



# **Spiritual Mestizaje: Religion, Gender, Race, and Nation in Contemporary Chicana Narrative (Latin America otherwise)**

*Theresa Delgadillo*

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Gloria Anzaldúa's narrative and theoretical innovations, particularly her concept of mestiza consciousness, have influenced critical thinking about colonialism, gender, history, language, religion, sexuality, spirituality, and subjectivity. Yet Anzaldúa's theory of spiritual mestizaje has not been extensively studied until now. Taking up that task, Theresa Delgadillo reveals spiritual mestizaje as central to the queer feminist Chicana theorist's life and thought, and as a critical framework for interpreting contemporary Chicana literary and visual narratives. First mentioned by Anzaldúa in her pioneering book *Borderlands/La Frontera*, spiritual mestizaje is a transformative process of excavating bodily memory to develop a radical, sustained critique of oppression and renew one's relation to the sacred. Delgadillo analyzes the role of spiritual mestizaje in Anzaldúa's work and in relation to other forms of spirituality and theories of oppression. Illuminating the ways that contemporary Chicana narratives visualize, imagine, and enact Anzaldúa's theory and method of spiritual mestizaje, Delgadillo interprets novels, memoir, and documentaries. Her critical reading of literary and visual technologies demonstrates how Chicanas challenge normative categories of gender, sexuality, nation, and race by depicting alternative visions of spirituality.

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