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QUEER CHIMERICA

A SPECULATIVE
AUTO/ETHNOGRAPHY
OF THE COOL CHILD



SHANA LEODAR YE

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"The book's originality of form is a great strength. It makes the material digestible, highly readable, and links it in a visceral way to critical theory that can so often be disembodied."

--Ari Heinrich, the Australian National University

QUEER CHIMERICA

A Speculative Auto/Ethnography of the Cool Child By Shana Leodar Ye

Blending archival work, ethnography, and cultural analysis with memoir, graphic arts, and science fiction, *Queer Chimerica* unpacks the ways in which the transnational circulation of queer culture, politics, and institutions are structured through the antagonist interdependence of China and the United States. By examining the intersecting timelines of the rise of queer theory and the rise of China in the late Cold War era, Shana Ye explores the relationship between the discourse of queer fluidity and capital's demands for labor flexibility.

Drawing on rare archival material and oral historical accounts of queer life from the 1950s to the late 2010s, the author shows how these accounts make sense of the variegated landscapes of desires, transformations, and conundrums in postsocialist China. The author illustrates party cadres in the Cultural Revolution, tongzhi activism mediated by the explosive politics of Tiananmen upheaval, HIV/AIDS community outreach workers, feminist artists and digital activists, leftist queer theorists, and fictional bio-engineers, layering these vivid depictions to reveal the poetic messiness of queer world-making. *Queer Chimerica* offers insight into the governmentality of LGBT rights, the rules of legibility and recognition, the geo- and bio-politics of identity, and the class-ridden appropriation of queer history and community. Thus understanding the production of queerness unveils the uneven distributions of capital, knowledge, affect, and opportunity that reproduce queer precarity and agency.

Shana Leodar Ye is Assistant Professor of Historical and Cultural Studies at the University of Toronto Scarborough and the Women and Gender Studies Institute at the University of Toronto.

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