

## PREFACE

This study represents my journey to becoming a Chicana intellectual, which has taken me far but still finds me in the place where I was born and raised, where I raised my two kids, and where I recently witnessed the birth of my granddaughter: a new generation, beautiful and scary. When I first conceived of this study, I planned to move southward toward the US-Mexico borderlands, but instead I ventured northward to the Denver Public Library (DPL) where I became conscious of Carlota d.Z. EspinoZa's *The Three Mexican Heroes* and *Pasado, Presente, Futuro*. The Friends for the DPL commissioned EspinoZa's second mural, a bicentennial project with a similar commission as the Kenneth Adams and Jesús Guerrero Galván murals at my home institution, which President James F. Zimmerman endorsed during the New Deal era. At the same time, *Pasado, Presente, Futuro* looks like many of the street murals across the greater Mexican American Southwest. EspinoZa's two murals illustrate the aesthetics of gender and place at the heart of my study, and I want to thank her for granting me permission to use her work. Most importantly, I want to acknowledge our newfound friendship.

This study connects the literature of the inter-war period (1916–1941) and the Mexican American generation (1945–1965) to the Chicana/o Renaissance (1965–1975) and contemporary Chicana/o literary and cultural studies. When referring to the period before the Chicana/o Renaissance, the study uses the designation Mexican American but often refers to more specific uses of local identity.

The term Chicana/o refers to the ethnic consciousness, literature and art that formed during and after the Civil Rights period in the Southwest through the dual themes of *indigenismo* and nationalism. Chicano in isolation refers specifically to a male-defined literary tradition, while Chicana alone refers to a specifically female-centered tradition. The study designates between Chicano nationalism and Chicana feminism to emphasize the overlap and distinction between the two and their differences from Chicana/o critical regionalism. The Mexican American Southwest refers to the geographical expanse of the study, from South Texas to California and New Mexico to Colorado. Chicana/o critical regionalism refers to the aesthetics and culture of the greater Mexican American region, and as a concept it adds to the already rich and fruitful discussion of Chicana/o literary and cultural studies.

I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers who awarded me a University of New Mexico Research Allocations Committee grant, which allowed me to travel to the Byers Branch Library in Denver. I also want to thank the Western History/Genealogy Department staff at the DPL, especially Jim X. Kroll, Abby Hoverstock, Coi Drummond-Gehrig and James Rogers, for assisting me with my research. To Jacqueline Dunnington, who opened her Santa Fe home to me, and to Charles Mann for granting me permission to use his Our Lady of Guadalupe photograph. Thank you also for the assistance I received from James Clois Smith, Jr. at Sunstone Press and Joelle Tybon at the University of Wisconsin Press, and Tomas Rene, Vicky Bates, and Soymiwa Kumar at Palgrave Macmillan. *Mil gracias* to Ms. Lauren Perry for opening her family's Tucson home to me, where I worked on the manuscript.

Thank you to the faculty members in the Department of American Studies at UNM who taught me how to be a scholar: A. Gabriel Meléndez, Alex Lubin, and Rebecca Schreiber; and in the Sociology Department, Felipe Gonzales. To José F. Aranda at Rice University and Priscilla Solis Ybarra at the University of North Texas, thank you for your unwavering support and invitation to the Taller Chicana/o. I feel blessed to be part of this community. To my writing partner at home, Kimberly R. Huyser, and to my *hermana*, Karen R. Roybal, at Colorado College, who lent me support in countless ways. To Norma E. Cantú, who is an exceptional inspiration. This study is the product of a collective effort, but its opinions and errors are solely my own.

Finally, I must thank my best pal and soul mate. *Por ahora y por siempre*.

Albuquerque, USA

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<http://www.springer.com/978-3-319-59261-9>

Gender and Place in Chicana/o Literature  
Critical Regionalism and the Mexican American  
Southwest

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2017, XI, 142 p. 6 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-59261-9