

is also “as psychologically human as a book character can be,” resisting unnamed critics of the novel who would argue that the judge is false. Sepich argues that the judge’s words of war are true, if abhorrent, and implores us: “Face the judge. Find a way to stop him” (152).

In the end, I admit, I still enjoy most of the original portions of the book, early chapters in which Sepich provides sketches of historical contexts, sources, biographies, and settings, and concordances to motifs and themes of the novel. These are the features that encouraged and validated my interests in McCarthy’s novel both as a work of art and as a meditation on the violence of Southwestern American borderlands history. It is a fine thing that the University of Texas Press, with the support of the Southwestern Writers Collection at Texas State University–San Marcos (where, of course, McCarthy’s papers now reside) republished Sepich’s important scholarship. Sepich remains a masterful commentator on a novel that he shows to be ever richer and deeper in its allusive range and philosophical power.

— Alex Hunt  
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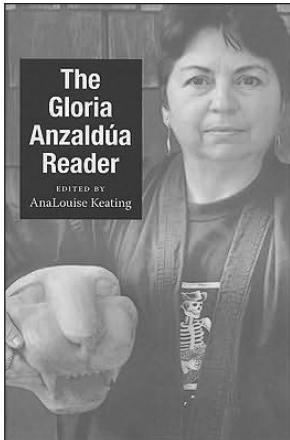
### ***The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader***

by Gloria Anzaldúa, edited by AnaLouise Keating.

Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009.

376 pp. \$84.95 hardback, \$23.95 paperback.

Gloria Anzaldúa, in her book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, described the border dividing Mexico from the United States as *una herida abierta*, an open wound “where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds. And before a scab forms it hemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two



worlds merging to form a third country—a border culture.” In many ways, she devoted her career as a writer, teacher, and activist to the identification of the sources of this wound as well as the radical sources of its potential healing, as seen in early works such as her collection co-edited with Cherrie Moraga, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*, a turning point in the collective understanding of feminists of color in the United States. The end result of Anzaldúa’s healing process is what she calls the new mestiza—one who, produced by the violence of the border, with her tolerance for ambiguity and her genesis out of

contradiction, can offer a healing imaginative consciousness for those in the borderlands and beyond. The selections included in *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* document the development of this new mestiza and, consequently, the gesture towards healing the wound of the multiple borders that divide people from one another as well as healing those wounds and borders within themselves.

Compiled and edited by AnaLouise Keating, Anzaldúa's long-time co-editor on decolonizing book projects such as *this bridge we call home*, *The Anzaldúa Reader* provides an in-depth view of the wide scope of Anzaldúa's interests and the developing nature of key concepts throughout her writing career. And it is this developing life project of Anzaldúa, the queer mestiza writer-poet-healer-activist, that provides the narrative structure for the *Reader*. While including important works already in print, Keating also provides us with many key works that were previously unpublished, such as "The New Mestiza Nation: A Multicultural Movement" and the poem "La vulva es una herida abierta/The Vulva is an Open Wound." Keating explains in her invaluable introduction (as well as in her helpful contextualizing notes to each work in the volume) that she divides the book into four sections: early writings (1974-1983); middle writings (1985-1993); images; and later writings (1996-2003). She sees behind these three chronological periods Anzaldúa's move from inclusiveness (early) to racialized opposition (middle) to radical inclusiveness (later).

The collection of early writings includes the famous autobiographical essay—or, as Anzaldúa calls it, her *autohistoria*—"La Prieta," in which she began to articulate several of the themes that would be predominant in *Borderlands/La Frontera*. These themes include Chicana indigeneity ("la prieta" means dark female, one who looks more "Indian" than her peers, a slur coming out of an internalized Mexican racism), queerness, identity construction, and the social reproduction and policing of women. The middle writings, the years of *Borderlands/La Frontera*, focus in part on the role of shamanic artistic processes in the Coatlicue transformation from wounded split being to reassembled new mestiza consciousness. This grouping includes works such as "Metaphors in the Tradition of the Shaman," "Haciendo caras, una entrada," "To(o) Queer the Writer—Loca, escritora y chicana," and "Border Arte: Nepantla, el Lugar de la Frontera." The later writings, as assembled by Keating, represent Anzaldúa's emphasis on a radical inclusiveness as a precondition for her project of spiritual activism. The title of one such work, an interview regarding perceived conflicts between Chicanas and American Indian women, suggests this moment: "Speaking Across the Divide." This section concludes with the essay written in response to the 2001 attack on the World Trade Center, "Let us be the healing of the wound: The Coyolxauhqui Imperative—la sombra y el sueño."

Coyolxauhqui, the daughter of earth mother Coatlicue, was dismembered and scattered by her sungod/wargod brother Huitzilopochtli. The Coyolxauhqui Imperative, then—which could be said to characterize Anzaldúa’s ultimate gesture—involves the reclamation of a loving, peace-making, bridging mandate as the cure for patriarchal destruction—the open wound. One limb left in phantom state in *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* is Anzaldúa’s crucial essay, “now let us shift...the path of *conocimiento*...inner work, public acts.” But given that Anzaldúa and Keating included this lengthy work in *this bridge we call home* (the 2002 follow-up companion to *This Bridge Called My Back*), and given the separate existence of *Borderlands/La Frontera*, this absence can stand in as a material sign for the healing work yet to be done in putting Coyolxauhqui back together.

— George Hartley  
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***Best of the West 2009:***  
***New Stories from the Wide Side of the Missouri***  
edited by James Thomas and D. Seth Horton.  
Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009.  
265 pp. \$19.95 paperback.

It is no small feat to revive a print anthology, and it is especially difficult to do so when one considers that major literary print journals such as *Chelsea*, *Ontario Review*, and, most recently, *TriQuarterly* have folded, but



in these shaky economic times editors James Thomas and D. Seth Horton have managed to include excellent stories from an impressive and diverse list of well-known and emerging authors in the revival of the *Best of the West* series. It is impossible to define the West in simple terms, but notable authors included in *Best of the West 2009* like Tracy Daugherty, Dagoberto Gilb, Antonya Nelson, Joyce Carol Oates, Lee K. Abbott, Louise Erdrich, and Annie Proulx are able to offer rich and rewarding takes on the iconic cultural image the American experience has given to “the West.”

Creating a regional anthology is not without its problems, and *Best of the West 2009* cannot fully show the vast physical and psychological space of the American West in one anthology. But readers who find this scope to be a

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