

**Chicana Literature:
A Feminist Perspective of Gloria Anzaldúa's Identity Politics**

Doctoral Thesis

Mgr. et Mgr. Tereza Jiroutová Kynčlová

2017

ABSTRACT

In the analyses executed in the present doctoral thesis, Chicana literary production emerges as a complex example of a strategic and reflexive instrumentalization of literature in the form of a political and activist tool contributing to Chicanas' gender and cultural emancipation on the one hand. On the other hand, within the Chicana/o context, literature is employed for perfecting the politics of recognition of the marginalized nation typified by the specificity of its geographic, cultural, and social location on the U.S.-Mexico border where a plethora of socially constructed categories interact and intersect. The doctoral thesis further provides a gender analysis of literary representations of Chicana/o lived experience by Chicana feminist writers in general and by Gloria Anzaldúa in particular, and investigates how these representations help shape feminist thought not only in relation to the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, but within and beyond the United States. Moreover, the thesis supplies an interpretation of Anzaldúa's reconceptualization of the border concept as a pertinent means for comprehending Chicanas'/os' socio-cultural context and for forging a situated epistemology, while also critically assessing the author's thematic and genre approaches she and other Chicana writers employ to expose the differences between Chicana and Chicano writing. Simultaneously, the doctoral project also focuses on how feminism manifests itself in Chicana literary production and discursively constructs its political and representational agenda, especially in regards to the androcentric Chicana/o nationalist movement and the dominant society's discriminatory practices. Interdisciplinary in its theoretical and methodological structure, the doctoral thesis draws on perspectives inherent to gender studies, cultural studies and postcolonial studies while also drawing on sociological concepts, and terms relevant to political science. Finally, the political and activist character of Chicana literature is epitomized by comprehensive literary analyses and close reading of relevant poems from Anzaldúa's chief accomplishment *Borderlands/La Frontera – The New Mestiza* (1987). Together with postcolonial and feminist reinterpretations of major figures of Chicana femininity, Anzaldúa's writings are contrasted with the foundational texts of Chicana/o nationalism.

KEYWORDS

Chicana literature; Gloria Anzaldúa; U.S.-Mexico border; gender; nationalism; feminism; identity politics; Aztlán; postcolonialism; intersectionality