



# **Uncoupling American Empire: Cultural Politics of Deviance and Unequal Difference, 1890-1910** **(SUNY series in Multiethnic Literature)**

*Yu-Fang Cho*

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*A cultural studies consideration of marriage and those considered “deviant” in the nineteenth-century American imagination.*

A radical revision of the politics of race and sexuality within racial capitalism, *Uncoupling American Empire* provides an original cultural genealogy of how the institutionalization of marriage shaped imagined relationships among working people who were seen as sexually deviant in nineteenth-century U.S. imperial cultures. Departing from the longstanding focus on domesticity as a middle-class white women’s imaginary construct of home, nation, and empire, this book foregrounds the relationship between marriage and subjects marked by slavery, prostitution, indentured labor, and colonialism through tracing overlooked linkages among the period’s fiction texts, journalistic accounts, pictorial illustrations, and missionary narratives. Yu-Fang Cho’s feminist intersectional approaches illuminate the complex web of social difference that uneven access to marriage has historically produced; the cumulative effects of the ironic—and indeed cynical—promise of freedom, equality, and inclusion through sexual conformity; and the central role that cultural imagination plays in forging alternative relations among minoritized subjects.

“...Cho’s work is unique in that she uses the institution of marriage to highlight how Asian laborers, gays and lesbians, Jewish immigrants, African Americans, and single young working women were excluded from the benefits experienced by white heterosexuals during this period ... This is by far Cho’s most impressive contribution to the historiography surrounding race and gender, particularly during the period under discussion.” — *H-Net Reviews (H-USA)*

“I cannot state strongly enough how visionary and momentous Cho’s book is, and how much it will contribute to not only nineteenth-century literary studies, American studies, and ethnic studies, but also gender studies, sexuality studies, and queer theory.” — Grace Kyungwon Hong, UCLA

“This ambitious book demonstrates Yu-Fang Cho’s facility with feminist, transnational, and queer theory, and her great dexterity moving between literary and historical methods. The book’s broad conceptual strokes are equally matched by her impressive archival research and close readings.” — Siobhan B. Somerville, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

“Utilizing arguably the best exemplar of a comparative and intersectional approach, Cho exposes the contradictions of the promise of freedom and emphatically calls for scholars to address the multiple and differentiated ways that subjects are positioned by U.S. imperialism across national borders.” — Kent A. Ono, University of Utah

“*Uncoupling American Empire* profoundly integrates a wide range of legal and social history with nuanced cultural and literary analysis. This innovative project goes well beyond the forced borrowing that characterizes much work that calls itself ‘interdisciplinary’ and truly challenges the divisions of ethnic studies, gender and sexuality studies, and transnational American studies.” — Josephine D. Lee, University

of Minnesota

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