Bored to Distraction
Cinema of Excess
in End-of-the-Century Mexico and Spain
Claudia Schaefer
Examines how recent Mexican and Spanish films act as untroubling distractions from everyday routines.

Popular culture in the 1990s, especially cinema, can be considered a showcase for the accumulated hopes and fears of the twentieth century. From the promise of material goods to the profusion of despair, from devastating tragedy to exaggerated rapture, a dizzying array of images assaults the eye. Drawing on recent films from Mexico and Spain, Bored to Distraction navigates this visual terrain, from melodrama to horror, looking for what, if anything, might be excessive enough to rouse us from our comfortable everyday routines.

“A very smart, theoretically informed, and provocative discussion of film in the context of a timely analysis of consumer-oriented cultures.” — Debra A. Castillo, author of Easy Women: Sex and Gender in Modern Mexican Fiction

“Very well written and quite reader-friendly. Schaefer’s theoretical framework is at the cutting edge of the field, and helps identify the place of the traditional cultural paradigm of leisure in the current production of middle class boredom and its economic and ideological ramifications.” — Jaume Martí-Olivella, coauthor of The New Catalan Short Story: An Anthology

Claudia Schaefer is Professor of Spanish and Comparative Literature at the University of Rochester and the author of Danger Zones: Homosexuality, National Identity, and Mexican Culture and Textured Lives: Women, Art, and Representation in Modern Mexico.

A volume in the SUNY series in Latin American and Iberian Thought and Culture

Rereading George Eliot
Changing Responses to Her Experiments in Life
Bernard J. Paris
A noted Eliot scholar explores how we become different interpreters of literature as we undergo psychological change.

In a probing analysis that has broad implications for theories of reading, Bernard J. Paris explores how personal needs and changes in his own psychology have affected his responses to George Eliot over the years. Having lost his earlier enthusiasm for her “Religion of Humanity,” he now appreciates the psychological intuitions that are embodied in her brilliant portraits of characters and relationships. Concentrating on Eliot’s most impressive psychological novels, Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda, Paris focuses on her detailed portrayals of major characters in an effort to recover her intuitions and appreciate her mimetic achievement. He argues that although she intended for her characters to provide confirmation of her views, she was instead led to deeper, more enduring truths, although she did not consciously comprehend the discoveries she had made. Like her characters, Paris argues, these truths must be disengaged from her rhetoric in order to be perceived.

“Consistently fascinating and engaging, this book represents a new kind of criticism in which the interpreter is as interested in interrogating himself as he is the writer under study.” — Jeffrey Berman, author of Risky Writing: Self-Disclosure and Self-Transformation in the Classroom

Bernard J. Paris is Professor Emeritus of English at the University of Florida and the author of a number of books, including Experiments in Life: George Eliot’s Quest for Values and Imagined Human Beings: A Psychological Approach to Character and Conflict in Literature.

A volume in the SUNY series in Psychoanalysis and Culture

Henry Sussman, editor
DOMESTIC ABOLITIONISM AND JUVENILE LITERATURE, 1830–1865
DEBORAH C. DE ROSA

Explores why women abolitionists turned to children’s literature to make their case against slavery.

Deborah C. De Rosa examines the multifaceted nature of domestic abolitionism, a discourse that nineteenth-century women created to voice their political sentiments when cultural imperatives demanded their silence. For nineteenth-century women struggling to find an abolitionist voice while maintaining the codes of gender and respectability, writing children’s literature was an acceptable strategy to counteract the opposition. By seizing the opportunity to write abolitionist juvenile literature, De Rosa argues, domestic abolitionists were able to enter the public arena while simultaneously maintaining their identities as exemplary mother-educators and preserving their claims to “femininity.” Using close textual analyses of archival materials, De Rosa examines the convergence of discourses about slavery, gender, and children in juvenile literature from 1830 to 1865, filling an important gap in our understanding of women’s literary productions about race and gender, as well as our understanding of nineteenth-century American literature more generally.

“De Rosa offers a detailed analysis of various works of abolitionist children’s literature to make a compelling case that this primary source can be valuable in explaining an overlooked dimension of antislavery activism before the Civil War. This study provides a new avenue for understanding female abolitionism and children’s literature.” — Nancy Isenberg, author of Sex and Citizenship in Antebellum America

“De Rosa should be commended for recognizing the gap in scholarship of the period and for finding value in a group of writers who took seriously the intersection of abolitionist and domestic concerns.” — Bruce Mills, Kalamazoo College

Deborah C. De Rosa is Assistant Professor of English at Northern Illinois University.

TRAUMATIC ENCOUNTERS
Holocaust Representation and the Hegelian Subject
PAUL EISENSTEIN

Addresses the difficulty of representing the Holocaust in literature and on film.

Traumatic Encounters argues for an alternative memorial path in Holocaust and cultural studies—one that shows the vital necessity of thinking in a universal way about an event like the Holocaust. Relying on Hegel’s notion that the particular is already universal, Eisenstein shows how the encounter with trauma transpires not in the refusal of a universalizing gesture but rather in its wholesale embrace. This embrace results in a recognition involving the trauma that conditions the possibility of history in the first place—a structural trauma immune to historicization that Hegel and psychoanalysis place at the heart of subjectivity and community. The structural trauma encounter is at the center of four titles that Eisenstein examines: Spielberg’s Schindler’s List, D. M. Thomas’s The White Hotel, Thomas Mann’s Doctor Faustus, and David Grossman’s See Under: Love.

“An exceptionally ambitious and timely intervention into contemporary discussions about the ethics of representation after the Holocaust.” — Wulf Kansteiner, Binghamton University, State University of New York

“Traumatic Encounters offers an innovative (Zizekian/Lacanian) approach to the Holocaust in literature and provides significant insight into an interesting selection of important texts.” — David Brenner, Chair of Jewish Studies, Kent State University

Paul Eisenstein is Assistant Professor of English at Otterbein College.
SHATTERED VESSELS
Memory, Identity, and Creation in the Work of David Shahar
MICHAL PELED GINSBURG and MOSHE RON

The first book-length study of the Israeli novelist David Shahar.

David Shahar (1926–1997), author of the seven-novel sequence The Palace of Shattered Vessels, occupies an ambiguous position in the Israeli literary canon. Often compared to Proust, Shahar produced a body of work that offers a fascinating poetic and ideological alternative to the dominant models of Amos Oz and A. B. Yehoshua. This book, the first full-length study of this fascinating author, takes a fresh look at the uniqueness of his literary achievement in both poetic and ideological terms. In addition to situating Shahar within the European literary tradition, the book reads Shahar’s representation of Jerusalem in his multivolume novel as a “heterotopia”—an actual space where society’s unconscious (what does not fit on its ideological map) is materially present—and argues for the relevance of Shahar’s work to the critical discussion of the Arab question in Israeli culture.

“…The concluding chapter, which elaborates a brilliant and illuminating comparison of Proust and Shahar, is alone worth the price of admission. I have read Shahar for years with great interest . . . and learned a great deal from this deft book. It breaks significant new ground both in comparative literature and Israeli fiction.”
— Murray Baumgarten, author of City Scriptures

TAMAR HELLER and PATRICIA MORAN, EDITORS

SCENES OF THE APPLE
Food and the Female Body in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Women’s Writing

Examines the rich and multiple meanings of food in women’s writing.

Focusing on women’s writing of the last two centuries, Scenes of the Apple traces the intricate relationship between food and body image for women. Ranging over a variety of genres, including novels, culinary memoirs, and essays, the contributors explore works by a diverse group of writers, including Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Toni Morrison, Tsitsi Dangarembga, and Jeanette Winterson, as well as such nonliterary documents as discussions of Queen Victoria’s appetite and news coverage of suffragettes’ hunger strikes. Moreover, in addressing works by Hispanic, African, African American, Jewish, and lesbian writers, the book explodes the myth that only white, privileged, and heterosexual women are concerned with body image, and shows the many cultural contexts in which food and cooking are important in women’s literature. Above all, the essays pay tribute to the rich and multiple meanings of food in women’s writing as a symbol for all kinds of delightful—and transgressive—desires.

“…Fascinating and provocative reading.”
— Susan Elizabeth Sweeney, coeditor of Anxious Power: Reading, Writing, and Ambivalence in Narrative by Women

Tamar Heller is Assistant Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Cincinnati. She is the author of Dead Secrets: Wilkie Collins and the Female Gothic and coeditor (with Diane Long Hoeveler) of Approaches to Teaching Gothic Fiction: The British and American Traditions. Patricia Moran is Associate Professor of English at the University of California at Davis and the author of Word of Mouth: Body Language in Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf.

A volume in the SUNY series in Feminist Criticism and Theory

Michelle A. Massé, editor

For a list of contributors, see page 57.
ANGLO-SAXON STYLES
CATHERINE E. KARKOV AND GEORGE HARDIN BROWN, EDITORS

Considers the definitions and implications of style in Anglo-Saxon art and literature.

Art historian Meyer Schapiro defined style as “the constant form—and sometimes the constant elements, qualities, and expression—in the art of an individual or group.” Today, style is frequently overlooked as a critical tool, with our interest instead resting with the personal, the ephemeral, and the fragmentary. Anglo-Saxon Styles demonstrates just how vital style remains in a methodological and theoretical prism, regardless of the object, individual, fragment, or process studied. Contributors from a variety of disciplines—including literature, art history, manuscript studies, philology, and more—consider the definitions and implications of style in Anglo-Saxon culture and in contemporary scholarship. They demonstrate that the idea of style as a “constant form” has its limitations, and that style is in fact the ordering of form, both verbal and visual. Anglo-Saxon texts and images carry meanings and express agendas, presenting us with paradoxes and riddles that require us to keep questioning the meanings of style.

“This is one of the few books attempting to synthesize our knowledge on Anglo-Saxon culture in new and interesting ways by finding a bridge between art and literature in the word ‘style.’” — Patrick W. Conner, author of Anglo-Saxon Exeter: A Tenth-Century Cultural History

Catherine E. Karkov is Professor of Art at Miami University and the author of Text and Picture in Anglo-Saxon England: Narrative Strategies in the Junius 11 Manuscript, the editor of Basic Readings in Anglo-Saxon Archaeology, and the coeditor (with Robert T. Farrell and Michael Ryan) of The Insular Tradition, also published by SUNY Press.

George Hardin Brown is Professor of English at Stanford University and the author of Bede the Venerable and Bede the Educator.

A volume in the SUNY series in Medieval Studies
Paul E. Szarmach, editor

For a list of contributors, see page 57.

BRAHMA IN THE WEST
William Blake and the Oriental Renaissance
DAVID WEIR

Argues that the myths and ideals of William Blake’s poetry were heavily influenced by the Oriental Renaissance—the British discovery of Hindu literature.

Examining William Blake’s poetry in relation to the mythographic tradition of the eighteenth century and emphasizing the British discovery of Hindu literature, David Weir argues that Blake’s mythic system springs from the same rich historical context that produced the Oriental Renaissance. That context includes republican politics and dissenting theology—two interrelated developments that help elucidate many of the obscurities of Blake’s poetry and explain much of its intellectual energy. Weir shows how Blake’s poetic career underwent a profound development as a result of his exposure to Hindu mythology. By combining mythographic insight with republican politics and Protestant dissent, Blake devised a poetic system that opposed the powers of Church and King.

“David Weir’s approach to Blake’s reconstitution of the Indian mythopoetic thought in his own terms—his locating of Blake’s vision in terms of Oriental Renaissance—takes into account the history of interpretation of Hindu texts by colonialist and non-colonialist writers of the eighteenth century. As Weir suggests, in many places when the colonialist authors saw ‘error and superstition,’ Blake’s poetic mind encountered mythic richness. More important is the fact that Weir looks into Blake’s own misreadings, locating them historically, and he makes a good case for the legitimacy of misreading as part of cross cultural influence. It is all very fascinating.” — Lalita Pandit, coeditor of Literary India: Comparative Studies in Aesthetics, Colonialism, and Culture

David Weir is Associate Professor on the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. He is the author of Anarchy and Culture: The Aesthetic Politics of Modernism; James Joyce and the Art of Mediation; and Decadence and the Making of Modernism.