

## Call for Papers

### **The Third Annual SOCIAL THEORY FORUM April 5-6, 2006 University of Massachusetts Boston**

Theme:

#### **Human Rights, Borderlands, and the Poetics of Applied Social Theory: Engaging with Gloria Anzaldúa in Self and Global Transformations**

*"The actual physical borderland that I'm dealing with in this book is the Texas-U.S. Southwest/Mexican border. The psychological borderlands, the sexual borderlands and the spiritual borderlands are not particular to the Southwest. In fact, the Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy.*

*"I am a border woman. I grew up between two cultures, the Mexican (with a heavy Indian influence) and the Anglo (as a member of a colonized people in our own territory). I have been straddling that tejas-Mexican border, and others, all my life. It's not a comfortable territory to live in, this place of contradictions. Hatred, anger and exploitation are the prominent features of this landscape.*

*"However, there have been compensations for this mestiza, and certain joys. Living on borders and in margins, keeping intact one's shifting and multiple identity and integrity, is like trying to swim in a new element, an "alien" element. There is an exhilaration in being a participant in the further evolution of humankind, in being "worked" on. I have the sense that certain "faculties"—not just in me but in every border resident, colored or non-colored—and dormant areas of consciousness are being activated, awakened. Strange, huh? And yes, the "alien" element has become familiar—never comfortable, not with society's clamor to uphold the old, to rejoin the flock, to go with the herd. No, not comfortable but home.*

*"This book, then, speaks of my existence. My preoccupations with the inner life of the Self, and with the struggle of that Self amidst adversity and violation; with the confluence of primordial images; with the unique positionings consciousness takes at these confluent streams; and with my almost instinctive urge to communicate, to speak, to write about life on the borders, life in the shadows.*

*"Books saved my sanity, knowledge opened the locked places in me and taught me first how to survive and then how to soar: La madre naturaleza succored me, allowed me to grow roots that anchored me to the earth. My love of images—mesquite flowering, the wind, Ehécatl, whispering its secret knowledge, the fleeting images of the soul in fantasy—and words, my passion for the daily struggle to render them concrete in the world and on paper, to render them flesh, keeps me alive. ...*

*"... But we Chicanos no longer feel that we need to beg entrance, that we need always to make the first overture—to translate to Anglos, Mexicans and Latinos, apology blurring out of our mouths with every step. Today we ask to be met halfway. This book is our invitation to you—from the new mestizas."*

**—Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987. (For more information, visit: <http://64.233.161.104/search?q=cache:GFq-NPYGI-EJ:gloria.chicanas.com/keatingobit.html+anzaldua+keating&hl=en>)**

The Third Annual Meeting of the Social Theory Forum, to be held on April 5-6, 2006, at the University of Massachusetts Boston, will be devoted to the theme "Human Rights, Borderlands, and the Poetics of Applied Social Theory: Engaging with Gloria Anzaldúa in Self and Global Transformations." Gloria Anzaldúa (1942-2004), a Chicana Lesbian-Feminist, poet, and cultural theorist, has been widely acknowledged for having made the literature of women of color visible in the U.S. Toward this end, Anzaldúa's poetic and imaginative social theorizing and praxis will be embraced as a framework for the exploration of liberatory and transformative symbolic interactionism in self and global landscapes along and across gender, race and ethnicity, class, age, nationality, religion, sexuality, and ability borderlands.

Walking along and crossing the borderlands of our own academic disciplines, we will engage with Anzaldúa's gripping and creative talent in bridging the boundaries of academia and everyday life, self and global/world-historical reflexivity, sociology and psychology, social science and the arts and the humanities, spirituality and secularism, private and public, consciousness and the subconscious, and theory and practice. We will engage with Anzaldúa as a guiding (though not necessarily exclusive) theme to revisit and cross our own knowledge, feeling, and sensual borderlands in favor of humanizing self and global outcomes. Central in this dialogue will be the exploration of human rights in personal and institutional terrains and their intersections with human borderlands, seeking creative and applied theoretical and curricular innovations to advance human rights pedagogy and practice on and off-campus.

The annual meeting will feature both invited and submitted papers and presentations. Please send completed existing papers (preferable) or two-page paper proposals as email attachment (Word format) to the email addresses of co-organizers as listed below, by **December 15, 2005**. Upon selection and notification of approval by the organizing committee, submitters must send completed paper manuscripts (around 20-25 pages) by **February 15, 2006**. Proceedings of the conference will be peer-reviewed for possible publication in an issue of *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge*.

2006 Annual Meeting Co-organizers:

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**Just Published**

*The Discourse of Sociological Practice*, Vol. 7, double issues 1&2, Spring/Fall 2005.  
Papers from the Second Annual Meeting of Social Theory Forum, held April 6-7, 2005 at UMass Boston  
Theme: "Theories and Praxes of Difference: Revisiting Edward Said in the Age of New Globalizations"

**Also Available**

*The Discourse of Sociological Practice*, Vol. 6, Issue 2, Fall 2004.  
Papers from the First Annual Meeting of Social Theory Forum, held April 7, 2004 at UMass Boston  
Theme: "Liberating Social Theory: Inspirations from Paulo Freire for Learning, Teaching, and Advancing Social Theory in Applied Settings"

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## **About the Social Theory Forum (STF)**

Department of Sociology  
UMass Boston

Histories of sociology tell us how the discipline was formed in the nineteenth century struggles to understand the combined upheavals of socio-political revolutions and the industrial revolution that gradually expanded throughout the world. These events radically changed the established order and posed various questions that are still with us today: questions about class, race, community, gender, the nature of social integration, and processes of social change, among others. But as we all know, the world again changed radically during the twentieth century, with great implications for social theory.

The Social Theory Forum (STF) is a series of conference-workshops organized jointly by the sociology and other interested faculty and students at UMB in order to creatively explore, develop, promote, and publish cross-disciplinary social theory in an applied and liberating (critical) framework. STF will offer the faculty and students of UMass Boston and other colleges and universities an interactive medium to discuss various aspects of the way in which particular theoretical traditions can be relevant to present everyday issues, the current state of social theory, and the future of social theory—recognizing that it is caught between its past successes and a situation that threatens to make its achievements less relevant if it does not deal successfully with the prospects of continuity and change.

STF's goals are:

- To critically engage with and evaluate classical and contemporary social theories in a cross-disciplinary and comparative cross-cultural framework in order to develop new integrative theoretical structures and practices;
- To foster individual and collective self-reflexivity in exploring social theories in global and world-historical contexts to aid people effectively address social problems and engage in liberatory social struggles;
- To foster interactive and dialogical learning experience and research in theory within and across faculty, students, and community divides on and off-campus, characterized by respect for the dignity and empowerment of ordinary individual lives and opinions in everyday life;
- To foster dialectical exchange of ideas open to constructive and integrative exploration of diverse and conflicting viewpoints, modes of thinking, and world-views;
- To foster theoretical education and research within a praxis-oriented and applied sociological framework capable of addressing concrete issues arising from intrapersonal, interpersonal and global contexts;
- To foster theoretical education and research as practices of freedom in favor of transformative and emancipatory personal and global social experience.

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