



GLORIA E. ANZALDÚA

The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader

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Throughout her career, and even before she became a published author, Anzaldúa was intensely interested in the relationship between Native and Chicana identities and in the concept of indigeneity more generally. This e-mail dialogue (written in 2002 at the request of her good friend, Inés Hernández-Ávila) represents one of Anzaldúa's most extensive discussions of these issues, focusing especially on the importance of indigenous knowledges to her work. I was reluctant to include this piece; it is not as polished or as carefully revised as most of Anzaldúa's published work, due to her poor health and pressing publication deadlines. However, in addition to providing a sustained discussion of indigenous issues, Anzaldúa offers one of her most detailed discussions of her theory of new tribalism as well as additional insights into her theories of *el cenote* and *nepantlera*. "Speaking Across the Divide" was originally published, in slightly different form, in the fall-winter 2003 issue of *Studies in American Indian Literatures*.

Speaking across the Divide

1. How did you come to an understanding of your indigenous identity?

I don't call myself an india, but I do claim an indigenous ancestry, one of mestizaje. I first became aware of la india in me when I was a child. When I came out of my mother's body, Mamagrande Locha told everyone that I was "pura indita" because I had dark blotches on my nalgas (buttocks). Because I have a face como una penca de nopal, because I was a dark brown girl who had darker skin than my siblings and other Anzaldúas, my family started calling me la "Prieta," the dark one. People said I had the demeanor (whatever that is) of los indios as I used to lie down on the bare earth to soak up the sun or crouch over the holes of snakes waiting for them to slither out. I would watch las urracas prietas fluff their feathers and caw. I learned that these images had power; these images allowed me an awareness of something greater, an awareness of the interconnectedness of people and nature and all things, an awareness that people were part of nature and not separate from it. I knew then that the india in me ran deep. Later I recognized myself in the faces of the braceros that worked for my father. Los braceros were mostly indios from central Mexico who came to work the fields in south Texas. I recognized the Indian aspect of mexicanos by the stories my grandmothers told and by the foods we ate. Still later I realized that making art is my way of connecting to the tribe, to my indigenous roots. Creative work feeds my soul, gives me spiritual satisfaction.

2. What does it mean to you to have Indian ancestry?

To have Indian ancestry means that *mi cuerpo* (my body), soul, and spirit have raíces (roots) in this continent. *El árbol de mi vida* has indigenous roots. I think that about 75% of DNA is an amorphous record of all past lives and past lives of ancestors. If this is true, *la india* in me will never be lost to me.

To have an Indian ancestry means to fear that *la india* in me that has been killed for centuries continues being killed. It means to suffer psychic fragmentation. It means to mourn the losses—loss of land, loss of language, loss of heritage, loss of trust that all indigenous people in this country, in Mexico, in the entire planet suffer on a daily basis. *La gente indígena* suffer a loss that's cumulative and unrecognized by the masses in this country, a loss generations old, centuries old. To have Indian ancestry means to bear a relentless grief. To have indigenous ancestry also means to bear the promise of psychic integration. As broken and shattered people we are driven to re-gather our spirits and energies, to reorganize ourselves. To have Indian ancestry is to envision a moon that is always rising, to see the sky rear up, to have entry into new imaginings.

I think it's not enough for me to be a Chicana or an Indian; it's not enough for anyone to base their identity on race, gender, class, sexuality, or any of the traditional categories. All of us have multiple identities. Besides *lo indio*, *el mestizaje* that I'm comprised of includes the biological mixtures of Basque, Spanish, Berber Arab, and the cultural mix of various cultures of color and various white cultures. I call this expanded identity "the new tribalism." In 1991, I "appropriated" and recycled the term "new tribalism" from David Rieff¹ who used it to criticize me for being "a professional Aztec" and for what he sees as my naïve and nostalgic return to indigenous roots. He takes me to task for my "romantic vision" in *Borderlands / La Frontera*, and claims that Americans should think a little less about race and a little more about class. I use the term "new tribalism" to formulate a more inclusive identity, one that's based on many features and not solely on race. In order to maintain its privileges the dominant culture has imposed identities through racial and ethnic classification. The new tribalism disrupts this imposition by challenging these categories. The new tribalism is a social identity that could motivate subordinated communities to work together in coalition.

3. Why do you think there is such resistance from some individuals to see Mexicanos and Chicana/os as Indians? What kind of resistance do you see? In other words, when someone resists seeing Mexicanos as Indians, what are they resisting?

There is definitely resistance from both sides. Some Raza (Mexicans and Chicanas/os) hate the Mexican (and therefore the Indian) in themselves. They only acknowledge their Spanish blood. Muchos tienen an unconscious vergüenza for being Mexican, for being part Indian. This self-hatred is projected onto Native women when Chicanas treat them sin respeto (disrespectfully). When Chicanas and other mujeres de color treat Native women and their issues as less important, we demote them to pawns for our movimientos. We make las indias the other. Nosotras gets divided into nos/otras, into an us/them division. The us/them dichotomy locks us into a who-is-more-oppressed dynamic. Internalized racism and internalized shame get played out. We all re-enact the colonialism and marginalization the dominant culture practices on Natives and people of color.

Then there's the question of who is "Indian." It would take a book to even begin dealing with this issue! Some Native Americans don't accept Chicanas as indias. Some think of Chicanas (and other women of color) as "appropriationists." During the "Color of Violence" conference in Santa Cruz organized by Andy Smith, la caca between Chicanas and Native women surfaced with a lot of finger pointing, basing the conflict on "intra-racism at the kitchen table." They saw Chicanas' use of the indigenous as a continuation of the abuse of native spirituality and the Internet appropriation of Indian symbols, rituals, vision quests, and spiritual healing practices like shamanism. Some natives put Chicanas/os on the side of the dominators and claim that our fantasies are similar to those of "whites." Similar conflicts between Chicanas and Native women surfaced in the "Conference Against Violence of Women of Color" in Chicago.

Right now Chicanos/as and Native Americans in ethnic studies departments like University of California, Berkeley's are experiencing internal rifts and have polarized into separate groups, each entrenched in their positions. People on both sides are angry and bitter, and both are passionate about their cultures. Emotions run deep, but also close to the surface, and often gush up in anger and frustration. We open old heridas, wounds of genocidal colonization and marginalization that have

never formed scabs because they've continued to bleed for centuries. Each group reinforces its borders in automatic defense mechanisms. Estos pleitos are hard to witness because both Native Americans and Chicanos share a long history of theft of entitlement. What sets off these bursts of contention are issues related to resources, teaching positions, grant distributions, and power in decision making. On many campuses the battles between different ethnic groups are reaching critical mass.

4. What's behind the fighting? Why do you think the rift is happening?

The underlying cause is systemic racism and internalized racism. The in-fighting manifests itself as verbal and emotional violence. What's particular about this violence is that it doubles back on itself. Instead of joining forces to fight imperialism we're derailed into fighting with each other, into maneuvering for power positions. Each struggles to be heard. Chicanas want to present their side of the indigenous narrative, so we take over the table. Chicanas and other people of color further silence Native women, already rendered invisible by the dominant culture and the corporate universities. Internalized racism gets "gendered" or "sexed" between Native women and mestizas, people who historically were the most chingadas (fucked). This history of oppression erupts with violence toward each other. This doesn't just happen between Native women and Chicanas. It's happening between other ethnic groups, between Chicana/os and Asians, between Afro-Americans and other groups. Ethnic groups are thrown a few crumbs in the form of teaching positions, grants, decision-making in hiring, etc., and we fight each other for them. It's the old divide-and-conquer strategy. There are some instances in which the different ethnic studies programs work in solidarity with each other, particularly when they are independent of each other.

5. Why do you think there aren't more Chicanas doing Native American studies and more Native Americans doing Raza studies?

One reason may be because we construct identity differently. Another reason may be because each group is defending their identities and territories against the encroachment of the other. Who has legitimate right to do scholarship dealing with identity, language, and other areas pertaining to both groups? The issue of "blood quantum" (the measuring

stick this country beats the Indians with) is one of the most explosive in the discussion of what constitutes tribal identity and indigenous legitimacy. In an earlier email, Inés mentioned the viciousness of the "assault on blood." ¿Cuáles gotas me van a quitar para "delegitimarme"? she asks. This makes me think about the "one drop" of black blood that makes you an African American, the one-eighth of Native American blood that makes you an Indian. In the case of Chicanas/os, where una nueva raza of mixed-bloods was created when Spaniards raped Mexican Indian women, the number of drops of blood doesn't seem to matter because most of us identify as mestizas. We weren't raised on reservations, nor were we raised identifying as Indian. Some Chicanas/os are angry at having to state the obvious—that biologically we have Indian blood.

I come from a state (Texas) that decimated every Indian group, including the Mexican indigenous. I don't look European, but I can't say I'm Indian even though I'm three quarters Indian. But the issue is much more complex than how many drops of indigenous blood Indians and Chicanas have. I've always claimed indigenous ancestry and connections, but I've never claimed a North American Indian identity. I claim a mestizaje (mixed-blood, mixed culture) identity. In participating in this dialogue I fear violating Indian cultural boundaries. I'm afraid that what I say may unwittingly contribute to the misappropriation of Native cultures, that I (and other Chicanas) will inadvertently contribute to the cultural erasure, silencing, invisibility, racial stereotyping, and disenfranchisement of people who live in real Indian bodies. I'm afraid that Chicanas may unknowingly help the dominant culture remove Indians from their specific tribal identities and histories. Tengo miedo que, in pushing for mestizaje and a new tribalism, I will "detribalize" them. Yet I also feel it's imperative that we participate in this dialogue no matter how risky.

Chicanas are damned for ripping off Native culture if they claim their Indianness and they are damned for going over to "whites" when gringos crook their fingers saying, "Come over to our side, you too are Caucasian." At other times "whites" will point their finger and say, "You belong over there with the dirty Indians." Chicanos weren't raised on reservations, nor were we raised identifying as Indian. I grew up in a Mexican ranch community, not an Indian community. Chicanas cannot claim to be members of indigenous people of Norte América unless their particular mix pertains to U.S. tribes. We can't represent Indian women, nor tell their stories.

Native women and Chicanas construct their indigenismo differently. It's a question of how you identify. Some Chicanas may have more Indian blood, but they might not identify with their indigeneity. Other Chicanas do not acknowledge their mixed blood. Unless it's culturally nourished, what's in the blood lies dormant. People who biologically may have less Indian blood than Chicanas, like Louise Erdrich or Paula Gunn Allen, are able to claim their Indianness (they both acknowledge their mixed-blood status as well). Deborah Miranda (Esselen/Chumash—non-federally recognized tribes) claims that if mixed-blood Indians identify as mestizas and not as Indian their indigeneity would vanish completely ("Footnoting Heresy"). This is tantamount to suicide/genocide. Until the indigenous in Indians and Chicana/os are ensured survival, establishing a new tribalism, a mestiza nation, remains merely a vision. But dream we must. The mestizaje and the new tribalism I envision adds to but does not dispossess Indians (or others) from their own history, culture, or home-ethnic identities.

The question is how much is nature, how much nurture, how much culture. Maybe identity depends more on which community you identify with, how you are reared, and less on the drops of blood in your veins. But roots are important; who was here on this continent first does matter. The Indian in all of us is indigenous to this continent and has been here for thousands of years; the white, Spanish, black, Asian aspects of our heritage are diasporic and came later.

Yet we're all mestizos. Mestizaje in Chicano identity and mestizaje in indigenous identity are two branches of the same tree. Mestizaje is the chief metaphor in the construction of both Raza and indígena identities. I fault Raza for ignoring the underlying Indian aspect of mestizo identity, for not embracing the Indian in our mestizaje in ways that don't misuse the appropriation of *lo indio*. Many of us are aware that we can't continue to claim indigenous origins and ignore what's happening to indígenas in Mexico and in the United States. Though Chicanas, like Indians, emerged from a colonized history, we can't ignore the fact that Indians are still under the imperialist thumb, are still undergoing colonialism. When Chicanas (and other women of color) take up the cause of silenced Native women, we don't hold ourselves responsible for how we use the history of colonization of Natives, a colonization that's forced on real bodies. We don't acknowledge or examine the human, treaty, and land rights violations that are happening before our eyes. We shut our eyes to how Natives are forced to live out past and present day violations.

6. You have been accused of appropriating indigenous identity in your work. How would you answer such objections?

My own indigenous knowledges have been crucial to my work. I have used certain Mexican indigenous cultural figures and terms to formulate concepts such as the Coyolxauhqui imperative, the new tribalism, nahualismo, spiritual activism, and various other procesos de la conciencia. In this respect sí, re-escribo algunos aspectos de la mitología náhuatl. For me to bring up these cultural figures and terms is more of a remembrance, an uncovering, and an exploration of my own indigenous heritage. I do it with a keen awareness that we're living in Indian land. I do it knowing that Native people in this country suffer from environmental racism, incarceration, alcoholism, the foster care system, no health care. I'd like to think that I do it for my own growth and healing, that I do it to promote social transformation. I try to do my remembrance (recordamiento) reflectively, I try to stick to my own indigenous antepasados and not "borrow" from North American Indian traditions.

According to Chicana scholar Josefina Saldaña Portillo in "Who's the Indian in Aztlán? Re-Writing Mestizaje, Indianism and Chicanismo from the Lacandón,"² by focusing on Aztec female deities and incorporating them into contemporary mestiza consciousness I exclude and erase contemporary indigenous subjectivity and practices on both sides of the border. I appreciate her critique, but my sense is that she's misread or has not read enough of my work.

I think it's important to consider the uses that appropriations serve. The process of marginalizing others has roots in colonialism. I hate that a lot of us Chicanas/os have Eurocentric assumptions about indigenous traditions. We do to Indian cultures what museums do—impose western attitudes, categories, and terms by decontextualizing objects and symbols, by isolating them, disconnecting them from their cultural meanings or intentions, and then reclassifying them within western terms and contexts. In my own work I've experienced both a colonization and a decolonization by first being marginalized and by then being elevated into the "mainstream." But it's an elevation that reproduces the dynamics of colonialism since that mainstream continues to control, to give or withhold what's labeled art or theory. I'm included in the canon, in the Norton, the Heath, and other readers, as a token. I am cited by "whites" mostly for my work in *Borderlands* and *This Bridge Called My Back*, but often

it's a mere referencing and not a deep exploration. I'm glad that others have borrowed and expanded on my ideas.

Some things are worth "borrowing." We are all on a spiritual journey and yearn for a Polaris star to guide us in a search for a spiritual "home." We're all looking for spiritual knowledge, for inner knowledge, the alchemist's quest for the philosopher's stone. If we don't have an inner spirituality, we try to re-root ourselves in other people's spiritual rituals and practices. The goal of spirituality is to transform one's life. In order to achieve this goal we "borrow" Native American spirituality and apply it to our situations. But we often misuse what we've borrowed by using it out of context. Chicana/os are not critical enough about how we borrow from lo indio. Some Indian Americans think all Chicanas/os plunder native culture as mercilessly as whites. Who does the appropriating and for what purpose is a point to consider. Russell Means, former AIM (American Indian Movement) leader, calls those who rip off Indian traditions "culture vultures."³ If you appropriate indigenous knowledge, shamanic or whatever, because it's marketable and will make you tons of money and give you fame, why bother with the consequences of your "borrowing"? We need to scrutinize the purpose and accountability for one's "borrowings."

7. Do you see any difference between Chicanas and Chicanos recovering and claiming an Indian identity and detribalized urban mixed bloods who do the same?

Yes, I do see a difference. But "detribalized urban mixed bloods" according to whom? Indians, "whites"? There are strong pan-Indian, intertribal urban communities throughout the country. These communities come together to help each other, to remember, to honor, to re-connect. In the case of Chicanos, being "Mexican" is not a tribe. So in a sense Chicanos and Mexicans are "detribalized." We don't have tribal affiliations but neither do we have to carry ID cards establishing tribal affiliation. Indians suffer from a much more intense colonization, one that is even more insidious because it is covered up, and white and colored Americans remain ignorant of it. Natives are really invisible; they are not even put on the map unless the U.S. government wants to rip them off. And mixed-bloods are even more invisible. Chicanos, people of color, and "whites" choose to ignore the struggles of Native people even when it's right in our caras (faces). I hate that all of us harbor este desconoci-

miento. It's a willful ignorance. Though both "detrribalized urban mixed bloods" and Chicanas/os are recovering and reclaiming, this society is killing off urban mixed bloods through cultural genocide, by not allowing them equal opportunities for better jobs, schooling, and health care. Or as Chrystos (Menominee) puts it, "the slop syphilization cooks up" is killing Indians ("Vanish Is a Toilet Bowl Cleaner" in this *bridge we call home*).

8. The focus of this special issue is Indigenous Intersections: American Indian and Chicana/o Literatures. Although some people might see this as redundant, what are the intersections that you see between these literatures?

Alliances—literary, spiritual, and otherwise—have been created and sustained by many writers who are identified as Chicana or Native American. Raza and American Indians share many cultural, creative, historical, political, economic, and spiritual concerns. Both groups are mestizos, although most Native people would reject this terminology. Both lead hybrid lives. Our historical lives have intersected in numerous places. We have many issues in common; we fight against similar oppressions. Both struggle against subordination, racism, etc. Both struggle against internal colonialism. Temas and questions important to American Indians and Chicana/os are political/historical memory, indigenous connections, health issues such as diabetes, the restoration of traditional foods and diet (before the advent of fast foods), and environmental racism. Raza feminism and mainstream feminism must include among their issues the erasure of the cultural practices of Native people, land rights, sovereignty, and self-determination. Less obvious areas to work together on are dealing with cumulative loss and trauma, generations suffering from post traumatic stress syndrome.

Dialogue and collaborations between Native Americans and Chicanas/os is necessary. We need to dialogue about identity, community, culture, language, activism, representation, and continuance. We need to do collaborative work that reveals how connected our past histories and present situations are. We need to explore how our legacies of colonization and displacement have given us a traumatic history, give outlet to our grieving for what we have lost, find ways of healing our damaged psyches and the effects on individuals by trauma inflicted on the group. Edén Torres talks about this in her book *Chicana Without Apology: The New*

Chicana Cultural Studies (Routledge, 2003). We need to amicably and respectfully talk about these mutual concerns. Yes, I know that collaborative political movements are difficult to carry out when two groups of people are in conflict and in *desconocimiento*. Such work is being done by *nepantleras*. We just need more written and published accounts by the very people who are doing this kind of *trabajo*.

9. How do you see the relationship of your writing to spirit, to the spirit of the land, to the spirit of the ancestors, to your own spirit?

When I stand before the abyss and am unable to leap; when my inspiration has deserted me and I hit a wall, feel wiped out, gutted; when *el cenote*, the source of my guiding voices, seems to have dried up; when I want the seas to part, rain to fall but nothing moves—when all of these happen, *pierdo las ganas* (I lose the will, desire, hunger, drive). Depression results. Depression is a loss of spirit. I get depressed when my creative efforts don't generate enough force and energy to make a difference in my life and in the lives of others. I have to surrender to the forces, the spirits, and let go. I have to allow *el cenote*, the subterranean psychic *norias* or reserves containing our depth consciousness and ancestral knowledges, to well up in the poem, story, painting, dance, etc. *El cenote* contains knowledge that comes from the generations of ancestors that live within us and permeate every cell in our bodies.

Each piece of writing I do creates or uncovers its own spirit, a spirit that manifests itself through words and images. Imagination takes fragments, slices of life and experiences that seem unrelated, then seeks their hidden connections and merges them into a whole. I have to trust this process. I have to serve the forces/spirits interacting through me that govern the work. I have to allow the spirits to surface. *Nepantla*, *el lugar entremedios*, is the space between body and psyche where image and story-making takes place, where spirits surface. When I sit and images come to me, I am in my body but I'm also in another place, the space between worlds (*nepantla*). Images connect the various worlds I inhabit or that inhabit me.

Nature is my source of sustenance and support. It offers images—I usually start each piece with a visual or other sensory image. Invisible energies whisper to me, visions from the subtle realms within me and from nature appear. I follow where the whisperings and images lead. I take their energies and transmit them to the reader. An exchange of

energy is what the process of creation is all about. Art is an exchange of energy and *conocimientos* (knowledge and insights). Writing, nature, and images give me a deeper connection to the sources of life, enable me to connect to certain energies. Every essay, fiction, poem I write is grounded in the land, the environment, the body, and therefore in the past/ancestors. Every piece enacts recovery.

10. How do you see the work you are doing as healing work, as work of recovery and recuperation?

The path of the artist, the creative impulse, what I call the **Coyolxauhqui imperative** is basically an attempt to heal the wounds. It's a search for inner completeness. Suffering is one of the motivating forces of the creative impulse. Adversity calls forth your best energies and most creative solutions. Creativity sets off an alchemical process that transforms adversity and difficulties into works of art. All of life's adventures go into the cauldron, *la hoya*, where all fragments, inconsistencies, contradictions are stirred and cooked to a new integration. They undergo transformation.

For me *esta hoya* is the **body**. I have to inhabit the body, discover its sensitivity and intelligence. When all your antenna quiver and your body becomes a lightning rod, a radio receiver, a seismograph detecting and recording ground movement, when your body responds, every part of you moves in synchronicity. All responses to the world take place within our bodies. Our bodies are tuning forks receiving impressions, which in turn activate other responses. An artist has to stay focused on the point of intersection (*nepantla*) between inner and outer worlds through her senses. Listening to an inner order, the voice of real intuition, allows it to come through the artist's body and into the body of the work. The work will pass on this energy to the reader or viewer and feed her or his soul. The artist transmits and transforms inner energies and forces, energies and forces that may come from another realm, another order of intelligence. These forces use *la artista* to transmit their intelligence, transmit ideas, values that awaken higher states of consciousness. Once *conocimiento* (awareness) is reached, you have to act in the light of your knowledge. I call this spiritual activism.

All of my work, including fiction and poetry, are healing *trabajos*. If you look at my central themes, metaphors, and symbols, such as *nepantla*, the *Coyolxauhqui imperative*, the *Coatlicue state*, the serpent, El

Mundo Zurdo, nos/otras, the path of *conocimiento* you'll see that they all deal with the process of healing. You'll find all these themes in "now let us shift . . . the path of *conocimiento* . . . inner work, public acts" in this bridge we call home: *radical visions for transformation* (Routledge, 2002.)

11. How do you see your work in relationship to autonomy and creativity? How does this relationship interweave with indigenous notions of individual visioning on behalf of the community?

I don't write in a vacuum. I have helpers, guides from both the outer realm like my writing *comadres* and invisible ones from the inner world. I write in-community, even when I sit alone in my room. Whatever I do I have to put my trust in a deeper order, an unknowable *trapo* (fabric) of divine and creative plan. I must trust in unseen helping guides, must surrender to the mysterious forces that guide me. I rely on the part of myself that has this ability to connect with these forces, to the imaginal world. I call this daimon "*la naguala*." I rely on others who access *esta facultad*.

Las *nepantleras*, modern-day *chamanas*, use visioning and the imaginal on behalf of the self and the community. *Nepantleras* deal with the collective shadows of their respective groups. They engage in spiritual activism. We need the work of las *nepantleras* to bridge the abyss between Native people and Chicana/os. *Nepantleras* are the supreme border crossers. They act as intermediaries between cultures and their various versions of reality. Las *nepantleras*, like the ancient *chamanas*, move between the worlds. They can work from multiple locations, can circumvent polarizing binaries. They try not to get locked into one perspective or perception of things. They can see through our cultural conditioning and through our respective cultures' toxic ways of life. They try to overturn the destructive perceptions of the world that we've been taught by our various cultures. They change the stories about who we are and about our behavior. They point to the stick we beat ourselves with so we realize what we're doing and may choose to throw away the stick. They possess the gift of vision. *Nepantleras* think in terms of the planet, not just their own racial group, the U.S., or Norte América. They serve as agents of awakening, inspire and challenge others to deeper awareness, greater *conocimiento*; they serve as reminders of each other's search for wholeness of being.

Nepantleras recognize that the heart of the continent is indigenous,

that the heart of the planet is Indian. I know that el árbol de la vida of all people has indigenous roots. But I also know that the past cannot be captured, but it must be remembered. Yet there is a cultural and linguistic revitalization movement going on with strong intertribal exchanges and negotiations. Planetically, indigenous movements have multiplied, and a new tribalism is emerging. Even though it may be the hardest thing we'll ever do, we have to come together, work with each other, learn about each other, listen to each other, value each other. We stand before the abyss between our worlds, psyching ourselves to leap. We have to use every means to transform ourselves and our society. I watch Coyolxauhqui the moon, I see her rise. And I wait for the sky to rear up.

NOTE: Questions 1, 2, 3, 7, and 8 were formulated by Domino, questions 9, 10, and 11 by Inés, and questions 4, 5, and 6 by Gloria.

Notes

1. "Professional Aztecs and Popular Culture," *New Perspectives Quarterly* (winter 1991).
2. *The Latin American Subaltern Reader*, ed. Ileana Rodríguez (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), 416.
3. Quoted in Ward Churchill, "A Little Matter of Genocide," in *From A Native Son: Selected Essays on Indigenism, 1985–1995* (Boston: South End Press, 1996), 321.

This previously unpublished poem, last revised in September 2003, illustrates Anzaldúa's later revisionist mythmaking as well as her contemplative self-reflection and further developments in her theories of *el cenote* and *nepantla*. Note the ways Anzaldúa identifies herself and her art with both *La Llorona* and *Coyolxauhqui*. (For more on these figures, see the glossary.)

Llorona Coyolxauhqui

1. Hija de la Llorona

Soy hija de la mujer que transnocha
I am the daughter of La Llorona
and I am La Llorona herself,
I am the monster's child and monstrous.
Abandoned by my mother culture
for being queer, orphaned,
I left behind las tierras arenosas
and now find myself in a dark wood
between home and the world
I feel alienated, feel as though I'm outside and apart from the
world, homeless, lost
I've lost the sense of being alive,
I have become a ghost,
set apart from other beings.
The dream is the "horse" that carries me the shaman
to the other world. The beat of hoofs is the drum
its sound catches my concentration I sink into trance,
and I'm flying

On my shoulder rides a horse's head
my teeth are fangs,
I am the horse with fangs
My mother calls her lost and exiled child
a call to the vocation of artist
La Llorona wailing, beckoning, encouraging the artist to rail
against injustices. She calls me to act.

2. Nepantla

I'm in a holding pen
waiting while something, someone in me