Journal of American Studies of Turkey
12 (2000) : 87-89

Book Review

This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation, edited by Gloria E. Anzaldua and Analouise Keating. (2002), 624 pages, U.S $ 90 (hardcover), $24.95 (paperback), Available from: Routledge.

Esra Sahtiyancı Öztarhan

When *This Bridge Called My Back,* edited by Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga was published in 1981 it brought new challenges to feminist theory. The book was created by radical women of color who asserted that it is now time for their discourse to be heard and discussed. The anthology was comprised of essays aiming to bring together and to empower previously silenced women of color.

The book was followed with another anthology by Anzaldúa, *Making Face, Making Soul/ Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color* (1990) which also brought many diverse viewpoints to the multicultural feminist theory debate. Both anthologies underline the concept of being "the other women", such as the mestiza, which means hybrid in English. Anzaldúa states that "la mestiza is a product of the transfer of the cultural and spiritual values of one group to another." Although the term is used by a Chicana like Anzaldúa to describe Chicanas, the term has a more widespread usage as Anzaldúa points out in her book *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza* : "It is the experience of being caught between two cultures, two identities and being an alien in both " (Aunt Lute Books, 1987).

Thus this new book should be analyzed as a continuation of the theoretical frameworks cited above. The situation of women of color is analogous to the new mestiza who is neither inside nor completely outside of mainstream culture. Therefore, the new anthology, like the previous ones, seeks to afford women the opportunity to speak for themselves. In this latest phase of multicultural feminism Gloria Anzaldúa has not separated one ethnic woman from the other but has chosen to unite all of them with another bridge-like anthology. *This Bridge We Call Home* aims to consolidate twenty-first century consciousness

for women of color. Its aim is to introduce readers to the new situation women of color are experiencing both in the US and in the world.

The editors of the book are well-known authors and feminist theoreticians such as, Gloria Anzaldúa, a Chicana, *tejana,* lesbian-feminist poet and fiction writer (as she defines herself in *La Frontera*) and editor of many theoretical books. The co-editor is Analouise Keating who previously had collected Anzaldúa's interviews in *Interviews 2000* (2000) and wrote *Women Reading, Women Writing: Self Invention in Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa and Audre Lorde* (1996). As can be easily noted, the editors bring to the anthology their well-established credentials asscholars in women's studies.

The compilation consists of over eighty essays (of a personal and theoretical nature) consisting of literary and artistic works articulating new concerns for the empowerment of women of color throughout the world. First of all, they are all radical essays critiquing white, middle class and heterosexual feminisms and seek to insert themselves within academia. The themes and concerns presented are all contemporary and not previously widely explored such as lesbian pregnancy or queer dystopia. The compilation follows the tradition of *This Bridge Called My Back* where the authors fought against the male supremacist, capitalist, misogynist, racist, homophobic and imperialist culture around them. A major difference from previous anthologies is that *This Bridge We Call Home* claims to encompass all radical women of color from Korean Americans to German, Palestinian and Caribbean women. Another difference is its acceptance of both women and men, of people of color and white contributors in order to include as varied viewpoints as possible.

The book is roughly composed of two parts. In the first part the writers commemorate *This Bridge Called My Back*, its contribution to feminist theory, to feminist mobilization of women of color and to the role they have played in feminist issues. Some of the titles exemplify *this:Bridging Different Views: Australian and Asia-Pacific Engagements with This Bridge Called My Back, Living Fearlessly With and Within Differences: My Search for Identity Beyond Categories and Contradictions.*

In the second part, new developments and issues for radical transformation (as indicated in the title) are explored in their search for identities. It incorporates new concerns for ethnic or sexual identities which the previous traditional feminisms failed to address. Some of the chapters include such issues as the following: *Now that You're a White Man: Changing Sex in a Postmodern World- Being, Becoming and Borders, All I Can Cook is Crack on a Spoon: A Sign for a New Generation of Feminists.*

The manner in which the book is edited and organized, both in terms of various subjects and contributors and in terms of its fragmented style, exemplifies the new status of women of color. Instead of trying to establish a united activism which encompasses all marginalized women, the book tries to form a bridge among different radical women of color where each can give voice to their personal struggle with their distinct and multiple identities, getting their strength from the unity. The anthology does not differentiate between popular and academic concerns.

From a Turkish perspective, the compilation is quite fascinating in terms of recognizing such multiple identities and in terms of allowing women of color and others a voice to articulate their personal experiences. It provides hope and and provides examples of possible modes of liberating women from all walks of life.

The anthology is a useful book for anyone who is interested in gender studies, multicultural and Third World feminisms and who would like (in co-editor Keating's words) "to examine the current situation of multicultural feminist theorizing". It is also a challenging book for those who would like to witness the birth and transformation of brand new postmodern identities for women in the 2000s.