



Lever Press

Fall & Winter 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.

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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

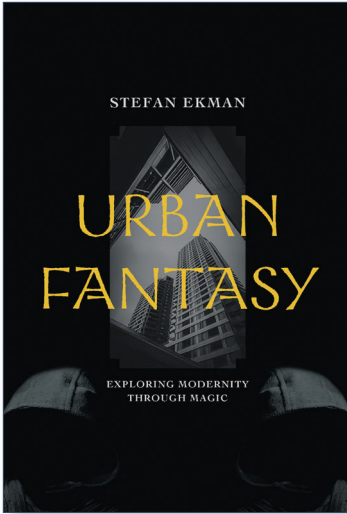
Series editor: Bernd Herzogenrath (Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main)

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.



Urban Fantasy

Exploring Modernity through Magic

Stefan Ekman

August 2024

Paperback | 9781643150642 | \$26.99

Open Access | 9781643150659

352 pages | 6 x 9

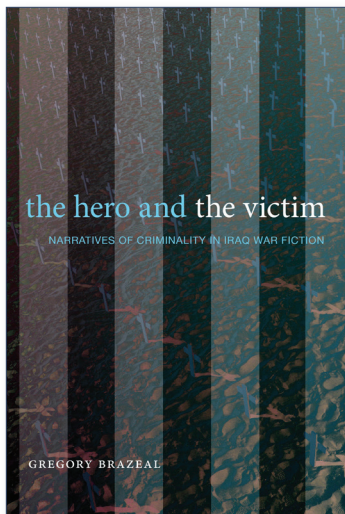
THE FIRST BOOK-LENGTH HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE URBAN FANTASY GENRE

Urban fantasy, the genre of fantastic literature in which magic and monsters meet modern society, is fairly young but has old roots. Stefan Ekman's book, *Urban Fantasy: Exploring Modernity through Magic*, examines the genre in depth, including its inherent social commentary, its historical development, and its interplay between modernity and the fantastic.

The author draws on a wide range of urban fantasy texts from five decades, combining detailed analysis of dozens of novels and other media with broad discussions to provide a comprehensive understanding of the genre across three sections. The first section presents an overview of what the genre looks like today—both in terms of its common traits and its variety of settings—and how it has developed over time, including the history of urban fantasy scholarship. The second section examines urban fantasy's core concern with the unseen, for example through a focus on unseen individuals overlooked by society or hiding within it, and on ignored urban spaces or labyrinthine undergrounds. The third section addresses how urban fantasy explores the relationship between the supernatural and modernity. Ekman offers readings of fiction by Ben Aaronovitch, Lauren Beukes, P. Djelí Clark, Charles de Lint, Neil Gaiman, Max Gladstone, Kim Harrison, N.K. Jemisin, and Megan Lindholm, among others.

Urban Fantasy will appeal to teachers and students of the fantastic as well as to urban fantasy enthusiasts and literary scholars. Ekman illuminates the genre's evolution and defining traits, inviting readers to rethink urban fantasy as a creative tool for using magic to explore modernity.

Dr. Stefan Ekman is a fantasy scholar affiliated with Karlstad University, Sweden. He has published extensively on urban fantasy, critical world-building, and fantasy maps. He is the author of *Here Be Dragons: Exploring Fantasy Maps and Settings* (Wesleyan University Press, 2013).



The Hero and the Victim

Narratives of Criminality in Iraq War Fiction

Gregory Brazeal

October 2024

Paperback | 9781643150666 | \$27.99

Open Access | 9781643150673

390 pages | 6 x 9

HOW AMERICAN FICTION REPRESENTS SOLDIERS—AND SOLDIER CRIMINALITY—IN DEPICTIONS OF THE IRAQ WAR

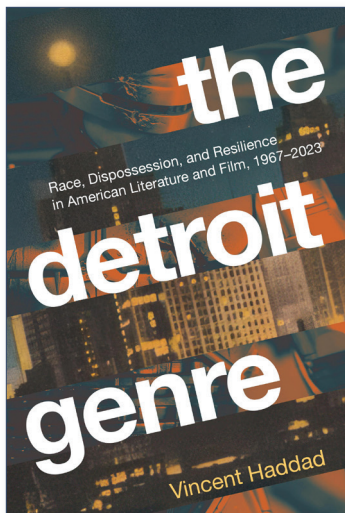
Two decades after the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, a canon of American literature about the war has begun to emerge. Gregory Brazeal's *The Hero and the Victim* situates Iraq War fiction in war literature's broader history. In contrast to the emphasis of most pre-modern war literature on the figure of the warrior-as-hero, and the growing modern emphasis on the figure of the soldier-as-vic-

tim, Iraq War fiction reflects the troubled emergence of a new narrative: the story of the ordinary soldier as a wrongdoer or even criminal. To a greater extent than earlier literature about American wars, Iraq War fiction is haunted by depictions of moral injury and expressions of unresolved guilt.

The emphasis on soldier criminality in Iraq War fiction can be partly explained by the rise of moral cosmopolitanism and its blurring of the traditional conceptual lines between war and crime. The anti-war literature of the twentieth century often presented fallen soldiers on both sides equally as victims and viewed the distinction between heroes and villains as part of the illusion that battlefield experience strips away. Written in the long shadow of Nuremberg, Iraq War fiction grapples with the possibility that the soldiers on one's own side may not be the heroes in the story, or even the victims, but participants in a wrong, and perhaps even complicit in crimes. *The Hero and the Victim* contributes to the ongoing, public reexamination of American traditions by confronting a topic that has, up to now, been largely untouched: the moral celebration of military service.

The Hero and the Victim explores the theme of soldier criminality through close readings of several works by American authors, including Kevin Powers's *The Yellow Birds*, Phil Klay's *Redeployment*, Helen Benedict's *Sand Queen*, Chris Kyle's *American Sniper*, and Roy Scranton's *War Porn*. This volume will be an essential text for students of American literature, historians of war culture, and any scholar interested in representations of the Iraq War.

Gregory Brazeal is a professor of criminal law and a former public defender. He served for nine years in the Army Reserve as a judge advocate and holds a JD from Harvard Law School and a PhD in English from Cornell University.



The Detroit Genre

Race, Dispossession, and Resilience in American Literature and Film, 1967-2023

Vincent Haddad

November 2024

Paperback | 9781643150680 | \$25.99

Open Access | 9781643150697

345 pages | 8 black-and-white images | 6 x 9

THE FIRST COMPREHENSIVE INVESTIGATION OF THE LITERARY AND POPULAR CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF DETROIT

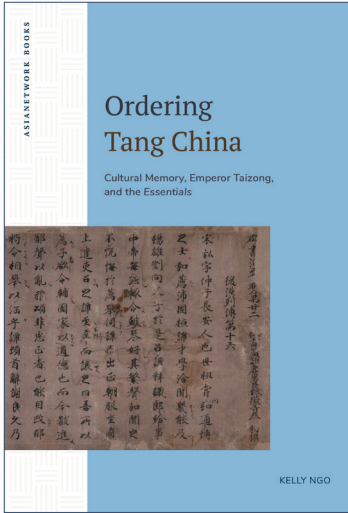
Detroit has an essential relationship to genre in American literature and popular culture. The contemporary formations of the suburban sitcom, the post-apocalyptic genre, the sci-fi dystopia, crime fiction, the superhero genre, and contemporary horror would not exist in the way they do today without the aesthetic material and racial history of Detroit. When DC Comics wanted

to compete with Marvel and market “socially relevant” comics, especially ones dealing with issues of race, they swapped Gotham and Metropolis for Detroit. What about vampires concerned with de-industrialization, heritage conservation, and impending water wars? Must be Detroit. A story about a half-man, half-robot wrestling with what it means to be human by fighting crime? Improbably, Detroit has two. Author Vincent Haddad’s *The Detroit Genre* provides the first comprehensive literary and cultural investigation of the representations of Detroit in popular and literary culture.

The book first establishes the concept of the “Detroit genre” that emerged in late 1960s and traces the tropes of this white-centric narrative genre in popular culture, touching on key texts including *Blue Collar*, *Robocop*, *The Crow*, *It Follows*, and *Barbarian*. The second part shows how Black writers, including Alice Randall, adrienne maree brown, Stephen Mack Jones, and Angela Flournoy, reclaimed and revised the Detroit genre by un-fixing Detroit narratives of dispossession, criminality, and industrial and social failure through formal experimentations on genre itself.

Where Detroit has typically been painted in the news as one of three things—the center of the automotive industry; crime-ridden and in ruins; or as a “blank canvas” with limitless potential of entrepreneurship—Vincent Haddad shows that the Detroit genre in literature and film can be far more powerful than news media in narrating Black dispossession as a pragmatic, even liberal consensus. The texts studied here condition forgetfulness about Detroit’s history or expose it to a full reckoning, direct attention toward or away from the city’s agents of injustice, fetishize resilience or model resistance, and foreclose or imagine a future of Black liberation. Appealing to scholars of popular literature, media, race, and American studies, *The Detroit Genre* is an accessible and engaging study of the city’s influence on a wide array of genres in pop culture.

Vincent Haddad is an Associate Professor of English at Central State University. His scholarship on literature and popular culture has appeared in the academic journals *College Literature*, *Inks*, *The Comparatist*, *ImageText*, as well as several edited collections.



Ordering Tang China

Cultural Memory, Emperor Taizong, and the Essentials

Kelly Ngo

December 2024
Paperback | 9781643150703 | \$23.99
Open Access | 9781643150710
315 pages | 6 x 9
Series: ASIANetwork Books

ANALYSIS OF A SEVENTH-CENTURY CHINESE ANTHOLOGY ON IMPERIAL GOVERNANCE

In *Ordering Tang China: Cultural Memory, Emperor Taizong and the Essentials*, Kelly Ngo presents the first book-length study in English of the *Essentials for Bringing about Order from Assembled Texts* (*Qunshu zhiyao* 群書治要), a rulership anthology that became renowned for its

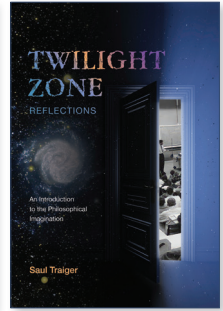
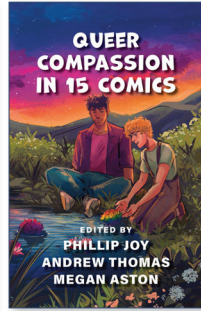
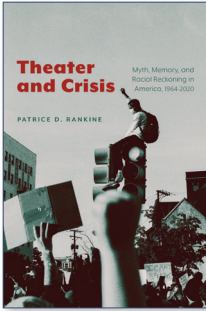
model of governance in ancient and early modern East Asia. The *Essentials* is one of the earliest Chinese anthologies designed to educate rulers in cultivating an ethical character and governing the state. Commissioned for the Tang emperor Taizong in the 620s, the *Essentials* articulates a distinctive political philosophy through a collection of excerpts from and commentaries on the earlier canonical, historical, and masters writings. Examining the *Essentials* and its transmission in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam through the lens of cultural memory, Ngo explores the foundation, conduct, and impact of Zhenguan rulership, which became synonymous with good governance among later generations of ruling elites, scholars, and historians in China and beyond.

By connecting the textual discourse with an analysis of its use and reception across the region, Ngo demonstrates that the *Essentials* was a key source of Confucian political thought and practice during the early Tang dynasty. In accounting for the place of the *Essentials* in political advice literature, Ngo illustrates how it drew from the ancient Confucian heritage and was still responsive to contemporaneous political concerns, suggesting that the *Essentials* played a part in the success of Zhenguan political practice.

Ordering Tang China also includes the first English-language translations of portions of the seventh-century anthology, with reference to partial translations published in nine languages. Utilizing the theory of cultural memory to study the *Essentials* not only opens a fresh approach to learning about the imperial consumption of literature, as well as the theory and practice of emperors, but also offers a case study for how to study Chinese governance literature, including its “mirror for princes” genre.

Kelly Ngo is lecturer in ancient Chinese Literature at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

Recently Published



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

Twilight Zone Reflections

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Saul Traiger

Women Making History

Revolutionary Feminist Postcard Art From Helaine Victoria Press

Julia M. Allen and Jocelyn H. Cohen

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Tian An Wong

Transforming the Authority of the Archive

Undergraduate Pedagogy and Critical Digital Archives

Edited by Andi Gustavson & Charlotte Nunes



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