



Lever Press

Spring & Summer 2025



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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.

film|minutes

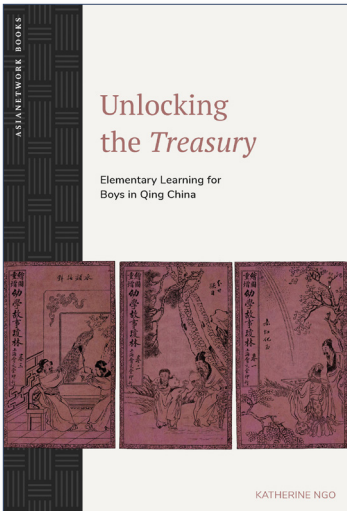
Series editor: Bernd Herzogenrath (Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main)

film|minutes is a book series in the short monograph format, with each volume of c. 25,000–40,000 words focused on one particular film. Volumes in the series cut up films into segments of exactly one minute and transform each minute into a fruitful, innovative tool for thinking with the film. Each volume works rigorously with the concept of “the minute” as a non-cinematic scale/quantity and a means to look away, to zoom in on (dis)orderly fragments that do not necessarily respect the confinements of (good) cinematic form or meaning. As a critical practice, the focus on minutes causes disruptions and displacement that create novel connections and perspectives that help us uncover hidden traces and make it possible to see each film anew.

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.



Unlocking the Treasury

Elementary Learning for Boys in Qing China

Katherine Ngo

January 2025
Paperback | 978-1-64315-074-1 | \$23.99
Open Access | 978-1-64315-075-8
308 pages | 1 black-and-white image | 6 x 9
Series: *ASIANetwork Books*

**THE FIRST MAJOR STUDY IN ENGLISH OF THE QING ERA
TEXTBOOK ON ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

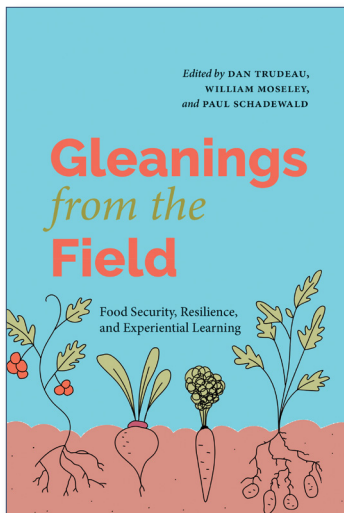
In recent years, the renewed interest in traditional Chinese elementary educational material has led to an increased use of these texts as teaching materials in Chinese schools, as well as popular literature and in academic research. *Unlocking the Treasury: Elementary Learning for Boys in Qing China* seeks to address the existing gap in Western scholarship regarding pre-modern Chinese primary education,

its theories, and textbooks. With a focus on the Qing dynasty textbook, *Treasury of Elementary Learning* (*Youxue qionglian*), this volume is the first major study of the *Treasury* in English and reveals a rich tradition of education through close and critical readings of the text.

Unlocking the Treasury grounds its study of primary education in the intellectual history of the period. Using the concept of interpretive communities, Katherine Ngo explores the impact of socio-political influences and differences in Qing schools of thought, including the school of principle, the school of heart-mind, and practical learning. As such, this volume examines the *Treasury* through three critical readings of the text: as a handbook for practical learning, a child-oriented reading of the school of heart-mind, and the instrumental perspective of education as examination training.

Ngo reframes the curricular content, skills, learning approaches, and teaching strategies of Chinese pre-modern elementary education with the goal of facilitating a broader transcultural dialogue in contemporary education. Far from the notion of traditional Chinese elementary education being monolithic and “rote learning,” *Unlocking the Treasury* reveals that elementary learning in the Qing dynasty offered a sophisticated and complex educational agenda with diverse learning goals of examination, preparation, moral development, and textual scholarship training that were shaped by intellectual trends of the time. An engaging text for scholars of Qing China and historians of education alike, Katherine Ngo’s *Unlocking the Treasury* is essential to understanding the philosophical, historical, literary, and psychological dimensions of education and educational theory in the Qing era.

Katherine Ngo is Lecturer of Ancient Chinese Literature at the Academy of Sinology, University of Wales Trinity Saint David. Her research interest is in the educational theories and practices of pre-modern and early modern Chinese didactic literature.



Gleanings from the Field ***Food Security, Resilience, and*** ***Experiential Learning***

Edited by Dan Trudeau, William Moseley, and Paul Schadewald

April 2025

Paperback | 978-1-64315-072-7 | \$23.99

Open Access | 978-1-64315-073-4

300 pages | 31 black-and-white images | 6 x 9

ADDRESSING THE FOOD SECURITY CRISIS THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING IN THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

In recent years, the concept of “food security” has garnered significant attention among policymakers, activists, and educators. Stemming from a growing awareness of the complexities surrounding access to sufficient food globally, movements advocating for food justice and sovereignty have emerged in response to these systemic inequities and health disparities, particularly in

local communities. With the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts in regions such as Ukraine and Gaza, and the escalating impacts of climate change, reliable food security has become exacerbated by these existing disparities. *Gleanings from the Field* argues that addressing food security is essential for tackling broader sustainability challenges facing humanity and recognizes the role of food in community-building, cultural exchange, and quality of life. However, promoting food security entails navigating intricate trade-offs, such as balancing economic interests in food supply with environmental concerns.

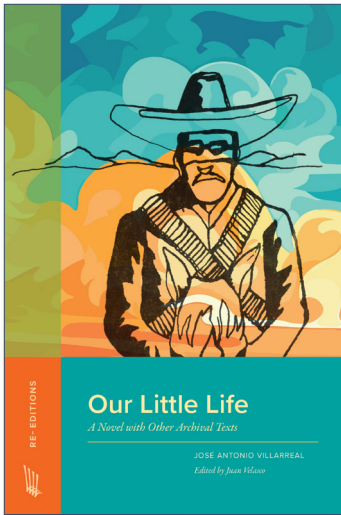
This timely essay collection frames our food security challenges as “wicked problems,” puzzles without clear solutions that are characterized by evolving complexities and divergent stakeholder priorities. In classroom settings, they argue for the usage of experiential learning to cultivate “wicked problem-solving skills” among students. *Gleanings from the Field* exemplifies this approach, offering pedagogical interventions to prepare students for tackling these wicked problems, while advocating for high-impact learning experiences that enable students to grapple with the interconnected systems influencing food security. Through hands-on experiences and reflective practice, students gain a deeper understanding of these systems and their societal implications. Importantly, the contributions outlined in this volume underscore the need for a multidimensional view of food security, thus examining the intersections of economic interests, government policies, and social movements. By contextualizing food security within broader political-economic arrangements, educators can empower students to enact meaningful change.

Gleanings from the Field argues for a holistic approach to food security education, one that acknowledges the fraught nature of wicked problems and equips students with the skills and knowledge needed for effective action. By integrating experiential learning, conceptual frameworks about food security and resilience, and real-world engagement, educators can cultivate a new generation of resilient problem-solvers committed to addressing food insecurity and other wicked problems.

Dan Trudeau is Professor in the Department of Geography at Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA.

William G. Moseley is DeWitt Wallace Professor of Geography, and Director of the Food, Agriculture and Society Program, at Macalester College. He formerly served on the UN High Level Panel of Experts for Food Security and Nutrition and is the author of 11 books.

Paul Schadewald is Senior Project Manager for Bringing Theory to Practice, a national initiative to advance engaged, holistic, and equitable change in higher education, based at Elon University in Elon, N.C.



Our Little Life

A Novel with Other Archival Texts

José Antonio Villarreal

Edited by Juan Velasco

May 2025

Paperback | 978-1-64315-078-9 | \$24.99

Open Access | 978-1-64315-079-6

300 pages | 3 color images | 6 x 9

Series: *Re-Editions: Literary and Cultural Texts*

Recovered for the Classroom

AN ARCHIVAL RECOVERY OF THE UNPUBLISHED, MUCH-EXPANDED FIRST DRAFT OF A GROUNDBREAKING NOVEL IN MEXICAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE

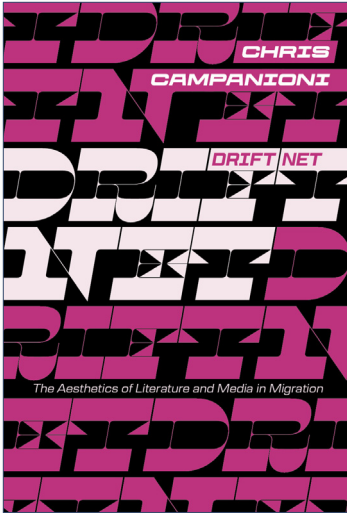
Our Little Life is the original title of José Antonio Villarreal's groundbreaking 1959 novel *Pocho*, which shaped Mexican-American literature for decades. *Pocho* narrated the experiences of and challenges to the Mexican-American

community in 1930s Silicon Valley through the story of Richard Rubio and his family, ending with the U.S.'s entry into World War II. With this new edition, author and editor Juan Velasco restores Villarreal's original vision for his novel. Published in cooperation with the Villarreal estate, this edition of *Our Little Life* is based on archival materials from the Villarreal Special Collection at Santa Clara University.

Our Little Life offers a much longer version of the *Pocho* story that extends a further 100 pages into the postwar period and follows Richard Rubio's return from war and the changing shape of Mexican-American life in the 1940s. This newly discovered manuscript reveals Villarreal's attention to Rubio's struggles with PTSD and his efforts to depict a community and a family's struggles with identity, belonging, and survival in postwar California. *Our Little Life* is an important work of archival recovery that sheds new light on Villarreal's authorship and his place not only in Mexican-American literature but in the twentieth-century American literary canon.

This first publication of *Our Little Life* includes a scholarly introduction that places this unpublished novel in the landscape of contemporary Mexican-American literary studies and offers a brilliant examination of how novels grow and change. The volume also includes materials from the Villarreal Special Collection that recontextualize the writer's vision, editing, and marketing of this and later novels. *Our Little Life* will be of interest not only to everyone in Mexican-American literary studies, but also to scholars of postwar America, women and gender studies, LGBTQ studies, ethnic studies, and migration and border studies.

Juan Velasco is the author of *Cultural Resistance and Collective Identity in Contemporary Chicana/o Autobiography* (2016) and *Las fronteras móviles: tradición, modernidad y la búsqueda de 'lo mexicano' en la Literatura Chicana contemporánea* (2003). He is co-editor of *In Xochitl in Cuicatl: Floricanto: Poemario Chicano/Latinx Contemporáneo* (1920-2020) and the founder of the NGO *Programa Velasco*, whose mission is to promote education and economic empowerment for children and women in El Salvador.



Drift Net

The Aesthetics of Literature and Media in Migration

Chris Campanioni

June 2025

Paperback | 978-1-64315-080-2 | \$27.99

Open Access | 978-1-64315-081-9

376 pages | 6 x 9

THEORIZES LITERATURE AND ART PRODUCED THROUGH EXPERIENCES OF MIGRATION, DETENTION, AND EXILE

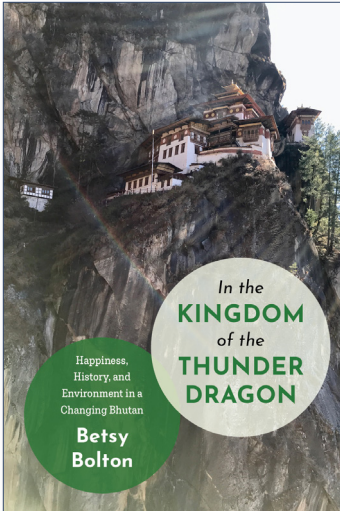
Today's aesthetic strategies to compose content and identity across digital media are neither new nor exclusively digital, but emerged from migration. In *Drift Net: The Aesthetics of Literature and Media in Migration*, Chris Campanioni theorizes an aesthetics of transmedia as a framework for civic activism, while showing how migrants have forecasted and reshaped new media practices and norms, producing a political subjectivity that resists

subjectification. As borders, global inequality, racism, and xenophobia proliferate, migrants continue to enact the possibilities of something else, beyond being spoken about and spoken for.

Through a model Campanioni calls a "migratory text," *Drift Net* advances a theory of literature and art born in translation that calls into question established theories of world literature, national literatures, literary periodization, and translation itself. Through an analysis of works born in translation and produced in passage, detention, and exile, Campanioni utilizes this model to read creatively across a wide range of social and political formations, from the experience of his parents' exiles to alternative housing initiatives and asylum reform efforts throughout Europe, including the largest LGBT+ refugee center in the world. Drawing on a mixed methodology of qualitative interviews with asylum applicants and shelter directors, textual analysis, and autoethnographic narrative, *Drift Net* traces literary developments alongside contemporary social and political interventions. This approach proposes interventions on the organizational levels of asylum, integration, public housing, and membership. It also marks the ways migrant creators have reformulated subjectivity through the same genres and modes that have contributed to their devaluation as minoritized subjects.

Drift Net both deepens and broadens our conceptualization of migrant literature, and recovers an understanding and application of transmedia that predates digital cultures. Campanioni offers a wide-ranging study of texts including Edward Said and Jean Mohr's *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*, Edgar Garcia's *Skins of Columbus*, Anna Seghers's *Transit*, Francis Ponge's *Soap*, Walid Raad's *The Atlas Group*, Klára Hosnedlová's embroidered paintings, Reem Karssli's and Caroline Williams's *Now is the Time To Say Nothing*, Cornelia Schleime's paper prints, and more. *Drift Net* formulates the "migratory" as a site of artistic production, resistance, and possibility, where theory is not an end but the beginning of tools and practices that might help researchers, instructors, and organizers to develop their strategies.

Chris Campanioni is Lecturer of Creative Writing and Media Studies at Pace University. His work on migration and media theory has been awarded the Calder Prize for interdisciplinary research and a Mellon Foundation fellowship, and his writing has received the Pushcart Prize, International Latino Book Award, and Academy of American Poets College Prize. His essays, poetry, and fiction have been translated into Spanish and Portuguese and have found a home in several venues, including *Diacritics*, *Journal of Cinema and Media Studies*, *Best American Essays*, and *Latin American Literature Today*.



In the Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon Happiness, History, and Environment in a Changing Bhutan

Betsy Bolton

June 2025

Paperback | 978-1-64315-082-6 | \$30.99

Open Access | 978-1-64315-083-3

425 pages | 71 black-and-white images | 6 x 9

Series: *ASIANetwork Books*

A JOURNEY THROUGH BHUTAN THAT LOOKS AT THE BUDDHIST MOUNTAIN KINGDOM’S RECENT HISTORY, GROSS NATIONAL HAPPINESS, ETHNIC CONFLICTS, AND BIOCULTURAL HERITAGE

Landlocked, mountainous, and surrounded by global giants India and China, Bhutan has provided remarkable leadership on both climate action and human happiness, despite its pre-2023 status as a least-developed nation.

Bhutan was the first country to be internationally recognized

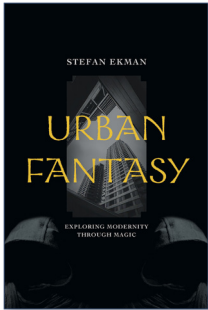
as carbon neutral; it is also the birthplace of “Gross National Happiness” (GNH), a pointed alternative to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as a means of measuring the success of national policies in promoting citizens’ wellbeing. Yet Bhutan has also been a site of ethnic conflict, with roughly 100,000 people displaced into refugee camps in the 1990s and eventually resettled abroad.

International views on Bhutan tend to be sharply split between admiration for its democratizing development strategies and opposition to its human rights abuses—a division partly maintained by Bhutan’s tight limits on immigration and foreign travel within the country. In the first book-length study of its kind, *In the Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon* explores the tensions and contradictions of Bhutan’s rapid political and economic transformation from the perspective of a Fulbright scholar helping start a new master’s program in the remote east of the country.

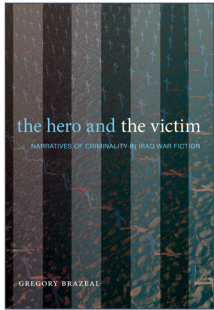
Mingling personal narrative with historical context to engage undergraduate students and general readers, *In the Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon* explores Bhutan’s Vajrayana Buddhist heritage and ongoing embrace of tradition alongside development, the country’s newly minted democracy amidst a complicated history of citizenship and belonging, and the challenges the nation faces in a period of increasing globalization. Betsy Bolton further explores Bhutan’s recent events surrounding the 1990s expulsion of the Lhotshampa people and the development of GNH in the early 2000s. From here, Bolton illuminates how these historical narratives and issues have impacted Bhutanese citizens and students through stories gathered at educational and artistic institutions, festivals and community events. *In the Kingdom of the Thunder Dragon* is a fresh, accessible approach to Bhutanese history and will interest general readers as well as scholars of Asia, history, economics, sociology, and environmental studies.

Betsy Bolton teaches English and Environmental Studies at Swarthmore College. She has served as a Fulbright scholar to Morocco (2013-4) and Bhutan (2017-8), where she facilitated community digital storytelling projects and created mini-documentaries of traditional crafts.

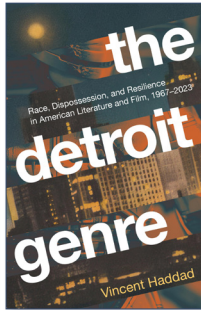
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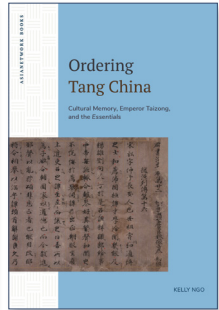
Urban Fantasy
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Stefan Ekman



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Narratives of Criminality in Iraq War Fiction
Gregory Brazeal



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Vincent Haddad



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Kelly Ngo

Theater and Crisis
Myth, Memory, and Racial Reckoning in America, 1964-2020
Patrice D. Rankine

The Chemistry of Character in Breaking Bad
A Videographic Book
Jason Mittell

Queer Compassion in 15 Comics
Edited by Andrew Thomas, Megan Aston, and Phillip Joy

