

Borderlands gloria anzaldua



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Imagine present day Mexico, there are many popular Mexican staples that can come to mind i. e tacos, warm weather, and pesos. However, when you take a closer look at their culture it is clear that the Mexican people are very religious. More specifically they are very connected to the Virgen de Guadalupe. The Virgen is depicted all over Mexico and is one of their most celebrated and loved saints. The Virgen de Guadalupe originates from Coatlicue The Aztecs, a 12th century CE civilization, were very religious and worshiped many gods and goddesses.

The ritual sacrifices that took place in the Aztec society influenced their everyday lives. The Aztec's were highly spiritual, always inspired and taught by the gods and goddesses, for which they were the creators of the earth and life. " The earliest is Coatlicue, or " Serpent Skirt. " She had a human skull or serpent for a head, a necklace of human hearts, a skirt of twisted serpents and taloned feet," (Anzaldua 49). She was a woman, an Earth Goddess, the beholder of all. " Coatlicue, Lady of the Serpent Skirt, contained and balanced the dualities of male and female, light and dark, life and death," (Anzaldua 54).

Since Coatlicue possesses these dualities she consisted of everything and in turn accepts all. " She is the central deity connecting us to our Indian ancestry" (Anzaldua 49). Of the many rituals performed by the Aztecs, only sacrifices would please her. The Spaniards embarked into the Aztec civilization during the 15th century CE. They were disgusted by the Aztec sacrifices, considering them barbaric. The Spaniards decided to disregard this ancient religion. " Coatlicue, the serpent goddess, and her more sinister aspects, Tlazolteotl and Cihuacoatl, were " darkened" and disempowered

much in the same manner as the Indian Kali" (Anzaldua 49). Coatlicue became the good mother, split from her dark guises. The Spaniards along with the Church continued to split her. What they were doing was desexing Coatlicue; her dualities were never discussed again. The manifestation of this change is now called la Virgen de Guadalupe. Coatlicue is embodied in all of us. I feel that she is in everything around us as well.

This is because she is good and evil; light and dark. What the Spaniards did was hide half of her. Letting only the good shine through and thus being unfaithful to the true Earth Goddess. Then there is the Antigua, somebody who is a greater figure, more of a divine presence. I think this is my connection with Coatlicue, the serpent woman, with la Virgen de Guadalupe, with what people call goddesses" (Anzaldua 241). The divine presence is what Gloria Anzaldua feels within her soul. She has unleashed a deep yearning that she has known her whole life. "The loss of a sense of dignity and respect in the macho breeds a false machismo which leads him to put down women and even to brutalize them. Coexisting with his sexist behavior is a love for the mother which takes precedence over that of all others.

Devoted son, macho pig. To wash down the shame of his acts, of his very being, and to handle the brute in the mirror, he takes to the bottle, the snort, the needle, and the fist," (Anzaldua 105). The western culture has morphed men into the almighty power. When Coatlicue ruled, women were highly regarded and men didn't have superior attitudes. Since Coatlicue has been desexed and buried amongst the "voodoo" worshipers that we all laugh at today, there has been a major shift of power that was not for the greater good.

I feel that if the 21st century can accept their inner Coatlicue this wouldn't be common among men. This is because Coatlicue doesn't allow this and men would be ashamed to put down a woman. Present day, many men think that it's their duty to "wear the pants" in the family. Our dominant male society has caused women to become suppressed. Women still don't receive equal pay and are pressured into a caretaker role in the household. The most upsetting aspect is that 50 years ago it was even worse and the progress women have strived for has only recently been accredited. Breaking the glass ceiling" is a common term amongst working women philosophy. However, I feel that there wouldn't be a glass ceiling to break if Coatlicue was present in our lives. Anzaldua struggles with her many identities; her homosexuality is one which caused major conflict within herself and family. "We are ashamed that we need your good opinion, that we need your acceptance. We can no longer camouflage our needs, can no longer let defenses and fences sprout around us. We can no longer withdraw" (Anzaldua 110).

Feeling this resentment towards your culture and your family is a huge struggle. Like many other homosexuals, Anzaldua wants to be accepted. It would be comforting to know that no matter what you were accepted. Sadly, this is not how our culture is and many of us, like Anzaldua, feel rejected. Coatlicue was the one who gave her strength when she was down and when Anzaldua needed her Coatlicue was there. Coatlicue accepts all; this is because she embodies everything and is not the good mother virgin that we are all accustomed to. Coatlicue is true to life and accepts the good and the bad. I am cultureless because, as a feminist, I challenge the collective

cultural/ religious male-derived beliefs of Indo-Hipics and Anglos; yet I am cultured because I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet," (Anzaldua 102, 103). Coatlicue is all cultures and this is why Anzaldua gravitates toward her in so many ways. Coatlicue doesn't shun homosexuals or mixed races.

This is because she accepts all life, Coatlicue looks beyond these superficial traits and looks inside of you to see who you really are. This freedom to be whoever allows everyone to express themselves freely. Anzaldua is drawn to this especially because she has a lot of distinct qualities that the western culture looks down on. Coatlicue allows Anzaldua to be herself free of guilt or shame. Anzaldua has a place with Coatlicue and everyone who believes in her spirit. " The mestizo and the queer exist at this time and point on the evolutionary continuum for a purpose. We are a blending that proves that all blood is ntricately woven together, and that we are spawned out of similar souls," (Anzaldua 107). This is inspired from the meaning of Coatlicue.

Anzaldua has a chance to overcome the obstacles she feels within herself. Globally we need to accept this because as time passes we will all blend into a melting pot... to not accept one of us, is the same as all of us, because we are all one of the same. Coatlicue is the heart of expressing yourself and the Aztecs understood the power of this message. No matter who you are there is a point in your life that you feel alone, left out, or different.

During this time of stuggle is when you can reach for Coatlicue. She will accept you and not be disgusted with you like western culture. At times like

these I wish I had Coatlicue. I feel as if knowing about Coatlicue I am a stronger person. As a Roman Catholic I have always felt that having the Virgin Mary's grace and love was unobtainable. It's not realistic to say you will never sin, never hate, never have any evil. Coatlicue is the true model of who and what we are. This is because we all have good and evil within us and Coatlicue is that. Gloria Anzaldua didn't intend on inspiring or captivating the public.

This naive way of writing, at some points almost talking to herself, is what I liked the most. This style of writing is very true to her and all that she discussed. With this, the outcome of Borderlands had a greater effect than Gloria ever thought. Especially when published within a western culture that doesn't accept much. This acceptance shows the need people want to change, grow, and overcome these man-made obstacles built hundreds of years ago. Gloria's book will continue to inspire countless generations and I truly feel that time will allow Coatlicue to rise again.