciation is seeking to understand and learn about another culture in an effort to broaden perspectives and connect with others cross-culturally. A healthy interracial couple should abide by this, and both parties should work to dismantle racist and sexualized opinions from friends, family and strangers about their relationship. Communicating and addressing issues which may cause discomfort in the relationship is a good way to create a positive environment for both sides to thrive.

It’s important to treat Asian women with the same respect as any other human being. We are not submissive and virginal sex objects, and we’d rather you be attracted to us for who we are as an individual than merely for our race and what you stereotypically assume all Asian women to be. Not fetishizing us and not treating us as the “other” is just the bare minimum of what a decent person should do. ■

## PURSUE ASIAN WOMEN.”





BY KATHARINE CHAN

# ASIAN FEMALE STEREOTYPES THAT NEED TO DIE

Why not both? I wish this meant having both soft and hard tacos but instead it's experiencing both sexism and racism as an Asian woman. It's like if I'm not being discriminated against for being a woman, then I'm being discriminated against for being an Asian. And if it's not that, there's a third category where race and gender come together into a mixed bag of shit, from subtle to blatant, the worst of both worlds. And that shit needs to die. So here are 9 Asian female stereotypes that need to die.



## I DON'T HAVE "WHITE FEVER"

Maybe you see a lot of couples where it's an Asian woman with a white man so you assume I'm one of those too? I'm not. I'm happily married to an Asian man and we have 2 wonderful kids.

Even if I was married to a white person, it doesn't mean I'm with him because I'm a self-loathing white worshipper or that I hate Asian men.

The stereotype that all Asian women go gaga for white men creates a harmful belief that Asians are an inferior race and need to be washed of their culture through eugenics.



## I'M NOT A MATERIALISTIC GOLD DIGGER

Contrary to how some Asian women are portrayed in the media, I don't desire a man to spend thousands and thousands of dollars at the drop of hat for me nor would that be something I would brag about. I don't look at a man's bank account to determine whether he's worthy of my time. I cannot be bought with a Chanel purse, a Benz or a pair of Louboutins. I'm not an object that can be exchanged for another object.



## I'M NOT A "DRAGON LADY"

I'm not cold and untrustworthy. I don't manipulate people or deceive others to get what I want. I don't use sex as a weapon to gain power. This one is just ridiculous and beyond offensive. I don't need to say more.





## I DON'T LIKE TO BE CALLED CUTE

I am smaller than the average North American woman but it doesn't mean I like to be called cute. Cuteness is associated with child-like innocence and naivety; therefore, it's like being objectified as a toy, doll or another inanimate thing.

I don't value cuteness. I am a strong mama bear who will fiercely protect her cubs with her sharp claws. Humans come in all shapes and sizes. When expectations are set for how a group of people should or shouldn't look depending on their race and gender, it exacerbates discrimination against them.

## I RESPECT SERVICE WORKERS BUT I AM NOT ONE

Yes, there are Asian females who are cleaners and nannies; some work at nail salons and child care centres. I have the utmost respect for these occupations.

I am not a service worker. Don't treat me like one. Don't assume I am because it highlights your racial bias in believing Asian women are second-class citizens.

## I'M NOT AN EXOTIC GEISHA

I read *Memoirs of A Geisha* when I was in high school and then I saw the movie. I have to admit that the story is beautifully written; however, it objectifies Asian women as exotic and sensual beings that exist in some sick erotic fantasy. Then when I found out it was written by a white American male author, it just made me feel icky and gross all over.



## I'M NOT A BAD DRIVER

Let's take a look at the statistics. The three main reasons behind car accidents are:

1. Speeding
2. Impaired driving
3. Distracted driving

I drive at the speed limit. I don't care who is sitting in my car; it's safety before anything else. I do not drink or smoke. I do not go on my phone when I drive. I've never received a single ticket for any of these. I can parallel park on a busy street with two screaming, hungry kids in the back and a trunk full of frozen groceries without flinching.

## I'M NOT A QUIET WORKER BEE

I'm not passive, docile, subservient, agreeable or any other adjective that makes it seem like I don't stand up for myself or that I am easy to control.

I have a strong work ethic but I don't just put my head down and do the work without speaking up. I say no to anything that is beyond my workload or outside my scope, role and responsibility. I set boundaries and I keep them. Before agreeing to work on anything, I ask a bunch of questions to be clear about what it entails. That's called being professional.

## I AM NOT INVISIBLE

I have a voice, a face and opinions. I stand up as a leader to share my experiences so that other Asian women feel heard. As a writer and content creator, I use my skills and talent to be vocal, telling real and authentic stories to empower individuals to do the same.

Whether a stereotype is true for an individual or not, it contributes to the discrimination and oppression of Asian women and perpetuates the invisibility and marginalization that they face on a professional and personal level.

It's time to make the invisible visible so that these stereotypes die for the next generation. ■





“I HAVE A  
VOICE,  
A FACE



AND  
OPINIONS.”



# ASIAN WOMEN SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES ON BEING

# STEREOTYPED



# FETISHIZED

IN 2020, THE STOP AAPI HATE REPORTING CENTER RECEIVED OVER 3,800 ANTI-ASIAN RACIST INCIDENTS, A 2,500% INCREASE FROM PREVIOUS YEARS. THE NUMBERS (RELEASED HOURS BEFORE THE TRAGIC ATLANTA MASSAGE PARLOR SHOOTINGS IN MARCH) REVEAL AN DISPROPORTIONATE NUMBER OF ATTACKS HAVE BEEN AIMED AT ASIAN WOMEN, WITH THAT CATEGORY MAKING UP OVER 68% OF THOSE REPORTS. ACCORDING TO AN APRIL 2021 PEW RESEARCH CENTER SURVEY, 81% OF ASIAN AMERICANS SAY VIOLENCE AGAINST THEM IS STILL RISING, IN CONTRAST TO THE 56% OF OTHER AMERICANS WHO SAY THE SAME. ASIAN RESPONDENTS MENTIONED THE VIOLENCE HAS INCREASED BECAUSE OF OTHERS SCAPEGOATING AND BLAMING ASIANS FOR "CAUSING" THE PANDEMIC BUT NOTED THIS TYPE OF DISCRIMINATION AND BIGOTRY HAS LONG EXISTED AGAINST THE AAPI COMMUNITY. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND, THOUGH, THAT MOST HATE INCIDENTS OFTEN GO UNDERREPORTED. "LIKE MINE," FOR INSTANCE.



In 2020, the Stop AAPI Hate Reporting Center received over 3,800 anti-Asian racist incidents, a 2,500% increase from previous years. The numbers (released hours before the tragic Atlanta massage parlor shootings in March) reveal a disproportionate number of attacks have been aimed at Asian women, with that category making up over 68% of those reports. According to an April 2021 Pew Research center survey, 81% of Asian Americans say violence against them is still rising, in contrast to the 56% of other Americans who say the same. Asian respondents mentioned the violence has increased because of others scapegoating and blaming Asians for “causing” the pandemic but noted this type of discrimination and bigotry has long existed against the AAPI community. It is important to keep in mind, though, that most hate incidents often go underreported. Like mine, for instance. As a 20-something Vietnamese woman living in New York City during the pandemic, people have told me to go back home to China and yelled anti-Asian slurs passing me on the street. Unfortunately, I can’t say this kind of discrimination is a new experience for me. It’s existed throughout most of my life, although it’s never been quite as heightened as it is now. I have become apathetic to having my humanity stripped away from me and others relating to my identity primarily



through some flattened, one-dimensional concept. Men have assumed I’m either a demure virgin or a hyper-sexual temptress, with no in between. A former boss once joked that I worked at a massage parlor because I had several jobs at the time to pay off my student loans and bills. I’ve had clients sincerely applaud me for understanding English even though it’s my native language. The microaggressions go on and on.

Not being seen may have given me a small degree of safety and adjacent belonging but at the cost of erasure and the loss of my own narrative. Now others can’t help but notice people that look like me but at the cost of potential violence.

It is emotionally disorienting to oscillate between extreme invisibility to the other end of extreme visibility. I am scared for everyone in the AAPI community and for our BIPOC brothers and sisters. I worry for my and my family’s safety. Every day I am terrified that the next hate crime will hit closer to home.

Amid this wave of fear, I am finding solidarity and community with other Asian Americans through our shared rage,

frustration, and guttural grief. For women, racism and sexism are inextricably linked, leaving us vulnerable to discrimination. And since imperialism and U.S. settler colonialism are some of the active contributors to the ongoing dehumanization and belittlement of Asian Americans, for Asian women, historical context cannot be ignored as we face the complex nuance of dealing with the triple jeopardy of racism, colonialism, and misogyny as well.

I spoke to seven women/non-binary Asians about how sexualized misconceptions and stereotypes affect their everyday and romantic lives. They share their thoughts on fetishism, racialized objectification, and their feelings about sex and safety in the world as it stands presently. Here’s what they had to say.

K • 34 •  
VIETNAMESE-AMERICAN • AUSTIN,

“I was born and raised in a predominantly white area. I got along pretty well with my classmates but I wouldn’t say I was a part of the crowd. People made fun of my real name because they couldn’t pronounce it. Back then, my friends would jokingly call me wonton or orange chicken as ‘nicknames’ because they thought it was cute and harmless. I threw a tantrum and begged my mom to let me legally change my name. Anglicizing my name quieted the taunts I guess, but I remember looking at my best friend’s text messages one day and saw her boyfriend of two years refer to me as that Asian girl instead of my Western name. Like I could have been anyone and it didn’t matter. It hurt because I changed my name to fit in. I gave up a piece of my identity and it didn’t get me closer to people. It just got me further away from who I was. “Personally, I do think that affected my sexual preferences. Back home, I was always known as the smart, nerdy, quiet Asian who never got in trouble. I was okay being a virgin and not investigating my sexuality further. I only experienced a sexual awakening when I went away to a

liberal arts college. I put myself out there and found out that my sex drive is actually really high. It was confusing to acknowledge that because it was at odds with this image of purity and conservatism that I had crafted for myself. But I see now that was more of a projection and not my true identity.

“Now that I’m embracing my true personality, I’ve since come out to my family to let them know that I am enby and queer instead of keeping it a secret. Turns out I’m not meek, either! My true personality is strong, confrontational, and loud, the opposite of my younger self. It’s been really triggering to process anti-Asian hate crimes and hear stories about people targeting the most vulnerable members in our community. I feel helpless and scared but it fuels me, too. We aren’t safe by staying quiet and keeping our heads down anymore. The attacks can’t be dismissed. I’m angry and pissed off. It makes me want to actively buck and speak against stereotypes more, specifically the ones I have internalized. I don’t want to be seen as deferential or controllable because I am not those things.”





**“I’VE BEEN TOLD BEFORE THAT I DESERVED TO BE RAPED FOR BEING ASIAN...”**

**HEEJIN • 29 •**

**KOREAN-AMERICAN • BROOKLYN, NY**

There’s the type of man who’s treated me like a novelty or fantasy, saying something like ‘I’ve never been with an Asian girl before.’”

“So, there are two big schools of men I’ve been with who’ve displayed a kind of sexualized racism towards me. There’s the type of man who’s treated me like a novelty or fantasy, saying something like ‘I’ve never been with an Asian girl before.’ (Once I just replied to that and was like ‘Well, I’ve never been with a Canadian before, so that’s cool!’) And then there is the other type—which I’m embarrassed to say I’ve been with more than one of them—who admitted to the fact that they had an Asian fetish (maybe not in public but in private with me). They joked about it and thought it was cool that \*I\* was cool with it, they were like ‘Well, I can’t change how I feel.’”

“The recent spike in anti-Asian violence shook up something in me. I’m no longer going to tolerate that kind of behavior. It’s actually not funny. Those stereotypes and fetishes are the same roots of the kind of fatal violence that we saw in Atlanta. If you’re consciously seeking out a race and that race only to fulfill some kind of fantasy, it doesn’t mean you’re automatically a bad person, but you need to examine what is behind that.”

“That’s also made me examine some of my own behavior in dating, and how I’ve subconsciously or consciously sought out white men in the past in order to have a partner who will both help me assimilate into white society or be acceptable to the racism in the Asian community, which can be quite hostile against Black and brown people.”

**ANONYMOUS • 23 •**

**FILIPINO-AMERICAN • USA**

I’ve been told before that I deserved to be raped for being Asian...”

“The stereotypes I often hear are the infamous [ones like] ‘Asian women are submissive,’ or ‘Asian women are tight and small.’ Specifically, though, a lot of East Asian men I’ve interacted with tend to think I’ll be an easier lay because they have these preconceived notions that ‘Filipinas are easy.’”

“I’ve barely had sex and I don’t really actively date but I’ve experienced sexualized racism plenty [of times]. I’ve been told before that I deserved to be raped for being Asian... that all I’m good for is starring in Asian porn or that I’m a legal loli/pedo bait/IRL hentai character, etc. When I was 16, I met someone who was 30. He would often ask me weird sexual questions and then proceed to tell me that if anything happened to me, it was because I was ‘asking for it.’ I’ve had some people express interest in me because I

apparently look a certain way, (i.e. the type of Asian they’re fetishizing. When they find out I’m Filipino, some men have gotten really weird about it almost as if I’ve tricked them or something. I’ve had men tell me that they try to find Filipina porn actresses that look like me so that they could better jack off to my photos. Sadly, a lot of the sexualized racism I’ve experienced has been from men in our own AAPI community, [too.]”

“I feel sad, worried, angry, but I’m not really surprised. Racism and violence against Asians are nothing new and have been going on forever, really. There’s been a spike due to COVID, but it’s just adding onto a problem that was already there. Something I wish people knew? Outside of wishing for certain people to keep their mouths shut... I guess you could say that I wish people would realize that being objectified and fetishized isn’t the compliment they think it is.”





**SARA • 44 •  
JAPANESE-AMERICAN • LAS**

“I am sex-positive but I don’t want to keep reducing my worth to my body.”

“I’ve had sex with men who used me to obtain some porno sexual fantasy. I used to do sex work and I’ve had some fairly graphic and explicit requests. They would tell me they have ‘yellow fever’ or how they can’t wait to have sex with me because Asian girls feel ‘tighter’ and better in bed. For the most part, nothing bad happened but I’ve had some men try to push the boundaries. At the time, it gave me icky feelings I was being commodified like that but I did it anyway. I wasn’t being politically correct. I was doing whatever they wanted because they were paying for the service.

“As for intimacy in my private life, I’ve had partners assume that I’m alright pushing the limits. They want to come all over my face to fulfill some bukkake wet

dream or tie me up because they believe I’m automatically submissive. In casual sex, I’ve noticed some partners don’t particularly care to ask me what I want in bed. It’s a lot of assumptions. They mainly see me as submissive and compliant—which I’m not. If I reject them, they get angry and call me a slut. I enjoy sex but I don’t say yes to everything because I’m not a brainless sex doll. I don’t just function inside of their fantasy.

“I was horrified by the mass murder of Asian women in Atlanta. The relentless anti-Asian violence in the news shocked me into a profound realization. By not educating the people in my life about the falseness of certain Asian cliches and stereotypes, I was maintaining this understanding or belief that what they believed about me was correct when it’s not the full truth.”

**TIFFANY • 30 •  
CHINESE-AMERICAN • LOS ANGELES, CA**

“As a public relations professional, one of the sectors I work in is entertainment and before the COVID-19 pandemic, males at red carpet events have made comments about my body like ‘Damn, she’s got ass and t\*tties for an Asian’ or ‘For an Asian, she’s cute.’ I’ve heard a plethora of dirty pick up lines mentioning Bangkok when I am not from Thailand. I’ve been harassed in public at the grocery store where men have followed me around saying ‘Ni hao’ or ‘Konichiwa’ to get my attention. If they aggressively ask me on a date and won’t take no for an answer, I [would] run to the customer service desk or speed walk away, and I don’t feel safe. In an extreme instance, an older male I said no to followed me in his car so I drove to the police station to lose him. Another time, I walked down Hollywood Boulevard when I didn’t want to take a CD from a stranger and he yelled at me, ‘I

don’t like ch\*nks anyways!’

“Being thin, docile, submissive, and quiet are all stereotypes I’ve heard on dates. People also believe the stereotype that our female anatomy (vaginas) is tighter than other races. On apps, since I am a woman that has curves, I get a lot of messages that say ‘You look like you’re the type of Asian girl that only dates Black guys.’ One of my worst dates ever was with a guy who had ‘yellow fever’ but hid it until we met in person. He had the nerve to tell me that I was from the wrong part of China because I am not tall and skinny. I’ve had ex-partners who were cis-males sexualize me and compare me to Asian adult film stars in casual conversation. They thought it would be a compliment to share in their spare time, since they’ve been dating me, they only watch ‘Asian’ porn.”

**JESSICA • 29 •  
TAIWANESE-AMERICAN • QUEENS, NY**

“I dated someone in high school and after we broke up, I noticed this weird trend. He only ever dated Asian girls and had Asian girlfriends. Years later, he finally told me that he never cared about personality. As long as the woman was Asian, it would be okay with him. That really messed me up. It affected how I approached dating for years. I would constantly wonder if people were dating me for me, or for being Asian.

“As an actress, I am acutely aware of my image and what I represent for people. I wish people knew how uncomfortable it is to be reduced to your appearance. When dating and interacting with the world at large, I’ve often doubted people’s intentions because I question why they want to date, work with, or be my friend. I’ve also not been taken seriously or treated with the respect I should be accorded due to being sexual-

ized or objectified for work situations, no matter what my job title is at the time. All of this adds up to an isolating and lonely existence. I wish I knew when people liked me for me, and not because of my appearance.

“As the only Asian screenwriter in my class, I sometimes feel obligated to choose scenes with an Asian American family because if I don’t, it probably won’t get chosen and it’ll end up on the cutting room floor. It feels like a weight that I am compelled to take—a weight that others assign to me or I assign to myself. I’ve had to take extra care of my mental health since I’ve had to write incidents of anti-Asian violence for two separate screenplays. I’m trying to find a good balance between being informed enough and being overly informed so I don’t end up feeling sad and scared all the time.”

**HILLARY • 31 •  
TAIWANESE-AMERICAN • NEW YORK, NY**

“The world expects me to be a docile, well-behaved, studious, pliable, gentle, and nurturing being. Yet I am rarely any of those things”

“What has been hard for me, as an Asian American professional, is understanding how to live in a world that doesn’t recognize me for who I am. The world expects me to be a docile, well-behaved, studious, pliable, gentle, and nurturing being. Yet I am rarely any of those things.

“Yes, I have two degrees from a prestigious school, but I didn’t become the leader I am today by being well-behaved. ‘You’re so beautiful,’ my patients would tell me—but my beauty doesn’t heal you. ‘I love your kind,’ a man would say suggestively—but ‘my kind’ doesn’t

define who I am as a friend, lover, or partner. Not to mention the unspoken prejudices I face as a non-white, non-male CEO of a company. Women received 2.3% of all venture dollars in 2020, with women of color making up but a fraction of that tiny slice.

“With the hate against Asians lately, these thoughts have become violent. I started writing because I felt the need to speak up and do something. I want to live fearlessly, yet the world keeps proving to me that I have \*a lot\* to fear—in my work, my love life, and my home. I have survived so far, but not without intense resilience, strong support from loved ones, and incredible luck against a world that needs to be taught how to see, hear, and know me for who I am.” ■



**“THE WORLD EXPECTS ME TO BE A DOCILE, WELL-BEHAVED, STUDIOUS, PLIABLE, GENTLE, AND NURTURING BEING.**



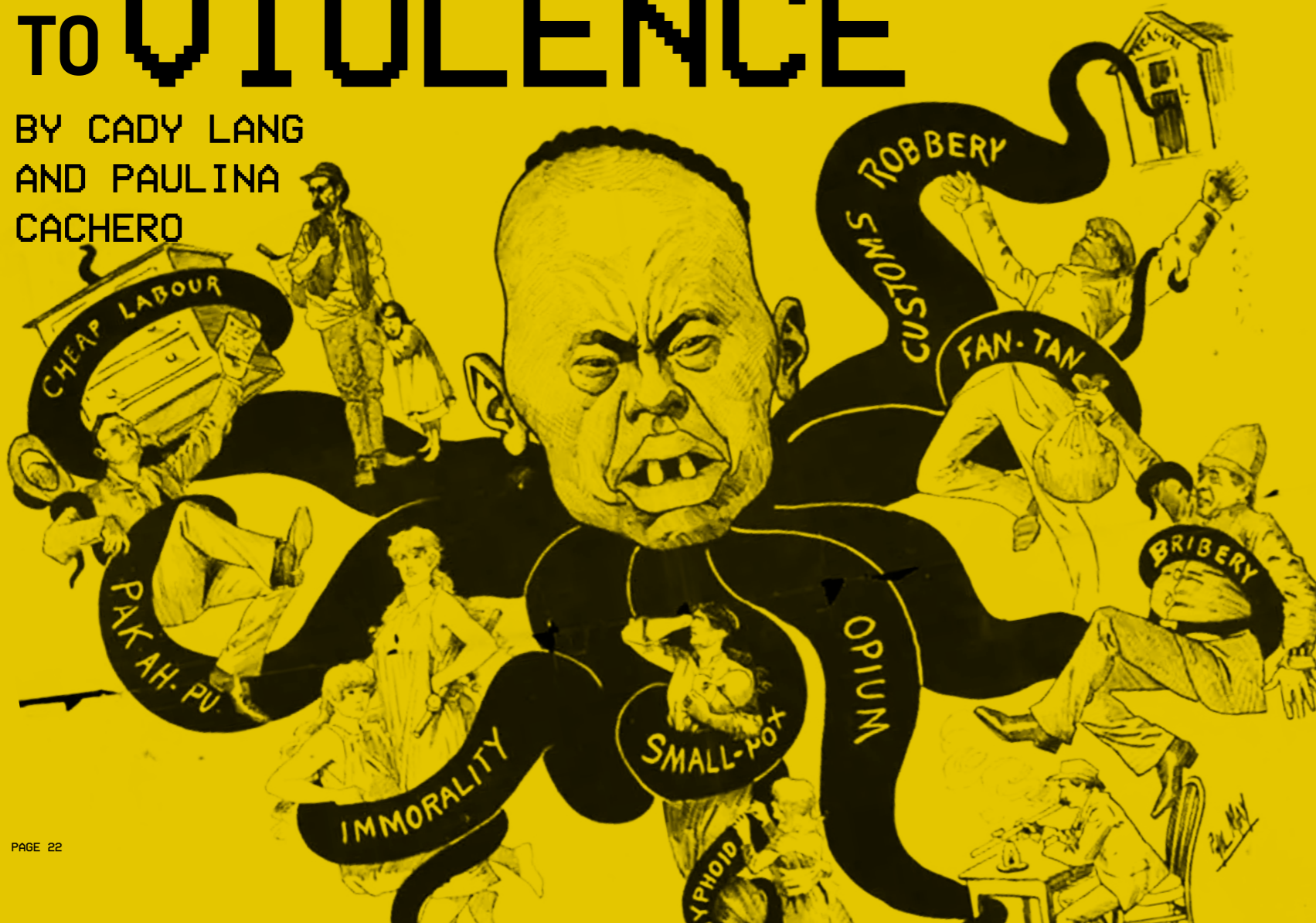
**YET I AM RARELY ANY OF THOSE THINGS”**





# HOW A LONG HISTORY OF INTERTWINED RACISM & MISOGYNY LEAVES ASIAN WOMEN IN AMERICA VULNERABLE TO VIOLENCE

BY CADY LANG AND PAULINA CACHERO



Above: A U.S. soldier escorts several Japanese American children and a pastor to an internment camp in 1942

Left: Notorious racist 1886 cartoon from the Bulletin, the Australian magazine that was one of the main intellectual drivers of independence in 1900.

In the weeks since eight people, six of whom were Asian women, were killed in a mass shooting at three massage businesses in the Atlanta area, the conversations prompted by the event have continued as has the fear felt by many Asian and Asian American women, for whom the violence in Georgia felt intimately familiar.

The mass shooting followed a year of increased anti-Asian violence and racist attacks, which advocates say has been fueled by xenophobic rhetoric about the COVID-19 pandemic. Stop AAPI Hate, a reporting database created at the start of the pandemic as a way to chart the attacks, received 3,795 reports of anti-Asian discrimination between March 19, 2020 and Feb. 28, 2021; of those attacks, women reported hate incidents 2.3 times more often than men.

However, in a press conference following the shooting spree, Captain Jay Baker, a spokesperson for the Cherokee County, Ga., sheriff's office, said that the suspect, a white man, claimed the attack was "not racially motivated." Instead, the

suspect had claimed a "sexual addiction" as explanation for his alleged targeting of the spas he reportedly frequented, to "take out that temptation." Baker, who has since been removed as the spokesperson for the case, may not have said it explicitly, but the message was clear: the motive was supposedly rooted in misogyny, not racism. But to see those two forces as entirely separate is to erase an important layer of context. As many Asian American women pointed out in the wake of the attack, racism and misogyny reinforce a shared narrative—and, due in large part to historical factors, Asian American women often experience that connection in a unique and troubling way.





## LEWD AND IMMORAL

A reductive view of Asian women as objects of desire—or even worse, a “moral contagion”—is a narrative that dates back as far as the early 19th century, says Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, Director of the Humanities Center and Professor of Asian American Studies at UC Irvine. “This act of violence goes back to the ways in which Asian women especially are perceived as having this kind of dangerous form of sexuality that is affecting American society,” she says of the Atlanta shooting.

That perception did not evolve by accident, she adds. In fact, the U.S. government has played a major role in cementing hypersexualized stereotypes of Asian women with both state and federal legislation.

While the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 is one of the few Asian-American milestones taught in many U.S. history classes, a little-known piece of restrictive legislation preceded it, called the 1875 Page Act—one of the earliest pieces of federal legislation to restrict immigration. Catalyzed by the white majority’s fears that an influx of approximately 300,000 Chinese immigrant workers would take their jobs, the Page Act explicitly targeted laborers from “China, Japan, or any Oriental country.”

The bill also effectively halted the immigration of Chinese women into the U.S.: though the text of the law did not outright ban their entry, it blocked “the importation into the United States of women for the purposes of prostitution.” At the time Asian women were superficially profiled as prostitutes and denigrated as being unclean—just the previous year, an extremely contentious lawsuit had begun over the detainment of 22 Chinese women who were accused of being “lewd and debauched” after arriving at the San Francisco harbor without husbands—so in practice this law allowed immigration officials wide leeway to keep them out of the country.

The Page Act’s exclusion of women was deliberate; in doing so, it prevented

Chinese men from starting families—a “conscious part of trying to restrict Asian immigration,” according to Wu.

Unable to become fathers and struggling with increasingly limited job opportunities, Asian American men were effectively emasculated. And for the relatively few Asian women in the U.S.—and the countless others who remained beyond the country’s borders, at that time and in the future—the false idea that the only reason they would come to the U.S. would be “lewd and immoral,” as the Page Act put it, had been written into law.



Actresses in a production of the musical, “Miss Saigon” (1989).





## THE MILITARY-SEXUAL COMPLEX

After the 19th century came to an end, U.S. policy continued to reinforce hypersexualized stereotypes about Asian women, especially as the country expanded its military presence in the Asia Pacific region. Military culture of the



time viewed drinking, gambling, partying and visiting brothels

### ... AND LOCAL WOMEN WHO ARE LIVING THROUGH THIS DEVASTATION DON'T USUALLY HAVE A LOT OF OPTIONS

as a common, even necessary, pastime of servicemen abroad. During conflicts in Japan, Korea, Vietnam, the Philippines and elsewhere, the local women were on the receiving end of that assumption.

“The overall pattern is that there are these places that become a site for warfare and militarization. And local women who are living through this devastation don’t usually have a lot of options, especially women who are working-class or poor,” says Ellen Dionne Wu, an associate professor at Indiana University Bloomington.

After World War II, U.S. military authorities in Korea began taking control of some of Japan’s military-run brothels, where an estimated 200,000 enslaved “comfort women” were deployed to provide sexual services to Japanese troops. The U.S. also established its own “camp towns” in the 1940s, as military authorities worked with the South Korean government to license areas with bars and clubs near U.S. military bases. These camp towns were set up specifically to entertain American troops, and sex work was part of that ecosystem. In a crackdown on sexually transmitted diseases among servicemen, “entertaining girls” at camp towns—including licensed sex workers, dancers, waitresses and bar girls—were routinely tested and treated. In 1965, 85% of GIs surveyed reported having “been

with” or “been out with” a prostitute.

“There was what is described as a military-sexual complex. You had large numbers of American men going abroad and a plan by the military to create rest and recreation sites where men can go and blow off steam,” says Judy Tzu-Chun Wu. “In those sites, it’s Asian women who are providing sexual gratification.”

The women who were recruited to work at camp towns were often orphans or impoverished women with no other way to

make a living. Camp town women often found themselves trapped, where they were charged rent for the rooms in which they serviced men and expected to pay for all of the items needed to entertain the American soldiers.

“White men have been trained, peer pressured and hazed by the U.S. military to release their anxiety, self-loathing, and hatred of the enemy onto Asian women’s bodies,” Khara Jabola-Carolus, the executive director of Hawaii State Commission on the Status of Women wrote in a tweet following the mass shooting. “From Okinawa to Okinawa. For generations. This is what we are up against.”

A U.S. soldier escorts several Japanese American children and a pastor to an internment camp in 1942





## ON THE HOME FRONT

As wars ended, many American troops came home with their wartime perceptions of Asian women as submissive and sexually available. But the fetishization of Asian women wasn't limited to military zones. It would also manifest in popular culture, where stereotypes dominated depictions of Asian and Asian American women, resulting in two binary and highly sexualized tropes known as the Lotus Flower and the Dragon Lady.

The Lotus Flower, or China Doll, trope reinforced stereotypes about Asian women being submissive, sexually subservient, feminine and meek. Such characters often meet tragic ends, as in the 1904 Puccini opera *Madame Butterfly*, about a Japanese woman who kills herself after her white American lover abandons her and their son. Perhaps most notoriously, in Stanley Kubrick's 1987 film *Full Metal Jacket*, a Vietnamese prostitute solicits two white American troops with a line that went main-



stream in the late '80s when 2 Live Crew prominently sampled it in the song "Me So Horny." The audio was also sampled by Sir Mix-a-Lot for his 1992 hit "Baby Got Back" and has since made appearances in movies like *The 40-Year-Old Virgin* and shows like *Family Guy*, having become an easy laugh at the expense of Asian women.

In contrast, the Dragon Lady trope paints Asian women as deceitful, villainous and cunning, using their sexuality as means to manipulate and gain power, a feminine embodiment of "Yellow Peril." This trope historically is most associated with Anna May Wong, who despite being a groundbreaking actress was relegated to playing dangerously wicked villainesses or exotic slave girls during her career in films like 1931's *Daughter of the Dragon* and 1932's *Shanghai Express*. More contemporary

examples include Lucy Liu's violent assassin O-Ren Ishii from Quentin Tarantino's *Kill Bill: Vol. 1* and Liu's cold, sexually manipulative character Ling Woo on the television series *Ally McBeal*. And while racist tropes are dangerous in and of themselves, the harm wrought by these widespread stereotypes is even more damaging given the severely limited representation of Asian American women in media. According to UCLA's 2020 Hollywood Diversity Report, in 2018, Asians accounted for only 4.8% of all film roles. (In mainstream movies, that is: one 2002 study found over-representation of Asian women in victim roles in violent pornography.) In the 1980s and '90s, a boom of the mail-order bride industry showed another real-world ramification of such stereotypes: Men upset about the rise

of feminism began looking overseas for foreign brides who would abide by "traditional values," Feellie Lee, director of International Projects at UCLA's office of International Students and Scholars, told the L.A. Times in 1986. Newspaper and magazine advertisements enticed male readers with "Gorgeous Pacific Women" and "Pearls of the Orient" dressed and posed in highly eroticized cultural dress, in what would become a multi-million dollar industry.

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Marlon Brando and Miiko Taka as Major Lloyd "Ace" Gruver and Hana-ogi in 'Sayonara' (1957)





Pictured left: Woman in Chinatown, San Francisco, 1896–1906

## THE LEGACY OF THE PAGE ACT

These tropes, along with the model minority myth—the false idea that Asian Americans are inherently more successful than other ethnic minorities—leave Asian and Asian American women simultaneously fetishized and despised, hypervisible as subjects of desire but disposable as people.

Although Daoyou Feng, Hyun Jung Grant, Suncha Kim, Soon Chung Park, Xiaojie Tan and Yong Ae Yue, the six Asian women who were killed on March 16, were not identified as sex workers, horrific jokes on social media after the shootings hearken back uncomfortably to the discriminatory assumptions of the Page Act. “The women who were killed faced specific racialized gendered violence for being Asian women and massage workers,” Red Canary Song, a grassroots Chinese massage parlor coal-

ition in New York City, wrote in a statement following the Atlanta shootings. “Whether or not they were actually sex workers or self-identified under that label, we know that as massage workers, they were subjected to sexualized violence stemming from the hatred of sex workers, Asian women, working class people, and immigrants.”

For the victims, this fatal violence happened at the intersection of not only race and gender, but also class—three aspects that were central to the Page Act, the repercussions of which are still being felt today. “Whether Asian American women are desired or hated or both,” Judy Tzu-Chun Wu says, “they are not understood as and permitted to be fully human, with their own agency and dreams.” ■

The Page Act of 1875 was the first restrictive federal immigration law in the United States, which effectively prohibited the entry of Chinese women, marking the end of open borders. Seven years later, the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act banned immigration by Chinese men as well.

Pictured are Chinese women, shopkeepers' wives, in San Francisco, mid-19th century.





Family and neighbors paying respects outside the scene of the 2021 Atlanta Spa shooting. On March 16, 2021, a shooting spree occurred at three spas or massage parlors in the metropolitan area of Atlanta, Georgia, United States. Eight people were killed, six of whom were Asian women, and one other person was wounded. A suspect, 21-year-old Robert Aaron Long, was taken into custody later that day.

**“WHETHER ASIAN-AMERICAN WOMEN ARE DESIRED OR HATED OR BOTH...**

**THEY ARE NOT UNDERSTOOD AS AND PERMITTED TO BE FULLY HUMAN, WITH THEIR OWN AGENCY AND DREAMS.”**



# HYPERSEXUALITY



# OF RACE

EXCERPT

BY CELINE  
PARREÑAS  
SHIMIZU







"Me so horny. Me love you long time". These words predate the rap act in popular culture, as they were said by actress Papillon Soo Soo, who portrays a Vietnamese prostitute soliciting American GI-s, in the Stanley Kubrick film Full Metal Jacket (1987), pictured above.



I am seventeen and riding the bus home alone at night. At first in whispers, the man across from me insists that we have met in Manila, then more brazenly, in Angeles or Olongapo, where he presumed that I had shot ping-pong balls from my vagina. The very public hailing bewilders, shocks, freezes, confuses, and confounds me. Foremost was my response: that is not me! From that visceral moment of misrecognition came my desire to understand what had transpired in that encounter.

Years later, the ability to name this stranger's interpellation of both Asian and Asian American women as hypersexual beings was not enough. I now seek to retool the stranger's lens of perverse sexuality so that it can be a more productive optic, acknowledging how Asian/American women are seen by others and allowing them to see themselves anew—especially when desiring sexual perversity and shamelessly owning the pleasure and pain that comes from sexual representations of race.

I love sexy Asian women gyrating in bikinis on stage in *Miss Saigon* (1989), prancing across ornate Oriental sets in *The Thief of Bagdad* (1924), and singing about forsaken love in the melodrama *Madame Butterfly* (1904). Encountering the gorgeous Nancy Kwan late at

night on cable Tv, I am immediately dancing on the sofa, hungrily consuming the sight of her as she sashays and commands the gaze of all kinds of men in popular movies dismissed for their racism and sexism." I lick my smiling lips while watching Lucy Liu kicking white male ass in films such as *Payback* (1999). As the dominatrix Pearl in leather ass-less chaps, she thrills to beating up her white male lover, who slaps her back with equal opportunity force. Clad in black in *Charlie's Angels* (2000), she wields chains and twists in mid-air to kick Crispin Glover. In a short cheong-sam and with chopsticks in her hair, she is a masseuse walking on Tim Curry's back before "knocking him unconscious" with a small foot on his neck. I love Asian women porn stars delivering silly lines in

broken English while performing in dragon lady fingernails, long black wigs, and garish yellow-face makeup that exaggerates slanted eyes. The Southeast Asian women prostitutes talking about transactions with their johns in *The Good Woman of Bangkok* (1991) preoccupy me.

From between the fingers covering my eyes, I keep looking at the prostitutes performing orgasms in the pornographic tapes *101 Asian Debutantes* (1995–98). When watching films by other Asian American women filmmakers, I embrace the whorish, the bad, and the dangerous. I love the urban Asian/American woman wearing short shorts, combat boots, and red lipstick strutting the brown streets of Los Angeles, fucking around on rooftops with an illegal immigrant, and fleeing her proper marriage in Hyun Mi Oh's *La Seriorita Lee* (1995), the sexually available Asian women who have easy sex (for big and small reasons) with men of color they just meet in Helen Lee's numerous films, and gender/race-ambiguous women in fetish wear who masturbate and perform with dildos in Machiko Saito's experimental movies. In my own short films, I am obsessed with fucking and other sex acts to illustrate the dynamics of power, desire, and colonial history regarding

Asian/American women. With intense pleasure, I direct a character to offer herself up like dessert in *Mahal Means Love and Expensive* (1993), name my characters various versions of the Tagalog word for vagina in *Her Uprooting Plants Her* (1995), and shoot numerous vigorous interracial sex scenes in *Super Flip* (1997).

My enjoyment in consuming and composing representations of Asian/American women's sexuality and power may seem inappropriate and improper to good racial and feminist politics. Complicated questions arise regarding the political nature of such pleasure: What is the relationship between history and representation? What is the role of fantasy and the psychic life of images in formulating our understanding of their power?

How do images of the suffering, suicidal Asian woman complement colonial projects in the encounter between Europe, the United States, and Asia across the twentieth century? How do hypersexual women's representations as dragon lady, prostitute with a heart of gold, and dominatrix unify differing eras of the yellow peril in the first half of the twentieth century and the model minority in the last half? How does the production of the desirable and





Anna May Wong was a Chinese American woman who achieved international fame as a film actor despite racism and stereotyping. She was an American actress, considered the first Chinese American Hollywood movie star, as well as the first Chinese American actress to gain international recognition. Her varied career spanned silent film, sound film, television, stage, and radio.

desiring Asian woman mesh with campaigns to sell East Asian and Southeast Asian prostitution to white male sex tourists in the case of *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960) and contemporary professional-amateur pornography shot in the Philippines, Thailand, and Korea today? Does *Flower Drum Song* (1961) ultimately present Asian Americans, with Asian women as traditional gender objects, within a model minority framework that counters the emergence of a militant black power movement? Doesn't Lucy Liu's contemporary image ultimately belong to a tradition of imperialist images that commodify, objectify, and fetishize the bodies of Asian women? Are performances of Asian/American women porn stars as well as the production of sexually explicit images by Asian American women filmmakers dangerous products of false consciousness? Why am I obsessed with the sexualities of Asian/American women on screen and in their relationship to the scenes of everyday life? My intense pleasures coexist with a terrible pain regarding racialized hypersexuality. Are we to relegate to the margins bodily pleasures generated from race, sex, and representation—such as my embrace of images of the dragon lady, the prostitute with a heart of gold, the dominatrix, the slut, the whore, and easy Asian girls? Similarly, do we repress the pain of sexual interpellation that we encounter on the streets when misrecognized as a fantasy image—slut, whore, easy Asian girl? How come I feel comfortable only in porn shops run by

Asians? Because I am an Asian American woman, are the Asian owners truly more able to disconnect me from the material I buy? How do we reconcile the guilt

that haunts our enjoyment of sexual performances with our admiration of the celebration of sexuality in the performances of, say, Nancy Kwan and Lucy Liu, as well as in the dazzling technical and narrative innovations in the work of such independent Asian/American filmmakers as Veena Cabrerros-Sud, Grace Lee, Helen Lee, Hyun Mi Oh, and Machiko Saito? Can porn about Asian/American women produce political knowledge or can visual pleasures, especially from “bad object” representations such as whorish Asian women, truly contribute to anti-racist politics?

To consider my pleasurable reaction as excessive to good politics would ultimately be an insufficient response to the power of representation and the rich experiences of racialized sexuality. When encountering the litany of dragon lady, the lotus blossom, the prostitute with a heart of gold, the little brown fucking machine powered by rice, the dominatrix, and the whore, a powerful misrecognition transpires for Asian women off screen. Asian/American women in the scene of viewing are subjected to

**“MY INTENSE PLEASURES COEXIST WITH A TERRIBLE PAIN REGARDING RACIALIZED HYPERSEXUALITY.”**

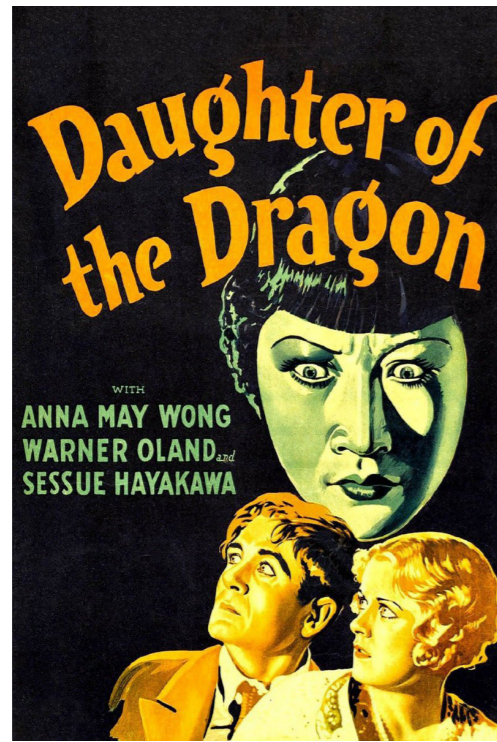






**“...THE DRAGON LADY,  
THE PROSTITUTE WITH A  
HEART OF GOLD, AND THE  
DOMINATRIX.”**





Movie posters showcasing the contrasting female Asian tropes of the cunning "dragon lady" and the submissive "lotus flower".



the simultaneous elation, seduction, and horror of "Is that me/not me? I adore it but it tortures me. Stop looking, oh no, keep looking! Give me more! How do I describe feeling pain/hate and pleasure/love at the very same time?" It is an extremely painful and intensely pleasurable contradictory experience of viewing, producing, and criticism. To insist on pleasure comes into confrontation with the painful aspects of such representations. As such, these experiences of viewing dramatize the political and economic inequalities not only of representation but of the social experiences of Asian/ American women.

So *The Hypersexuality of Race* ultimately emerges from my own "bad subjectivity": as a viewer drawing pleasure from sexualized images of Asian women while juggling its injuries, harms, and injustices, and as an Asian American feminist filmmaker dramatizing, narrating, and experimenting with the role of sexuality and eroticism in the race and cinema experience, especially as that sexuality and eroticism enable a more autonomous subject formation for Asian women.? For example, in my latest video work, *The Fact of Asian Women* (2002/2004), I interrogate how perverse sexuality unifies the repre-

sentations of Asian American femme fatales in Hollywood from the 1920s to the present. Anna May Wong, Nancy Kwan, and Lucy Liu each represent various modes of excessive sexuality as the dragon lady, the prostitute with a heart of gold, and the dominatrix. The perversity unifying their representations, which are palpably different from normal sexuality usually embodied by a white woman, can be interpreted variously: as strength, diversity, or pathology. By examining the sexual lighting, male gaze, and their racialized performances, I locate their performances historically—somewhere between the wound of sexual racialization and the remedy of pleasure in visual and sexual representations of race.

Almost twenty years since the kernel of this project was planted on that Berkeley bus, what is clear like never before is the ease with which we can resort to striving for a kind of normativity in the face of hypersexual ascription. To panic about being identified within perversity can too easily lead us to strive toward self-restricting sexual normalcy or the impossible constraints of sexual purity. If we limit understanding of racial sexuality within good or bad, abnormal and normal, or right and wrong we may also limit how

to enjoy, appreciate, and more fully understand our own sexuality as Asian/American women. We can too easily confine the vast sea of experience between the polarities of bad/painful and good/pleasurable that frame racialized sexuality.

The fear of sexual perversity, pleasure, and badness can choke the voicing of complex experiences of sexuality and curb the beauty emergent from the chronicles of our sexual histories and the survival of sexual subjection." Sexuality—thrilling, compelling, and mysterious—organizes my expression as a film and performance scholar and producer. The voices and visions of Asian American women performers, writers, and critics representing themselves as hypersexual beings—as overdetermined by sex and speaking through sex—show that I am not alone in my obsession with the bottomless pit of wonder that is sexuality. They insist upon the ambiguity and ultimate unknowability of race, sexuality, and representation, especially in reinscribing the perverse sexuality traditionally ascribed to Asian/American women, and they do so using tremendously beautiful and innovative forms. I aim to keep open the complexity

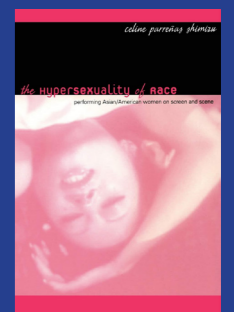
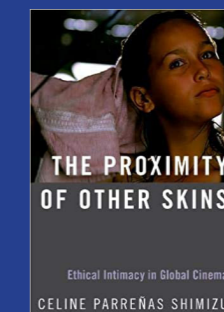
of images as well as the experience of their production and consumption in order to formulate a theory of race-positive sexuality that takes seriously the challenge of engaging issues of power in defining race, sexuality, and representation in terms of Asian/ American feminist women's practices, politics, and priorities.

*The Hypersexuality of Race* takes up the challenge offered by the work of Asian/ American actresses, filmmakers, performers, and critics at the site of industry blockbusters and independent stage and screen, including Broadway, Hollywood, and a hundred years of pornography and video art. Within these sites, Asian/American actresses, spectators, performers, filmmakers, and critics present complex, rich, and nuanced representations of sexual desire, pleasure, and pain. In paying attention to the desire for identities that centrally pivot on sexuality, I aim to show how hypersexuality, performed and consumed pleasurably as well as painfully, expresses yearning for better representations and realities for those marginalized by race and gender. ■



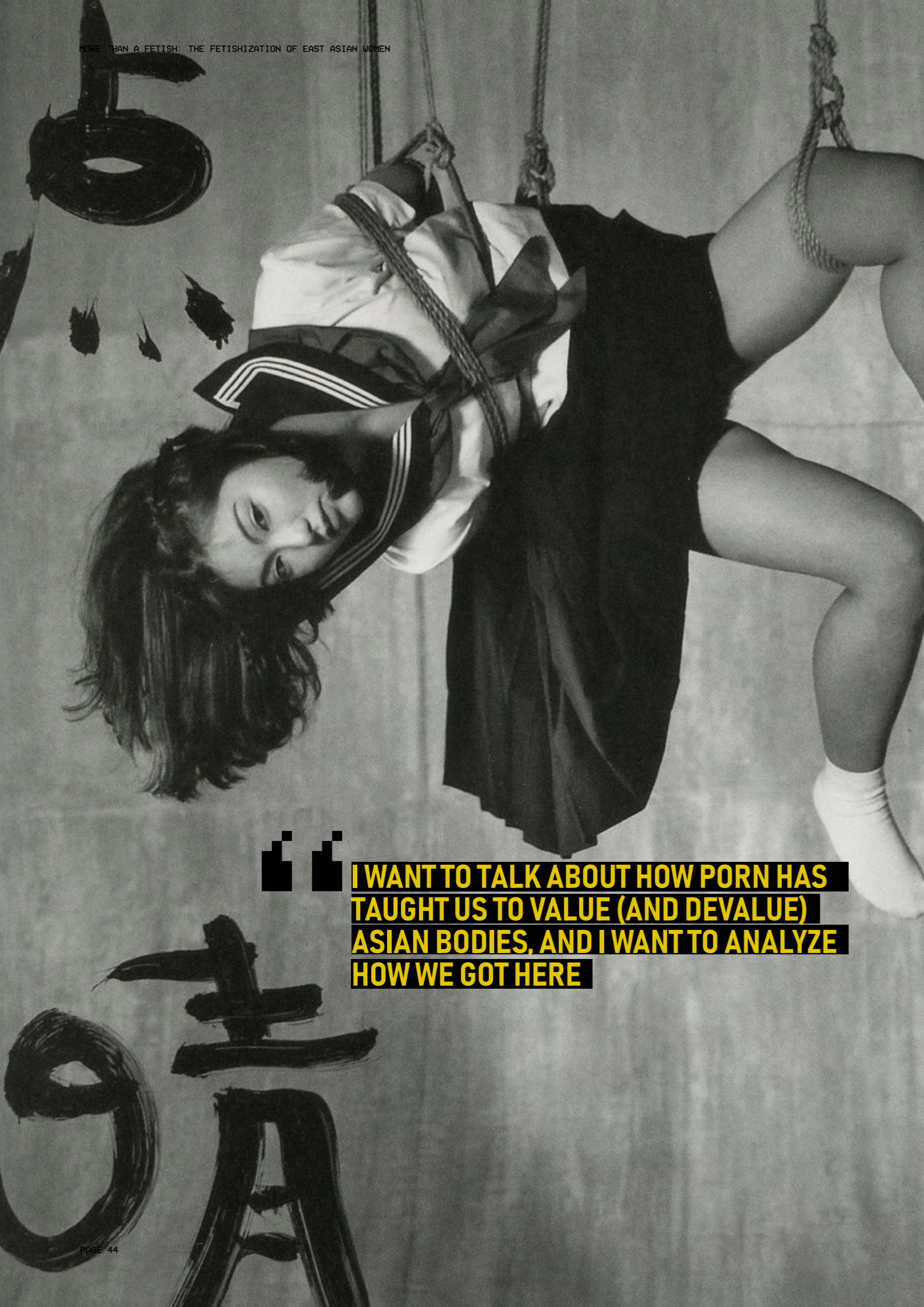
## CELINE PARREÑAS SHIMIZU

Celine Parreñas Shimizu is a filmmaker and film scholar. She is well known for her work on race, sexuality and representations. She is currently Dean of the Arts Division at the University of California at Santa Cruz. Shimizu is the daughter of political refugees from the Philippines. Her family relocated to Boston when she was in her early teens. She attended the University of California at Berkeley and received a B.A. in Ethnic Studies in 1992.[1] She has an M.F.A. in Film Directing and Production from the University of California at Los Angeles[2] and a Ph.D. from Stanford University in Modern Thought and Literature.[3]



Books written by Celine Parreñas Shimizu:





**I WANT TO TALK ABOUT HOW PORN HAS TAUGHT US TO VALUE (AND DEVALUE) ASIAN BODIES, AND I WANT TO ANALYZE HOW WE GOT HERE**

# MAINSTREAM PORN HAS TAUGHT YOU A LOT ABOUT ASIAN FEMALE SEXUALITY - BUT IT'S ALL A DIRECT RESULT OF RACISM

BY AMY SUN

I have to hand it to my mom. She thoroughly prepared for “the talk.” And she did a pretty good job. She didn’t use scientific terms, but her gestures of “down there” in Mandarin sufficed for eleven-year-old me. I got the picture: When people love each other, they do it.

I’m telling you. The woman was thorough. But what my mother didn’t prepare me for (and thank the goddess) was porn. I had to learn about porn the difficult way. It was a while before I laid eyes on real porn. But even though I hadn’t seen a real porno, teenage-me had a pretty good idea of how Asian women were being represented.

That’s because teenage-me was (unfortunately) used to dealing with some pretty fucked up stereotypes about my body and sexuality before I could even define myself.

Like—hey—my boobs just came in. Don’t tell me if they’re “typical” or “big for an Asian girl.” I haven’t even been to my first gynecologist appointment,

and you’re telling me that my vagina is smaller than average? And I haven’t had sex with anyone yet. Don’t tell me how you like submissive Asian girls. Let me figure out my sexuality on my own, please.

And this is just the typical bullshit before Tinder. This article isn’t going to highlight the horror stories of terrible pick-up



## ASIAN WOMEN WORKING IN SERVICE INDUSTRY JOBS ARE TOO OFTEN CONFLATED WITH PROVIDERS OF COMMERCIAL SEX.

lines Asian women hear all the time or what it's like to date as an Asian woman. You can find those here and here. This article is also not going to go in-depth about Asian women in various pornos. You can find those...well, you do the research.

Instead, I want to talk about how porn has taught us to value (and devalue) Asian bodies, and I want to analyze how we got here: Where did these stereotypes about Asian sexuality come from? And like my mom, I want to be very thorough.

And in order to fully understand Asian sexuality in mainstream porn, we need to go way back in history to the colonization of Asian peoples. So let's cover that quickly, first and foremost.

Colonization is the mass migration of a group of peoples to already occupied land. Colonization may bring an upheaval of language, culture, and privileges as the new settlers usually deem themselves more "civilized" and thus, entitled to certain benefits. To be clear, colonization is not when two groups of people live harmoniously together – nor does colonization always bring turmoil. Though we normally associate colonization with militarization, colonization can also occur over time and without bloodshed.

But the bottom line is that colonization is never by choice or an equal exchange of power. And this history of colonization is written in the basic porno plot involving the submissive Asian. Sex, another tango between dominance and subordination, shows us exchange of power. But similar to an oppressive history course

on colonization, the basic porno plot tricks us into thinking both players enjoy an equal exchange of power. And when millions of people consume pornographic images on a daily basis, we need to reexamine what these images actually mean. So here's what porn has taught me about my Asian body and what that all really means. I Must Be "Submissive" – And Enjoy It.

Okay, let's get a bit graphic. Porn has taught us that Asian women love to be dominated. We're looking up with smiling faces, usually wearing ridiculous pigtailed, giggling, and giving blow-jobs. And loving it. The stereotype is that we are demure and shy. We follow orders and enjoy it. We love to service you so much that we gravitate toward service jobs, like giving you a massage, fixing your nails, and waiting on your table. So we take a similar role – sexually subservient – in mainstream pornos.

In short, Asian women are infantilized. We follow orders and enjoy it – I'm talking Stage 3 in Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development – to feel accepted like children. Thank you, porn, but we are #NotYourAsianSidekick. What Does This Really Mean?

My Asian body has been colonized to sell a fantasy of compliant submissiveness. This fantasy teaches me to be sexually submissive by showing images of other Asian female bodies like mine acting submissive during sex. Because if that Asian female body is

Adult film actress Lulu Chu was featured in a scene by porn company BangBus. She was filmed eating Chinese noodles while performing. People were criticizing the company for putting this scene out, but Chu's response was that she had consented and did not find anything offensive in it.



**lulu chu**  
@xxxluluchu

Follow

A lot of people have something to say about my #bangbus scene, but I want to assure y'all that we discussed the premise beforehand and I okay'd it. I'm always one to advocate for the Asian community and found nothing TRULY offensive in the scene.

5:06 pm - 29 Jun 2019

**TeensNSFW**

@TeensNsfw

Follow

This is a disgusting scene, @xxxluluchu ... because you may have "okay'd" it but you don't speak for the Asian Community. THIS IS THE EQUIVALENT of feeding a black girl KFC & Grape Juice on the bangbus. Let that sink in your head. You are young but unfortunately not smart.





Adult film actress Lulu Chu in a scene. Submissive Asian porn is one of the biggest categories with millions of viewers every year.

**YOUR ASIAN BODY BECOMES THE COMMODITY. THE EXCHANGE IS MONEY FOR LUST. THE EXCHANGE IS SURVIVAL FOR ENJOYMENT.**

enjoying her dominance, it makes it okay, right? This colonization of Asian bodies is an extension of Western nations' colonization of Asian peoples. On screen, the Asian body is dominated

into compliant submissiveness, mirroring the real submissiveness experienced by colonized people.

Let's look at the basic porno plot starring the Asian masseuse, for example. We've all heard about the massage parlors where you can finish with a "happy ending." This isn't a new stereotype. Asian women working in service industry jobs are too often conflated with providers of commercial sex. Cue the ridiculous gong, silky kimono robes, and "Me love you long time" lines. But this link to

sexual services is not by choice, and it dates back to colonization. Asian female bodies in service and sex industries are a product of survival.

These industries are often the only jobs available to women during colonization since they don't require much language skills or higher education. Think about it: Colonization brings an upheaval of the status quo. An alien language is introduced, the marketplace is in flux, and (with militarization) foreign men are imported.

Now the terms for survival

are different. With more soldiers, there is a demand for bars, strip clubs, and money for sex. The line between service and sex is blurred. More importantly, when the colonizer and the colonized look different, it results in Orientalism. Orientalism is when generalizations are made about Arabic, Asian, and North African people based on perceived and universal differences. This is how we produce the stereotypes that "All Asian women are submissive" and "All Asian women want sex" – instead of "These Asian women are trying to survive" and "These

Asian women want sex for money."

Because maybe you don't know this, but the "Me love you long time" line from Full Metal Jacket is really a remnant of prostitution during the Vietnam War.

When war is rampant and the demand for sex is high, you advertise the longevity of your lovemaking to the customer. Your Asian body becomes the commodity. The exchange

is money for lust. The exchange is survival for enjoyment. And this advertisement has stood the test of time. Business was so good that Asian women don't need to do much work nowadays. We are automatically sexy and desirable.

That's why Asian women are still the most desired on dating sites. Asian comedian Kristina Wong is so confident in her sexual appeal that she swears it doesn't matter what disgusting things she does because "someone wants this!"

So the next time you walk into a salon and hear an Asian

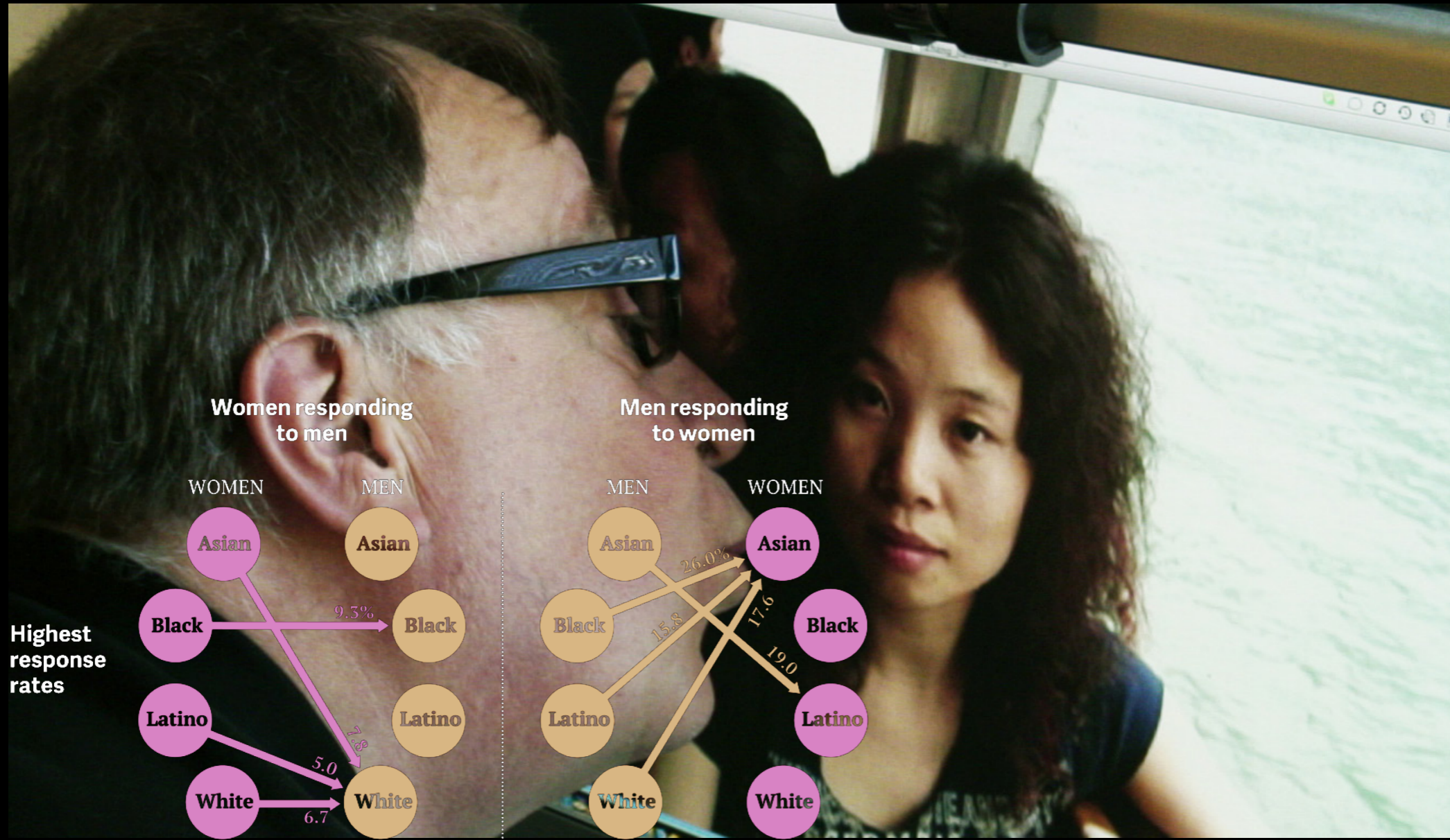
language being spoken, please consider colonization and survival rather than sex and submissiveness. (In fact, working in nail salons helped thousands of displaced Vietnamese refugees assimilate to their new lives in the US.) Because historically, Asians involved in service- and sex-oriented businesses are surviving – not submissive. I Must Be "Small and Tight" – Down There...

Let's not forget about our magical "I heard that Asian women are tight" vaginas. But this is a good stereotype, right?

Umm, no, not really. See, this stereotype sounds wonderful – as most quote-unquote "positive stereotypes" do – but it clearly reduces us to our sexual parts. Also, have you noticed that we are always "getting it" from black men? Like big, black men. With their gigantic penises (also a dangerous racial myth, by the way, that elicits a culture of fear).

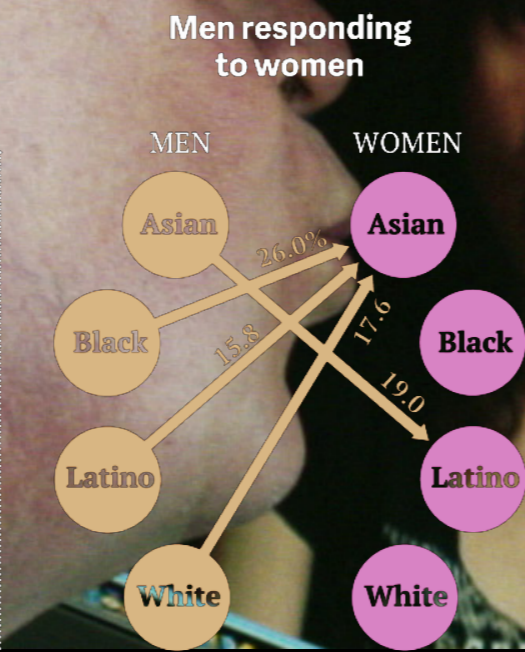
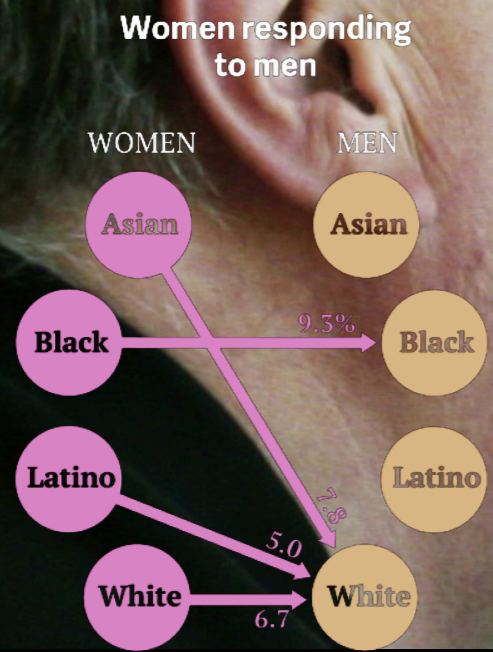
It's almost like we're purposefully paired with culturally stereotypical big, black men to emphasize this idea that Asian women are super tiny. News flash! People come in different shapes and sizes,



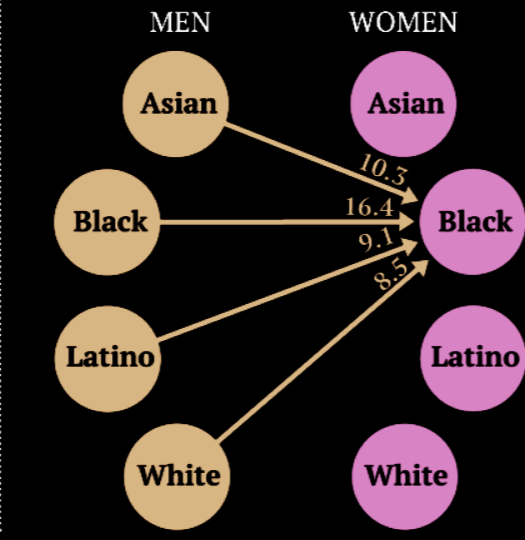
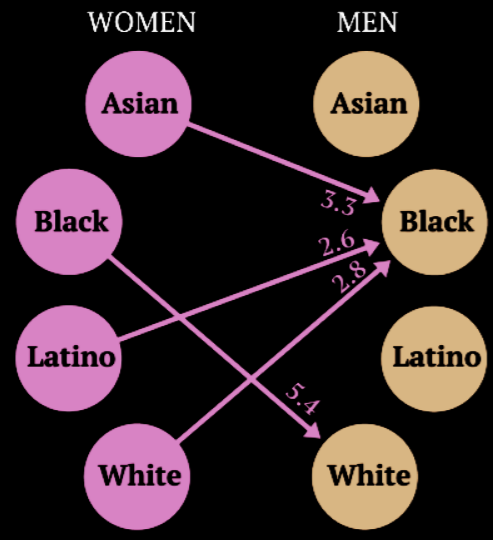


Statistical graph shown (bottom left) depicting the first glance preferences in dating apps. What is often seen as compliments is in reality a result of stereotypes and hypersexualization.

Highest response rates



Lowest response rates



stereotypes instead, which allows colonization's legacy to prevail.

Because as soon as we essentialize people down to their body parts and how they're different from "us," we take away their humanity. These differences are what propel colonization of peoples.

And right now, colonization's doctrine of difference is hidden behind pornographic images

of difference as well. Except these differences are packaged as "raw sexuality" and the idea that "Asian people are just sooo exotic." But exoticism is more than curiosity when they create harmful sexual stereotypes.

Like how Asian women are the model minority – even in porn. We are lithe, tight, and ready to go with a smile. The Asian woman in porn is kind of like how Asian people are portrayed in the real world. We are smart, successful, and we don't rock the boat. We are model citizens. Even our vaginas are model vaginas! But the thing about being

model citizens with model vaginas is that somewhere, somehow, we start becoming spectacles in a freak show. Step right up and see the world's smallest vagina from the Far East!

Colonization's influence on porn may give us "sexy" images of petite Asian women, but they also drive home dehumanizing racial stereotypes. No matter how "positive" these stereotypes may sound, we are still the "other" – the spectacle. And white is still the gold standard for normalcy against which everything else is measured. Colonization's fingerprints are all over our mainstream porn, y'all. We're not just watching people have sex. We're consuming colonization's legacy. If we can't tell what "sexy" actually looks like, we run the risk of being colonized all over again.

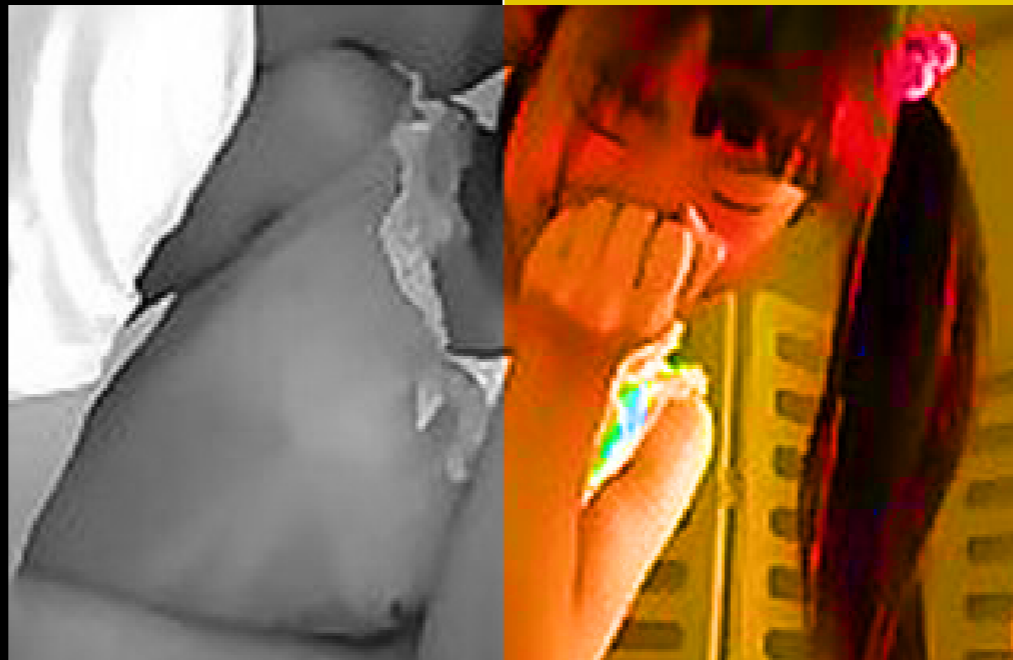
So I speak as my former teenage-self when I say this: Porn is not a reflection of my individual sexuality or perceived power. My culture was already colonized. I refuse to let my body be colonized, too. ■

regardless of their race. Like, "fat Asians" totally exist. What Does This Really Mean?

My Asian female body has been sexually juxtaposed with big black men to drive home Orientalism. Orientalism essentializes societies and their people as static. Therefore, it creates the gospel that "All Asian women have tight vaginas."

With Orientalism, we not only make absolute assumptions, but we insist on differences between "us" and "them," the West and the East. Orientalism prevents us from seeing people as individuals, seeing them as





**“MY CULTURE  
WAS ALREADY  
COLONIZED.**

**I REFUSE TO  
LET MY BODY BE  
COLONIZED, TOO.”**





# YOUR “GAMER GIRL” AESTHETIC HAS REAL CONSEQUENCES

BY SYD HAUPT







Belle Delphone (pictured) is an influencer and pornographic content creator. She has gained criticism for "asian-bating" which creates further sexualization of Asian women and culture.

I recently made a trip into Los Angeles' historical Little Tokyo district after being overcome with a craving for some authentic mochi. I was delighted to be back in Little Tokyo, a place which for me was imbued with value and memories.

It has great historical relevance for my Japanese American family, who felt welcomed there upon their move to California in the early 20th century, and I personally have many fond memories of skipping through its busy streets in my childhood — honey cake snacks in hand and an easy smile on my face.

Returning for the first time since the recent rise in hate-crimes against Asian Americans, I worried that the Little Tokyo square would be desolate, that the wishing tree would be barren of notes,

that the storefronts would be dark and dusty. Luckily, the district was bustling with life. Seeing elderly Asian couples walking through the square with grocery bags, young groups of friends chattering in a mix of Japanese and English and couples walking hand in hand with musubi sent a wave of relief over me.

However, I also encountered something that I had not been expecting on my Little Tokyo trip: groups of non-Asian people walking through the streets wearing what they apparently perceived to

be "Asian" clothing. Now, I'm not talking about wearing a kimono, which would be overt cultural appropriation. No, what these people were wearing was a reductive caricature of Asian culture. I saw groups of people bearing knee-high socks, jackets with nonsensical Japanese letters and phrases on them and high bun hairstyles littered with chopsticks.

While these things might sound insignificant to the typical onlooker, I can guarantee that almost every Asian person reading that sentence has sighed

and rolled their eyes, because we have all experienced a moment where someone presumes that all of Asian culture can be boiled down to a chopstick-in-hair aesthetic. This moment perfectly encapsulated how pop culture's vicious trend cycle regularly fetishizes Asian women. In the few seconds that these people walked by me, I saw a variety of Asian trends and styles mismatched together with no care; the knee high socks were clearly a product of the extremely problematic Japanese schoolgirl aesthetic, the jackets with random Japanese phrases came from the recent American obsession with Asian streetwear and the bun hairstyle was almost certainly from the kawaii aesthetic that was popularized in the U.S. in the last decade. "Asian-fishing," or when a non-Asian person alters their appearance to seem more Asian, has taken a dark turn in this century. Rather than overtly present-

ing itself as racism, "Asian-fishing" hides under the premise of being a "cute," "aesthetic" trend. But make no mistake — it has the same consequences of demeaning our culture and people. And many of us see either overt Asian-fishing or an unjust co-opting of Asian trends within our everyday lives, without even realizing it. What is most dangerous about the way that people like this express an "Asian" aesthetic is that it often involves an acknowledgement that the world sees Asian women as domestic, cute, little and, ultimately, rather helpless. Yet after this acknowledgement occurs, no steps are made to correct that assumption and empower us. Asian women are condemned to this fate, sometimes fatally so.

After the Atlanta spa shootings killed eight people, six of whom were Asian women, the world turned its eyes on the Asian American community. While some individuals were quick to claim that this was a sexually-motivated act rather than a hate crime, we must question why the perpetrator's desire to rid his world of sexual temptation had to be expressed as an attack on Asian women. We know that the man who fatally shot these women had been clinically treated for a sex addiction, and was acting out against Asian women because, to him, Asian women are sex incarnate. Our very existence has been sexualized, without our choice. Thousands of voices rose up to condemn Asian American hate crimes, as

well as the sexualization and fetishization of Asian women that led to this shooting. I saw countless infographics, articles and guides to "dismantling" this fetish. Although they called out the problematic stereotypes throughout history, such as the "Lotus Blossom," and the "Dragon Lady," I found very little discussion about how these fetishizing aesthetics have developed in the modern era.

It is no secret that beauty standards around the world rely upon the premise of making women look young — for example, the relentless pursuit of removing all hair from our bodies is deeply rooted in our desires to appear youthful —and that itself is a product of living in a society that prioritizes the opinions of men over the comfort of women ... It is a truly vicious, endless issue. Studies from dating app companies have found that, while a woman's age correlates with the age of the men she finds most attractive, men will always find a young woman in her twenties



**WE HAVE SEXUALIZED THE VERY NOTION OF YOUTH.**

to be their standard for beauty, no matter their own age. We have sexualized the very notion of youth.

One of the largest examples of this is the "schoolgirl aesthetic," which is largely associated with Asian women. You've likely seen it in movies and TV shows such as "Kill Bill," "Sailor Moon," "2 Fast 2 Furious," "D.E.B.S." and countless others. My personal thesis for why this horrific fixation is so heavily associated with Asian culture is because Asian women are often regaled for looking extremely young in comparison to other women their age.





But the most serious claim of cultural appropriation came from the Japanese-inspired imagery Stefani used heavily on her 2004 album "Love. Angel. Music. Baby," which birthed her No. 1 single "Hollaback Girl" and her Harajuku Girls entourage.

Stefani disagrees with the longstanding criticism to this day. During her Paper Magazine interview, Stefani said people from different cultures can "share."

Since the "schoolgirl aesthetic" hinges upon looking young, of course Asian women are going to receive more attention than we have ever wanted. The perverted nature of men's attraction leans itself towards our supposedly natural, youthful appearance. Horrifically, this aesthetic has been co-opted by the pornography industry, which regularly profits from forcing Asian actresses to demean themselves re-enacting "schoolgirl" fantasies. This feeds into men's perspective on Asian women as the most desirable in comparison to those

of any other race — an undesired subset of the male gaze that lends itself into an ongoing cycle of dehumanizing fetishization. Perhaps the worst part of all of this is that many onlookers see Asian women getting (unwanted) attention and crave the spotlight. In turn, they weaponize the fetishization of our race by mimicking our appearance through Asian-fishing aesthetics, makeup and mannerisms that reinforce the notion that the Asian woman is submissive, docile and innocent.

This is deeply evident within recent

trends in makeup, such as the fox eye makeup look that was popularized in the last year. Although seemingly innocent, the fox eye trend involves elongating the appearance of one's eyes, which ends up mimicking the long, thin almond eye shape that many Asian people naturally have. This is oftentimes paired with a pose of the model purposefully pulling their eyes back — a pose that many Asian Americans will remember being mocked with throughout their youth for having "slanted" and "small" eyes.

Fook Mi, Fook "Mi" and Fook "Yu" were two twin Harajuku girls at Austin's Pad after his knighting at Buckingham Palace. They appear in the 2002 film Goldmember, with Diane Mizota portraying Fook Mi and Carrie Ann Inaba portraying Fook Yu.

Minority groups across the globe will be familiar with this phenomenon: society's trend cycle snatches up once-shameful aspects of our lives and repackages them as an "aesthetic" for white audiences. For example: acrylic nails, cultural foods (such as bento boxes and kimchi), African American Vernacular English being rebranded as Generation Z slang and Kendall Jenner's recent tequila venture, just to name a few. Something less spoken about is the recent "gamer girl" aesthetic, popularized by TikTok, which, similarly to the fox-eye trend, involves elongating one's eyes amongst a variety of other makeup touches. The look is often paired with drawing on excessive faux eyelashes, adding a dash of blush, contouring to create a button nose and drawing on a full pouty upper lip. All of these together serve to do one thing: create an infantilized and overtly Asian aesthetic.

These "gamer girls" take to Twitch and actively stream in this Asian-fishing makeup, often dressing in infantile clothing and acting in a submissive demeanor that reinforces the concept of Asian women as subservient, childish and dainty. They are actively profiting off of co-opting a dangerous, racist aesthetic — and getting away with it. They know that there will be no consequences for their actions because their way has been paved by people like Belle Delphine non-Asian "influencers" who are beloved for their appropriation of Asian culture.

Profiting from the fetishization and dehumanization of Asian people is nothing new. Many members of the millennial and Gen Z generations were likely exposed to Gwen Stefani's sicken-



ing relationship with her Asian backup dancers from a young age. Stefani hired four Japanese dancers — Jennifer Kita, Rino Nakasone, Mayuko Kitayama and Maya Chino — in 2004 and contractually obligated them to act, dress and speak in a culturally insensitive manner. Stefani required them to perform in the ways that she deemed to be "Asian," rather than allowing them to express their true cultural norms.

On top of that, their appearances were contingent on them dressing in a Harajuku aesthetic and speaking Japanese. These two behaviors not only alienated them throughout their time in Stefani's crew, but also promoted the idea that all Asian women are confined to a specific Western stereotype of an Asian woman. This confining stereotype is often a perky, innocent woman who betrays her foreign identity through dressing in a strange manner and only speaking her native language.

While Stefani denies that this was at all problematic, she also openly refused to call the women by their real names. Instead, she referred to them by their

stage names — "Love, Angel, Music and Baby" — a gross form of fetishization that reduces someone's entire identity down to an elegant little word (and these words just so happened to be "adorable" little words that further infantilized these women). This openly racist charade earned Stefani millions of dollars, while her Japanese dancers earned a small portion of the cut. They sacrificed their own sense of self and cultural identity for Stefani's sake — and for

## PROFITING FROM THE FETISHIZATION AND DEHUMANIZATION OF ASIAN PEOPLE IS NOTHING NEW.

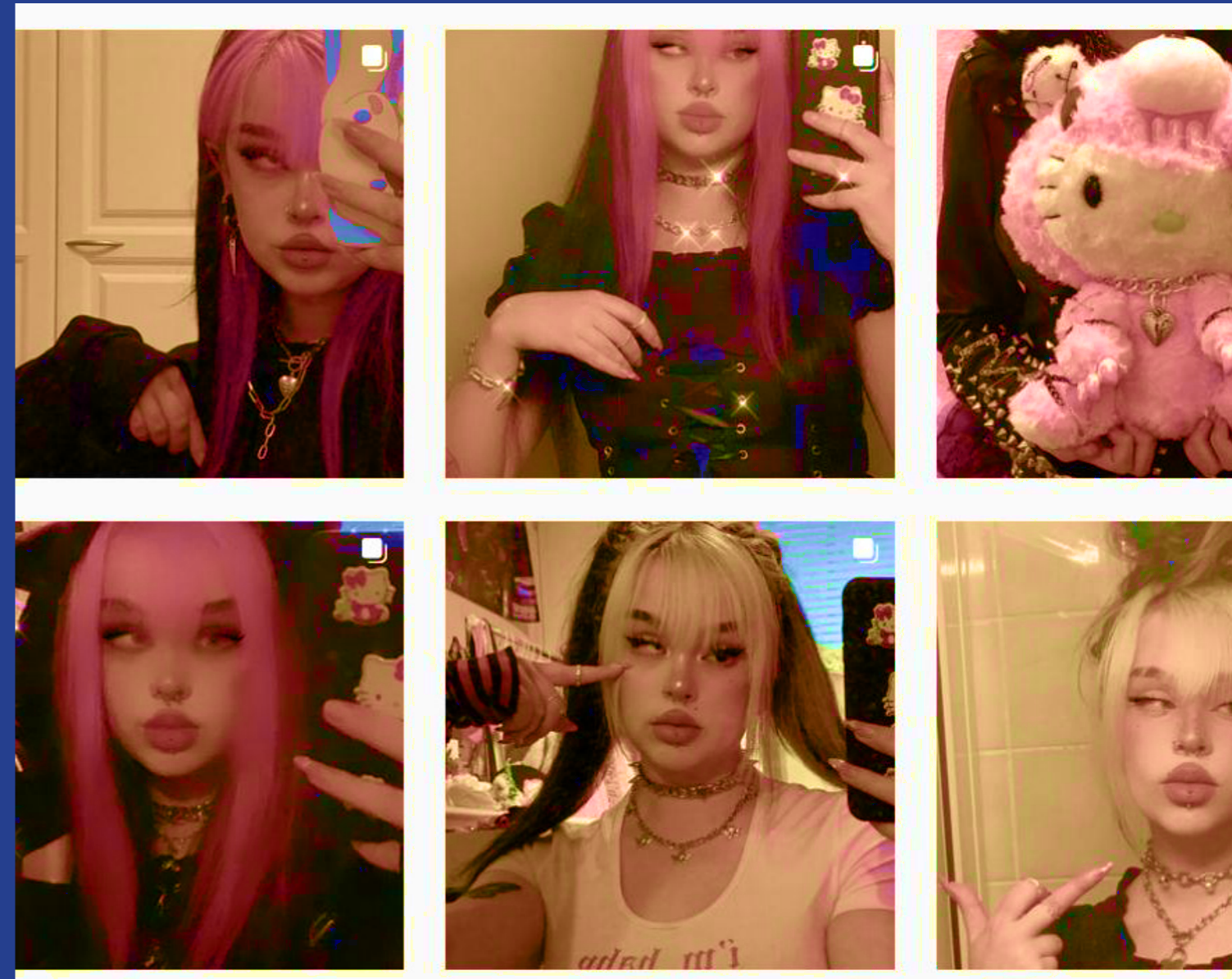
what? At the end of the day, it was not the people she cared about, but rather reinforcing and profiting off of her own perception of Asian culture. Stefani illustrates something interesting about the Western world's infatuation with Asian cultures: those who claim to be active supporters of Asian culture and people





Asain baiting includes people who act in what is perceived to be quintessential Asian mannerisms, which evidently means the submissive, kawaii stereotype while wearing infantilising clothes that are highly sexualised. Some of the worst cases are white influencers who put on an 'Asian' face and schoolgirl-like lingerie to pose for their OnlyFans content. While these people clearly enjoy Asian cultures, Asian women have long struggled against this very image that those who claim to be appreciating their culture perpetuate.

**THEY DO NOT WANT ASIAN PEOPLE AROUND; INSTEAD, THEY WANT OUR FOOD, OUR CLOTHING, OUR TRENDS AND OUR AESTHETICS.**



are also sometimes the ones to reinforce and perpetuate fetishizing stereotypes. Stefani is eager to claim that she is one of the biggest lovers of Japanese culture alive — something shared by “weeaboos” and K-pop “stans.” Similarly to Stefani, these rabid fans will go to lengths to compare every Asian woman they see to various anime characters and K-pop singers, without taking into account the dangers of reducing a woman’s identity to that of their favorite star. These stans will often go further than making an individual uncomfortable by commenting on their appearance. They become fierce defenders of a culture they have no experience with, asserting their opinions

on the histories of various Asian countries and civilizations over the voices of actual Asian people. These trends in media ultimately indicate that people find the products of our culture more worthwhile than us. They do not want Asian people around; instead, they want our food, our clothing, our trends and our aesthetics. But not us. Never us.

The way that non-Asian people consume our culture has always been parasitic, but observing how people interact with Asian aesthetics and trends over the internet makes it clearer than ever that this Westernized co-opting of our culture clearly has real consequences. People like the Atlanta shooter see the infantilized

Asian woman as a sex symbol, something further reinforced by pop culture, which demeans Asian women as subservient and cute. Appropriating these trends without realizing how they contribute to Asian women’s lives is irresponsible and can be dangerous for our mental and physical safety. Asian Americans have reached a reckoning point. It is time to create waves in the public sphere and challenge people’s perception of what it means to look, act and be Asian.

*Syd Haupt cannot express how exhausting it was when people mentioned that she looked like an anime character in her high school uniform.*



# ASIAN PORN PERFORMERS ARE SICK OF BEING FETISHIZED IN RACIST ROLES

BY EJ DICKSON





In 2019, adult performer Jade Kush shot a scene where she appears on an elliptical machine in a tie-dye thong leotard and leg warmers, before a man in sweatpants approaches her and she starts to enthusiastically fellate him. It was, by most standards, a fairly typical porn scene. Yet when the scene was ultimately released, Kush, who is Asian American, noticed it had an unusual title: “Cum Dim Sum.”

Kush was furious. The script had not made reference to such a title. “I was just like, ‘That doesn’t make sense at all. It’s a workout video,’” she says. She approached the director of the scene to ask why the title had been changed, only for the director to tell her that the decision had been made by the distribution company. “There was nothing I could do about it except not promote it,” she says. “It was just something I did not want my name on, or all over my Twitter. All I could do was choose not to support it.”

During her three-year career as a porn performer, Kush had made it a priority to avoid being cast in stereotypically Asian roles. She had told her agency, LA Direct Models, that she refused to don a silk dress and wear chopsticks in her hair. When she had played a massage therapist and was told by the director to speak in broken English, she had said no; when directors had asked her to speak in her “native tongue,” she had retorted, “I grew up in Chicago.” Yet when

it came to starring in a scene that she had otherwise found inoffensive, she’d found herself marginalized when she had no control over the title. “Cum Dim Sum” it was. Such an experience is common among many Asian performers, who struggle with being fetishized and cast in roles that exploit outdated and offensive Asian stereotypes. In light of discussions about the exponentially rising rate of anti-Asian hate crimes, and how offensive tropes about Asian women factor into anti-Asian discrimination, there’s increasing discussion among Asian members of the adult industry about the role that porn has played in perpetuating such stereotypes. On Pornhub alone, there are thousands of videos featuring performers of Asian descent as masseuses, maids, or geishas, as well as more than one video in which a woman performs fellatio using chopsticks.

Issues of marginalization and fetishization are even worse for transgender Asian performers like Venus Lux, a performer, producer, writer, and director who has been in the industry for more than a decade. As one of a handful of Asian American performers on the trans side of the industry, “I’m a niche of a niche of a niche,” she says. “There’s not enough support to help us congregate and address issues related to Asian fetishization and there’s a lack of representation to have a conduit for us to vocalize our concerns and see improvements.” She says the level of support provided to Asian Americans in the industry is “abysmal.”

Such conversations about representation within the industry are “unfortunately not new,” says Kristel Penn, creative director at Grooby Productions, which produces trans erotica. On tube sites and in award shows, performers have historically been categorized by race, with many performers of color paid less than their white peers. “Pornog-

raphy is the least progressive industry in America,” black performer Demi Sutra told me last year. “There’s no other industry that can say, ‘You are black so you cannot do this movie.’”

When it comes to the depiction of Asian American people specifically, Penn says the issue is not specific to porn. “When we think about the ways mainstream society depicts Asian American women, it’s always as lesser than, or how Asian American women are useful to white men. To me, it’s an issue of race and misogyny,” they say. But in general, Penn says, there is “not a lot of representation” of Asian American women in the industry, and even less of Asian American men.

Asian porn is one of the most popular subgenres of adult content, with search terms like “Asian,” “Japanese,” or “Chinese” consistently ranked year over year as among the top 25 search terms. And indeed, there is a handful of Asian American performers who have ascended to the upper echelons of the industry, most notably former Penthouse Pet Tera Patrick, Venus Lux, and author and porn star Asa Akira. But for Asian performers just getting started in the industry, the options for non-stereotypical roles are few and far between, says adult content creator Saya Song, who says she left the mainstream porn industry in part because she was tired of being asked to take such parts. “If you want to get your name out there, you do have to be OK with people fetishizing you,” she says. “If you do speak up about it, you end up like me — you just don’t shoot.”

Even Akira, one of the biggest names in the industry, has spoken publicly about starting her career being cast in stereotypically Asian roles, such as massage therapists. “I just hated the monotony of it. I didn’t feel sexy doing it, I guess you could say,” she told me in 2014. Over the years, however, she had come



to “embrace it”: “I think a lot of people see it as degrading of Asian culture, but I see it as a celebration,” she said. “I don’t see anything wrong with fetishizing what I am. I think if anything, that’s celebrating what’s cool about me. I mean, it’s not like guys are watching my movies and laughing. They’re watching my movies and masturbating.”

But other performers say the pressure to take certain roles or adhere to certain tropes can be intense, particularly in the mainstream porn industry. Cam performer Joey Kim says that in her work, she has received customs requests from fans to make content where she is “very submissive, where they’re in control,” she says. “Thankfully with my work, I can decline such offers. But I know that in the adult industry in general a lot of times the woman can feel pressured to do something they’re not entirely comfortable with because they don’t want to disappoint their agency or the company they’re working for, when it’s not a reflection of who they are or the content they want to create.”

When she first entered the industry, Lux says she was primarily cast in “Asian ‘lady boy,’ prostitute, Asian massage parlor-type roles.” “Because a lot of the power is in the hands of white men, there’s a lack of inclusivity when it comes to the narrative, the storyline, the outfits, the portrayal of myself in these movies,” she says. “To pay my bills, I conformed to that narrative even though I personally did not agree to it. I felt more valuable than that. But I consented, because it was a job.” She says that she also faced degrading treatment from producers behind the scenes due to her race and gender identity. Later in her career, she adopted more of a dominant persona in order to avoid being cast in stereotypically submissive Asian

roles. But “deep down, the scenes I’ve done [earlier in my career] have triggered some level of trauma within me,” she says.

The industry has not exactly been sensitive or responsive to these discussions. Shortly after the Atlanta shootings, in which six Asian women were shot dead, the porn production company Inked Angels tweeted a list of “10 tattooed Asian porn stars you should follow,” accompanied by the hashtag #StopAsianHate. When Saya Song, who was featured on the list, called them out for appropriating the hashtag and using racially insensitive language in the list, including such phrases as “land of the rising sun,” the website tweeted, “you try to show support and you’re the one met with negativity and hate” before deleting its entire account (the website also deleted the listicle in question, although a cached version still exists).

Kush was also taken aback when a distribution company tagged her in a tweet promoting a scene titled “Asian Massage Invasion” shortly after the attacks. She says the discussion in the industry about depictions of Asians in light of the attacks has been sadly short-lived. “I haven’t seen Asian performers really come together and talk about stuff







like this. I think there's a lot of difference of opinion too," she says. "They might say, 'Oh, it's just acting, it's just a scene, it's just a costume.' And if they do then who am I to tell them, no, this is wrong?" Many creators also take issue with the way various racial and ethnic groups are categorized on tube sites, with "Asian," "ebony," and "latina" serving as categories in themselves. Indeed, it took only June 2020 for AVN, the industry trade publication that runs an annual award show, to announce it would be eliminating its "ethnic" and "interracial" awards categories, following outcry over an insensitive article related to the death of George Floyd.

Such marketing, while it makes sense from an SEO perspective, has the effect of making performers feel like they are the sum total of their identities. "I personally don't think it's OK and the language I see it on tube sites tend to be misogynistic and racist and it relies on very old tropes of how people of color are represented and from a business perspective, I don't think we need to rely on those things," says Penn. But porn sites largely serve as a reflection of societal tastes, and Lux says that changing the entire climate of the industry is contingent on a lot more than changing search terms: "until people stop using them, they won't be abolished," she says.

Major economic changes within the industry, however, herald positive change on the horizon for all creators of color. Within the past year, thanks to Covid, the balance of power has shifted substantively from studios and large production companies to independent content creators on platforms like OnlyFans. Such seismic changes provide performers and creators with more autonomy to shape their own career trajectories and be less dependent on studios — which means they're free to

make whatever content they want.

"It was really freeing for me to figure out I don't need to rely on these companies and I don't need to do whatever they tell me to do to make money," says Kush, who has avoided shooting for safety reasons for the past year and has largely been making a living on OnlyFans. "If I don't want to do another scene where I'd have to be dressed up or humiliated, I don't have to do it. I make custom videos, and it's a lot easier for me to tell fans I'm not comfortable doing that than it is for me to tell a company that. There's not as much on the line."

As the industry and the rest of the world slowly emerge from the shadow of the pandemic, and business as usual resumes again, Kush is hopeful that the current climate, combined with the change in recent power dynamics, will lead production companies to be more mindful of how they choose to portray marginalized people in their content. If not, she says performers should feel empowered to speak up and draw a line in the sand. "It goes back to the whole issue of consent in porn," she says. "Whether it's wearing an outfit you feel uncomfortable with or taking a dick up your butt, you should feel OK saying 'I'm not comfortable doing this. Can we figure something else out?'"

But Lux emphasizes that the onus should not be on performers to change the climate, but on the people in power — producers, directors, and distribution companies — to lead the charge. "At the end of the day it's about accountability, about whoever's making money from a marginalized group being able to not further enable or reinforce derogatory, abuse, or exploitative behavior," she says. "I think the change has to come from the top." ■



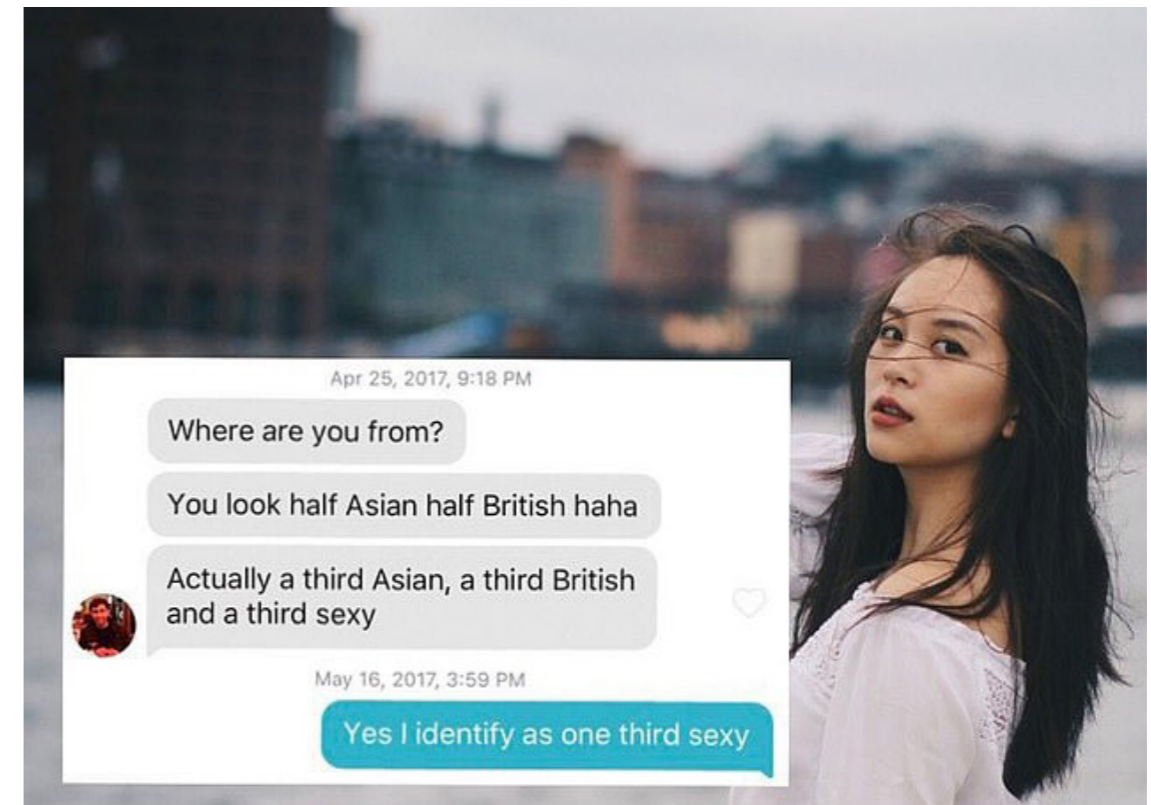
# ARTIST HIGHLIGHT

## 'I NEED MY YELLOW FEVER CURED': ASIAN AMERICAN WOMAN DOCUMENTS THE RACIST, FETISHIST, AND VERY SEXUALLY EXPLICIT MESSAGES SHE GETS FROM MEN ON TINDER

A young Asian American woman is highlighting the racist, fetishist messages that Asian women frequently receive on Tinder.

Lilian, who lives in New York and Boston, is single and regularly uses dating apps like Tinder — but she noticed an alarming pattern in the kind of messages she was getting from men. Disgusted, the 20-something created the Instagram page @thefleshlightchronicles in 2017 to bring attention to gross pick-up lines that are sent to minorities, and she now posts both her own distasteful messages as well as

submissions from her followers. She also invites her 23,000 followers to send her submissions of the strange messages they have received as well. Some are just flat-out sexual from the get-go, with men sending explicit sexual desires right off the bat. Speaking to HuffPost, Lilian, who chose not to reveal her surname, said she receives significantly different messages than her white friends.





## NOT THE END



The fetishization of Asian women in the west is something uncomfortable to talk about but incredibly crucial. The freedom for Asian-American women to be proud of their culture without the fear of it being sexualized is something that can be worked towards with spreading the message about our experiences. To make one's culture made out to be cheap and child like is incredibly hurtful. The diversity of all Asian cultures and strength of all Asian women are inspiring for generations and that should be the focus of the media. Thank you for reading.

*Photo by Sandy Kim*