

This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color

Introduction and Selections

Fahmida Patwary

Meet the Authors

Cherrie Moraga



- Was born in Whittier, California.
- Is a chicana writer, feminist, poet, essayist, and playwright.
- She earned her bachelor's degree from Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, California and her Master's from San Francisco University in 1980.
- Being a lesbian feminist, she was one of the first writers to explore Chicana lesbianism.
- As a lesbian with Mexican and Anglo heritage, in her first individual work, *Loving in the War Years* (1983), Moraga articulated her complex bicultural relationship to Anglo and Chicana culture.
- She co-edited *This Bridge Called my Back: Radical Writings by Women of Color* (1981) with Gloria Anzaldua.

Gloria Anzaldua



- She was born to farmers on September 26, 1942 in South Texas and grew up on ranches and farms in border towns alongside the Texas-Mexico border.
- In 1969, Anzaldua received her BA in English, and Secondary Education from Pan American University. She then received an MA in English and Education from University of Texas.
- Her most famous work, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, is a work that moves between English and Spanish prose and poetry.
- She received an NEA Fiction Award, the Before Columbus Foundation American Book Award for *This Bridge Called My Back*.

Introduction of the writings by Radical Women of Color

- ★ The two authors created this anthology to express to all women – especially to white middle-class women – the experiences which divide us as feminists; they want to challenge white feminists who refuse to acknowledge the complicated nature of feminism and women’s rights for women of non-white backgrounds. They used the term “radical” because they wanted to include writings of women of color who want nothing short of a revolution in the hands of women – for the feminist politic emerges from the roots of both the women’s cultural oppression and heritage.

The beginning

The middle

The end

- In the first 3 sections, women of color in the US write about the experience of growing up as a minority women; the violence they experienced at the hands of men, white women, and institutions. They write about their relationships with other women and the complicated emotional and social circumstances that comes with them. These writers express the alienation they dealt with from other women, and the desire to break barriers to create a unified community.

Con't

The middle

The end

- In the middle section, the writers shift to the topic of queer women in the Women's Movement and feminist community. Many women, especially white feminists, not only alienate women of color from feminist movements, but don't consider queer women, lesbian women to be actual women and so they are told they can't have the same rights as them. These writers focus on this topic because most of them are lesbians, just as the authors, who feel that they are neglected from feminist groups.

The end

In the final section, speaking in tongues, the author write about the importance of lifting women up who are from minority backgrounds so their voices are made worthy by the privileged. The anthology ends with a hopeful section on the power of unified Women's Movement, and the potential that Third World Feminism has the power to change the US, and the world.

The main argument

The purpose behind the authors reason to start this anthology ultimately leads back to the principle that women need to embrace each other's differences – in race, class, sexuality – while being all-inclusive, in order for women to unite and conquer the adversity of being a female in our society. The radical women intend to reflect on concerns such as the destructive and demoralizing effects of racism in the women's movement; Third-World women's writing as a tool for self-preservation and revolution; and the ways and means of a Third-World feminist future.

references/bibliography

5 facts about Gloria Anzaldua

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<http://www.supersummary.com/this-bridge-called-my-back/summary/>

<https://wp.nyu.edu/communcollab2016/2016/11/13/this-bridge-called-my-back-analysis/>

<https://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/1137421-this-bridge-called-my-back-writings-by-radical-women-of-color>

Quotes and discussion questions

Is there any particular group you perceive has been left behind in the struggle for equality in America?

Why do these authors define themselves as “radical women of color”?

“The real power, as you and I well know, is collective. I can’t afford to be afraid of you, nor you of me. If it takes head-on collisions, let’s do it: this polite timidity is killing us.”

— Cherríe L. Moraga, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*

“I am a woman with a foot in both worlds; and I refuse the split. I feel the necessity for dialogue. Sometimes I feel it urgently.”

— Cherríe L. Moraga, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*

Discuss the idea of white men as colonizers of everyone around them. Do you agree or disagree? Defend your answer.