



Tex[t]-Mex: Seductive Hallucinations of the "Mexican" in America

William Anthony Nericcio

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A rogues' gallery of Mexican bandits, bombshells, lotharios, and thieves saturates American popular culture. Remember Speedy Gonzalez? "Mexican Spitfire" Lupe Vélez? The Frito Bandito? Familiar and reassuring—at least to Anglos—these Mexican stereotypes are not a people but a text, a carefully woven, articulated, and consumer-ready commodity. In this original, provocative, and highly entertaining book, William Anthony Nericcio deconstructs Tex[t]-Mexicans in films, television, advertising, comic books, toys, literature, and even critical theory, revealing them to be less flesh-and-blood than "seductive hallucinations," less reality than consumer products, a kind of "digital crack."

Nericcio engages in close readings of rogue/icons Rita Hayworth, Speedy Gonzalez, Lupe Vélez, and Frida Kahlo, as well as Orson Welles' film *Touch of Evil* and the comic artistry of Gilbert Hernandez. He playfully yet devastatingly discloses how American cultural creators have invented and used these and other Tex[t]-Mexicans since the Mexican Revolution of 1910, thereby exposing the stereotypes, agendas, phobias, and intellectual deceits that drive American popular culture. This sophisticated, innovative history of celebrity Latina/o mannequins in the American marketplace takes a quantum leap toward a constructive and deconstructive next-generation figuration/adoration of Latinos in America.

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