

At times Levi's text reads very much like the doctoral thesis from which it no doubt originated, with comments like "In this chapter I will" and ... small errors such as *colonia* for *colonia*.

Despite the aptly chosen neo-pop cover art, "Santo Santo" by Sergio Arau, featuring a masked wrestler flanked by masked cherubs with wings in the colors of the Mexican flag, Levi's study of professional wrestling as adapted in Mexico as *lucha libre* is not for the popular audience. Only the most die-hard fans will wade through the sometimes tedious language of "hegemonic" and "counterhegemonic," and supporting citations from theoreticians such as Roland Barthes, Pierre Bourdieu, and Octavio Paz. Clearly written more for an academic readership rather than a popular one, the text is a thorough history of *lucha libre* with extensive footnotes and a solid bibliography. Though on occasion the reader may suspect that Levi has teased out more from this quintessential Mexican sport/spectacle than *lucha libre* merits, she has nevertheless written a commendable cultural study of an important aspect of Mexican identity. Part of Duke University Press's American Encounters/Global Interactions, *The World of Lucha Libre* fits well within the framework of a series aimed at new interpretations of the influence of the United States.

**Linda Ledford-Miller**

*University of Scranton*

JOHANNE HERSHFIELD: *Imagining la Chica Moderna. Women, Nation, and Visual Culture in Mexico, 1917-1936*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008.

*Imagining la Chica Moderna. Women, Nation, and Visual Culture in Mexico, 1917-1936* is a study of the popular images that were addressed to female middle-class consumers during the years following the Mexican Revolution. The study questions one-sided historical approaches on state formation and official nationalism by dealing with "popular" forms of female representation in the public domain; hence, "popular culture" and "gender" are key methodological tools for this study. By highlighting the importance of consumer culture addressed to women, the author attempts to expose the interaction between heterogeneous identities and official nationalism, between state formation and market forces, between discourses on *mexicanidad* and transnational gendered commercial ones.

The book is divided into five chapters. The first chapter offers an historical overview of the period in order to contextualize the emergence of popular visual culture, particularly images of "chicas modernas," within the background of post-revolutionary nationalism and global consumerism. By documenting

the appearance of illustrated magazines, advertising, and the motion picture in Mexico, this chapter claims that the construction of post-revolutionary nationality was inseparable from the idea of modernization. The second chapter centers on fashion and the depiction of fashionable women in popular culture. It takes on the hypothesis that fashion is a way to unveil processes of identity-construction in modern times. It examines the relationship between style and female identity, and understands fashion as a visual discourse of social communication and self-representation. The third chapter analyzes changing views on domesticity. Women came to be portrayed as widely cosmopolitan and, at the same time, specifically Mexican. According to the author, such bi-faceted images reveal in which way the global imagery of domesticity contributed to the construction of “chicas modernas” within the context of Mexican nationalism. Chapter four looks at images of working women and connects these images to larger considerations of womanhood and to specific public spaces, such as the office, the factory, the shop, and the streets. Finally, chapter five addresses the depiction of folkloric female types, particularly *la china poblana* and *la tehuana*. According to the author, these images were disseminated under the spell of exotic imagery, thus they also contributed to the dream of modernity in Mexico.

The book ends with a brief conclusion on the interactivities between official nationalism, modernity, and diverse local senses of belonging. By describing pictures of women in the public sphere, the author speculates on the way in which “real” women were internalizing images of “la chica moderna” in order to fashion their own identities. Nonetheless, the study does not constitute a social history of women during the period; it does not give an account of audience reception nor does it document *petite histoires* in depth. This book discusses the connections between nationalism and consumer capitalism in post-revolutionary Mexico from a gender perspective; it reads popular imagery of “la chica moderna” as a consequence of transnational capitalism and as an alternative discourse to state-nationalism. However, it does not give a full critical account of this intricate relationship. The author repeatedly asserts that commercial visual culture provided modern women with a basis for the reconfiguration of social identity; however, the author makes these assertions without a discussion of the fetishization of woman as commodity. It is somewhat imprecise what political or critical advantage should be derived from popular imagery of the “chica moderna” in post-revolutionary Mexico.

**Adela Pineda Franco**

*Boston University*