

Fixing the White Short Circuit: How Asian American Ethnofuturism Defies Silence

Critic Anthony Sze-Fai Shiu categorizes science fiction ethnofuturist texts in two ways: how identities are structured according to a dominant racial tradition, and the possibility of reimagining these current and future practices without an obligation to reproduce such traditions. Franny Choi's sci-fi chapbook *Death by Sex Machine* utilizes poetical conventions like referential form, scattered words, and an implied Asian woman speaker to resist depictions of traditional Asian femaleness as subservient, silent, and illiterate, common in American cyberculture by distinguishing a fierce oppositional consciousness that creates a new Asian mythology, thus bridging Shiu's two ethnofuturist purposes. Choi both acknowledges and transforms the traditional Asian female mythology. In this paper, I will investigate the treatment of the female body and alterity as depicted in traditional science fiction, and analyze representations of Asianness in three poems in Choi's *Death by Sex Machine*, "Kyoko_Inquiries," "Letter to Kyoko," and "Solitude." Although her critique is possible only through explicit intertextual references to Asian androids like Kyoko (*Ex Machina*) who embodies traditional ideologies, Choi purposely situates her own personhood parallel to Kyoko, firmly subverting her own humanness to constitute a reimagining of contemporary cyberculture ideologies. Her poetry chapbook emphasizes the silent, oppressed, subordinate Asian female, thus stifling the "machine" that perpetuates and justifies an unfair depiction. Through this close-reading analysis, I argue that Choi's sci-fi poetry chapbook is an ethnofuturist text that both identifies the dominant culture's mythology of Asian femaleness, and reimagines a present position that permits the creation of a new and authentic oppositional ideology.