



Wild Tongues: Transnational Mexican Popular Culture (Chicana Matters)

Rita E. Urquijo-Ruiz

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Tracing the configuration of the slapstick, destitute *Peladita/Peladito* and the *Pachuca/Pachuco* (depicted in flashy zoot suits) from 1928 to 2004, *Wild Tongues* is an ambitious, extensive examination of social order in Mexican and Chicana/o cultural productions in literature, theater, film, music, and performance art.

From the use of the *Peladita* and the *Peladito* as stock characters who criticized various aspects of the Mexican government in the 1920s and 1930s to contemporary performance art by María Elena Gaitán and Dan Guerrero, which yields a feminist and queer-studies interpretation, Rita Urquijo-Ruiz emphasizes the transnational capitalism at play in these comic voices. Her study encompasses both sides of the border, including the use of the *Pachuca* and the *Pachuco* as anti-establishment, marginal figures in the United States. The result is a historically grounded, interdisciplinary approach that reimagines the limitations of nation-centered thinking and reading.

Beginning with Daniel Venegas's 1928 novel, *Las aventuras de don Chipote o Cuando los pericos mamen*, Rita Urquijo-Ruiz's *Wild Tongues* demonstrates early uses of the *Peladito* to call attention to the brutal physical demands placed on the undocumented Mexican laborer. It explores *Teatro de Carpa* (tent theater) in-depth as well, bringing to light the experience of Mexican *Peladita* Amelia Wilhelmy, whose "La Willy" was famous for portraying a cross-dressing male soldier who criticizes the failed Revolution. In numerous other explorations such as these, the political, economic, and social power of creativity continually takes center stage.

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