Contents

Preface *xv*
Acknowledgments *xvii*

1 Introduction 1

Studying Sexual Identities 5
Box 1.1: Alternative Sexuality Models 5
Sexuality, Sexual Orientation, Sexual Identity—What Does It All Mean? 6
Box 1.2: The Heterosexual Questionnaire 8
The Alphabet Soup of Sexual Identities 9
Box 1.3: The Limits of Social Acceptance 14
Essentialist and Social Constructionist Perspectives 16
From Gay Politics/Theory to Queer Politics/Theory 18
Complicating Sexual Identity 20
Box 1.4: Gender and Sexuality in a Cultural Context 23
The Relationship between Media and Identity 24
The Social Scientific Approach: Identity Prior to Media 26
Critical/Cultural Approach: Media Prior to Identity 27
Media and Identity in the Digital Age 30
Conclusion 31
References 32

2 Historical Context 35

Box 2.1: Changing Language and Shifting Identities 36
Emerging Identities: 1860s–1930s 37
Scientific Interest in Sexuality 38

Box 2.2: Scientific Research on Sexuality and Race 39
Changing Socio-Economic Conditions 41
Media Images of an "Identity" 42
Box 2.3: Framing of 19th Century Female-to-Male Cross Dressers 43
An Emerging Movement: 1940s–1950s 46
Shared Identity and Shared Persecution 47
Homosexual Voices 49
Transgender as a Distinct Identity 52
From Tolerance to Liberation: 1960s–1970s 54
Gayness as Political Identity 54
Gayness as Ethnic Identity 56
Media Recognition 57
Box 2.4: Vito Russo and The Celluloid Closet 58
Defined by AIDS: 1980s 61
A Common Enemy 62
Complications from AIDS—Media Representations 64
Conclusion 66
References 67

3 Visibility 69

The Visibility Generation 70
Political Recognition 71
Media Visibility 72
Box 3.1: Tracking Visibility 76
Why Visibility Matters 77
Approaches to Visibility 80
Stereotypes 80
Box 3.2: Advocacy for Whom? GLAAD and Its Critics 83
Critiques of Stereotype Analysis 86
Stereotypes as "Work" 88
Box 3.3: Rethinking the "Sissy" 91
Visibility for What? 93
Box 3.4: Evaluating the Meaning of Gay Marriage in Television 94
Conclusion 97
References 98

4 Consumer Culture 101

Box 4.1: "Gendernebulous" Fashion Advertising 102
The Gay Market 105
Box 4.2: The Bear Market 107
Marketing in Gay Publications 110
"Gay Vague" Advertising 112
Box 4.3: Commercial Closet 115
From Gay Vague to Gay Vogue 117
Identity, Politics, and Consumer Culture 120
The Marketplace as Political Battlefield 121
Advertising's Model Minority 123
Box 4.4 GLBTQ Publications as Activism 125
Conclusion 127
References 128

5 Resistance 131

Production as Resistance: GLBTQ-Produced Media for GLBTQ Audiences 133
Music 135
Box 5.1: Queering Hip-Hop 138
Film 139
Web and Video Series 141
Box 5.2: Engaging GLBTQ Production 142
Reading as Resistance 144
Active Decoders: Learning to Read Subtext 145
Camp: Finding Pleasure in Resistance 147
Queering Readings: Finding Non-Heteronormative Pleasures 151
Box 5.3: Queering Mainstream Television 152
From Queer Pleasures to Queer Participation 153
Box 5.4: Slash Fiction 155
Conclusion 159
References 160

6 The Closet 163

The Metaphor of the Closet 164
Box 6.1: The Ethics of Outing 165
Coming-Out Narratives 166
Mediating the Closet: Coming-Out Stories 167
Box 6.2: Out in Sports 169
Coming Out Online: Community, Connection, and Learning 170
Box 6.3: What Is "Better"? 173
The Perils of Secrecy 174
Tragedy of the Post-Gay Closet 175
Box 6.4: Closeted Children's Characters 178
Racing the Closet: The Down Low 180
Critiquing the Closet 183
Complicating the Coming-Out Narrative 185
Whiteness and the Closet 187
Conclusion 189
References 190

7 Comedy 195

What's So Funny? Comedy and Cultural Norms 196
Box 7.1: Why Do We Laugh? 200
Box 7.2: Reverse Comic Discourses 203
The Intersection of Gender and Sexuality 205
"That's So Gay" 205
Sexism and GLBTQ Humor 207
Box 7.3: "Snap Queens" and the Intersection of Race, Gender, and Sexuality 208
Situation Comedy Conventions 212
Box 7.4: Opening Up the Sitcom Structure? 218
Conclusion 219
References 220

8 Bodies 225

Thinking about Bodies 226
Mediating Same-Sex Intimacy 228
Box 8.1: The Ratings Game 229
Between Women 231
Between Men 234
Box 8.2: Is a Kiss Just a Kiss? 236
Transgender Bodies as Media Spectacle 239
Box 8.3: Rejecting the Cisgender Gaze 240
The Medical Gaze 242
Monstrous Bodies 244
Bodies of Disruption and Transformation 246
Disrupting Desire 246
Disrupting Gender 248
Box 8.4: Half Drag 248
Conclusion 250
References 251

9 Conclusion 255

Emerging Questions 256
Post-Gay 257
Box 9.1: Post-Closet Hollywood? 258
Transgender "Tipping Point"? 259
Labels 261
Heterosexuality 262
Box 9.2: Heterosexual Identities and the Media 262
Media Matters 264
References 265

Index 267