

GLORIA E. ANZALDÚA

Lesbian Chicana Editor and Writer (1942-2004)



Gloria E. Anzaldúa was a guiding force in defining the contemporary Chicano/Chicana movement and a leader in lesbian and queer theory and identity. Born in southern Texas in 1977 she moved to California where she supported herself through her writing, lectures, and occasionally teaching courses in feminism, Chicano studies, or creative writing. She is perhaps best known for co-editing *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981) with Cherri Moraga, a groundbreaking publication not only as a collection by feminists of color, but also for confronting the racism/classism found at the time in feminist thinking. The collection is also noteworthy for fully embracing lesbian voices and concerns and making a clear case that feminism should be inclusionary. Anzaldúa also edited the follow-up volume *Making Face: Making Soul/Hacienda Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color* (1990). Voted one of the 100 Best Books of the 20th century by both *The Hungry Mind Review* and *Utne Reader*, her semi-autobiographical book, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), explored the borders between countries, languages, genders, the classes, and even within oneself. She also wrote several bi-lingual children's books and co-edited *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation* (2002). Anzaldúa was adamant about the limiting quality of labels and against all things that separated people. For her, inclusion was essential in the gay movement as well. She was one of the first to champion the "otherness" of the queer people. The recipient of numerous accolades and awards, she died in 2004 from complications due to diabetes.



Lesson Plan

Level 1: Contributions Approach

1. Activate Prior Experience: Before today, what did you know about Chicano feminist, Gloria Anzaldúa?
2. Read the biography above and explore additional resources at <https://legacyprojectchicago.org/person/gloria-e-anzaldua>.
3. Group Discussion: Describe the focus of Anzaldúa's activism. Why does this type of work matter?
4. Extend Knowledge: Read the selection at http://womenshistory.about.com/od/feministpoetry/a/gloria_anzaldua.htm. What are your first impressions?

Level 2: Additive Approach

1. Examine these reviews of Anzaldúa: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUPwYtOXx6I>, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vguEMuAqxs> (Spanish).
2. How do these reviews connect to the reading, "Letting Go" and what does this say about her activism?
3. Legacy Project Website Investigation: Which resource(s) would you share with others about Anzaldúa? Go to <https://legacyprojectchicago.org/person/gloria-e-anzaldua> and select from the list at the bottom of this link. Explain why the resource you have chosen resonates with you.

Level 3: Transformational Approach

1. Examine the Chicana community through <http://www.chicanas.com/> and the works of Anzaldúa (<http://chicanas.com/literatura.htm>) and <http://anas.com/chingonas.htm>
2. View the Borderland/La Frontera at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borderlands/La_Frontera:_The_New_Mestiza. In an effort to understand the Chicana community, how have Anzaldúa's writings shed light on the "borderlands" that change the consciousness level for marginalized groups, including LGBTQ communities?

Level 4: Social Action Approach

1. Anzaldúa described the "otherness" of the queer movement. Examine how she advocated for understanding and equality in her professional and personal life.
2. Conduct an advanced search for "Latinx" nominees at <https://legacyprojectchicago.org/explore/advanced>. List several other people who have pushed boundaries in the queer and Chicana communities.
3. How do you advocate for your own "otherness" in our society today?