

6. Why Queer Asian American Studies? Implications for Japanese America

Amy Sueyoshi

In 2013 the United States Supreme Court ruled unconstitutional the Defense of Marriage Act that had restricted marriage as a union only between a man and a woman.¹ The federal recognition of same-sex marriage appeared to many as the final victory in a national LGBT civil rights campaign that had been gaining momentum with the earlier termination of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” a policy that had prohibited the participation of gays and lesbians to openly serve in the military.² In television as well, a venue that theorists such as John Hartley claim coheres American ideals and belonging, gay images have surged in the twenty-first century. More than fifty lesbian and bisexual characters alone, not including gay men, appeared in popular dramas such as *ER* and *NYPD Blue* in 2010. Shows that centralized being gay such as *Will and Grace* and *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* also drew tremendous numbers of viewers. Ellen DeGeneres, an openly gay comedian and TV personality, won the Day-time Emmy Award for Outstanding Talk Show Host four years in a row. While DeGeneres had suffered a major career set back shortly after coming out in 1997, by 2005 she had risen to become “Public Lesbian Number One” according to cultural critic Jennifer Reed.³

For sure, increasing queer visibility is more complicated than simply a sudden loving embrace of all LGBT people. Media scholars such as Suzanna Walters notes that this advancement in visibility has come about through the assimilation of queers as something commodifiable in the cultural marketplace of consumerism. Jamie Skerski warns that DeGeneres’ rise has taken place only through the sanitization of her queerness as she reconstituted herself as the “girl next door.” In politics as well, Richard Goldstein cites the rise of “homocons,” gays and lesbians who subscribe to conservative val-

ues to be accepted by a straight mainstream as propelling a broader culture of queer acceptability.⁴ Moreover, with more gay visibility media images of gays and lesbians appear largely white with a handful of African Americans who are coming out in professional sports.⁵ Asian Americans—as well as Latinos, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders—remain almost completely absent. Aside from a few queer activists and actors visible in the mainstream such as Helen Zia, George Takei, and B.D. Wong, what does queer have to do with Asian America?

Certainly, there are LGBT Asians in America. One generation of radical queer Asians outed themselves nationally in the 1980s when they joined other queer women of color writers in documenting and publishing their experiences at the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality in short stories, poems, and polemical writings. *This Bridge Called My Back* published in 1981 inspired countless queer women of color and continues to be cited as a foundational text in women of color feminism.⁶ Thirteen years later, the publication of *The Very Inside* appeared as the first widely accessible collection of writings comprised entirely from Asian and Pacific Islander Lesbian and Bisexual Women. The same year, the leading scholarly serial in Asian American Studies titled *Amerasia Journal* published a special issue on sexuality that featured various queer API perspectives from artists, activists, and academics. Alice Hom underscored the necessity of mapping queer sexuality “as a part of Asian American family” due to the reality of gay and lesbian children.⁷ Indeed, it would be ahistorical if not simply naïve to imagine gays and lesbians as existing only in the contemporary period or only among whites. In my own research I trace the significance of same-sex sexuality of Issei Yone Noguchi, among the first group of Japanese immigrants in the late nineteenth century. Historian Judy Wu has also traced the life of rumored lesbian Margaret Chung, the first known American-born Chinese physician and surgeon. Chung is also the founder of the Chinese hospital in San Francisco Chinatown in the early 1920s.⁸

Asian American, Japanese American, and queer of color. A history of political activism within the JA community has motivated my work as a researcher and public intellectual. Japanese in America have consistently organized amongst themselves and across communities to push back against inequality. Issei farm laborers in Oxnard, California joined with Mexicans to form one of the earliest multi-racial labor unions in their struggle against the reduction of wages in 1903. In Hawai'i as well, Japanese joined Koreans, Filipinos, and laborers of other ethnicities to combat labor abuses on plantations. Nisei community leaders in 1929 also founded the JAACL (Japanese American Citizens League) creating one of the earliest Asian American civil rights organizations. In the 1940s, Gordon Hirabayashi, Fred Korematsu, Min Yasui, and a lesser-known Nisei woman Mitsuye Endo challenged the U.S. government when federal officials incarcerated 120,000 Japanese Americans into remote inland camps surrounded by barbed wire. During the 1970s, Japanese Americans along with other Asian Americans established drug rehabilitation programs, arts organizations, and senior centers, when existing institutions refused to provide services to "Orientals" and other people of color. Nikkei such as Yuri Kochiyama and Richard Aoki, as well as previously mentioned Kiyoshi Kuromiya participated in revolutionary movements for racial equality with African Americans. And in the wake of 9/11 Japanese American activists spoke out against policies that have discriminated against Arabs and Muslims in America. In the arts as well, acclaimed filmmakers such as Renee Tajima-Peña and Bob Nakamura have consistently taken up issues of social justice.¹⁵

Within the lesser-known area of queer Asian American history too, JAs have been actively forging LGBT acceptance and inclusion. In 1990, in the midst of the AIDS crisis when much of the nation feared to even breathe the same air as gay men, the San Fernando JAACL elected Takenori "Tak" Yamamoto as president. Yamamoto became the first openly gay president in any chapter of the JAACL and played a critical role in the organization's endorsement

of gay marriages at their national convention four years later.¹⁶ In 1994 as AIDS becomes the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 25 to 44, Pine United Methodist in San Francisco, one of America's earliest Japanese American churches, became the first queer-friendly Asian American church in America.¹⁷ Cherry Blossom Festival organizers then invited more than 100 women and men to march in the April parade, after hearing that an LGBT contingent had just marched in San Francisco's Chinese New Year's parade. Vice President at Union Bank and community leader June Sugihara led the contingent declaring, "It is so very important to recognize and support the lesbian and gay people in our Japanese American community."¹⁸ More recently in 2012, Japanese American Mark Takano became the first openly out LGBT person of color to become elected to Congress in a profession in which being a white queer would be history-making enough. Two years later, the Japanese American National Museum would host the first Nikkei LGBT gathering called "Okaeri" or "Welcome Home" sponsored by the JAACL-Pacific South West.¹⁹

JA parents of LGBT children also have taken historic steps in combatting homophobia and transphobia. In 1997, Al and Jane Nakatani published *Honor Thy Children*, a memoir of the loss of their three sons of whom two were gay. Ellen and Harold Kameya too became actively involved in PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) as the first known Asian parents in America to publicly advocate for their gay children. Marsha Aizumi later authored *Two Spirits, One Heart* for her transgender son Aiden.²⁰ With such an incredible legacy of activism so central to Japanese American history, how could any self-respecting JA stand idly by in the face of inequality?

In 2010, a friend of mine from the API queer community, a lesbian refugee from Japan, told me about the homophobic struggles she faced from other shin-Issei teachers as a volunteer at Rosa Parks Elementary School in San Francisco. It seemed outrageous in such a gay and Asian city and even more so since the broader

Japanese American community appeared to have worked through much of their homophobia fifteen years earlier. I had a personal stake in this as well, because of my own shin-Issei mother and her circle of shin-Issei friends. Being queer around them is a funny mix of “we know—we like you—we don’t have to talk about it.” It is a self-evident acceptance yet still one undergirded by my and my mother’s anxiety of whether someone knows and my own concern about my mom’s well being when she gets outed as the mother of a queer. Nearly all of her friends though, have at some point dropped an ambiguous hint of their support through comments such as “I saw your webpage” to me, or “Your daughter is so no-nonsense and refreshing unlike other girls,” and “How terrible that Proposition 8 passed” to my mother. My mother or I would be taken aback initially and then nod quietly in response. With this personal stockpile of unspoken work and simmering worry, a homophobic shin-Issei has become particularly intolerable to me. I wanted to shake vigorously the shin-Issei teachers at Rosa Parks to tell them they should know better than to think it was acceptable to exert their homophobia on a volunteer teaching assistant at their work place.

I responded to the incident with an editorial in *Nichibei Weekly* calling for a more queer friendly Japanese America.²¹ While I wrote to the community at large, my intention was to spark more Japanese Americans to engage with homophobes within the Shin-Issei community. I deliberately set out to reach them in a circuitous manner, in order to not demonize the Shin-Issei by singling them out. I would write the editorial in English in *Nichibei Weekly*, which they would likely not read, and hope that a larger community conversation might reach them like the waves on the edge of an ocean. It was an overly optimistic venture similar to throwing a message in a bottle and thinking that it will reach your lover who lives in a specific beach town. Still, I held faith in the power of the larger Nikkei community. I grew up surrounded by Shin-Issei and my experience of the Nisei/Sansei through my mother’s community work was always a breath of progressive air. The Japanese American communi-

ty freed me from the rigid confines of the Japanese community in America. As a child I watched Nisei/Sansei in hopes of what I too might become as an Asian American rather than remaining forever the dislocated daughter of immigrants. Moreover, I witnessed important exchanges between shin-Issei and the Nisei/Sansei around food, culture, and politics.

Increasingly though, a new generation of shin-Issei who have little to no knowledge of Japanese American history and no emotional connection to the Japanese American community appear to be making a home here. For them the United States is simply another place to live and carve out a comfortable life rather than a land dependent on struggles for social justice for its very survival as a “land of opportunity.” These folks who are arriving with more than just one suitcase have had more access to America and capital than my mother’s generation of Shin-Issei who grew up in impoverished, bombed-out post-war Japan. A more Japan-friendly sushi-eating America too, greets them at the door. Particularly for these Shin-Issei, it becomes particularly difficult to align with the marginalized, when they themselves never felt alienated as a social class in Japan nor in their imagination of America. They would more likely align with a super structure that they believe is built on merit and fairness, rather than self-interest and bigotry.

For these socially conservative Shin-Issei, a Japanese American who appears better adjusted and successful in America can serve as a more persuasive model of progressive politics. Few would take seriously the remonstrations of a gender queer daughter of another Shin-Issei, but rather a person more standard in the Japanese American community – a Nisei dentist, optometrist, doctor, or a Sansei teacher, accountant, or mortgage broker. Thus, I wrote the editorial so that the most “respectable” among the JA community could be inspired to continue to blast their progressive messages, so loudly that every Shin-Issei might eventually be reached. While I heard from a handful of churches that said they were going to bring up the topic of homophobia at their next study group, my friend who had

hoped to volunteer in a bilingual program would not have a happy Japanese American ending.

She quickly became blackballed from Japanese bilingual programs throughout San Francisco. One day care program in Japantown told her in Japanese that they did not want “her kind” when she approached them to volunteer. She would later find a position at the Harvey Milk Civil Rights Academy, a public elementary school named after gay activist Harvey Milk perched above the famously gay Castro District.²² How sad that she had to leave her Japanese community twice – once in Japan and a second time in America – to find queer acceptance. Ultimately, eradicating homophobia in the JA community and the larger Asian American community may not be the most effective coming from queers such as me and my friend clamoring for justice, but rather through “straight insiders” who can best convince friends and family that it is in fact “cool to be queer.”

Precisely because talking to homophobes feels like banging my head on a brick wall, an act of self-hate where I continuously allow myself to be bloodied, I direct my teaching and research to APIs and others folks of color already on the left. My work aims to illuminate how queer theory or queers’ ways of thinking can liberate queers and non-queers already open to progressive ideals. There is no doubt in mind that homophobia in the following decades will decrease in the American mainstream. The API community in America will similarly follow these trends. A society more accepting of queers will then allow more people to come out which in turn will contribute towards the lessening of homophobia as studies have shown.

When I first started teaching at San Francisco State University in 2002 the API students in both my sexuality studies and ethnic studies classes would regularly approach me breathlessly and declare how surprised and moved they were to see an Asian queer. One trans student noted with particular excitement that she could not tell if I was Male-to-Female or Female-to-Male. Yet in spring 2014 when I asked a room of more than 100 students in a class on Asian American

community, how many of them knew someone queer, nearly all of them still slouching in their seats raised their hand. To them being queer or seeing an Asian queer was hardly a novelty. It had taken just a decade for me to become completely ordinary to Asian Pacific Islander students coming out of California public high schools. For the youth of California and the nation as a whole, it has already become less provocative to think of queers as “people too.”

The national adoption of a queer frame of mind looms for me as the more interesting challenge in which people could think beyond the constraints of “normal” and embrace the power and beauty of “weird.” Embracing queerness can be liberating and transformational within an API community besieged and belittled by white American standards of gender and sexual ideals. Cultural critic Hoang Tan Nguyen argues for a reconfiguration of negatively perceived Asian male emasculation or more specifically “being a bottom” as a potential site of agency and pleasure. In Pacific Islander studies, historians such as Noenoe K. Silva, Kaleikoa Kaeo, and Lilikala Kame’eleihiwa illustrate how Kanaka Maoli sexuality traditionally intertwined with spirituality to embrace diverse sexualities and genders as an affirmation of community and culture. Native Hawaiian leaders such as Kumu Hinaleimoana Wong-Kalu who were tormented for being “too girlish” found refuge in being Kanaka Maoli.²³

On the ground, a radical change in framework would mean more men embracing anal sex as conceivably pleasurable rather than “disgusting” even if they have no intention of experiencing it themselves. It would mean respect for sex workers and the advancement and promotion of clitoral orgasms. Women would have no shame in masturbating and Americans as a whole would support polyamory in concept, even if an individual personally found having more than one lover confusing. A queer frame of mind would include the wholesale adoption of feminism and eradication of misogyny so that boys could wear dresses to school, survivors would not be blamed for their own rape, and women would be hired and valued in male dominated areas of work and receive equal pay for equal work.

By resetting to a queer frame of mind, Asian America could move out of the shadows of inadequacy that often defines our existence and create new standards of “excellence.” A thick Asian butch with a shaved head working on her pick-up truck, two wispy gay Asians with amazing hair holding hands as they wait for the bus, and a transwoman with a five o’clock shadow walking around in stilettos in the broad light of day, could all become provocative models of Asian America. How great would it be to be valued rather than denigrated for your outrageous difference. This is the transformative power of queer to fuel not just self-acceptance and liberation but also community cohesion and political power.

Political Scientist Cathy Cohen lamented as early as 1997 that even a recently revamped queer politics that had departed deliberately from a previously assimilationist gay and lesbian civil rights movement had lost its transformative potential. To Cohen, radical politics must take place through comrades determined by “one’s relation to power, and not some homogenized identity.” Alliances comprised of those deemed nonnormative and marginal, such as “punks, bulldaggers, and welfare queens” would bring about profound change.²⁴ Theorist Gloria Anzaldúa too had called for the radical reconfiguring of feminism ten years earlier that centered “*los atravesados*,” those who defied the confines of “normal” - “the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half-breed, the half dead.”²⁵ In the long tradition of queer of color theorists, queer Asian American Studies and more broadly queer ethnic studies is never simply about papering over differences in the name of universal love, but rather to acknowledge and welcome differences as a powerful mechanism to consolidate power and strengthen a social movement.

More than two decades have passed since queers first stormed both the Asian American community and academy. Sociologist Dana Takagi in an essay frequently seen as ground zero for queer Asian American studies astutely called for “all of us” to be thinking about sexuality and Asian American history for two rea-

sons - 1) to acknowledge the experience of diverse sexualities and 2) to address the problematic in thinking about racial and sexual identities as simply additive rather than intersectional. She detailed how racial identity is readily visible whereas sexual identity is invisible particularly in the face of Asian American “silence.”²⁶ While Takagi’s essay took important first steps in Asian American studies, the queer API community has changed significantly since its publication in 1994.

“Silence” is less a cultural value among an API population comprised of drastically fewer numbers of Bill Hosokawa’s Nisei, the “quiet Americans,” particularly in a generation flooded with social media that openly shares our private lives loudly even in the absence of audio.²⁷ API public figures are out in larger numbers and those less famous also appear determined to declare their queerness. In 2013, Mia Nakano’s API queer visibility project, which gathered hundreds of portraits of API queer women, and transgender individuals across the nation exhibited at the Smithsonian Asia Pacific American Center’s pop up gallery.²⁸

The American public too is more queer savvy than ever before. Through the public proliferation of queer culture, “straight” America had developed an “eye” for the “queer guy.” In the twenty first-century, a “fruit fly” or “dyke tyke” may likely have a more finely honed gaydar than the just recently out queer. With the aesthetic rise of lesbian chic and geek chic, many API queers also have more legitimate fashion ensembles to provocatively present as queer. These queers in fact will feel that they have no choice *but* to appear queer. For them invisibility is not a reality and visibility is not an option enabled only by verbally coming out since they are almost always read as queer. Among this new generation of up and coming queers, their friends know they were gay even before them; their parents confront and out them while they are still in their teens; and each time they come out to a new friend they are faced with the short answer, “Duh!” For these LGBT folks, their friends, and their allies, queer Asian American studies must be

more than simply acknowledging their existence and negotiating their identities. It serves more defiantly as a site of radical change for not just domestic issues but more urgently for international unrest and global imperialism. Queerness can then be understood as “part love-letter to the past and future” in the words of José Esteban Muñoz, to aim towards a utopia filled with surprise and imagination.²⁹

Notes

1. Ryan J. Reilly and Sabrina Siddiqui, “Supreme Court DOMA Decision Rules Federal Same-Sex Marriage Ban Unconstitutional,” *Huffington Post*, June 26, 2014, accessed July 6, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/26/supreme-court-doma-decision_n_3454811.html.

2. Elisabeth Bumiller, “Obama Ends ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ Policy,” *The New York Times*, July 22, 2011, accessed July 6, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/23/us/23military.html?_r=0.

3. John Hartley, *Uses of Television* (New York: Routledge, 1999); “AfterEllen.com’s Top 50 lesbian and bisexual characters,” AfterEllen.com, accessed July 19, 2014, <http://www.afterellen.com/afterellencoms-top-50-lesbian-and-bisexual-characters/03/2010/>; Jennifer Reed, “Ellen DeGeneres: Public Lesbian Number One,” *Feminist Media Studies* 5 (2005): 23-36. Accessed July 6, 2014, doi: 10.1080/14680770500058165.

4. Suzanna Walters, *All the Rage: The Story of Gay Visibility in America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001); Jaime Skerski, “From Prime-Time to Day Time: The Domestication of Ellen DeGeneres,” *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 4, no. 4 (December 2007): 363-381; Richard Goldstein, *Homocons: The Rise of the Gay Right* (New York: Verso, 2003).

5. For more on openly gay athletes see Eric Anderson, “Openly Gay Athletes: Contesting Hegemonic Masculinity in a Homophobic Environment,” *Gender and Society* 16, no. 6 (December 2002): 860-877.

6. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, ed., *This Bridge Called my Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Watertown, MA: Persephone Press, 1981). For texts on its significance see M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Grace Hong, *The Ruptures of American Capital: Women of Color Feminism and the Cultures of Immigrant Labor* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006). For additional queer Asian work in the 1980s see Kitty Tsui, *The Words of a Woman who Breathes Fire* (New York: Spinsters Ink, 1983); Willyce Kim, *Dancer Dawkins and the California Kid* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1985).

7. Sharon Lim-Hing, ed., *The Very Inside: An Anthology of Writing by Asian and Pacific Islander Lesbian and Bisexual Women* (Toronto: Sister Vision Press, 1994); *Amerasia Journal* 20, no. 1 (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Press, 1994); Alice Hom, “Stories from the Homefront: Perspectives of Asian American Parents with Lesbian Daughters and Gay Sons,” *Amerasia Journal* 20, no. 1 (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Press, 1994), 32.

8. Amy Sueyoshi, *Queer Compulsions: Race, Nation, and Sexuality in the Affairs of Yone Noguchi* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2012); Judy Tzu-Chun Wu, *Doctor Mom Chung of the Fair-Haired Bastards – The Life of a Wartime Celebrity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).

9. AnnaMarie Jagose, *Queer Theory: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 1996). For works constructing African Americans and the disabled as queer see Siobhan Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: New York University Press, 2006). For critiques on queer theory and queer studies broadly as white see Cathy J. Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3 (1997): 437-465; David Eng, Judith Halberstam, and José Esteban

Muñoz, eds., "What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?," special issue, *Social Text* 23, no. 3-4 84-85 (Fall-Winter 2005).

10. Robert Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999); David L. Eng, *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America* (Durham, NC: Duke University press, 2001); Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California press, 2001); Eric Wat, *The Making of a Gay Asian Community: An Oral History of Pre-AIDS Los Angeles* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002); Martin Manalansan, *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003); Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005); Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Eng-Beng Lim, *Brown Boys and Rice Queens: Spellbinding Performance in the Asias* (New York: New York University Press, 2013).

11. Interview with Kiyoshi Kuromiya conducted by Marc Stein, June 17, 1997. Available at <http://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/philadelphia-lgbt-interviews/interviews/kiyoshi-kuromiya>. Accessed July 14, 2014.

12. Interview with Crystal Jang conducted by author, January 31, 2012, San Francisco, CA.

13. Daniel C. Tsang, "Third World Lesbians and Gay Men: Challenges for the Eighties," *Gay Community News* 9: 31 (February 27, 1982), 5.

14. Trinity Ordoná, "Coming Out Together: An Ethnohistory of the Asian Pacific Islander Queer Women's and Transgendered People's Movement of San Francisco" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Santa Cruz, 2000), 134-135.

15. Tomás Almaguer, *Racial Fault Lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Ronald Takaki, *Pau Hana: Plantation Life and Labor in Hawaii, 1835-1920* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press,

1983); Roger Daniels, *The Japanese American Cases: The Rule of Law in Time of War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013); Diane Fujino, *Heartbeat of Struggle: The Revolutionary Life of Yuri Kochiyama* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Diane Fujino, *Samurai Among Panthers: Richard Aoki on Race, Resistance, and a Paradoxical Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

16. Harold Kameya, "Asian American LGBT Pioneers Recognized," San Fernando JACL, accessed 14 July 2014, <http://sfvjacl.weebly.com/1/post/2012/07/apa-lgbt-pioneers-recognized.html>; "Tak Yamamoto, Pioneer Nikkei Gay Activist," *The Rafu Shimpō*, November 19, 2012, accessed July 14, 2014, <http://www.rafu.com/2012/11/tak-yamamoto-pioneer-nikkei-gay-activist-dies-at-74/>.

17. "A Timeline of AIDS," AIDS.gov, accessed July 14, 2014, <http://www.aids.gov/hiv-aids-basics/hiv-aids-101/aids-timeline/>; "Pine is Proud to be a Reconciling Church," Pine United Methodist Church, accessed July 14, 2014, <http://www.pineumc.org/?p=reconciling>.

18. Linh H. Pham, "Another First: Lesbian and Gay Asian Americans to March in Cherry Blossom Parade," Google Groups, accessed July 14, 2014, https://groups.google.com/forum/#!topic/bit.listserv.gaynet/On2kPOFp7_s; Elisa Lee, "Lavender Godzilla," *Third Force* 2, no. 2 (June 30, 1994): 7; Crystal Jang, text message to author, July 14, 2014.

19. Diane Anderwon-Minshall, "Mark Takano Becomes First LGBT Person of Color in Congress," *Advocate.com.*, November 7, 2012, accessed July 14, 2014, <http://www.advocate.com/politics/election/2012/11/07/mark-takano-becomes-first-lgbt-person-color-congress>; Shane Goldmacher, *National Journal*, March 10, 2012, p. 10. "Okaeri: A Nikkei LGBT Gathering," Okaeri-LA.org, accessed July 20, 2014, <http://www.okaeri-la.org/>.

20. Molly Fumia. *Honor Thy Children: One Family's Journey to Wholeness* (Berkeley: Conari Press, 1997); Harold Kameya, "Our Journey," Network on Religion and Justice, accessed July 19, 2014, <http://www.netrj.org/?p=library&id=2>; *In God's House:*

Asian American Lesbian and Gay Families in the Church (Berkeley, CA: PANA Institute, 2007), DVD; Marsha Aizumi, *Two Spirits, One Heart: A Mother, Her Transgender Son and Their Journey to Love and Acceptance* (Bronx: Magnus Books, 2012).

21. "For a More Queer-Friendly Japanese America," *Nichi Bei Weekly*, 29 July 2010 – 4 August 2010, p. 2.

22. For more on Harvey Milk see Randy Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982).

23. Hoang Tan Nguyen, *A View from the Bottom: Asian American Masculinity and Sexual Representation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014); Lisa Kahaleole Hall, "Navigating Our Own 'Sea of Islands': Remapping a Theoretical Space for Hawaiian Women and Indigenous Feminism," *Wicazo Sa Review* 24, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 15-38; *Kunu Hina*, directed by Dean Hamer and Joe Wilson (San Francisco: ITVS, 2014), DVD.

24. Cohen, 438.

25. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza / La Frontera* (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987), 3.

26. Dana Takagi, "Maiden Voyage: Excursion into Sexuality and Identity Politics in Asian America," *Amerasia Journal* 20, no. 1 (Los Angeles: UCLA Asian American Studies Press, 1994): 1-17.

27. Takagai cites Hosokawa in her elaboration of "silence" and Asian Americans. Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1969).

28. Gwendolyn, "The Academic Feminist: Summer at the Archives with the Visibility Project," *Feministing*, accessed July 21, 2014, <http://feministing.com/2013/08/01/the-academic-feminist-summer-at-the-archives-with-the-visibility-project/>.

29. "Cruising Utopia," NYU Press, accessed July 21, 2014, http://nyupress.org/books/book-details.aspx?bookId=1091#.U82_FKj-D72Q; José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).