

GLORIA ANZALDUA

b. September 26, 1942

d. May 15, 2004

AUTHOR

“Nothing happens in the ‘real’ world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.”

Anzaldua helped build a multicultural feminist movement and called for people of different races to move forward together.

Gloria Anzaldua was a leading scholar of feminist, queer and Chicana theories. She was the first author to combine these subjects in poetry, narrative and autobiographical works. She helped build a multicultural feminist movement and called for people of different races to move forward together.

Anzaldua was born to farm workers in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. After witnessing Spanish speakers being treated as second-class citizens, she began writing about Mexican-American liberation.

She earned a bachelor’s degree in English from Pan American University and moved to California to teach feminism, creative writing and Chicana studies. She received a master’s degree from the University of Texas, where she taught a groundbreaking course called “The Mexican-American Woman.”

Anzaldua co-edited “This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color” (1981), one of the most cited books in feminist theory. She is best known for her autobiographical narrative, “Borderlands: The New Mestiza” (1987), which explores her identity as a Chicana lesbian feminist. The Hungry Mind Review and Utne Reader named “Borderlands” among the 100 best books of the century.



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Her work is most noted for its mix of two variations of English and six of Spanish. She refused to write in only one language. “As long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than having them accommodate me,” Anzaldua said, “my tongue will be illegitimate.”

Anzaldua won many awards, including the Lambda Lesbian Small Book Press Award, the Lesbian Rights Award, National Endowment for the Arts Fiction Award and the American Studies Association Lifetime Achievement Award. She died while working on her doctorate in literature, and was posthumously awarded a Ph.D. by the University of California, Santa Cruz.

