

VIVANCOS-PÉREZ, Ricardo F. and Norma ELIA CANTÚ, eds. 2021. Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books. ISBN 978-1-879960-95-4. 552 pp. \$35.95.

In *Borderlands/La Frontera: A New Mestiza*, Gloria Anzaldúa describes her textual creation as a living, autonomous entity: “The whole thing has a mind of its own, escaping me and insisting on putting together the pieces of its own puzzle with minimal direction from my will. It is a rebellious, willful entity, a precocious girl-child forced to grow up too quickly, rough, unyielding” (2021, 135). The relationship between Anzaldúa and her book unfolds as an ongoing conversation between two independent interlocutors: “I talk to it; it talks to me”; it is a relationship that even summons the language of kinship: “My child, but not for much longer” (2021, 135). The intimacy Anzaldúa describes between herself and *Borderlands/La Frontera* illustrates the deep nature of the bond between the author and the work in its many iterations. Yet this bond is necessarily a transient one, as Anzaldúa also recognizes, ending at the moment when the compositional process concludes, and the publication process renders the text in a stable form.

In their new critical edition of *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Ricardo F. Vivancos-Pérez and Norma Elia Cantú both honor the form of Anzaldúa’s unruly text with “a mind of its own” and offer readers a critical framework for understanding its literary and cultural significance. In addition to the text proper, Vivancos-Pérez and Cantú provide a succinct yet rich biography of Anzaldúa’s life; bibliographies of scholarship on *Borderlands/La Frontera* and select reprinted excerpts from that scholarship; extensive Appendices containing images of first drafts of the preface, the prose section, and the initial poetry collection as well as a few other selected drafts; and an afterward by AnaLouise Keating describing the contents and coordinates of Anzaldúa’s archive.<sup>1</sup> While they have chosen to amend obvious errors — generally typos — found in the first publication of the text, their editorial focus is on annotation: their efforts uncover the extent of Anzaldúa’s

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1. Vivancos-Pérez and Cantú contribute to the critical edition’s apparatus based on their respective areas of expertise. While Cantú contributes much of the material that relates to Anzaldúa’s life — the preface, the biography, and select contextual footnotes, Vivancos-Pérez’s primary focus is on archival and scholarly concerns. He provides the introduction, the two bibliographies, a brief guide to the edition’s Appendices, and footnotes related to pertinent scholarship and archival materials. Both editors collaborate on matters of translation (2021, 20–21).

intertextual references and document the scholarly reception of particular passages.<sup>2</sup> This editorial labor, moreover, is consciously performed with rigor and transparency: the editors' emendations to Anzaldúa's quotations are marked with an asterisk; their notes are meticulously distinguished from Anzaldúa's; and their translations of passages in Spanish that Anzaldúa left untranslated appear in small print at the end of every chapter, providing readers full access to the text while also preserving as far as possible the experience of reading the bilingual text that Anzaldúa intended.<sup>3</sup>

The editorial interventions noted above will enrich readers' experience of Anzaldúa's most pivotal work. The volume's core contribution, however, presented at the opening of the edition in the critical "Introduction" and at its close in the Appendices, stems from its engagement with Anzaldúa's archive. Chief among the insights gathered from this engagement is the revelation that *Borderlands/La Frontera: A New Mestiza* was originally solely composed of poetry. Although all published versions of the text bear witness to its poetic foundations and intrinsically hybrid nature, the revelation of the book's original form is striking for the many readers who associate *Borderlands/La Frontera* with Anzaldúa's "prose" essays as they are traditionally excerpted in anthologies or front-loaded in reading editions. Here, the poems that compose the second half of the work, *Un Agitado Viento/Ehécatl, The Wind*, are emphasized, receiving at last the critical attention they deserve.

Many of the volume's footnotes serve to remind readers of the generic transformation Anzaldúa's text underwent and consistently redirect readers to relevant manuscripts reproduced in the edition's Appendices. In a note on the last paragraph of the section "Ella tiene su tono" in "Entering the Serpent", for example, Vivancos-Pérez traces the content back to the first,

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2. The text of *Borderlands/La Frontera* in the critical edition remains relatively unchanged from that in Anzaldúa's first edition, which contained a preface by Anzaldúa, the seven prose essays that compose the first half of the book, the poems that compose the latter half, and Anzaldúa's endnotes, all represented in the critical edition.

3. In one of the first footnotes of the edition, the editors comment on Anzaldúa's purposefully bilingual titles, reminding readers, "Anzaldúa may or may not give us the exact translation into English. By not providing literal translations, and therefore challenging the Spanish/English duality of bilingualism or bicultural experience, the author exposes the artificial nature of borders — geopolitical, cultural, generic, linguistic, and so on — and invites the reader to explore different points of view that have to do with cultural difference, identity politics, and language ideologies" (2021, 53).

fully poetic, draft of the work, stating that the “paragraph is a prosified version of the seventh stanza of the poem ‘Entering into the Serpent’” (2021, 86). Here, the link to the first iteration of this idea in “Entering into the Serpent” suggests that several of the poems Anzaldúa discarded from the first fully poetic draft became catalysts for her prose essays, which draw not only on their words and ideas, but in this case on their titles as well.

By pointing out the extent to which Anzaldúa transformed her text in the course of the compositional process, the editors imply that access to *Borderlands/La Frontera* is only partially gained through our engagement with a print edition of the work. For fuller access to Anzaldúa’s work and thought, we must enter the archive. Yet it is certainly easy to wonder what Anzaldúa might have thought about the way her papers have become an archive — with all of the connotations that attach to that culturally and ideologically charged space. Would the writer who advocated for an “uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and the collective consciousness” in academic and public spheres approve of the way her papers are now sequestered within the boundaries of the academic archive (2021, 150)? Her mistrust of academia is well documented, beginning, perhaps, with her own complicated relationship with her graduate studies at the University of Texas, Austin, and later clearly articulated in the text of her book: “Even our own people, other Spanish speakers *nos quieren poner candados en la boca*. They would hold us back with their bag of *reglas de academia*” (2021, 538; 121). Would she have wanted her life’s work to be cordoned off from those whom she considered to make up her primary audience and accessible only to those with sufficient funds and status to think critically about her work — work that unsettles the colonial assumption that there is only one way to attain knowledge?<sup>4</sup>

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4. Gaining access to Anzaldúa’s archive can prove a difficult task. As AnaLouise Keating notes in her afterward to the edition, accessing *The Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa Papers* at the University of Texas, Austin’s Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection can be costly (2021, 547). Traveling to visit the archive to view the papers in person of course requires time and money; and the alternative to travel is not much better: Researchers can periodically request scans of a few folders, for a fee, but considering the vast scope of Anzaldúa’s archive, the cost of requesting even limited scans would be considerable and the time necessary to accumulate comprehensive materials for a research project on Anzaldúa while adhering to the limits on requests for outside researchers set by the Benson could drag out any project’s timeline. The University of Texas, Austin’s Center for Mexican American Studies does offer a few, small grants annually, one of which is dedicated to studies that focus on Anzaldúa’s papers, but these grants

Vivancos-Pérez and Cantú take these questions seriously, creating through their collaboration a portable, if still unavoidably partial and removed, *Borderlands/La Frontera* archive. Indeed, rather than erase the messy traces of the material archive, as so many critical editions do, Vivancos-Pérez and Cantú's edition seeks to incorporate it by providing the information — in images and data — necessary for readers to make a first foray into the textual conditions and constraints of the book's genesis. This methodological approach may represent a shift in the form of scholarly editions that will be interesting to track. More immediately, Vivancos-Pérez and Cantú's edition addresses issues of access and will be particularly helpful for those without significant institutional support for archival work — independent scholars and graduate students. Intended by the editors for a diverse audience, this critical edition invites everyone inside *and* outside academia to seriously study, engage with, and experience Anzaldúa's borderlands.

The edition's unusual publishing circumstances — prepared, authorized, and sold by the same small, feminist press that published the first edition of Anzaldúa's pivotal work in 1987 — invites further investigation into its material production. A single, spare detail about the creation of the critical edition alludes to the publisher's influence on it. In his explanation of his editorial principles and practice, Vivancos-Pérez notes that he was not the only agent making changes to the notes: "Some of [Anzaldúa's] original notes have been corrected by the publisher to provide the most accurate citation and reference information" (2021, 39). The extent and location of these changes are not specified further in the paratextual materials or in the text of the edition itself. Although the publisher's corrections are characterized as factual, these "silent" corrections cannot be easily traced and evaluated.<sup>5</sup> A different editorial ethos seems to be at work in the scholarly editor than in the publisher. The latter's multifaceted role as publisher, editor, and secondary subject invites additional questions about how Aunt Lute might have participated in and molded the creation of this critical edition. In the "Introduction", for example, Vivancos-Pérez's record of the publication history of Anzaldúa's book relies primarily on the memories of Joan Pinkvoss, Aunt Lute's Executive Director and

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are limited to Ph.D. candidates and postdoctoral fellows, those already accepted and integrated into the academic world, and may not fully cover expenses for an extensive archival venture.

5. To assess these corrections, readers would have to compare all the endnotes from the first edition with those in the new critical edition.

Anzaldúa's publisher. As a result, Pinkvoss's memories of her professional interactions with Anzaldúa dominate the narrative. How then might the Press's own interests in this narrative both bolster and complicate the edition's aim of elucidating the intertwined composition and publishing histories of such a text? In other words, does the publication of this critical edition with the book's original press guarantee a fuller illumination of its composition and publication processes, or does it — at least potentially — obfuscate those processes? In a scenario where a publisher or editor has personal stakes in the narrative of a text's production, are there extra editorial precautions that can help ensure editorial efficacy and transparency? How do the agents involved — authors, editors, publishers — influence one another's intentions and praxes? Vivancos-Pérez and Cantú's critical edition of *Borderlands/La Frontera* provides a wealth of access to the pertinent archival materials necessary to begin exploring these very questions and more.

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WHEARTY, Bridget. 2022. *Digital Codicology: Medieval Books and Modern Labor*. Stanford: Stanford University Press. Pp. 338. ISBN 9781503632752, Hardcover \$80. ISBN 9781503634190, eBook \$80.

With the title *Digital Codicology*, Bridget Whearty names and delineates an emergent field within medieval manuscript studies: the bibliographical study of digitized manuscripts as book objects in themselves. In a technological context in which high-quality digital images increasingly mediate researchers' experience of medieval manuscripts, these digital images, their forms, and their user interfaces become available as objects of bibliographical analysis. Whearty, of course, recognizes the medievalist researcher's desire for the transparency of these "digital surrogates" or "digital facsimiles" — two terms she rejects in favor of "digital manuscripts" (3) — but she rightly insists that this transparency does not attain in the digitization of medieval manuscripts any more than it does in any other historical instance of textual replication. In other words, though the manuscript digitization projects of the last three or four decades substantially increase access to the contents of medieval manuscripts, they call into existence a new kind of textual artifact, one wrapped in metadata and most directly responsive to and best understood within the specific institutional context that gave rise to it. *Digital Codicology* takes up the ambitious task of describing a discipline and