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My purpose is to establish a dialogue (at first sight uncanny) between Gloria Anzaldúa and Julia Kristeva. Anzaldúa (1942–2004), a self-described “border woman” and “dyke,” was one of the leading Third World Women of Color Feminists in the United States during the second half of the twentieth century. A Chicana born in Texas, she was deeply committed to political, social, and sexual issues. She produced important books of essays, short stories, memoirs, and poems, in which several leitmotivs emerge not only as personal obsessions but also as collective and cultural ones (border and borderland, bridge, stranger, and mestizaje).

Julia Kristeva (Bulgaria, 1941) is a French citizen, linguist, philosopher, psychoanalyst, fictionist, and essayist, whose large work includes a trilogy on women (Hanna Arendt, Melanie Klein, and Colette). Her position as “a foreign woman” inside a predominantly male intellectual circle in France has determined her interest in the politics of marginality and in discourses that resist rigid and one-dimensional logic (in language, culture, and gender).

Anzaldúa and Kristeva are feminist thinkers, belong to the same generation, and were exiled from their own culture, having to overcome hardship and oppression from the beginning: one as a migrant farm worker in Texas, the other in communist Bulgaria where she lived until she moved to Paris at the age of 23. That common experience was the basis for their special sensitivity regarding immigrants, bilingualism, gender and ethnic differences. Also, both of them, in their own different ways, are linguists and practice intertextuality as a strategy to promote inter- and intra-cultural understanding.

For example, in Kristeva’s Strangers to Ourselves, we can find many topics in common with Anzaldúa, and a shared interest in people as unique individuals, free of tags and stereotypes. In the first chapter, Kristeva enumerates several traits that could be easily applied to Anzaldúa’s notion of mestizaje, ambiguity, and living in the borderland. Kristeva starts with the notion of “l’inquiétante étrangeté” (uncanny strangeness) that comes from Freud’s Das Unheimlich: “what ought to remain secret and hidden but has come to light” (Kristeva, 1991: 183). In this particular case, it means the stranger that is in all of us (“a strange land of borders and otherness ceaselessly constructed and deconstructed,” 191). Kristeva acknowledges that even though Freud never explicitly referred in this article to foreigners, he taught us how to recognize them in ourselves. Kristeva explains, “by recognizing our uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoy it from the outside. The foreigner is within me, hence we are all foreigners. If I am a foreigner, there are no foreigners” (192). Anzaldúa, on her part, and after a wild and angry initial writing, comes to a similar conclusion in the preface of her last book, This Bridge We Call Home: “[t]wenty years ago we struggled with the recognition of difference, within the context of commonality. Today we grapple with the recognition of commonality within the context of difference” (2002: 2). And she adds:
Today categories of race and gender are more permeable and flexible than they were for those of us growing prior to the 1980s. *This bridge we call home* invites us to move beyond separate and easy identifications, creating bridges that cross race and other classifications among different groups via intergenerational dialogue. (2002: 2)

From the Mexican border and the cosmopolitan Paris, two feminist socialist writers and essayists come together in a multicultural approach as a mark of inclusion, increased consciousness, and dialogue that evolved from an initial political revolution to become an interior revolution.¹

NOTE

¹See references to her own spirituality, and the notion of *Nahualismo* in Anzaldúa’s interview by Ikas. See also Kristeva’s similar point of view in her interview “La revolution est d’abord intérieure.”

WORKS CITED