CELLULOID NATIONALISM AND OTHER MELODRAMAS
From Post-Revolutionary Mexico to fin de siglo Mexamérica
SUSAN DEVER

Explores issues of representation and rebellion in Mexican and Mexican American cinema.

Celluloid Nationalism and Other Melodramas looks at representation and rebellion in times of national uncertainty. Moving from mid-century Mexican cinema to recent films staged in Los Angeles and Mexico City, Susan Dever analyzes melodrama’s double function as a genre and as a sensibility, revealing coincidences between movie morals and political pieties in the civic-minded films of Emilio Fernández, Matilde Landeta, Allison Anders, and Marcela Fernández Violante. These filmmakers’ rationally and emotionally engaged cinema—offering representations of indigenous peoples and poor urban women who alternately endorsed “civilizing” projects and voiced resistance to such totalization—both interrupts and sustains fictions of national coherence in an increasingly transnational world.

“I particularly like the elegant and entertaining manner in which Dever gracefully negotiates different registers of highly theoretical and autobiographical discourse. Her selection of directors and texts combines original rereadings of the Mexican male canon—Emilio Fernández—with groundbreaking work on several understudied Mexican and U.S. women directors.” — Cynthia Steele, author of Politics, Gender, and the Mexican Novel, 1968–1988: Beyond the Pyramid

Susan Dever is Associate Professor of Media Arts at the University of New Mexico.

A volume in the SUNY series, Cultural Studies in Cinema/Video

REMAKING THE FRANKENSTEIN MYTH ON FILM
Between Laughter and Horror
CAROLINE JOAN S. PICART

Explores how filmmakers and screenwriters have used comedy and science fiction to extend the boundaries of the Frankenstein narrative.

Focusing on films outside the horror genre, this book offers a unique account of the Frankenstein myth’s popularity and endurance. Although the Frankenstein narrative has been a staple in horror films, it has also crossed over into other genres, particularly comedy and science fiction, resulting in such films as Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein, Young Frankenstein, The Rocky Horror Picture Show, Bladerunner, and the Alien and Terminator film series. In addition to addressing horror’s relationship to comedy and science fiction, the book also explores the versatility and power of the Frankenstein narrative as a contemporary myth through which our deepest attitudes concerning gender (masculine versus feminine), race (Same versus Other), and technology (natural versus artificial) are both revealed and concealed. The book not only examines the films themselves, but also explores early drafts of film scripts, scenes that were cut from the final releases, publicity materials, and reviews, in order to consider more fully how and why the Frankenstein myth continues to resonate in the popular imagination.

“Picart tells a story of the story of every film in a gifted way; this takes talent, as well as a thorough familiarity with the films and a genuine enthusiasm for them.” — Joseph Natoli, author of Memory’s Orbit: Film and Culture 1999–2000

Caroline Joan S. Picart is Assistant Professor of English and Humanities and Courtesy Assistant Professor of Law at Florida State University. She is the author of The Cinematic Rebirths of Frankenstein: Universal, Hammer, and Beyond and the coauthor (with Frank Smoot and Jayne Blodgett) of The Frankenstein Film Sourcebook.

A volume in the SUNY series in Psychoanalysis and Culture

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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
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