

In Between Worlds : The Representation of Women in Mexican Soap Operas

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In an era of transnational media and postnationalism, much research on Mexican soap operas (telenovelas) has focussed on the economic and political factors at work within the telenovela industry, concerned with Mexico's phenomenal success in regional and international markets. However, little research has been conducted on the content of Mexican telenovelas, particularly on gender representation, produced within the context of global markets. This paper explores the notion of the Mexican telenovela's representation of women as existing "in between worlds." Despite flourishing in the postnational era of "neoisms" the telenovela is located as the ideal contemporary site of a nationalist discourse that harks back to the nation founding at the turn of the 20th Century, with the Mexican government's construction of an ideal or "imagined" Mexico (Anderson, B.: 1991). The paper locates the patriarchal female archetypes within this discourse and discusses their cultural significance and pervasiveness. It then locates them within a telenovela typical of the "Mexican Formula" (Sinclair, J.: 1999) and questions the viability of a female identity that exists "in between worlds."