



# Camp TV

Trans Gender Queer

Sitcom History

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Duke University Press Durham and London 2019

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Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY  
Designed by Courtney Leigh Baker  
Typeset in Garamond Premier Pro and Helvetica Neue  
by Copperline Books

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data  
Names: Miller, Quinlan, [date] author.  
Title: Camp TV : trans gender queer sitcom history / Quinlan Miller.  
Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2019. | Series: Console-ing passions |  
Includes bibliographical references and index.  
Identifiers: LCCN 2018037344 (print) | LCCN 2018044915 (ebook)  
ISBN 9781478003397 (ebook)  
ISBN 9781478001850 (hardcover : alk. paper)  
ISBN 9781478003038 (pbk. : alk. paper)  
Subjects: LCSH: Situation comedies (Television programs)—United States—  
History and criticism. | Television—Social aspects—United States—History—  
20th century. | Transgender people in popular culture—United States. |  
Gender nonconformity on television. | Gender identity on television. |  
Homosexuality and television—United States—History.  
Classification: LCC PN1992.8.C66 (ebook) |  
LCC PN1992.8.C66 M44 2019 (print) | DDC 791.456/53—dc23  
LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2018037344>

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David Susskind Papers, Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.  
(Bottom) *Beverly Hillbillies*.



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Sitcoms of the 1950s and 1960s are widely considered conformist in their depictions of gender roles and sexual attitudes. In *Camp TV* Quinlan Miller offers a new account of the history of American television that explains what campy meant in practical sitcom terms in shows as iconic as *The Dick Van Dyke Show* as well as in more obscure fare, such as *The Ugliest Girl in Town*. Situating his analysis within the era's shifts in the television industry and the coalescence of straightness and whiteness that came with the decline of vaudevillian camp, Miller shows how the sitcoms of this era overflowed with important queer representation and gender nonconformity. Whether through regular supporting performances (Ann B. Davis's Schultz in *The Bob Cummings Show*), guest appearances by Paul Lynde and Charles Nelson Reilly, or scripted dialogue and situations, industry processes of casting and production routinely esteemed a camp aesthetic that renders all gender expression queer. By charting this unexpected history, Miller offers new ways of exploring how supposedly repressive popular media incubated queer, genderqueer, and transgender representations.

"*Camp TV* is a powerful study of the camp currents of 1950s' and 1960s' American television comedy. Quinlan Miller argues passionately for a corrective account of the multiple gendered and erotic sounds and images that constituted the key evolutionary moment in the form of the sitcom."—Amy Villarejo, author of *Ethereal Queer: Television, Historicity, Desire*

"An important and intriguing work of theoretical and historical media scholarship, this book dramatically rethinks 1950s' and 1960s' U.S. television comedy in order to uncover a more nuanced sense of the social world being made visible on television—one in which trans figures were a significant element—than previous media scholarship has allowed."—Matthew Tinkcom, author of *Working Like a Homosexual: Camp, Capital, Cinema*

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#### CONSOLE-ING PASSIONS

Television and Cultural Power

Edited by Lynn Spigel

Duke University Press [www.dukeupress.edu](http://www.dukeupress.edu)

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