

**Review of *EntreMundos/ Among Worlds: New Perspectives on Gloria Anzaldúa*
edited by AnaLouise Keating**

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Coyolxauhqui is the ancient Aztec goddess who was dismembered and dispersed into the universe to create the moon and stars. In 1977 her statue was unearthed in Mexico City. The huge circular stone sculpture upon which she is carved in all her fragmented feminine glory gives the sense that she is ever moving and changing, offering a space for multiple interpretations. For some she represents the loss of the feminine. For others, she signifies the duality of death and creation. Gloria Anzaldúa saw her post-*Borderlands* work as an attempt to “put Coyolxauhqui back together again” (Keating, 2005). For her fragmentation and multiplicity, Coyolxauhqui also provides an apt metaphorical framework for reviewing *EntreMundos/ Among Worlds: New Perspectives on Gloria Anzaldúa* edited by AnaLouise Keating, a text that both in its organization and content unearths underrepresented aspects of Gloria Anzaldúa’s vast and varied work, while at the same time moving within, around, and in some ways, beyond it as Anzaldúa had anticipated it would (Keating, 2005). Like the formidable goddess Coyolxauhqui, the anthology is deliberately fragmented yet aims at and achieves a coherent, if not ever-shifting whole.

EntreMundos is meant not only to broaden Anzaldúan scholarship but also to actively carry out her legacy and expand upon it. The diverse entries include scholarly essays, personal anecdotes and theoretical testimonies, and interviews with Anzaldúa. Passages from her writings are interspersed throughout, and often open each section of the book. There are also a few of her own drawings that outline the theoretical concepts central to her work. An impressive line-up of contributors from multiple academic disciplines and life situations contribute to the text – a fact that reflects the far-reaching nature of Anzaldúa’s thought-activism that transcends traditional academic boundaries. Contributors are from within Women’s Studies, English, Native American Studies, Chicana Studies, Sociology, Ethnic Studies, Comparative Literature, Philosophy, Queer Studies, Disability Studies, and include storytellers, poets, oral historians, and friends of Anzaldúa. What connects these authors is how Anzaldúa’s experiential theories affect their own praxis as theorists, teachers, activists and writers - how her wisdom transforms and strengthens their own scholarship.

Keatings’ essays begin and end this five section anthology and skillfully outline Anzaldúa’s central theory-praxis concepts. The text’s five part structure deliberately parallels Anzaldúa’s five stage plan of socio-individual liberation, which moves from and between concepts that she has named *Autohistoria / autohistoria-teoría*, *nepantla*, *nos/otras*, *conocimientos*, and *el mundo zurdo, a new tribalism*. Briefly, the process of *Autohistoria / autohistoria-teoría* is how Anzaldúa describes her singular form of theory-biography that is at once an exploration and elaboration of personal and collective history. *Nepantla* is a Nahuatl word that signifies a state of in-between ness and shifting possibility. *Nepantla* is a place where binary thought and given ways of knowing are challenged and where potential for real transformative change can be readied and

realized. Those who can achieve these states of in-between ness (*nepantleras*) can manage multiple worlds *a la vez* (simultaneously) and be facilitators of such change. *Nos/otras* takes the feminine form in Spanish for the word “us” or “we” and separates it out to form a neologism. In dividing the term, Anzaldúa reminds us of its etymological roots as a word that is a combination of the two divergent terms of “us” and “others.” She makes this linguistic divide in order to question and alter the age-old binary of “us and them”. (Again, using the Coyolxauhqui metaphor, fragmenting can lead to wholeness, dividing can put her back together again). Destabilizing that central duality can lead us to *Conocimientos*, which derives from the word for knowledge. But for Anzaldúa this knowledge is a thought process that moves beyond binary thinking and is informed by imagination and spiritual activism (Keating, p.8). *El mundo zurdo* (*the left-handed world*), *a new tribalism* envisions alliances between and among people whose differences are celebrated and who come together to transform reality through their collective vision born out of difference (Keating, p.9). *El mundo zurdo* culminates in a spiritual activism with an ultimate message of healing, justice and love. Interestingly, as Keating points out, no full explanations of these concepts have been published. This lack of completeness makes sense because the concepts themselves are bound up with praxis and therefore their definitions cannot be wholly text based but rather are an integral part of oral and activist practices which cannot be pinned to the page.

Anzaldúa’s classic and visionary work *Borderlands/La frontera* (1987) was one of the first to articulate a new textual language and content— to go beyond and shift between assumed boundaries so as to have them shift as well, and where readers were compelled to alter their own consciousness too. *EntreMundos* follows her lead and the reader will find this same process of movement and shifting of boundaries here, challenging our linguistic and academic assumptions. One noteworthy difference between Anzaldúa’s early critical text and this homage to her is that often these writers, inspired by Anzaldúa, play with language and build upon the positive promise for which Anzaldúa ultimately and tirelessly advocated. Edith Vásquez’s mischievous title “La Gloriosa travesura de la musa que cruza” or Chela Sadoval’s forward full of confounding language are just two examples of entries that underscore how Gloria was ‘a resolute theorist of hope’ (Sandoval, p. xiii) and an artfully original linguist. Likewise, Mariana Ortega recognizes how Anzaldúa is aligned with Audre Lorde, María Lugones and many others who also live(d) in-between and who, from there, can and could offer their voices for profound change. María Lugones reminds us that Anzaldúa reclaims loathe conditions of doubt, uncertainty, and marginalization and asserts them as strategies for liberation and spiritual growth (Lugones, p.188). Her work finds opportunities for self-expansion in states of oppression and elaborates ways to transform notions of victimization into positions of privileged possibility (Lugones, p.188-189). Likewise, Eve Wiederhold shows how this transformation at a personal level can be generalized within pedagogical practice and asserts that writers can emulate Anzaldúa’s “interpretive turbulence” (Wiederhold, p. 111) to revolutionize traditional teaching methodologies and shake up literary criticism.

Readers of this anthology will enjoy the creative expression of language that each author uniquely brings to the text. There is almost too much information to grasp in one reading of it, and so like a *canCIÓN pegajosa y profunda* (a profound and catchy song), the reader will go back to be refreshed and challenged by *EntreMundos*, just as these authors are by Anzaldúa. Together, we will make Coyolxauhqui whole once more.

References

Keating. AnaLouise, ed. 2005. *EntreMundos/ Among Worlds: New Perspectives on Gloria Anzaldúa*. New York: Palgrave.