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Bad Language, Naked Ladies, And Other Threats To The Nation: A Political History Of Comic Books In Mexico



Synopsis

In *Bad Language, Naked Ladies, and Other Threats to the Nation*, Anne Rubenstein examines how comic books—which were overwhelmingly popular but extremely controversial in post-revolutionary Mexico—played an important role in the development of a stable, legitimate state. Studying the relationship of the Mexican state to its civil society from the 1930s to the 1970s through comic books and their producers, readers, and censors, Rubenstein shows how these thrilling tales of adventure—and the debates over them—reveal much about Mexico's cultural nationalism and government attempts to direct, if not control, social change. Since their first appearance in 1934, comic books enjoyed wide readership, often serving as a practical guide to life in booming new cities. Conservative protest against the so-called immorality of these publications, of mass media generally, and of Mexican modernity itself, however, led the Mexican government to establish a censorship office that, while having little impact on the content of comic books, succeeded in directing conservative ire away from government policies and toward the Mexican media. *Bad Language, Naked Ladies, and Other Threats to the Nation* examines the complex dynamics of the politics of censorship occasioned by Mexican comic books, including the conservative political campaigns against them, government and industrial responses to such campaigns, and the publishers' championing of Mexican nationalism and their efforts to preserve their publishing empires through informal influence over government policies. Rubenstein's analysis suggests a new Mexican history after the revolution, one in which negotiation over cultural questions replaced open conflict and mass-media narrative helped ensure political stability. This book will engage readers with an interest in Mexican history, Latin American studies, cultural studies, and popular culture.

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Customer Reviews

"This is a very interesting study which from an unusual angle reveals a lot about Mexican, as well as Latin American, culture and politics."--Erick D. Langer, Georgetown University
"With this study Anne Rubenstein breaks new ground in Mexican cultural history, giving comic books the political and social importance they deserve in the making of Mexican national society and PRI hegemony after 1940. Her gendered analysis is refreshing and exemplary."--Mary Kay Vaughan, University of Illinois at Chicago

"This is a very interesting study which from an unusual angle reveals a lot about Mexican, as well as Latin American, culture and politics."--Erick D. Langer, Georgetown University

Wonderful book! Fills in missing history in publishing many US Americans are unfamiliar with. Perfect shape - Highly recommend!

Prof. Rubenstein is one to watch! This book is interesting on a number of levels and should be required reading for students and professors in the area of political science, multiculturalism, and anyone interested in the recent or historical blending of pop culture and politics.

Cultural studies have opened new horizons to researchers in the Humanities, but not every person working the field has offered a more comprehensive, transcultural, multidisciplinary and worthwhile contribution to knowledge. Prof. Anne Rubenstein has. Her latest eye opener (Bad language, naked ladies and other threats to the Nation...) achieves the double goal of making a reasonable point and supporting it with sound, real information, obtained from actual sources --it is easy to tell that she has lived in Mexico, and actually read hundreds of illustrated magazines, before writing her book. I may not agree with her conclusions totally, but I wholeheartedly support every page of evidence she presents. My warmest regards to her --Â¡Felicitaciones por su trabajo!--, and to every reader who shares in her joyful and amazing quest for truth: The making and remaking of PostRevolutionary Mexico through media, are well worth the reading!

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