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A Xicana Codex Of Changing Consciousness: Writings, 2000–2010



Synopsis

A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness features essays and poems by Cherríe L. Moraga, one of the most influential figures in Chicana/o, feminist, queer, and indigenous activism and scholarship. Combining moving personal stories with trenchant political and cultural critique, the writer, activist, teacher, dramatist, mother, daughter, comadre, and lesbian lover looks back on the first ten years of the twenty-first century. She considers decade-defining public events such as 9/11 and the campaign and election of Barack Obama, and she explores socioeconomic, cultural, and political phenomena closer to home, sharing her fears about raising her son amid increasing urban violence and the many forms of dehumanization faced by young men of color. Moraga describes her deepening grief as she loses her mother to Alzheimer's; pays poignant tribute to friends who passed away, including the sculptor Marsha Gomez and the poets Alfred Arteaga, Pat Parker, and Audre Lorde; and offers a heartfelt essay about her personal and political relationship with Gloria Anzaldúa. Thirty years after the publication of Anzaldúa and Moraga's collection *This Bridge Called My Back*, a landmark of women-of-color feminism, Moraga's literary and political praxis remains motivated by and intertwined with indigenous spirituality and her identity as Chicana lesbian. Yet aspects of her thinking have changed over time. *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness* reveals key transformations in Moraga's thought; the breadth, rigor, and philosophical depth of her work; her views on contemporary debates about citizenship, immigration, and gay marriage; and her deepening involvement in transnational feminist and indigenous activism. It is a major statement from one of our most important public intellectuals.

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Customer Reviews

“Moraga’s prose is characteristically trenchant and her stance unapologetic as ever. But there is a tender quality of reflection here, too, even nostalgia, that strikes a new note. . . . [T]he sense of trying to hang on to, to remember, something vanishing is palpable in this book. It is a posture that Moraga strikes superbly, and the result is a strong articulation of resistance and, yes, hope, from one of the most important queer Chicana intellectuals of our time.” - Victoria Bolf, *Lambda Literary Review*

“Nostalgia, evolving consciousness, and the concept of (w)riting œwriting to remember / making rite to remember / having the right to remember œlyrically permeate the pages of this book. Moraga’s ideas have matured and become more profound with the passage of time; I look forward to reading more of her eloquent resistance and wisdom in the coming years.” - The Feminist Texican

[Reads] “This is an overall compelling, timely, and on many fronts, prophetic read. There is just enough background discourse on Chicana feminist thought and history for those uninitiated readers, and many new critical reflections and insights for the more seasoned readers wondering what this author has to offer since her last influential work. Both will potentially walk away from this book with an overdue sense of indignation, as well as a sense of hope that within the burgeoning nest of Chicana consciousness and social activism, lies the golden egg of a just, social democracy in the United States.” - Christiane Grimal, *GRAAT Anglophone Studies*

“A Xicana Codex reminds readers about the contributions women of color have made to feminist inquiry. . . . The book is a must for everyone, especially those interested in the intersections informing transnational women of color feminist practice.” - Alvina E. Quintana, *Women’s Review of Books*

“I am no prophet, only a witness to the writing already on the wall that divides my own native homeland,” says Cherríe Moraga in the opening of her contemporary codex. Moraga speaks directly, as a powerful voice of a pivotal generation, a generation that is aging and coming to terms with its urgent, collective story. This political memoir in essays is a testimony to the awakening of an indigenous consciousness that has been disappeared in the memory of colonized Americas. The collection is blessed by the drawings of Celia Herrera Rodríguez. They provide the ceremonial flow. They represent the voices of the plants, earth and elements that give dreaming to the human mind. What a powerful offering in a time of

reckoning. Joy Harjo, Mvskoke Nation, poet, musician, performer, playwright
Cherríe Moraga's *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness* is a hope fulfilled. After the passing of Gloria Anzaldúa, Chicana/o studies suffered something like an eclipse of the moon but here comes radical, creative light into our lives and scholarship once more. Moraga's intellectual and emotional courage about sexuality, race, queerness, and feminist energy shows us that Barack Obama and all Americans also live in the time of Latinos and Xicanas. Underlying these essays is the creative question "How can this new demography of many colors and genders be cultivated into a new democracy?"
David Carrasco, author of *Religions of Mesoamerica: Cosmology and Ceremonial Centers* "A Xicana Codex reminds readers about the contributions women of color have made to feminist inquiry. . . . The book is a must for everyone, especially those interested in the intersections informing transnational women of color feminist practice." (Alvina E. Quintana *Women's Review of Books*)
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"While I may turn to other writings for cultural criticism, Moraga provides what I have not been able to find on any other front: an indigenous Xicana path that insists on transgression as a political and spiritual imperative in a national environment whose core values are corrupt." (Paloma Martinez-Cruz *Letras Femeninas*)

Cherríe L. Moraga is an award-winning playwright, poet, essayist, and activist. She is the author of *Loving in the War Years* and co-editor, with Gloria Anzaldúa, of *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. Moraga is a founding member of La RED Xicana Indígena, a network of Xicana activists committed to indigenous political education, spiritual practice, and grassroots organizing. She is an Artist-in-Residence in the Drama Department at

Stanford University, where she also teaches in the Program in Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity.

A must have in Chicana Literature. It reveals her private life with her own partner and if you dig in you will realize that she went through hell as Ana Castillo's partner! A codex for life's journey!

book was not for me. It was just, okay.

When I heard that Cherríe Moraga was releasing a new collection of her writings, I could not wait to get my hands on it. Moraga, one of the foremothers of the Chicana feminist movement, has been producing beautiful, revolutionary work for over thirty years now. Along with Gloria Anzaldúa, she edited one of the classics of feminist literature, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (which unfortunately keeps going out of print). Now back with essays spanning the first decade of this century, it's obvious that Moraga has not lost her touch. There are a lot of recurring themes throughout *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness*. In the past decade, Moraga became a mother and has been living with her partner, visual and performance artist Celia Herrera Rodríguez, and Celia's two children (Celia also created the illustrations in the book). As an activist, numerous events—from September 11 to the 2008 presidential election to the struggle to legalize gay marriage—have shaped her work. Her mother also grew ill and passed away during this period; as Moraga grows older, the longing to know and tell the stories of her ancestors deepens. She explores all of these parts of her racial, sexual, and feminist identity in the raw, defiant style I've long admired her for. Nostalgia, evolving consciousness, and the concept of (w)riting -writing to remember / making rite to remember / having the right to remember—lyrically permeate the pages of this book. Moraga's ideas have matured and become more profound with the passage of time; I look forward to reading more of her eloquent resistance and wisdom in the coming years.

I personally did not enjoy the book, however this was a required text by my professor for an upper level English course. Others might like the story of the book.

Great collection of recent speeches and writings. Her reflections on the anniversary of the Third World Strike provide important messages and direction for the futures of Chican@ and Ethnic Studies.

Moraga does a good job including significant points in her life. Her passion is obviously spirited; however, she does have her strong stances and points which may not resonate with all audiences. That's not to say it isn't a good read. To each, their own I say.

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Love the book!

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