The Role of Lucha Libre in the Construction of Mexican Male Identity

Javier Pereda
Southampton Solent University

Patricia Murrieta-Flores
University of Southampton

DOI: https://doi.org/10.31165/nk.2011.41.68

Abstract

Lucha Libre has played an important role in Mexican culture since the late 1950s. The sport became famous mainly due to its masked wrestlers, who incorporated their own family traditions, beliefs and fears into the design of their masks, transforming an ordinary person into a fearless character. After the introduction of the Monsters Cinema in the 1930s, Mexican audiences welcomed and adopted characters like Dracula, Nosferatu, Frankenstein and The Werewolf. The success of Monster Cinema in Mexican culture was based on the integration of national legends and beliefs, placing them in local and identifiable concepts in the Mexican popular imagination. Later, Lucha Libre Cinema mixed with Monster Cinema resulting in the birth of new heroes and myths. These emergent paladins of the Mexican metropolis set the cultural and moral standards of that time and how Mexicans wanted to be perceived. Through an anthropological and historical analysis of Mexican Cinema and Lucha Libre, this paper investigates the main social interaction of male wrestlers who perform as heroes inside the celluloid world and outside of it. We explore how masculinity and the male figure evolves in Lucha Libre Cinema, and the processes that wrestlers have to undergo in order to be able to portray themselves as superheroes of an evolving and fast growing Mexico.
Lucha Libre (Mexican wrestling) involves athletic guys—and a few women—performing wild antics in a ring (as well as on the ropes and outside the ring too!). Spectators get involved by making their voices heard, cheering on, or booing to show their pleasure or displeasure at the antics in and out of the ring. You don’t need to understand Spanish to get what’s going on. They hide their identity and create a special, usually outlandish, persona with a story. A luchador may put their mask into play in a special fight. Lutherott ordered the construction of Arena Mexico in Mexico City’s Colonia Doctores, which was inaugurated in 1956. With a capacity for 17,000 spectators, the building was one of the largest indoor fora in the world at that time. 3. Lucha libre – Lucha libre is a term used in Mexico for a form of professional wrestling developed in the country. Professional wrestling is a form of entertainment based on a portrayal of a combat sport. Mexican wrestling is characterized by colorful masks, rapid sequences of holds and maneuvers, as well as high-flying maneuvers, Tag team wrestling is especially prevalent in lucha libre, particularly matches with three-member teams, called trios. Lucha libre wrestlers are known as luchadores and they usually come from extended wrestling families who form their own stables. Lucha libre’s wiki: Lucha libre (Spanish pronunciation: [ˈlutʃa ˈliβɾe], meaning “Free fight”) is a term used in Mexico for a form of professional wrestling developed in the country. Professional wrestling is an athletic form of entertainment based on a portrayal of a combat sport. Although the term today refers exclusively to professional wrestling, it was originally used in the same style as the American and English term “freestyle wrestling”, referring to an amateur wrestling style without the restrictions of Greco-Roman wrestling. Rules. The rules of lucha libre are similar to American singles matches. Matches can be won by pinning the opponent to the mat for the count of three, making him submit, knocking him out of the ring for a predetermined count (generally twenty) or by disqualification.