

A Race So Different: Performance and Law in Asian America (Postmillennial Pop)

Joshua Takano Chambers-Letson



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Winner of the 2014 Outstanding Book Award presented by the Association for Theatre in Higher Education

Taking a performance studies approach to understanding Asian American racial subjectivity, Joshua Takano Chambers-Letson argues that the law influences racial formation by compelling Asian Americans to embody and perform recognizable identities in both popular aesthetic forms (such as theater, opera, or rock music) and in the rituals of everyday life. Tracing the production of Asian American selfhood from the era of Asian Exclusion through the Global War on Terror, *A Race So Different* explores the legal paradox whereby U.S. law apprehends the Asian American body as simultaneously excluded from and included within the national body politic.

Bringing together broadly defined forms of performance, from artistic works such as Madame Butterfly to the Supreme Court's oral arguments in the Cambodian American deportation cases of the twenty-first century, this book invites conversation about how Asian American performance uses the stage to document, interrogate, and complicate the processes of racialization in U.S. law. Through his impressive use of a rich legal and cultural archive, Chambers-Letson articulates a robust understanding of the construction of social and racial realities in the contemporary United States.

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