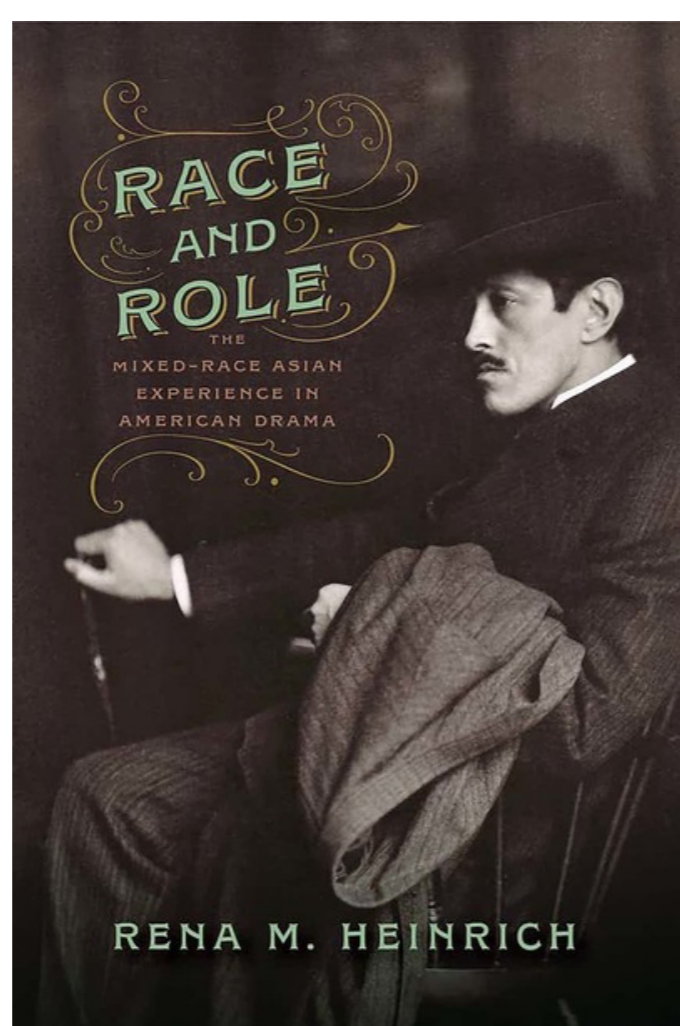


# Levan Institute for the Humanities

## Upcoming Levan Book Chat



Wednesday, February 14 | 12:00 PM | Virtual

### Levan Book Chats—Rena Heinrich, *Race and Role: The Mixed-Race Asian Experience in American Drama*

A discussion of Rena Heinrich's new book, *Race and Role: The Mixed-Race Asian Experience in American Drama* (Rutgers University Press, 2023). The author will be joined in conversation by SanSan Kwan (UC Berkeley) and Rebecca Chiyoko King-O'Riain (Maynooth University), moderated by Duncan Williams (USC). Co-organized by the USC School of Dramatic Arts and the USC East Asian Studies Center. [REGISTER](#)

**About the Book:** Mixed-race Asian American plays are often overlooked for their failure to fit smoothly into static racial categories, rendering mixed-race drama inconsequential in conversations about race and performance. Since the 19th century, however, these plays have long advocated for the social significance of multiracial Asian people. *Race and Role: The Mixed-Race Asian Experience in American Drama* traces the shifting identities of multiracial Asian figures in theater from the late-19th century to the present day and explores the ways that mixed-race Asian identity transforms our understanding of race. Mixed-Asian playwrights harness theater's generative power to enact performances of "double liminality" and expose the absurd tenacity with which society clings to a tenuous racial scaffolding. [MORE](#)



**About the Author:** **Rena Heinrich** is an Associate Professor of Theatre Practice in Critical Studies at the USC School of Dramatic Arts (SDA) and an affiliated professor of East Asian studies in the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. As an artist, her theatrical work has been produced in Los Angeles by the John Anson Ford Theatre, The Latino Theater Company, East West Players, Company of Angels, Playwrights' Arena, TeAda Productions, Artists at Play, Casa 0101, and Highways Performance Space, among others. She is also a contributor to the anthology *Shape Shifters: Journeys Across Terrains of Race and Identity* (University of Nebraska Press) and to *The Being of America: Personal Narratives about Being Mixed Race in the 21st Century* (2Leaf Press).

#### About the Participants:

**SanSan Kwan** is Professor of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies at UC Berkeley. Her recent book, *Love Dances: Loss and Mourning in Intercultural Collaboration* (Oxford University Press, 2021), is winner of the 2022 de la Torre Bueno© Award. She is also author of *Kinesthetic City: Dance and Movement in Chinese Urban Spaces* (Oxford University Press, 2013) and co-editor, with Kenneth Speirs, of *Mixing It Up: Multiracial Subjects* (University of Texas Press, 2004). Her articles can be found in *The Drama Review*, *Dance Research Journal*, *Theatre Survey*, *Performance Research*, *Choreographic Practices*, *Representations*, and other journals and anthologies.

**Rebecca Chiyoko King-O'Riain** is an Associate Professor of Sociology at Maynooth University. Her research interests include globalization, popular culture, emotions, and technology; racial/ethnic beauty pageants; critical race theory; qualitative methods; interracial marriage and multiracial people. She is the author of *Pure Beauty: Judging Race in Japanese American Beauty Pageants* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006) and editor of *Global Mixed Race* (NYU Press, 2014). Her current research explores globalized interpersonal and interactive forms of bodily culture through skin-altering practices in Asia and Europe, beauty pageants, and Asian popular culture (Korean and Japanese popular music and dramas).

**Duncan Williams** is Professor of Religion and East Asian Languages & Cultures and the Director of the USC Shinso Ito Center for Japanese Religions and Culture. Previously, he held the Shinjo Ito Distinguished Chair of Japanese Buddhism at UC Berkeley and served as the Director of Berkeley's Center for Japanese Studies for four years. He has also been ordained since 1993 as a Buddhist priest in the Soto Zen tradition and served as the Buddhist chaplain at Harvard University from 1994-96. He is the author of *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Soto Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton University Press, 2005) and *American Sutra: A Story of Faith and Freedom in the Second World War* (Harvard University Press, 2019). He is also the editor/co-editor of seven volumes including *Hapa Japan* (Kaya Press, 2017), *Issei Buddhism in the Americas* (U-Illinois Press, 2010), *American Buddhism* (Routledge/Curzon Press, 1998), and *Buddhism and Ecology* (Harvard University Press, 1997).

The Levan Institute for the Humanities hosts **Book Chats**, conversations celebrating new books by USC scholars in the humanities and humanistic social sciences.

Open to attendants outside of USC. An excerpt of the book will be made available to registered attendants. Registration before the event is required.

[REGISTER FOR THIS EVENT](#)

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