Moraga and Anzaldúa call on both Malínche and Aztłán to construct a Chicana identity. Part of the feminist Chicana agenda, in which they participate, has been to appropriate and redefine Malínche or Malintzin. While they describe Malintzin in vivid, concrete terms, Aztłán, to these two authors, is instead often a shadowy, imprecise place, a falsely romanticized past. The two symbols are linked. Cherrie Moraga describes Aztłán in its usual ideal terms, but then turns the table and calls it a dream: "Però, es un sueno. This safety / of the desert. / My country was not like that. / Neither was yours. / We have always bled / with our veins / and legs / open / to forces / beyond our control." For Chicana feminists, Aztłán was the place where Malintzin was always already betrayed, rather than simply betrayer. Caught between two patriarchal cultures, sold by her mother that her mother might curry favor with her brother, Malintzin, also called La Vendida, was the sell-out who had already been sold, been alienated. Similarly, Anzaldúa claims, "Not me sold out my people but they me. Malinali Tenepas, or Malintzin, has become known as la Chingada — the fucked one. . . . Not me sold out my people but they me." To see Malintzin as the betrayer, in this view, is to ignore the power relations within and not just between cultures. Anzaldúa demands "an accounting with all these cultures — white, Mexican, Indian." To be female, to be Chicana, in this view, is to be multiply-identified.

Knowing that redefining these symbols has placed her outside of the Chicano movement's definition of ethnicity, Anzaldúa proclaims, "And if going home is denied me then I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture — una cultura mestiza — with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture." Anzaldúa and Moraga have rejected Aztłán as defined by the male-dominated Chicano movement, or as they have constructed that definition. Their own lived experience and their interpretation of that experience differ from the men; they are not the displaced rulers, and Malínche serves as a symbol of that difference and the power relations bound up in it. Instead of using Aztłán, as the land stolen from men by their own women and the men of another culture, Moraga and Anzaldúa construct their own ethnic origins in the woman Malintzin, the site of cultural contest and mixing. In her, they create their own "homeland," their own female ethnic identity.

Moreover, having constructed Malínche as on the border between cultures, for Anzaldúa and Moraga, lesbianism becomes an extension of their Chicana identity, another borderland, another betrayal of Chicano men, of their own. In describing the fear she inspires in her mother, Moraga explains,

The line of reasoning goes:

Malínche sold out her indio people by acting as courtesan and translator for Cortez, whose offspring symbolically represent the birth of the bastardized mestizo-Mexican people. My mother then is the modern-day Chicana. Malínche marrying a white man, my father, to produce the bastards my sister, my brother, and I are. Finally, I — a half-breed Chicana — further betray my race by choosing my sexuality which excludes all men, and therefore most dangerously, Chicano men.

I come from a long line of Vendidas.

I am a Chicana lesbian. My own particular relationship to being a sexual person and a radical stand in direct contradiction to, and in violation of, the women [sic] was raised to be.

By refusing to be "the women [she] was raised to be," Moraga has rejected the prescribed roles she sees available for her in Chicano culture. She is betraying not her ethnicity, but that particular construction of Chicano culture, and substituting for it a Chicana culture, a culture redefined to include her. She is not simply a lesbian, but "a Chicana lesbian." "Chicana" here means Malintzin, the borderlands within, not Aztłán, the mythically pure, monocultural territory. Like Malínche's, their sexuality is a betrayal that does not gain them the dominant culture's acceptance or place them within the dominant culture. Instead, it is another enactment of dual marginalization.