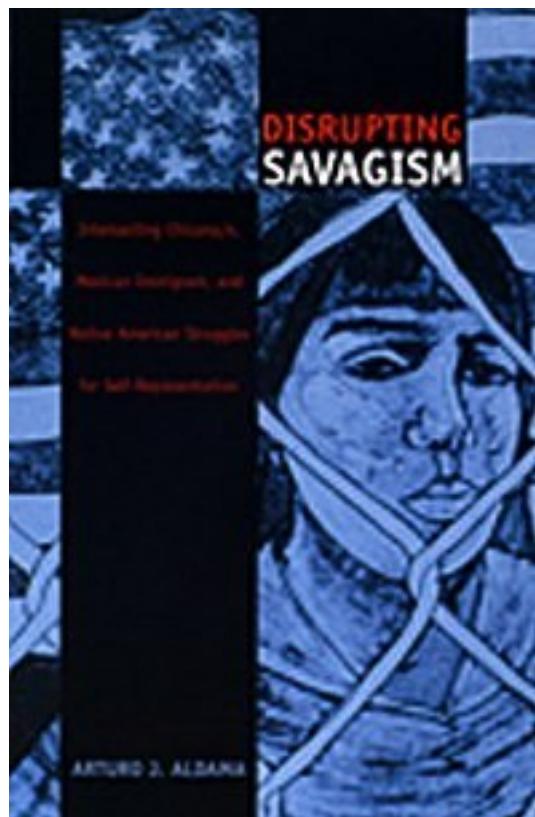


# Disrupting Savagism



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Colonial discourse in the United States has tended to criminalise, pathologise, and depict as savage not only Native Americans but Mexican immigrants, indigenous peoples in Mexico, and Chicanas/os as well. While postcolonial studies of the past few decades have focused on how these ethnicities have been constructed by others, "Disrupting Savagism" reveals how each group, in turn, has actively attempted to create for itself a social and textual space in which certain negative prevailing

discourses are neutralised and rendered ineffective. Arturo J. Aldama begins by presenting a genealogy of the term 'savage,' looking in particular at the work of American ethnologist Lewis Henry Morgan and a sixteenth-century debate between Juan Gines de Sepulveda and Bartolome de las Casas. Aldama then turns to more contemporary narratives, examining ethnography, fiction, autobiography, and film to illuminate the historical ideologies and ethnic perspectives that contributed to identity formation over the centuries. These works include anthropologist Manuel Gamio's "The Mexican Immigrant: His Life Story", Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, Gloria Anzaldua's *Borderlands/La Frontera*, and Miguel Arteta's film *Star Maps*. By using these varied genres to investigate the complex politics of racialised, subaltern, feminist, and diasporic identities, Aldama reveals the unique epistemic logic of hybrid and mestiza/o cultural productions. The trans-cultural perspective of "Disrupting Savagism" will interest scholars of feminist postcolonial processes in the United States, as well as students of Latin American, Native American, and literary studies.

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