



Lever Press

Spring & Summer 2024



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The Lever Press Editorial Program

Lever Press is a publisher of pathbreaking scholarship. Supported by a consortium of liberal arts institutions focused on excellence in research and teaching, we have founded our press on three essential commitments:

- » To be a press aligned with the ethos and mission of liberal arts colleges
- » To be a peer-reviewed, open access press that charges no fees to either authors or their institutions
- » To publish rich media digital books simultaneously available in print

We seek out, identify, evaluate, and advocate for transformative scholarship that:

- » Emerges from creative dialogue within and between traditional fields of inquiry, with an emphasis on disciplinary innovation and transformation
- » Engages with issues of social and civic importance
- » Transcends divisions between research and teaching by drawing from new models of collaborative inquiry addressing a broad audience

Lever Press seeks proposals that bring diverse perspectives to bear upon pressing issues of social, moral, political, and scientific concern. Such projects might be single-authored monographs; they might also involve interdisciplinary groups of scholars bringing a variety of perspectives to bear on a given question; discussions among scholars of contending, even irreconcilable, viewpoints, modeling civil discourse; or a constructive approach to a question from a discipline not ordinarily thought to be the obvious starting point.

Our works are published on Fulcrum, which provides a platform allowing narrative to be richly integrated with associated data (images, videos, audio files, visualizations, etc.), optimized for long-term preservation and accessibility.

To learn more about the press, visit leverpress.org

To read books from Lever Press for free online, visit fulcrum.org/leverpress

Book Series

ASIANetwork Books

Series editors: Erin McCarthy (St. Lawrence University) and Lisa Trivedi (Hamilton College)

This series publishes high-quality, original monographs embodying a rigorous liberal arts approach to Asian Studies. Manuscripts published in the *ASIANetwork* series, no matter how narrowly focused, are expected to raise broad questions of interest and potential classroom utility for Asian Studies scholars in the liberal arts. We encourage authors to discuss a work's pedagogical relevance when submitting their manuscript for consideration. While *ASIANetwork* assists teachers in their own professional development and deepens the understanding of Asia within our campus communities, it is also intended to provide a broader reading public with reliable and accurate scholarship about Asia.

Open Access Musicology

Series editors: Daniel Barolsky (Beloit College) and Louis Epstein (St. Olaf College)

Open Access Musicology is a free collection of essays, written in an accessible style and with a focus on modes of inquiry rather than content coverage. Our authors draw from their experience as scholars but also as teachers. They have been asked to describe why they became musicologists in the first place and how their individual paths led to the topics they explore and the questions they pose. Like most scholarly literature, the essays have all been reviewed by experts in the field. Unlike all scholarly literature, the essays have also been reviewed by students at a variety of institutions for clarity and relevance.

Re-Editions: Literary and Cultural Texts Recovered for the Classroom

Series editor: Michelle Burnham (Santa Clara University)

The *Re-Editions* series publishes lost, forgotten, or neglected literary and cultural texts, recovering marginalized voices and perspectives in new scholarly editions designed for use in undergraduate classrooms and beyond. Editions in the series will make previously overlooked or long out-of-print works—recovered from physical or digital archives, special collections, and the dustbins of history—newly available in digital editions for students, scholars, and the public. The series aims to recover important and field-reshaping texts from a range of historical periods, geographical regions, and genres, with the goal of making canons and curricula across disciplines more diverse, global, and inclusive.

Videographic Books: Film and Media Scholarship in Sound and Image

Series editor: Jason Mittell (Middlebury College)

Combining the possibilities of digital scholarship with the long-standing strengths of the print monograph, this series strives to publish works that convey ideas and expand knowledge via the digital rhetoric of videographic criticism. *Videographic Books* will resemble traditional print books as accessed via an online e-reader, but use embedded video and audio to convey ideas through the distinct form of videographic criticism. The published works will explore a wide-range of topics and approaches concerning film, television, videogames, and other media, but be united through a commitment to born-digital publishing as structured through the stable, archivable, and library-optimized open-access Fulcrum platform, and the use of audiovisual media as core components of intellectual expression, not just illustrations or examples.



The Chemistry of Character in Breaking Bad

A Videographic Book

Jason Mittell

March 2024

Open Access / 978-1-6431-5061-1

AN EXPLORATION OF CHARACTERS IN *BREAKING BAD*, WITH OVER 20 VIDEO ESSAYS

This multimedia, open access project explores the landmark American television series *Breaking Bad* (2008–13) via the emerging format of videographic criticism. Featuring a collection of open access video essays, this “videographic book” aims to interpret the particular modes of characterization within the series and discusses the signifi-

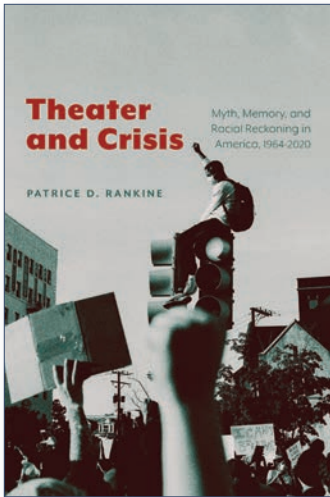
cance of character as an aspect of media storytelling. With this innovative project, author Jason Mittell demonstrates the vital importance and exciting possibilities of analyzing a medium using its own media form.

Videographic criticism examines media using the same material that it seeks to analyze: sounds and moving images. Videographic practices can reveal otherwise hidden facets of media, with videographic works potentially exploring aesthetic, experimental, poetic, and affective dimensions more effectively than written scholarship. *Breaking Bad*, which won dozens of awards throughout its five seasons, is particularly suitable for videographic criticism due to its notably vivid visual and aural style. Additionally, its construction of character is distinctive and groundbreaking, making it a welcome series to advance understanding of characterization in television and its connections to important facets like identity politics, morality, and viewer engagement. Each video essay can be viewed separately or watched together in the context of the book.

This book will be of interest to academics focused on television, media studies, and narrative theory, and also to fans of the series and its vibrant characters. The format of this project is truly unique: it acts almost as a viewing guide with more than 20 embedded video essays alongside brief written commentaries contextualizing the videos. *The Chemistry of Character in Breaking Bad* is a great resource for any reader or viewer who wants to dive into the series once again.



Jason Mittell is Professor of Film & Media Culture at Middlebury College. He has published seven books on American television, narrative theory, and videographic criticism.



Theater and Crisis

Myth, Memory, and Racial Reckoning in America, 1964-2020

Patrice D. Rankine

March 2024

Paperback / 978-1-6431-5059-8

Open Access / 978-1-6431-5060-4

322 pages | 7 images | 6 x 9

DEMONSTRATES HOW MYTH, LITERATURE, AND THEATER ARE PART OF AND RESPOND TO PUBLIC OR POLITICAL EVENTS

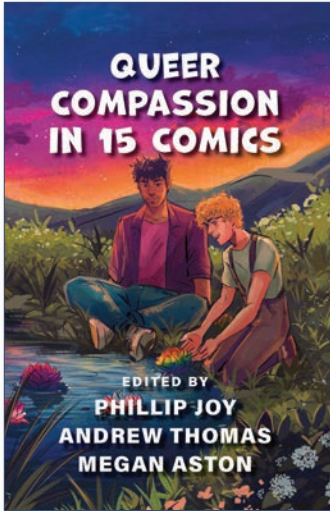
Racial reckoning was a recurrent theme throughout the summer of 2020, a response to George Floyd's murder and the unprecedented impact of COVID on marginalized groups. *Theater and Crisis* proposes a literary and theatrical

study of how Floyd's killing could possibly happen in the aftermath of the Civil Rights era, and in the supposedly post-racial era following the election of Barack Obama. In the days and months following Floyd's death, there were nightly protests in streets across the United States and broader world. At the same time, theater performances were forced to shift online to video conferencing platforms and to find new ways to engage audiences. In each case, groups made shared meaning through storytelling and narrative, a liberatory process of myth-making and reverence that author Patrice D. Rankine calls "epiphanic encoding."

Rather than approaching the problem of racial reckoning through history, where periodization and progress are dominant narratives, *Theater and Crisis* argues that myth and memory allow for better theorization about recurring events from the past, their haunting, and what these apparent ghosts ask of us. Building on the study of myth as active, processual storytelling, Rankine acknowledges that it grounds and orients groups toward significant events. *Theater and Crisis* aligns narratives about Emmett Till, Trayvon Martin, and George Floyd, among others, with ancient, mythic figures such as Christ, Dionysus, Oedipus, and Moses. As living and verbal visitations, these stories performed on stage encode the past through their epiphanies in the present, urging audiences toward shared meaning.

Rankine traces the cyclical hauntings of race through the refiguring of mythic stories across the past 75 years in the plays of James Baldwin, Ntozake Shange, Antoinette Nwandu, and many more, and in response to flashpoints in US racial history, such as the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till, the upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s, the wars on drugs and crime, and the continued violence against and disenfranchisement of Black people into the twenty-first century. *Theater and Crisis* explores the appearance of myth on the American stage and showcases the ongoing response by the theatrical establishment to transform the stage into a space for racial reckoning. This timely book is essential reading for scholars of theater studies, classics, and American studies.

Patrice Rankine is Professor in the Department of Classics and the College at the University of Chicago. He is author of *Ulysses in Black: Ralph Ellison, Classicism, and African American Literature* (The University of Wisconsin Press, 2006), *Aristotle and Black Drama: A Theater of Civil Disobedience* (Baylor University Press, 2013), and coauthor of *The Oxford Handbook of Greek Drama in the Americas*.



Queer Compassion in 15 Comics

Edited by Andrew Thomas, Megan Aston,
and Phillip Joy

April 2024
Paperback / 978-1-6431-5057-4
Open Access / 978-1-6431-5058-1
200 pages | 6.625 x 10.25

COMICS FROM AN INTERNATIONAL CAST OF QUEER ARTISTS THAT RESPOND TO TRAUMA WITH COMPASSION

This unique comic anthology takes its readers on a journey through different art styles and queer perspectives, from first Prides to multi-generational friendships to finding community among chosen families. The comics in *Queer Compassion* offer kaleidoscopic insight into the colorful, heartbreaking, empowering, funny, and diverse lives of queer people around the world by centering compassion as a way to inhabit and build community.

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These comics are created by queer artists for queer audiences and with the intent for queer self-expression and representation. Social science researchers spoke to diverse members of LGBTQ+ communities to explore their beliefs about and experiences of compassion. Fifteen queer comics were commissioned to illustrate those stories, making the process of creating each comic a unique collaboration between researchers and artists, blending data exploring the meanings of compassion for queer folks with the creativity, passion, and understanding of a queer comic artist.

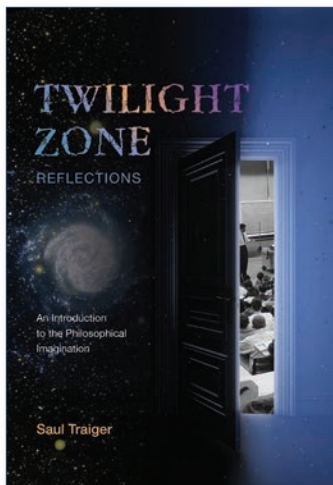
These stories reflect not only the harsh realities that many queer people face but they also uplift queer voices, illustrate strength, and capture queer resolve to make life more compassionate. Queer people, living in a cis-heteronormative world, often face experiences of marginalization, discrimination, stigma, trauma, and invisibility in everyday life. *Queer Compassion* shows that its titular emotion can be the bridge that brings understanding and creates community connections — a bridge that is particularly needed at this time.



Phillip Joy is Assistant Professor at Mount Saint Vincent University.

Andrew Thomas is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology and working as a research assistant at Mount Saint Vincent University and Dalhousie University.

Dr. Megan Aston is a Nursing Professor at Dalhousie University.



Twilight Zone Reflections

An Introduction to the Philosophical Imagination

Saul Traiger

June 2024

Paperback / 978-1-64315-062-8

Open Access / 978-1-64315-063-5

536 pages | 6 x 9

**AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY THROUGH THOUGHT
EXPERIMENTS IN THE 1959-1964 TELEVISION SERIES,
*THE TWILIGHT ZONE***

Twilight Zone Reflections is the first book of its kind to explore the entirety of *The Twilight Zone* (1959-1964) as a series. It acts as both an introduction to the field of philosophy

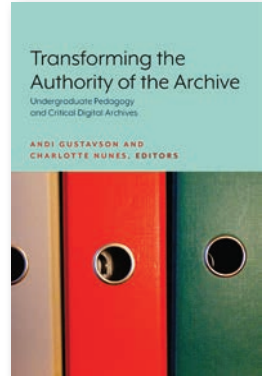
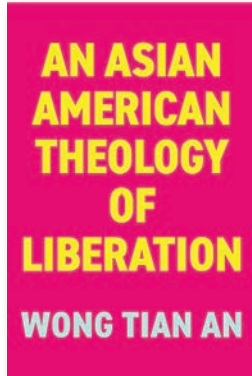
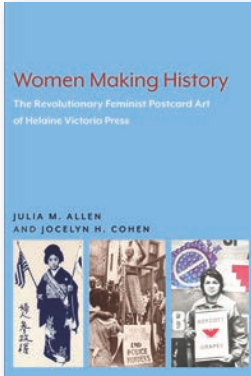
and as a complete guide to the philosophical issues illustrated throughout the original 1959-64 television series. Author Saul Traiger explores each of the 156 episodes, investigating the show's themes in metaphysics, epistemology, moral and political philosophy, and other topics in a way that is accessible to both seasoned philosophers and those outside academia.

Each short chapter dives into a single episode and concludes with helpful cross-references to other episodes that explore similar philosophical problems and subjects. For example, a reader may be interested in questions about the nature of the mind and whether machines can think. By referencing this book, they could easily discover the thematic connections between episodes like "I Sing the Body Electric" or "The Lateness of the Hour," and learn how both episodes introduce the viewer to possible worlds that challenge us to consider whether our idea of the mind, and even our very personhood, extends beyond the human to robots and other artificial intelligences. Each chapter introduces fundamental philosophical questions such as these through the lens of *The Twilight Zone* and inspires additional exploration. Further readings are suggested for all episodes, making this volume indispensable to academics, students, and fans of the show. Each chapter is short and accessible, ensuring that this book is the perfect resource to accompany a complete series re-watch.

The Twilight Zone considered questions that strike at the heart of philosophical inquiry, such as the nature of self, the existence of god, the possibility of an afterlife, the relationship between knowledge and mental illness, the nature of possibility, even the nature of imagination itself, and so much more. Traiger argues that each episode can serve as an entry point for philosophical reflection. *Twilight Zone Reflections* is a valuable reference for anyone interested in exploring a well-known slice of popular culture history that doubles as a vast store of philosophical ideas.

Saul Traiger is Professor Emeritus of Cognitive Science and Philosophy at Occidental College, where he co-founded the Department of Cognitive Science in 1987. He has published extensively on the philosophy of David Hume, in contemporary epistemology and in the philosophy of mind. He is a former president of The Hume Society, and a former co-editor of *Hume Studies*.

Recently Published



Women Making History

Revolutionary Feminist Postcard Art From Helaine Victoria Press
Julia M. Allen and Jocelyn H. Cohen

An Asian American Theology of Liberation

Tian An Wong

Transforming the Authority of the Archive

Undergraduate Pedagogy and Critical Digital Archives
Edited by Andi Gustavson & Charlotte Nunes

The Politics of India under Modi

An Introduction to India's Democracy, Economy, and Foreign Policy
Vikash Yadav and Jason A. Kirk

Public Feminisms

From Academy to Community
Carrie N. Baker and Aviva Dove-Viebahn

South End Shout

Boston's Forgotten Music Scene in the Jazz Age
Roger R. House



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