

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
ASIAN AMERICAN LITERATURE

The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature offers an engaging survey of Asian American literature from the nineteenth century to the present day. Since the 1980s, Asian American literary studies has developed into a substantial and vibrant field within English and American studies. This *Companion* explores the variety of historical periods, literary genres, and cultural movements affecting the development of Asian American literature. Written by a host of leading scholars in the field, this book provides insight into the representative movements, regional settings, archival resources, and critical reception that define Asian American literature. Covering subjects from immigrant narratives and internment literature to contemporary race studies and the problem of translation, this *Companion* provides insight into the myriad traditions that have shaped the Asian American literary landscape.

Crystal Parikh is Associate Professor of English at New York University. She specializes in twentieth-century and contemporary American literature and culture, with a focus on comparative race and ethnic studies. She is the author of *An Ethics of Betrayal: The Politics of Otherness in Emergent U.S. Literature and Culture*, which won the Modern Language Association Prize in United States Latina and Latino and Chicana and Chicano Literary Studies.

Daniel Y. Kim is Associate Professor of English at Brown University, where he teaches classes in Asian American literature, American literature, and ethnic studies. He is the author of *Writing Manhood in Black and Yellow: Ralph Ellison, Frank Chin, and the Literary Politics of Identity*.

A complete list of books in the series is at the back of this book

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE CAMBRIDGE

COMPANION TO

ASIAN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

THE CAMBRIDGE
COMPANION TO
ASIAN AMERICAN
LITERATURE

EDITED BY

CRYSTAL PARIKH

New York University

DANIEL Y. KIM

Brown University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107479142

© Cambridge University Press 2015

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2015

Printed in the United States of America

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature / [edited by] Crystal Parikh, New York University; Daniel Y. Kim, Brown University.
pages cm. – (Cambridge Companions to Literature)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-09517-5 (hardback) – ISBN 978-1-107-47914-2 (pbk.)

I. American literature – Asian American authors – History and criticism.

I. Parikh, Crystal, editor. II. Kim, Daniel Y., editor.

PS153.A84C35 2015

810.9'895-dc23 2015008284

ISBN 978-1-107-09517-5 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-107-47914-2 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

CONTENTS

<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	page ix
<i>Chronology of Major Works and Events, 1763–2014</i>	xv
CRYSTAL PARIKH	
<i>Introduction</i>	xxi
DANIEL Y. KIM AND CRYSTAL PARIKH	
PART I FORMATIONS OF ASIAN AMERICA: IMMIGRATION, EMPIRE, LAW	
1 Asian American Literature within and beyond the Immigrant Narrative	3
MIN HYOUNG SONG	
2 America’s Empire and the Asia-Pacific: Constructing Hawai‘i and the Philippines	16
DENISE CRUZ AND ERIN SUZUKI	
3 Adjudicating Asian America	29
KANDICE CHUH AND KAREN SHIMAKAWA	
PART II ASIAN AMERICAN WRITING AND THE LEGACY OF WAR	
4 Writing the Internment	45
GREG ROBINSON	
5 The Literature of the Korean War and Vietnam War	59
DANIEL Y. KIM AND VIET THANH NGUYEN	
	vii

CONTENTS

6	“The War on Terror”: Post-9/11 South Asian and Arab American Literature RAJINI SRIKANTH	73
PART III THE EXTRAVAGANCE OF GENRE		
7	Asian American Drama JOSEPHINE LEE	89
8	Asian American Poetry JOSEPHINE PARK	101
9	Model Minority Narratives and the Asian American Family ERIN NINH	114
10	The Writing of Translation CHRISTOPHER LEE	129
11	Popular Genres and New Media BETSY HUANG	142
12	Toward a Definition of Diaspora Literature HYUNGJI PARK	155
PART IV IDENTITIES AND POSTIDENTITIES		
13	Feminisms and Queer Interventions into Asian America HELENA GRICE AND CRYSTAL PARIKH	169
14	Comparative Race Studies and Interracialisms JOSEPH KEITH	183
15	Rethinking Embodiment and Hybridity: Mixed-Race, Adoptee, and Disabled Subjectivities CATHY J. SCHLUND-VIALS AND CYNTHIA WU	197
	<i>Bibliography</i>	213
	<i>Index</i>	225

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

KANDICE CHUH is a professor of English and American studies at the City University of New York, Graduate Center. The author of *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique* (Duke University Press, 2003) and coeditor, with Karen Shimakawa, of *Orientations: Mapping Studies in the Asian Diaspora* (Duke University Press, 2001), she researches and teaches in Asian American and American studies, critical theory and race, gender, and sexuality studies. Chuh's current research brings together aesthetic theories and philosophies and minority discourse to consider the politics and practices of the humanities in the present moment.

DENISE CRUZ is an assistant professor of English at the University of Toronto. She is the author of *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina* (Duke University Press, 2012) and the editor of Yay Panlilio's *The Crucible: An Autobiography of Colonel Yay, Filipina American Guerrilla* (Rutgers University Press, 2009). Other articles have appeared in *American Quarterly*, *PMLA*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, *American Literature*, *American Literary History*, and the collection *Eating Asian America: A Food Studies Reader*. Her research centers on the use of spatial and geographic frameworks to analyze gender and sexuality in national and transnational cultures.

HELENA GRICE is Reader in American literature at Aberystwyth University, Wales, United Kingdom. Her interests lie in ethnic American literatures, children's narratives, and feminisms. She is author of *Negotiating Identities* (Manchester University Press, 2002), *Maxine Hong Kingston* (Manchester University Press, 2006), and *Asian American Fiction, History and Life Writing: International Encounters* (Routledge, 2009). She is currently working on the writer and political figure Anna Chan Chennault.

BETSY HUANG is an associate professor of English and Chief Officer of Diversity and Inclusion at Clark University. She is the author of *Contesting Genres in Contemporary Asian American Fiction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), in which she examines the political implications of narrative form for Asian Americans who write highly conventionalized genre fiction – immigrant fiction, crime fiction, and

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

science fiction. She is also the coeditor, with David Roh and Greta Niu, of the essay collection *Techno-Orientalism: Imagining Asia in Speculative Fiction, History, and Media* (Rutgers University Press, 2015). Her work has appeared in *Journal of Asian American Studies*, *MELUS*, and *The Asian American Literary Review*.

JOSEPH KEITH is Associate Professor of English at Binghamton University, SUNY, where he specializes in twentieth-century literatures of the United States, comparative race and ethnic studies, and postcolonial and Marxist theory. He is the author of *Unbecoming Americans: Writing Race and Nation from the Shadows of Citizenship: 1945–1960* (Rutgers University Press, 2013), and his essays have appeared in *Interventions*, *The Black Scholar*, and *Postmodern Culture*.

DANIEL Y. KIM is Associate Professor of English at Brown University. He is the author of *Writing Manhood in Black and Yellow: Ralph Ellison, Frank Chin, and the Literary Politics of Identity* (Stanford University Press, 2005). He is currently working on a book provisionally titled *The Korean War in Color: Race, Nation, and the Intimacies of Conflict*. His articles have also appeared in *American Literary History*, *Criticism*, *Journal of Asian American Studies*, *Novel*, and *positions: Asia critique*.

CHRISTOPHER LEE is Associate Professor of English at the University of British Columbia, where he is the director of the Asian Canadian and Asian Migration Studies Program. He is the author of *The Semblance of Identity: Aesthetic Mediation in Asian American Literature* (Stanford University Press, 2012) and a coeditor of *Tracing the Lines: Reflections on Poetics and Cultural Politics in Honour of Roy Miki* (Talonbooks, 2013). His current research focuses on trans-Pacific literary thought during the Cold War and the use of realism in Chinese Canadian writing.

JOSEPHINE LEE is a professor of English and Asian American Studies at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. She is the author of *The Japan of Pure Invention: Gilbert and Sullivan's The Mikado* (University of Minnesota, 2010) and *Performing Asian America: Race and Ethnicity on the Contemporary Stage* (Temple University Press, 1997). She also coedited *Asian American Plays for a New Generation* and *Relcollecting Early Asian America: Essays in Cultural History* (Temple University Press, 2002 and 2011). Other work includes essays on modern drama, performance, and Asian American studies.

VIET THANH NGUYEN is an associate professor of English and American Studies & Ethnicity at the University of Southern California. He is the author of *Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America* (Oxford University Press, 2002) as well as a novel, *The Sympathizer* (Grove Press, 2015). He coedited *Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emerging Field* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2014) and is finishing a book titled *War, Memory, Identity*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

ERIN NINH is Associate Professor of Asian American Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and author of *Ingratitude: The Debt-Bound Daughter in Asian American Literature* (New York University, 2011).

CRYSTAL PARIKH is Associate Professor in the Department of English and the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis at New York University. In addition to numerous articles, she has published *An Ethics of Betrayal: The Politics of Otherness in Emergent U.S. Literature and Culture* (Fordham University Press, 2009). She is currently completing a book about human rights politics and contemporary U.S. writers of color.

HYUNGJI PARK is Professor of English and Dean of Underwood International College at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. She writes and teaches on issues of metropole, gender, and the East in Victorian literature, as well as on questions of locatedness and diaspora in Asian American literature.

JOSEPHINE PARK is Associate Professor of English and Asian American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. She is the author of *Apparitions of Asia: Modernist Form and Asian American Poetics* (Oxford University Press, 2008), and she is presently completing a book manuscript on Asian American representations of the American wars in Korea and Vietnam.

GREG ROBINSON is Professor of History at l'Université du Québec À Montréal, a French-language institution in Montreal, Canada. His books include *By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Harvard University Press, 2001), which spent four months on *Academia* magazine's scholarly best-seller list; *A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America* (Columbia University Press, 2009), winner of the 2009 History book prize of the Association for Asian American Studies; and *After Camp: Portraits in Midcentury Japanese American Life and Politics* (University of California Press, 2012), winner of the Caroline Bancroft History Prize in Western U.S. History. He is also the editor of *Pacific Citizens: Larry and Guyo Tajiri and Japanese American Journalism in the World War II Era* (University of Illinois Press, 2012) and coeditor of *Miné Okubo: Following Her Own Road* (University of Washington Press, 2008), an anthology volume on a groundbreaking Nisei artist and writer. Professor Robinson also writes a regular column, "The Great Unknown and the Unknown Great," for the San Francisco *Nichi Bei Weekly*.

CATHY J. SCHLUND-VIALS is an associate professor of English and Asian/Asian American Studies at the University of Connecticut (Storrs). She is also the director of the Asian and Asian American Studies Institute (UConn). She is the author of two monographs: *Modeling Citizenship: Jewish and Asian American Writing* (Temple University Press, 2011) and *War, Genocide, and Justice: Cambodian American Memory Work* (University of Minnesota Press, 2012). Her publications

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

have appeared in journals such as *Amerasia Journal*, *positions*, *American Literary History*, *MELUS*, and *The Journal of Asian American Studies*. Her coedited collections include *Disability, Human Rights, and the Failures of Humanitarianism* (with Michael Gill, Ashgate Press, 2014), *Keywords for Asian American Studies* (with Linda Trinh Vo and K. Scott Wong, New York University Press, 2015), and *Asian America: A Primary Source Reader* (with K. Scott Wong and Jason O. Chang, Yale University Press, forthcoming).

KAREN SHIMAKAWA is an associate professor of Performance Studies in the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University and an Adjunct Instructor at the NYU Law School. Her research and teaching focus on Asian American performance and critical race theory. Publications include *Orientations: Mapping Studies in the Asian Diaspora* (coedited with Kandice Chuh, Duke University Press, 2001) and *National Abjection: The Asian American Body Onstage* (Duke University Press, 2002).

MIN HYOUNG SONG is Professor of English at Boston College. He is the author of *Strange Future: Pessimism and the 1992 Los Angeles Riots* (Duke University Press, 2005) and *The Children of 1965: On Writing, and Not Writing, as an Asian American* (Duke University Press, 2013), as well as several journal articles and essays in collected volumes. He is the former editor of the *Journal of Asian American Studies* and the coeditor of *Asian American Studies: A Reader* and is coediting (with Rajini Srikanth) *The Cambridge History of Asian American Literature* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming). More information about him can be found at minhyoungsong.com.

RAJINI SRIKANTH is Professor of English as well as an affiliated faculty member in the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She is the author of the monographs *Constructing the Enemy: Empathy/Antipathy in US Literature and Law* (Temple University Press, 2012) and the award-winning *The World Next Door: South Asian American Literature and the Idea of America* (Temple University Press, 2004). In addition, she has published several coedited collections, including *Bold Words: A Century of Asian American Writing* (Rutgers University Press, 2001) and *A Part, Yet Apart: South Asians in Asian America* (Temple University Press, 1996). Her essays have appeared in *Frame: Journal of Literary Studies*, *Asian American Literary Review*, the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, *Pedagogy*, and *MELUS*, among other places.

ERIN SUZUKI is an assistant professor of English at the University of California, San Diego. She is currently developing a book project that addresses representations of migration and diaspora in the immigrant and indigenous literatures of the Pacific Islands. Her work has appeared in *Modern Fiction Studies*, *MELUS*, *ESQ: A Journal of the American Renaissance*, and *Literature/Film Quarterly*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

CYNTHIA WU is an associate professor of American studies in the Department of Transnational Studies at the University at Buffalo (State University of New York). She is the author of *Chang and Eng Reconnected: The Original Siamese Twins in American Culture* (Temple University Press, 2012). Her publications have appeared in journals such as *Amerasia Journal*, *American Literature*, *Journal of Asian American Studies*, *LIT*, *MELUS*, *Meridians*, and *Signs*.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CRYSTAL PARIKH

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR WORKS AND EVENTS, 1763–2014

- 1763 Filipino seamen working on a Spanish galleon establish a village in the Louisiana bayous.
- 1784 The United States–China trade begins with the departure of the *Empress of China* from New York, which leads to the arrival of Chinese immigrants, along with Chinese goods, to the United States.
- 1849 The start of the California Gold Rush draws the first significant number of immigrants to the United States.
- 1854 The California Supreme Court decides in the case of *People v. Hall* that the Chinese should be classified as “Indian” and are therefore not eligible to provide witness against a white person.
- 1868 The signing of the Burlingame Treaty between the United States and China establishes formal friendly relations between the two nations and encourages immigration from China to the United States.
- 1875 Under the guise of preventing the transporting of prostitutes to the United States, the passage of the Page Act by Congress effectively prohibits the immigration of women from China to the United States.
- 1882 The Chinese Exclusion Act is the first law to significantly restrict immigration and eliminates most new Chinese immigration to the United States.
- 1898 With the signing of the Treaty of Paris at the conclusion of the Spanish-American War, the United States acquires the

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR WORKS AND EVENTS, 1763–2014

island territories of the Philippines (and other territories in the Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean regions).

The United States annexes the Kingdom of Hawai‘i. Queen Lili‘uokalani, *Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen*

1899 Onoto Watanna (aka Winnifred Eaton), *Miss Nume of Japan*

1901–1905 In a series of Supreme Court cases known as the Insular Cases, concerning the status of the former Spanish colonies acquired by the United States, the Court designates these territories, including the Philippines, as “foreign in a domestic sense.” Residents of these territories are granted the status of “American nationals” rather than U.S. citizens.

1907 The signing of the Gentlemen’s Agreement, a treaty between the United States and Japan, drastically reduces the number of Japanese immigrants to the United States; it also cedes control of the Korean peninsula to Japan, marking the beginning of decades of brutal colonial rule.

1912 Sui Sin Far (aka Edith Maude Eaton), *Mrs. Spring Fragrance*

1917 The 1917 Immigration Act restricts immigration from the “Asiatic Barred Zone.”

1922 The ruling in the Supreme Court case of *Ozawa v. U.S.* rejects Takao Ozawa’s petition for U.S. citizenship on the basis that the Japanese do not qualify as white.

1923 The decision in the Supreme Court case of *U.S. v. Bhagat Singh Thind* finds that Asian Indians are not eligible for U.S. citizenship because they are not white.

1924 The passage of the Johnson-Reed Act effectively ends almost all immigration from Asian countries (as well as from Southern and Eastern Europe).

1925 Shōson Nagahara, *Lament in the Night* (in Japanese)

1941 The Imperial Japanese Navy launches a surprise attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawai‘i. As a result, the United States enters World War II.

1942 President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066 on February 19, authorizing the creation of military zones and the relocation of Japanese Americans from areas considered

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR WORKS AND EVENTS, 1763–2014

- vital for military security; most are eventually resettled in internment camps for the duration of World War II.
- U.S. and Philippine troops are forced on a brutal trek to prison camps in the Bataan Province of the Philippines in what comes to be known the Bataan Death March.
- 1943 Pardee Lowe, *Father and Glorious Descendant*
- 1945 U.S. forces drop atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. World War II ends.
 Jade Snow Wong, *Fifth Chinese Daughter*
- 1946 The Philippines are granted independence from the United States.
 Carlos Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*
- 1949 The Communist Revolution in China brings Mao Zedong to power, who establishes the People's Republic of China.
- 1950–1953 The Korean War
- 1952 The passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act, also known as the McCarran-Walter Act, ends Asian exclusion.
- 1953 Monica Sone, *Nisei Daughter*
- 1955 Representatives from twenty-nine countries meet in Bandung, Indonesia, for the Afro-Asian Conference.
- 1957 John Okada, *No-No Boy*
- 1958 The musical production of *Flower Drum Song*, based on the 1957 novel by C. Y. Lee, opens on Broadway.
- 1959 Hawai'i is granted U.S. statehood.
- 1960–1975 The Vietnam War
- 1964 Richard Kim, *The Martyred*
 The clash between U.S. and North Vietnamese naval forces in the Gulf of Tonkin leads to the passage of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution by Congress and increased U.S. military deployment in Vietnam.
- 1965 The passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act eliminates the national origins quota system and extensively restructures immigration policy.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR WORKS AND EVENTS, 1763–2014

- The theater company East West Players is founded in Los Angeles, California.
- 1967 The Supreme Court decision in the case of *Loving v. Virginia* strikes down bans on interracial marriage.
Daniel K. Inouye, *Journey to Washington*
- 1970 Poetry carved into the walls of the then-shuttered Angel Island Immigration Station in San Francisco Bay by Chinese migrants who had been detained there between 1910 and 1940 is discovered.
- 1972 *The Chicken Coop Chinaman* by Frank Chin is first produced in New York.
- 1974 The Supreme Court decision in the case of *Lau v. Nichols* finds that schools need to provide special services for students who are unable to speak English.
Frank Chin, Jeffery Paul Chang, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Shawn Wong, Eds., *Aiiieeeee! An Anthology of Asian American Writers*
Frank Chin, *The Year of the Dragon*
- 1975–1994 The United States imposes an embargo on Vietnam.
- 1975 Milton Murayama, *All I Asking For Is My Body*
- 1976 Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*
- 1977 Maxine Hong Kingston, *China Men*
- 1978 Eric Chock and Darrell Lum found the Bamboo Ridge Press in Hawai‘i.
- 1980 The passage of the Refugee Act provides for the systematic admission, resettlement, and economic assistance of refugees in the United States.
- 1981 The English translation of Nieh Hualing’s *Mulberry and Peach* (originally published serially in Chinese in the 1970s) is published.
Cherríe Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, Eds., *This Bridge Called My Back*
Joy Kogawa, *Obasan*

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR WORKS AND EVENTS, 1763–2014

- 1982 Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée*
- 1983 Dennis Carroll, *Kumu Kuhua Plays*
 Cathy Song, *Picture Bride*
- 1988 Congress passes the Civil Liberties Act, which issues an official apology and provides for reparations for surviving Japanese internees.
 David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly*
- 1989 Asian Women United of California, *Making Waves*
 Jeannie Barroga, *Walls*
 Le Ly Hayslip, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places*
 Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club*
- 1990 Jessica Hagedorn, *Dogeaters*
 Karen Tei Yamashita, *Through the Arc of the Rain Forest*
- 1991 The United States closes its military bases in the Philippines.
 Frank Chin, Jeffery Paul Chan, Lawson Fusao Inada, and Shawn Wong, *The Big Aiiieeeee!*
- 1994 Sharon Lim-Hing, *The Very Inside*
- 1995 Chang-rae Lee, *Native Speaker*
 R. Zamora Linmark, *Rolling the Rs*
- 1996 Dale Furutani, *Death in Little Tokyo*
 Shirley Geok-lin Lim, *Among the White Moon Faces*
 Helie Lee, *Still Life with Rice*
- 1997 Nora Okja Keller, *Comfort Woman*
- 1998 The Association for Asian American Studies awards its prize in literature to Lois-Ann Yamanaka for her novel *Blu's Hanging* (1997) but rescinds it soon after, sparking much heated controversy.
 Susan Choi, *The Foreign Student*
 Ruth Ozeki, *My Year of Meats*
- 1999 Andrew X. Pham, *Catfish and Mandala*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CHRONOLOGY OF MAJOR WORKS AND EVENTS, 1763–2014

- 2001 Terrorists from al-Qaeda launch a series of coordinated attacks in New York City and the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, resulting in the deaths of more than 3,000 people.
President George W. Bush declares “war on terror”; the war in Afghanistan begins.
Congress passes the USA PATRIOT Act.
Phil Yu launches the blog *Angry Asian Man*.
Playwright David Henry Hwang stages his “revisical” of *Flower Drum Song* on Broadway.
- 2002 Ted Chiang, *Stories of Your Life and Others*
- 2003 United States invades Iraq.
lê thị diễm thúy, *The Gangster We Are All Looking For*
Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt*
- 2004 Ha Jin, *War Trash*
- 2005 The English translation of *The Guest* (2001) by Korean writer Hwang Sok-Yong is published.
Gish Jen, *The Love Wife*
- 2006 Kip Fulbeck, *Part Asian 100% Hapa*
- 2007 Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*
Ed Lin, *This Is a Bust*
- 2008 Mahvish Khan, *My Guantánamo Diary*
Nam Le, *The Boat*
Linh Dinh, *Love Like Hate*
- 2009 Rajiv Joseph, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*
- 2011 Amy Chua, *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*
- 2013 Maxine Hong Kingston receives the National Medal of Arts.
Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being*
- 2014 Chang-rae Lee, *On Such a Full Sea*

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DANIEL Y. KIM AND CRYSTAL PARIKH

INTRODUCTION

Although writers of Asian descent have been producing literature since the late nineteenth century, it was not until a century later that these works were taken up for study by scholars and critics. Since the 1980s, Asian American literary studies has developed into a substantial and vibrant field within English and American studies departments in the U.S. academy. Moreover, there are now roughly fifty departments or programs in Asian American Studies in American universities and colleges, and a growing number of literary scholars abroad – particularly in East Asia and Europe – have taken an avid interest in the field. Critics and literary historians have brought a range of current theoretical and methodological paradigms to their examination of Asian American literature, and their insights have helped reshape American literary studies, expanding its conception of national culture and its literary canons. *The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature* offers an introduction to the historical contexts, theoretical concepts, generic distinctions, and constructions of cultural and political identity that writers and critics have relied upon in crafting their visions of the Asian American literary tradition.

“Asia” itself refers to a vast continent composed of diverse and heterogeneous peoples and cultures, as well as complex and shifting social and political histories. The rubric “Asian American” signals the infusion of this complexity into the United States and even beyond – into all of the Americas. Thus, from its inception, Asian American studies has grappled with questions of social difference, the possibility of coherent identity, the terms of political affiliation and unity, and the conditions of belonging and exclusion. “Asian American” has functioned quite self-consciously as a pan-ethnic category that brings together – if at times tenuously – members of various diasporas across different historical moments. It pertains to all who identify as “Asian” as well as to those who *have been identified by others* as Asian or “Oriental.” A central challenge for researchers and teachers of Asian American literature, then, has been to conceive of the continuity and

xxi

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DANIEL Y. KIM AND CRYSTAL PARIKH

boundaries of a body of literature that always seems to be moving beyond any static notion of identity and culture. But it is this dynamism that makes Asian American literary studies such a compelling field of study, and this anthology is intended to provide students and scholars with the critical wherewithal to engage with its challenging and evolving complexities even as they gain a sense of its coherence.

In keeping with the field's historicist emphasis, this *Companion* works from the assumption that Asian American literature's formal and generic complexities can best be understood as a refraction of the historical currents that have shaped the Asian presence in America and the American presence in Asia. We identify several historical thematics – including immigration, empire, war, globalization, and law – that have informed and shaped the emergence of Asian American writing. We show how the shifting status of Asians within immigration law and the waging of several U.S. wars in Asia and the Pacific (including the “War on Terror”) as well as seismic transformation of the economic circuits linking East and West have all been dominant concerns of much Asian American writing, not just shaping its content but catalyzing the emergence of certain aesthetic innovations. As such, this companion addresses not only traditional categories of genre – such as poetry and drama – but also narrative traditions that are distinctive of Asian American literature: immigrant narratives, the internment memoirs, or diasporic narratives of return, to name a few examples.

This *Companion* also addresses what many have termed a “transnational turn” that has revolutionized American studies as a whole (as well as many other scholarly fields). For Asian American studies, this has meant acknowledging that immigration represents only one historical trajectory, however central, in the expressive cultures of Asians in America. As such, our anthology traces the diasporic impulses that find expression in many works as well as their concern with the intensifying globalization that has defined the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

Moreover, our anthology reckons directly with the shifting ways in which Asian American writers and critics have tackled the question of identity. We trace the shift from the United States–centered articulations of identity that shaped the foundational notions of the Asian American literary tradition to the paradigms of cultural identity that grow out of diasporic and transnational perspectives. We explore as well how the particularities of Asian American mixed-race experiences give voice to a distinct tradition of writing racial hybridity. We also address how Asian American literary conceptions of identity have emerged in relationship to those from other minority traditions as well as in feminist and queer traditions.

This *Companion* is divided into four sections.

xxii

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

INTRODUCTION

Part I engages with the three powerful historical formations that have shaped the experiences of Asians in America since their arrival in the nineteenth century and outlines the literary traditions and critical paradigms that are useful for illuminating them. Despite the fact Asian Americans have had a long history in the United States, their status as Americans has been vexed, as they have been deemed, at various times, “aliens ineligible for citizenship,” “U.S. nationals,” and incorporated citizens. This section provides an overview of how the legal strictures governing citizenship and immigration as well as the exigencies of U.S. empire have shaped Asian American social conditions. It identifies how 1965 marked a watershed moment in Asian American history as it brought to an end a century-long era of restrictive immigration policies, tracing how this transformation was registered in law and literature. Moreover, it considers how the territorial acquisitions in the Asia Pacific that defined the overtly imperialist endeavors of the United States in the early twentieth century created distinctive categories of Asian Americans – from the Philippines and Hawai‘i, for instance – whose itineraries were different from those of the immigrants who arrived through Ellis or Angel Island. The chapters in this section consider how literary works reflect, contest, and reimagine these trajectories of immigration and empire that have been so foundational to the construction of Asian America.

The essays in Part II contemplate the ways in which war has functioned as a defining context for much Asian American writing. The perceptions of Asian enemies and allies that emerged out of the multiple U.S. wars fought in Asia during the past century formed a canon of racial images that many writers have sought to negotiate and challenge in their writings. A significant number of works also attend to the traumatic effects of these wars on survivors and their children, a literary concern that opens a window not only into the racist dimensions of U.S. wars in Asia but also into the fratricidal violence of the civil conflicts that emerged in many Asian nations in the era of decolonization. The chapters here address the literary traditions that arose from the internment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War and the antiwar movement that took shape during the Vietnam War: wars that have assumed a central place in critical understandings of the Asian American literary tradition. They also address how the Korean War and the War on Terror – conflicts whose significance scholars have increasingly come to recognize – have become a prominent concern of Asian American writings.

While the realist novel and the autobiography have been the dominant genres of Asian American literature, the chapters in Part III demonstrate that the richest and most vibrant understandings of form and convention can advance from an exploration of genres that can seem more extravagant to the tradition. In addition to the self-evident and often neglected categories

xxiii

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-09517-5 - The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature

Edited by Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

DANIEL Y. KIM AND CRYSTAL PARIKH

of drama and poetry, the essays here examine genres distinctive to the Asian American context. These include literary works that both affirm and destabilize the dominant conception of Asian Americans as a model minority, often by speaking to a timeless sense of Asian family values; and writings that bespeak a transnational or diasporic link to Asian homelands, often by making central use of the trope and practice of translation. Indeed, as this section also addresses, the globalization of capitalism and culture has rendered literature of and about diaspora a generic form of marked significance in Asian America. Finally, we also examine how popular genres like the romance novel, science fiction, and crime fiction have become increasingly vital sites of Asian American literary production, as have the new media that result from the rise of the Internet and digital culture. While the essays in this section take questions of form and genre as their point of departure, they do so in order to demonstrate how our appreciation and understanding of the wide range of aesthetic strategies adopted by Asian American authors is only deepened by an awareness of the historical trajectories that their writings respond to and are shaped by.

Part IV consists of essays that engage with the fact that the very term “Asian American” refers to a recently constructed and explicitly political identity category. It honors the foundational work of early proponents of the Asian American tradition, which was shaped by a cultural nationalism that sought to establish a coherent and distinctive minority tradition in America. But its focus is on the work that has appeared in the past two decades or so that has sought to highlight the “hybridity, multiplicity, and heterogeneity” (to paraphrase Lisa Lowe) of all social formations, including that of Asian America. The essays here trace the multiplicity of identity categories that have come to shape Asian American writing and criticism, delineating the significant critical paradigms that emerge from them. This section traces how United States–focused notions of cultural identity, which were marred by masculinism and homophobia, have given way to ones that are more closely attuned with feminism and queer theory. It also identifies a growing and significant body of literary works and critical methods that are attentive to the experience of multiracial, adoptee, and disabled subjects as well as ones that explore the linkages between Asian Americans and other racialized groups. Overall, the chapters in this final section encourage readers to think creatively about the emergent affiliations and aspirations of the myriad forms of Asian American identity that are now taking shape – to see how comparative race, mixed race, and disability studies approaches move the study of Asian American literature well beyond a narrow identity politics toward a critical humanism that is diverse and often global in its ambitions.

xxiv