
Gloria Anzaldúa's Naguala Cuerpo

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Abstract

Gloria Anzaldúa's papers are at The Benson Library Archives at The University of Texas in Austin. I have carefully studied her writings that pertain to illness. The archives have her glucose logs, the notations within these logs, and her published and unpublished work. Gloria Anzaldúa suffered from Diabetes, Type 1, and she died from complications of the disease. In this paper, I discuss the many links between illness and her creative work. I will be presenting, via A/V equipment, some of her glucose logs and marginalia to reveal the connections between her creative work and illness. Her theories on the "naguala" correspond directly to how her mind and body would shift. For example, in one section of notations she writes:

"When my Diabetes was most out of control . . . It felt as though I had been transformed into an alien other and it was cannibalizing my flesh from the inside. I felt divided against myself. I developed an ultra-sensitive body consciousness . . . The illness led me to move my awareness out of my head and into my body."

In *This Bridge We Call Home*, she writes: "According to nagualismo, perceiving something from two different angles creates a split in awareness. This split engenders the ability to control perception. You will yourself to ground this double saber (double knowing) in your body's ear and soul's eye, always alerta y vigilante of how you are aware..." Gloria Anzaldúa's glucose logs and personal writings reveal a woman in constant struggle to make connections and reach an equilibrium between the body and the mind. I look forward to sharing these findings and having the audience view these glucose logs to discuss them in tandem with her literary work.

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