



Transforming Modernity: Popular Culture in Mexico (Translations from Latin America Series)

Néstor García Canclini

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Is popular culture merely a process of creating, marketing, and consuming a final product, or is it an expression of the artist's surroundings and an attempt to alter them? Noted Argentine/Mexican anthropologist Néstor García Canclini addresses these questions and more in *Transforming Modernity*, a translation of *Las culturas populares en el capitalismo*. Based on fieldwork among the Purépecha of Michoacán, Mexico, some of the most talented artisans of the New World, the book is not so much a work of ethnography as of philosophy—a cultural critique of modernism. García Canclini delineates three interpretations of popular culture: spontaneous creation, which posits that artistic expression is the realization of beauty and knowledge; "memory for sale," which holds that original products are created for sale in the imposed capitalist system; and the tourist outlook, whereby collectibles are created to justify development and to provide insight into what capitalism has achieved.

Transforming Modernity argues strongly for popular culture as an instrument of understanding, reproducing, and transforming the social system in order to elaborate and construct class hegemony and to reflect the unequal appropriation and distribution of cultural capital. With its wide scope, this book should appeal to readers within and well beyond anthropology—those interested in cultural theory, social thought, and Mesoamerican culture.

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