Journeys, Itineraries, Horizons

An Introduction

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I. Q & A in the Twenty-First Century

Over twenty years ago, David L. Eng and Alice Y. Hom edited Q & A: Queer in Asian America, which was to become a canonical work in Asian American studies and queer studies. Lauded by scholars, activists, artists, and community members, this award-winning work was one of the first anthologies to offer a critical yet sensitive collection of a variety of Asian American queer voices. What does it mean to publish Q & A in the twenty-first century? What does a book about the queerness of Asians in the Americas do in shedding light on recent events that seem at first to be radical departures from the late twentieth century when the first iteration of Q & A was launched? At that time, the AIDS pandemic was a major public concern, LGBT studies was slowly gaining institutional ground, struggles for gay marriage and for gays in the military were the prime issues in many LGBT activist agendas, and queerness was becoming a resonant umbrella signifier and as an analytic. But where are we now?

We, the editors, gesture to both the material presence and affective aspirations of a collectivity and to a fragile yet crucial coalition of multiple communities. Have queers come a long way since “the maiden voyage,” as Dana Takagi termed it in her formative essay that chronicled the advent of gay and lesbian studies focusing on Asian Americans? Or have we lost our way in the midst of the increasing xenophobic, brutal, and increasingly blatant violent inequalities wrought by a world filled with populists, white supremacists, capitalists, unabashed homophobes, and transphobes? AIDS is
still a raging problem in the Global South and in Black and Latinx communities in the United States; poverty and violence pervade communities of color in North America; refugees are being turned away or incarcerated at various borders; reproductive health and transgender rights are being threatened. Despite the initial celebration of the gay marriage ruling and marveling at the triumphs of the transgender revolution, there is more work to be done and even more daunting obstacles to surmount. We need to think of these events more as way stations to something better and more capacious, to other horizons, and to the not-yet-here. Currently, we all live in an era where political regimes are dismantling the progressive political and cultural advances LGBTQ communities have gained, and these regimes are cruelly devastating the fruitful coalitions that have formed through the years. This collection is built around these realities, and its relevance is buoyed by the vital aspirations and struggles for our endurance and survival.

Q & A is not a mere sequel to the original volume. It is not an additional appendage to an original site. First, it is a series of continuing meditations and conversations on enduring questions, issues, and struggles that have persisted and vexed Asian North American LGBTQ individuals, communities, and agendas. These conversations are by no means linear. In fact, as the array of scholarly and creative works proves, this anthology’s trajectories are multiple and often multidirectional. By imagining alternative ways to confront these issues, this volume reframes seemingly vexing chronic issues by thinking beyond preset ideas, frameworks, political stances, and emotional composes.

Second, this volume is a space for opening new vistas, geographies, experiences, bodies, identities, and communities that have not, until this moment, been acknowledged if not made visible. It is clear that many other voices and communities were not part of the first iteration of Q & A. Political groups, queer studies, and cultural productions in the twenty-first century have indeed given rise to movements that have questioned the canonization of LGBT/queer studies in both popular culture and in the academy. In this regard, writings about transgender phenomena, disability, and settler colonialism are placed at the forefront of this volume. The editors envision these works not as mere additives but rather as complex vectors that reshape if not upend the typical idea of queerness as always renegade sexuality and sociality bounded by Euro-American historical and cultural exigencies.


The “queer Asian America” that the subtitle alludes to is no longer tethered to its long-standing mainstream political and cultural strictures. Asian
America is not anchored to the politically demarcated geography and situated history but rather is constituted by multistranded postnational temporal and spatial convergences and entanglements. This anthology aims to conceptually and politically reconfigure these strictures within and across scales of body, city, nation, region, and global. We are not discarding the value of the original idea for the title, and this volume is sensitive to the decades of vibrant intellectual work in Asian American studies as well as political organizing and coalition building in various Asian American LGBTQ activist groups. That said, we recognize that this volume comes out of this current period of ongoing growth not only in critical ethnic studies and American studies but also in the emergence of area studies–based queer studies.

What, then, is the “Asia” in queer Asian America? Or more appropriately, what does the idea of a queer Asian America do in relation to the idea of “Asia”? First, we recognize the ongoing effects of the vestiges of imperial domination, neocolonial infringements, and other political maneuvers of an increasingly vexed “empire” of the United States of America. These enduring vestiges have spurred migrations and return migrations between Asia and North America. Asian Americans have had the long history of historical exclusion in the realm of immigration history and citizenship; the Chinese Exclusion Laws of the nineteenth century and Filipinos as “national wards” (not citizens) in the early twentieth century are just a few prime examples of the fraught relationship of Asians in the North American continent with the nodes of race, nationhood, and citizenship, embroiled as they were in the classed, sexualized, and gendered dimensions of difference. We continue to recognize and appreciate the particularity of the experiences of Asian American and Asian Canadian queers in terms of these legacies and conditions.

That said, this anthology also confronts the promise and limitation of a “queer Asian America” despite its postnationalist, transregional, and transnational repositionings and aspirations. We have involved people in Canada and other places not just to have more expansive geographic inclusivity but also to question the very perimeters of our conceptual, theoretical, cultural, and political understandings. Queer Asian America is part of a set of transnational entanglements and nodes that considers its emplacement not as a central hub but rather as a point of convergences, encounters, and possible collisions or clashes. We acknowledge and are sensitive to the fact that much of the early scholarship in queer Asian American studies has been seen as imposing a Euro-American–centric view of “Asian” queerness, especially in light of the glaring institutional and economic disparities. However, we hope to harvest the playful yet critical openness of “queer” in light of the various contingencies that face scholarship and activism in Asian America.
and Asia. We also recognize the new politico-economic power matrix involving China. We appreciate and are constantly learning from emerging contemporary cross-national, intra-Asian political and cultural queer institutions and practices.

This collection further “queers” the meanings of “Asian” and “America” by not simply forging a cumulative diverse gathering of queer-identified voices, bodies, and experiences but by expanding the contours’ spatial and temporal boundaries that enfold issues of decoloniality; sovereignty; and cross-border, cross-racial, and imperial entanglements from the United States–Mexico nexus to those of Israel and Palestine. Therefore, this volume dismantles Asian America by including issues and debates beyond the confines of the United States of America; by questioning conceptual, geographic, and historical boundaries; and through breaking down epistemologies of queer as emanating only from specific conditions that cannot be easily universalized. We also recognize the need to accelerate the growth of transnational and inter- or intraregional networks of scholars, activists, and cultural producers to further complicate the understandings of queer and “Asia.”

To echo and relocate Howard Chiang’s and Alvin K. Wong’s felicitous concept of “Queer Asia as Critique,” this volume envisions a queer Asian America as part of a dialogical assemblage of queer Asias (emphasis ours) by approaching meanings and materialities surrounding queerness through an open-ended approach. We aim to defuse and “reorient” queer Asian American studies’ Global North–centric optics by enhancing continuing efforts to listen and learn from queer Asian Studies and other paradigms. This volume attempts to take on the gnarled, enmeshed relationships between desires, bodies, social hierarchies, and cultural meanings across temporal and spatial scales. We take inspiration from ongoing developments in queer Sinophone studies, critical regional studies, and frameworks such as the “transpacific.” We seek to frame our locations and cultural productions in the political and academic institutions of North America and the privileges we enjoy within these unequal geopolitical realities. That said, we look forward to strengthening ongoing institutional and informal cooperative efforts between scholars in area and ethnic studies, and between those based in North America and in Asia.

What does “queer” in “queer Asian America” do? This collection’s understanding of queer comes from the emergence and dissemination of queer of color critique and the continuing legacy of women of color feminism. “Queer” is not just about nonheterosexual desire and coupling or non-normative gender behavior. In fact, it reinforces what has been offered in the first iteration of Q&A, that sex can never be divorced from its complex entanglements with gender, class, race, and ethnicity. Diasporic migration itself is a queer
process as it uncovers and dismantles the normative masculinist carapace of nationhood and emplaces the “migrant” or diasporic subject within unstable, nonheteronormative, and often precarious states of being. In other words, Asians, who compose some of the biggest numbers of migrants and mobile subjects crossing borders both in North America and in other parts of the world, wittingly or unwittingly participate in this queering or a political and cultural process of exfoliating layers of normative, often violent precepts of social order and deviance. This anthology is one of many ongoing efforts to translate, transfer, discard, or refuse circulating ideas of queer scholarship and activism that highlight the perils of universalism and the rich potentials of multiple “particulars.” We seek to participate in the ongoing broad discussions between queer studies scholars, artists, and activists in the North and South because many of our contributors straddle this troubled divide.

**The Work of Cultural Production and Activism**

A significant distinction of this volume is that it has a noticeable decrease in academic essays—significantly less than the first Q & A. It includes more contributions from activists, community organizers, creative writers, and visual artists. The editors have their own varying histories and experiences with nonacademic locations that will be evident in the acknowledgments piece that consists of the editors’ individual odysseys. Queer cultural producers have always been the pivotal fulcrum for energizing theoretical frameworks and political agendas. Cultural productions and community work have always been a major part of a queer vision of the world and have always been intertwined. The editors strongly believe that instead of paying mere lip service to this important mesh of relationships, visions, and institutions, this volume is committed to centering the work and voices of these groups of social agents who have been influential both within and outside the ivory tower of academia. One example is the Trinidadian Canadian filmmaker Richard Fung, whose canonical cinematic oeuvre and his classic essay “Looking for My Penis” have been major sources of inspiration for generations of Asian North American queers. The contributions of Fung and other Asian North American poets, filmmakers, and visual, musical, and performance artists have been the persistent sparks—that animate and fuel ongoing questions and creative responses to the possibilities of queer Asian America.

This collection’s emphasis on cultural production sheds light on affects, postures, ideas, and feelings that undergird queer activism, education, and scholarship that often circumvent the imposition of universalist, neoliberal metrics. Indeed, personal testimonies, poetry, and visual arts are more often
seen as unwieldy, unruly, and unscholarly—exemplifying a queerness that often evades neoliberal governance “standards,” measures, and modernist empiricism. The cultural genres represented in this collection offer this mode of queerness that not only informs but often also inspires, unsettles, and amuses, among other things. In other words, these cultural genres animate and propel movement into new goals, visions, agendas, and horizons.

Like many anthologies, this work is never a complete one. We admit that what we present in the following pages is a mere glimpse or a snapshot of what is happening now—after twenty years. We do not aspire to be the final word. Instead, we humbly offer this anthology not as a kind of denouement or triumphant conclusion but rather as fodder and fuel to animate and energize future dialogues and fiery debates. In the spirit of queer in queer theory and studies, this volume aspires (à la José Esteban Muñoz) to that horizon of things that are yet to be, working through and investing in struggles from the past and in the present for that distant future. With tempered optimism and a fervent aspirational outlook, the essays in this collection move us further toward that ever-shifting vanishing point as we look around ourselves in the midst of multiple swirling collective energies and desire, and with burning hope, we reach out to the world.

II. Itineraries: An Unruly Map of Chapters

There is already something amiss when we try to put order in an otherwise recalcitrant collection. Recalcitrance is not just idiosyncratic willfulness but rather is based on the creative paths and trajectories of many of these works. Some people might call it “scholarship lite” since there are not a lot of scholarly citational practices in poetry and other creative genres. However, we assert that the inclusion of various creative works implies that there is no singular way in which critical thought can be formulated and channeled. We want to expand the goal of this collection from this limited notion of critical thought to a more expansive idea of the fostering of sensibilities—skills that enable people to empathize and make meaningful connections that escape the neoliberal metrics of higher education and knowledge production in general.

We confess that writing this part of the introduction was quite uncomfortable. Is it mere bad curatorial or editorial skills, or is it in a discomfort at trying to rein in the multiple genres? Recalcitrance is not mere direct refusal or resistance. Rather, the various contributions point to the ways in which things never comfortably fit in unitary or coherent parts. They connect and converse to various conversations within and outside this collection. For the sake of the reader and under pressure from publication conventions, we tried to commit to paper the various fragile and contentious
connections between works. This part is a normative mandate from above, so we invite the readers to peruse, skim, and read with abandon. This is a messy map, so please revel in the mingling of voices, images, and ideas. Feel free to design your own routes of reading.

**Part I, Enduring Spaces and Bodies**

This set of visual art, poetry, scholarly essays, autobiographical meditations, and analyses of histories and popular culture gestures to enduring everyday racial, gender, and sexual experiences of misrecognition, microaggressions, loss, and trauma when racialized Asian bodies—for example, Chinese, Pinay, Tamil, Jewish, Korean, femme, feminine presenting, gender nonconforming, transgender, transmasculine, queer, mixed race, mother, immigrant, and “foreign”—are on the line, called into question, pathologized, marginalized, or violated. Danni Lin creates “portraits of inadequacy” through large scroll paintings that combine “Western masterpiece materials and Chinese symbolism.” The paintings also include self-portraits that suggest the artist’s complex relationship with Chinese-ness and queerness. Kimberly Alidio’s poem, “All the Pinays are straight, all the queers are Pinoy, but some of us,” evokes shame, grief, pain, an LOL in your face queer femme Pinay fierceness. Jih-Fei Cheng deconstructs and problematizes the “Chinese Jew” figure in the context of science, race, and labor. Cheng argues that the “reprisal of the Chinese Jew” in current scholarship, popular literature, and genetics research complicates, and even undoes, the racial/ethnic categories of “Chinese,” “Jewish,” “Asian,” and by extension “Chinese American,” “Jewish American,” and “Asian American.” Performance poet and spoken word and hip-hop artist D’Lo reflects on personal experiences to discuss their queerness and how their mother/amma inspired and became a part of their creative processes and performances. Mixing personal, creative, and scholarly voices, Patti Duncan also interrogates her mixed-race family histories across generations and from the subjectivity of a mother writing to her son. In addressing various historical fragments related to the personal and political, race, gender, sexuality, and U.S. empire, Duncan also reveals healing and wholeness. Douglas S. Ishii compares and contrasts two television shows about Chinese diasporic family lives, *Fresh off the Boat* (United States) and *Family Law* (Australia), to discuss the concept of “lateral diasporas” and “queer adaptations,” which “reorient vertical relationships” and reveal alternative intimacies and socialities. As a group, contributors use art, poetry, hybrid writing, and critical scholarship to reveal how a queer lens that fiercely takes into account other axes of difference and structures of power (e.g., race/racial formation, imperialism, militarization) also facilitates important personal and political critiques that put the spotlight on racial, gender, and
sexual injustices, and just as crucial, how we can create racial, gender, and sexual justice through visual art, poetic forms, memory work, and reflexive and critical diasporic scholarship.

Part II, Queer Unsettling: Geographies, Sovereignties

This part, comprised primarily of academic essays plus a set of poems, offers different ways of considering queer Asian subjects and subjectivities in local and global economies of desire situated largely outside of the continental United States in locales such as mainland Southeast Asia, the Philippines, Hawai‘i, Palestine, the United Kingdom, South Africa, and the U.S./Mexico border. The essays and poems describe what happens or may happen when queer Asian American subjects travel, crossing different national borders as a result of immigration or displacement resulting from war; tourism; returns to homelands, occupied places, or sites of apartheid. Through unflinching poetry, Việt Lê provides us an itinerary of queer and refugee desire, displacement, and pleasures. Kim Compoc analyzes racial and sexual border zones in Ang Lee’s 2005 film Brokeback Mountain and R. Zamora Linmark’s 2011 novel Leche to unpack complicated race and class politics that intersect on queer brown bodies in motion. Sony Coráñez Bolton writes of Filipinx houseboys and housemaids in Bryon Escalon Roley’s 2001 novel American Son. Coráñez Bolton argues that the novel reveals how Asian American experience is inevitably refracted through and changed by the U.S.–Mexican corridor in early 1990s post-riots Los Angeles. Vanita Reddy addresses queer South Asian desires, Blackness, and the apartheid state in South Africa in Shamim Sarif’s 2008 novel The World Unseen. Reddy’s essay “foregrounds the role that intimacy, affect, and aesthetics play in comparative racialization, particularly between Black and Asian diasporic populations.” Jennifer Lynn Kelly addresses “pink washing, tourism, and the (in) visibility of Israeli state violence” through critical analyses of gay tourism materials and reflections on fieldwork at pride events such as those in Palestine and Israel. Kelly ultimately argues, “Israeli state violence is thus not rendered invisible by Israeli gay tourist initiatives, but rather it is selectively celebrated as both necessary and justified.” Finally, Reid Uratani develops the concepts of “Asian Settler abstraction” and “administrative aloha” through his critical analysis of gay tourism materials in Hawai‘i. Ultimately, Uratani suggests that “Hawai‘i becomes legible as a confluence of contingent historical processes whose efficacies are dispersed and resistant to tidy narrations.”

This part is highly significant in that it includes some of the latest queer Asian American studies scholarship on tourism. While the field of queer studies (broadly defined) has focused on the phenomenon of “gay tourism,”
and in the field of feminist studies there has been attention on (gendered, racialized, classed, and placed) sex work and sex tourism, scholarship in the field of Asian American studies in the last couple of decades seemed to stall. Essays in this part reignite and reanimate important conversations regarding tourism and differently situated mobilities. They also describe and analyze other types of border crossings, not just through geography or spaces but when particular bodies cross established (or policed) racial and class lines in different temporal moments—for example, in the context of settler colonialism as argued by Uratani; neocolonialism from the contributions of Lê, Compoc, and Corañez; and racial apartheid as discussed by Reddy. The scholars in this part also model how to closely read and interpret literary and cinematic works. They demonstrate how the seemingly fleeting moments in the queer economy of desire when traveling, moving, staying still, getting settled, crossing borders, hanging out in cafés, walking on streets, dancing in clubs, organizing for social justice, feeling alive and present, and fucking your lover(s) are laced with power and pleasure always; complicity and privilege oftentimes; resistance, decoloniality, radicalism, feminism, longing, beauty, shame, loss, and resilience sometimes.

**Part III, Building Justice: Queer Movements in Asian North America**

The authors in this part—Eric Estuar Reyes, Eric C. Wat, Amy Sueyoshi, Sasha Wijeyeratne, Glenn D. Magpantay, and Kim Tran—are scholars, teachers, and activists who also participate in the movements they document and analyze. From their particular perches, they invite the reader to ponder the multiple spaces, identities, and contexts of the activism of queer Asians from local, national, and international perspectives. Amy Sueyoshi’s article provides a broad overview of queer Asian and Pacific Islander (API) history from the nineteenth century to the present while the other authors—Sasha Wijeyeratne, Glenn D. Magpantay, Eric Reyes and Eric Wat, and Kim Tran—offer specific lived experiences and examples of how our horizons have shifted given what others have done before us. How can we imagine different possibilities for our future? How can we connect the everyday experiences to larger political narratives? Where do we succeed in moving beyond identity politics and engaging in the hard work of solidarity practices? The essays by Eric Reyes and Eric Wat and by Kim Tran include the voices and the singing of those on the frontlines in the past and in the current day. The authors recognize they are not in a position to make grand speculations, but they allow for the multiplicity and provide a mapping of where we’ve been and how we’ve made our change for API LGBTQ communities. Sasha Wijeyeratne’s essay provides an on-the-ground account of
their activism in grassroots organizations around solidarity and allyship. Glenn D. Magpantay’s essay provides a macro-level account of political organizing, community building, and advocacy by API LGBTQ organizations across the United States.

The articles by Reyes and Wat, Sueyoshi, Wijeyeratne, Tran, and Magpantay knit together the many ways API LGBTQ communities have worked toward justice in small and big ways, how we have invited our families and broader communities in our lives, and how organizing continues to be a critical way to make change. From an oral history roundtable discussion to a personal narrative, historical overviews, and connecting cultural production, we are witnessing the continuation of legacies, one that tells the stories of solidarity, the challenges within our own families and communities, and how we shift our own understandings between and among generations of LGBTQ Asian Americans.

**Part IV, Messing up the Archives and Circuits of Desire**

The works in this part examine politics of histories—as in LGBT dominant “mainstream” history (read: white, male, gay, and U.S. American), as well as dominant Asian American histories (read: straight and/or heteronormative and gender conforming). Who gets to set the terms of Asian American queer history? How does Asian American queer history “mess up” the archive not as a mere “repository” of facts but as a space for dwelling and struggle?

Ching-In Chen’s poetry subtly suggests the forms and locations of intimate histories through the flow of desire and history in various locations such as Sumatra and Manila and their containment through and in letters, oral histories, and baskets. Joyce Gabiola confronts the vicissitudes of actual “official” archives and challenges their institutional strictures and their racialization. Chris A. Eng revisits the historicity of the Japanese internment camps by productively reframing them in terms of kitsch and camp. C. Winter Han and Paul Michael Leonardo Atienza engage with virtual archives of gay sociality. Han takes Craigslist as a historical and cultural arena where tensions of interracial desires and intimacies are troubled and unsettled. Through a life history of a Filipino American gay man, Atienza examines Grindr as a location where pleasures and perils of online dating apps are the grounds by which shifting racialized standards of gay male desirability complicate the technology’s promise of efficient and fulfilling sociosexual encounters. Anthony Yooshin Kim and Margaret Rhee’s essay offers a reflective response to Jee Yeun Lee’s provocation from the 1998 volume that maps out contemporary routes and challenges of queer Korean American studies.
The artists and scholars in this part collectively illustrate how and why queer histories and queer Asian and American critical engagement with archives, special collections, objects, historiography, and narratives produces critical insights. They show how queerness may playfully and powerfully disrupt dominant, well-known, but now tired histories and established conventional gender binaries, imperial racial hierarchies, and (hetero)normative notions of the past. In so doing, as a group, they show us how to queerly interpret histories with an intersectional attention to race, class, gender, sexuality, and location, and they point out the possibilities and pleasures messing with archives and reimagining different queer and Asian futures.

Part V, Burning Down the House—Institutional Queerings

Social institutions have queer potentials despite their roles in maintaining and propping up power and inequality. The essays in this part lay out the varied sites and places where a queer intersectional analysis offers alternative sets of queer collective action and ways of being that interrogate the limits and possibilities of social institutions. From universities to mental health fields to religious settings, the essays offer a productive and radical set of institutional restructuring and reconfiguration that departs from neoliberal metrics of success and failure. In Long T. Bui’s essay, the military complex might seem to be an odd site for exploring queerness, but he argues that the experiences and tactics of Asian American soldiers such as Dan Choi have effectively been a major source of critical insights about the facile connections between military service and “good legitimate citizenship.” John Paul Catungal portrays the university as another place of queer navigation and disruption, particularly as higher education (in this case Canadian) has become entrenched in the unjust and rabidly inhumane precepts of neoliberal capitalism. However, with the presence of faculty of color and the deployment of queer of color critique, the university is made habitable and even a more vibrant site of learning despite ongoing precarity in the academic field. Queering the curriculum through intersectional approaches is one strategy in which the “house” of learning is transformed from a factory of professional skilled workers for the labor economy to agents for imagining and building the foundations for alternative educational futures. The mental health field is often considered a race-blind public service field, but the terrain is filled with inequalities, and more important, it is rife with the destructive processes of the privatization and monetization of “mental health well-being.” To counter this trend, Mimi Khúc argues for a “queer” rethinking of clinical mainstream definitions of mental health issues according to the contingencies of racialized, classed, and gendered immigrant
Excerpt: Temple University Press

experiences and the works of Asian American critical theorists. Three essays involve the queer dimensions of religious institutions, practices, and experiences. May Farrales’s essay focuses on the Catholic Church in Canada and its influence on Filipinx Canadian lives, not as easy extensions of each other but rather as complicated by the challenges of race, class, and everyday life. Spirituality and sexuality are not antipodal extremes but rather are intersecting lines of ideas and practices that complicate Filipinx Canadian lives. In other words, migration to Canada is not a “secularizing” process but involves other queer possibilities, even with the presence of religion. Sung Won Park offers his “personal theological reflection” as a Korean American transman who envisions the possibilities for Korean American immigrant churches to be transformed from institutions of transphobia into welcoming spaces through minjung theology. Pahole Sookkasikon unpacks the queer Orientalist underpinnings of the tensions surrounding two Thai temples in Berkeley, California, and Los Angeles and lays out the literal and figurative nourishing religious processes and rituals involved in Thai American community activist formation against heteronormative Orientalized neighborhood zoning politics.

Part VI, Mediating Queer

Scholars and writers in this part collectively explore the vicissitudes of Asian-ness and queerness in various media and sensorial regimes. Kay Ulanday Barrett’s poetry evokes meaning-making worlds in various intimate encounters, including those of YouTube imagery, that enable various affective intensities and emotional stances around such intimacies and disabilities. The essays by Thea Quiray Tagle, Thomas Xavier Sarmiento, and Casey Mecija focus on queer Filipinx performativities’ postcolonial “excesses.” Using the cinematic production on the Andrew Cunanan murders, Sarmiento argues that these excesses elude racial and sexual legibilities in the United States; “excess” here is used in the geographic and spatial sense, whereby Filipinx subjects do not neatly align with the nation (Philippines) or with the diaspora (United States), or with either dominant East and West Coast perspectives or established LGBTQ cultures, and are instead routed through the Midwest region. Quiray Tagle and Mecija point to corporeal excesses (as in gyrating bodies or monsters and vampires) by thinking through queerness via (racialized) Filipinx kids and notions of queer childhood and futurity. Emily Raymundo offers an important critical analysis on a revised contemporary version and production of M Butterfly in the context of Trump-era “post-multiculturalism.” The part is rounded out by Xine Yao’s critical essay on a graphic novel where tarot cards and the occult play
a central role in a queer mixed Japanese Canadian teen character’s “disidentificatory tactics,” which anticipate later popular QTPOC (Queer and Trans People of Color) tarot cards. The scholars and writers collectively show how queerness and Asian-ness are navigated and mediated through a range of popular culture, media, literature, and poetry. Contributors model for us to closely read diverse kinds of texts to reveal how race and queerness operate in surprising, unexpected, and complex ways.

Part VII, Finding One’s Way: Routes of Lives and Bodies

Contributors in this part collectively use autobiographical writing and poetry to remember and reinscribe powerful personal and family-related experiences concerning bodies, health, disability, gender transitions, bodily trauma, death, healing, resilience, and social action. The contributors in this part remind us that the personal is still political in the twenty-first century and that taking the time to remember and write important life moments as queer Asians has the power to touch others. This is not a concluding part. It is one that refuses termination or redemption but rather prefers a collection of moments of dwelling and lingering amid dreams, deaths, and illness. These works are not mere displays of emotions but are powerful illustrations of how queers of color confront, endure, and survive various vicissitudes and contingencies. What is perhaps stunning in all of these contributions is that they form a generous and brave commensal set of narratives about struggles that are always kept under wraps, submerged in the unconscious, or cast into the realm of forgetting. They are not emotional stalemates, final endpoints, or dramatic endings but rather pivotal nodes of healing or “moving on” toward more complete itineraries of intimacies and histories.

Leslie Mah and Maiana Minahal read and rewrite their (queer, racialized, gendered, and classed) bodies and address how difficult it can be to navigate health-care systems and medical diagnoses; how healing journeys take many twists and turns; and how biology is not destiny. Kinship and the familial are ties that bind yet also set queer free. They are not always the spaces of incarceration that mainstream LGBTQ narratives often portray them to be. As a parent, Marsha Aizumi also recalls how (Asian) queer politics, sensibilities, orientations, connections, and personal and community knowledge have the power to transform lives and heal different kinds of bodies and identities. Karen Tongson embraces the memory of her grandmother, Mamang, as pivotal in her own self-formation. Syd Yang offers a meditation about healing that weaves the biological, the historical, and the diasporic. traci kato-kiriyama’s poem is a reverie about intimacies of places and people that blur both the past and the future.
The works in this part collectively echo and complicate past LGBTQ anthologies from the 1980s and 1990s that always included a significant number of autobiographical narratives. The anthologies from back in the day were a way to write from queer and Asian perspectives or as queer people of color (to give a few examples of featured positionalities and subjectivities), and readers in various communities often eagerly awaited them to find representations of themselves and their experiences. Thus, this part can be seen as significantly building on and dialoguing with the aforementioned literary legacies. Finally, readers of this part have the opportunity to bear witness to writers’ personal truths and memories. Thus, as they read these queer Asian personal narratives, there is a strong possibility and hope that they will be deeply moved and hopefully forge some connection and the beginning of an emotional and political attunement that can animate and energize their own healing journeys.

III. Inspirations and Hope: Foundations and Futures

*Part I, Enduring Spaces and Bodies*

This collection of works gestures to enduring ideas of political and conceptual genealogies, openings, and inaugural thoughts about being in a queer racialized world.

Danni Lin  
Kimberly Alidio  
Jih-Fei Cheng  
D’Lo  
Patti Duncan  
Douglas S. Ishii

*Part II, Queer Unsettlings: Geographies, Sovereignties*

This part is a series of conceptual and theoretical reconfigurations as it highlights issues of queerness in relation to settler colonialism and other political forms of spatial inhabitation and divisions.

Việt Lê  
Kim Compoc  
Sony Coráñez Bolton  
Vanita Reddy  
Jennifer Lynn Kelly  
Reid Uratani
Part III, Building Justice: Queer Movements in Asian North America

This set of essays and works revolves around varied interrogations about the provocative intimacy between social justice and queerness.

Eric Estuar Reyes and Eric C. Wat
Amy Sueyoshi
Sasha Wijeyeratne
Kim Tran
Glenn D. Magpantay

Part IV, Messing up the Archives and Circuits of Desire

This set of writing engages with multiple political and cultural implications of various fields or dwelling spaces of knowledge and desire from academic fields to various cultural forms.

Ching-In Chen
Joyce Gabiola
Chris A. Eng
C. Winter Han
Paul Michael Leonardo Atienza
Anthony Yooshin Kim and Margaret Rhee

Part V, Burning Down the House—Institutional Queerings

This part lays out the varied sites and places where a queer intersectional analysis offers alternative sets of collective action and ways of being. From universities to the mental health field to various religious settings, the essays offer a productive and often radical set of queer reconfigurations of institutions and social structures.

Long T. Bui
John Paul Catungal
Mimi Khúc
May Farrales
Sung Won Park
Pahole Sookkasikon

Part VI, Mediating Queer

This set of essays explores the vicissitudes of Asianess and queerness in various media and sensorial regimes.
Kay Ulanday Barrett
Thomas Xavier Sarmiento
Casey Mecija
Thea Quiray Tagle
Emily Raymundo
Xine Yao

Part VII, Finding One’s Way: Routes of Lives and Bodies

This set of essays, poems, and artwork offer multiple meditations and affective inquiries into diasporic contingencies, precarity, mourning, and the future as framed within a queer of color vantage.

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Acknowledgments and Itineraries: To Whom?
For Whom? From Where? To Where?

This book, like many intellectual and political projects, is a journey, or more appropriately a conglomeration of ongoing and future travels. While a book is a site and a location for collective world making, we suggest that we take location not as a bounded site but, as James Clifford has wisely described it, as an itinerary, a process, and an unfolding. In the spirit of this unfolding and in trying to present the coming together of three editors, we turn to our own individual voyages to complicate our seemingly unitary voice and singular destination in this volume.

Q & A is a product of various legacies, travails, and travel. One of the pillars of this anthology’s was formed on the basis of the three editors’ visions and experiences. How did the three of us come together? “Together” here is not a fusion but rather a set of crossings of political, intellectual, and social networks and visions. While this might seem unusual if not seemingly narcissistic, we want to highlight the importance of the personal with the social, as this collection is a tribute to the necessary connections between individual and collective endeavors and aspirations. In other words, coediting is a form of queer connection not merely between queer identified persons per se but rather about the uncomfortable yet productive juxtaposition of lives and projects. This connection or togetherness is future oriented...
not in terms of reproducibility but as an enduring coalitional commitment to reaching the horizon of a queer Asian America. In this part, we combine the biographical as a way to acknowledge, give thanks, and recognize the generosity of people who have buoyed our lives and fueled the energies behind this endeavor. We have crafted brief narratives of our individual personal odysseys and professional itineraries that have led us to this project that in turn become the platforms for recognizing debts and offering gratitude.

Alice Y. Hom

When *Q & A: Queer in Asian America* reached the milestone of its twentieth anniversary publication in 2018, I couldn’t help but feel a bit of pride and disbelief that this anthology continues to be taught in a variety of courses ranging from queer studies, ethnic studies, and gender studies and is still relevant to a broad audience. When I meet queer Asian Americans of a certain age, I typically get an excited reaction, and they share how *Q & A* made a difference in their lives or inspired them to get involved with the queer Asian American community. As a community historian with a fascination with dates, I acknowledged the anniversary by writing a personal essay about what it meant for this anthology to be published. I did a quick phone interview with David L. Eng, the coeditor, and we reminisced about project and what it meant for us in our lives.

The significance of *Q & A* was its “narrative plentitude,” a term coined by Viet Thanh Nguyen, at a time when that wasn’t a reality for Asian American queers in academia or in our communities. This anthology brought together academics, activists, and cultural workers who submitted articles, roundtable interviews, personal essays, and artwork that represented a vibrant queer Asian America. David still gets emails from gay Asian Americans who struggle with the whiteness of the queer community and the dominant racial images of masculinity that don’t reflect Asian American men. They share the difficulties of being an academic in a racist institution or department and the difficulties of coming out. I’m often approached at community events with people telling me *Q & A* made them feel like they belonged and even helped them in their coming out.

When David and I set out to collect articles for *Q & A*, we were both graduate students immersed in our academic pursuits while simultaneously involved in community activism with the Asian American queer community. I was in my first year as a Ph.D. student in a history program and knew I wanted to conduct research on lesbians of color and trace the activism of these women in various social movements. I loved being a graduate student because I could focus on the research and write about
communities who were erased and marginalized within the published books and articles I read in the academy. I wanted to ensure community voices were heard, documented, and shared with the academic and wider public audience. Since I was trained in Asian American Studies Masters Program at UCLA, I felt indebted to the teachings of the early Asian American movement activists from the 1960s and 1970s, a time when the phrase “serve the people” was the rallying cry.

While I completed my Ph.D. program, I also knew that a tenure-track teaching position was not my end goal. I never wanted to become a professor, and I took jobs that allowed me to blend my academic endeavors with community organizing. I worked at Occidental College as the director of the Intercultural Community Center, where I worked on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and social justice, which provided me the opportunity to work with students and faculty on intersectionality issues and allowed me to teach outside of the classroom. Cocurricular workshops, trainings, and programs became the way for me to make a difference.

The last fifteen years of my professional career has been in the philanthropy sector, where I focused on advocacy for increased funding to people of color and LGBTQ communities, specifically LGBTQ Asian American communities. Lack of funding continues to be a critical issue for Asian American issues and communities, and I worked at Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy as the director of the Queer Justice Fund to address this need. AAPIP’s Queer Justice Fund provided funding to support the fragile infrastructure and build the capacity of LGBTQ AAPI organizations with paid staff. In terms of my activism and community work, I came to a full-circle moment where I used to document and write about the LGBTQ Asian American organizing and community, and in the late 2000s I began funding them. Now in my career, I’m the director of equity and social justice at Northern California Grantmakers and can work at a larger scale of moving foundations to practice racial equity with an intersectional lens in their grant making and within the internal policies and operations of organizations.

When presented with the opportunity to revisit Q & A and work on a new anthology for the times we are in now, I was intrigued because the academic work is not as close to me since I left working in higher education. I spoke with David, and he declined because his current work wasn’t in queer studies. While I’m not in academia anymore, I wanted to make sure that this anthology had community voices and experiences and included activists, artists, and creatives. When I learned that Martin F. Manalansan IV and Kale Fajardo would be the other coeditors, I was excited to work with the both of them, having known them over the years.

In some ways, because Q & A was one of the earliest anthologies to gather personal, political, and academic essays on queer Asian Americans,
it had the pressure of being a lot of things to different people. Some friends of mine have critiqued the anthology as being too academic, and others shared that it was great blend of different types of articles. I see this anthology as a product of the times, and it couldn’t resonate for all people. It makes me think about the groups who formed early on and who dealt with the tensions of some people left out, or how the group focused on political activities while others wanted more social activities. The one group had to bear the burden of creating a space of belonging, and it couldn’t be everything for everyone. The tensions and the critiques provided a generative space where people formed other groups and focused on the issues important to them. This new anthology is a product of this current time period, and we have more communities and a larger body of work to draw from.

There are many people to thank who have helped in my journey to where I am professionally and personally. I’d like to offer my appreciation and gratitude for their support, encouragement, and love over the years. A deep bow of thanks David L. Eng because this anthology wouldn’t exist if we hadn’t crossed paths at the Association of Asian American Studies conferences and he asked me if I wanted to coedit the first Q & A. Everyone needs a best friend like Diep Tran, someone who is there to say no when you’re about to do something silly and to cheer you on when the fear seems overwhelming. A close circle of friends always helps when you need a meal, a shoulder to lean on, a writing buddy, an accountability partner, or someone to be with. A grateful bow to my chosen family: Maylei Blackwell, Gisele Fong, Noelle Ito, Ingin Kim, Sami Iwata, Laila Mehta, Marie Morohoshi, Tei Okamoto, Eric C. Wat, Kayva Yang, and Karen Yin. I want to thank my birth family, especially my mom; sisters Anita, Anna, and Angela; and my brother Wellington. They have all provided care and comfort.

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