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Sommario/riassunto

The Abject of Desire approaches the aestheticization of the unaesthetic via a range of different topics and genres in twentieth-century Anglophone literature and culture. The "experience of disgust", which Winfried Menninghaus describes as "an acute crisis of selfpreservation", is correlated with conceptualizations of gender in theories of the abject/abjection. In view of this general crisis of identity in the experience of disgust, the contributions to this volume discuss examples of the aestheticization of the unaesthetic in cultural representations and locate conceptual (re)codings of the body, gender. and identity with regard to the abject as an immediate and uncompromising experience on the one hand, and a social and political phenomenon on the other. Considering a variety of cultural narratives by writers as diverse as Samuel Delany, Sarah Schulman, Joyce Carol Oates, Leslie Marmon Silko, Paul Magrs, J. G. Ballard, Stevie Smith, T. C. Boyle, Joseph Conrad, Poppy Z. Brite, and Will Self, by film directors John Waters and Peter Greenaway, playwrights Girish Karnad and Mahesh Dattani, and "body artist" Gunter von Hagens, the contributors to this volume scrutinize different implications of the ambivalent concept of the abject/abjection.