

## BOOK REVIEW

### AnaLouise Keating's *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*

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The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader. Edited by AnaLouise Keating. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2009. Pp. 376. \$84.95 (cloth) \$23.95 (paper).

*The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* is an impressive volume at over 300 pages and including forty-five articles of various genres as well as artwork by Liliana Wilson and Anzaldúa's own drawings. The anthology draws from Anzaldúa's prolific publications as well as from papers of the Gloria Anzaldúa archives—108 linear feet at the University of Texas, some documents sealed through 2024. Keating's selections bring together pieces from the full gamut of Anzaldúa's writing career. The collection is organized chronologically in three sections: early writings, which feature unpublished poems from 1974–1983 and Anzaldúa's fiction and nonfiction through the second edition of *This Bridge Called My Back*; to the middle period from the mid 1980s through the early 1990s; and to her later writings (beginning in the mid-nineties and ending with Anzaldúa's essay on 9/11).

Keating's stated goals for the anthology are (1) to be useful to the widest possible audience, from newcomers to those well versed in Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* and anthologies; (2) to showcase the diversity of Anzaldúa's writing, in theme and in topic; and (3) to remain true to Anzaldúa's own style.

Keating briefly introduces each text with information about publication or production of the piece, its relation to other articles in the collection,

and discussion of the work the piece does. There is an inviting element to these introductions in that they encourage the reader to annotate the text: identifying different themes of intellectual or personal significance and filling the margins with notes of her own. As with Anzaldúa's stated preference, neither Spanish nor indigenous language words are italicized (this in resistance to academic conventions which draw a stark line between English and foreign languages).

There are several paradoxes about Anzaldúa's writings: she wrote hundreds of poems, essays, stories, and short pieces, but published only a fraction of her work. On the one hand her work was very widely anthologized and on the other she came to represent difference in mainstream white academia. Her work had an enormous impact on Chicana/Latina Studies and gender and sexuality studies, and American Studies, and yet during her lifetime she rarely received the recognition of her achievement.

One tension in the collection involves Keating's decision to publish previously unpublished works. She acknowledges that at the time of her death, Anzaldúa had several completed manuscripts that were ready for publication but were not actually in the process. (It is presumed that these full manuscripts are available in the Anzaldúa archives). In a sense then, Anzaldúa had deliberately chosen not to publish certain works, and so Keating's decision to publish them poses a bit of a challenge to her stated respect for Anzaldúa's wishes. One way Keating works through this is by choosing works which Anzaldúa used in her extensive speaking tours: Early poems that she incorporated into her talks, for instance, are printed here for the first time. Thus they may have a familiarity to those who heard Anzaldúa speak, while providing the first actual textual encounter. Some of the other decisions are less clear-cut, as with the decision to reprint email correspondence. This decision seems more in line with the Keating/

Anzaldúa collection *Entrevistas*, which brought together published interviews along with some less formal transcripts.

In her introduction to the volume, Keating discusses the intensely personal relationship that readers have with Anzaldúa's writing; Keating's choices for this collection develop that relationship, with powerful poetry, insightful analysis, and personal stories. The collection is not the archive by any means and there are significant gaps, especially with key pieces of Anzaldúa's fiction that are not included. Keating may have been unable to secure permission from the original publishers, or she may have decided that putting all of Anzaldúa's "Prietita" stories together might undermine the chance for later publication of some of the completed manuscripts. This reviewer directs the reader to the stories "Puddles," "La historia de una marimacho," "Lifeline," "People Should Not Die in June in South Texas," and "Ms. Right My True Love, My Soul Mate," as being essential to any study of Anzaldúa's fiction, along with her children's books (these stories are not included in the collection because the books themselves are still in print): *Friends from the Other Side* and *Prietita and the Ghost Woman*.

*The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* includes a timeline of Anzaldúa's life and a glossary of key terms. These are valuable tools both to those reading Anzaldúa for the first time as well as for advanced scholars, who will inevitably annotate and argue with some of the definitions. That is as it should be. This volume is recommended for undergraduate surveys and graduate seminars in literature, Latina/o Studies, gender & sexuality studies, and major authors.

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