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Richard Paul, Gloria Anzaluda, and Mestiza Consciousness: Shifting the Borders of Critical Thinking

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RICHARD PAUL, GLORIA ANZALDÚA, AND *MESTIZA* CONSCIOUSNESS:

SHIFTING THE BORDERS OF CRITICAL THINKING

A Thesis Presented

by

MARGARET E. CRONIN

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Critical and Creative Thinking Program

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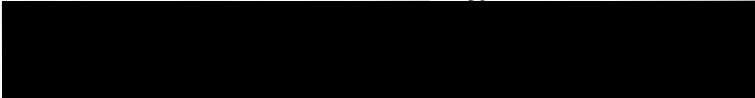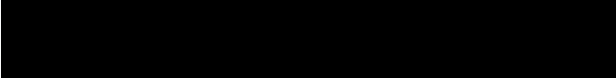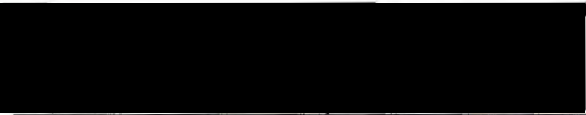Delores Gallo, Program Director
Critical and Creative Thinking Program

ABSTRACT

RICHARD PAUL, GLORIA ANZALDÚA, AND *MESTIZA* CONSCIOUSNESS:

SHIFTING THE BORDERS OF CRITICAL THINKING

September 1997

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Directed by Professor Delores Gallo

In recent years, many theorists and practitioners in the field of critical and creative thinking have moved beyond a discrete skills understanding of critical and creative thinking to advocate a more holistic approach. This approach focuses on recognizing underlying assumptions, analyzing frames of reference, and foregrounding personal and social biases. Yet despite this much needed move toward contextualizing thinking and the thinker, there is little attention given to the role that power and identity difference play in the development and teaching of thinking.

This thesis concerns itself with the issues of power, identity, and difference in thinking by comparing the work of critical thinking theorist Richard Paul with that of several race-inflected lesbian feminist theorists. I consider what happens if we try to insert a very specific thinking subject -- Gloria Anzaldúa's *mestiza* thinker -- into Paul's theoretical milieu.

inhabiting a multiple consciousness, the *mestiza* must also deal with the issue of how she is seen as different from the norm.

This necessitates a discussion of how difference is inflected by unequal power dynamics that have an effect on how we envision the thinker, how we grant her authority, and how we define and validate effective thinking. I use critiques of white feminist theory by Anzaldúa, Norma Alarcón, and María Lugones to illustrate how some of Paul's theorizing of the thinking subject parallels white feminist theorizing which has ignored or devalued women of color in neglecting issues of multiple subjectivity, power, and difference.

In conclusion, I argue that the critical and creative thinking field would be served by an inclusion of lesbian/feminist of color discourses. These discourses might serve as examples of critical and creative thinking, as well as give us a more complete portrait of the thinker and thinking that goes beyond the notion of the thinker as a universal, unitary self.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Buzz and Lorraine Cronin, who did not

make it to this day, but who gave me the wherewithal to do so.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> **. . . the link between critical thinking and feminism is much deeper and potentially more liberating than the current scholarship on critical thinking would suggest. The aims of each are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. It may be, then, that critical thinking is not simply a feminist issue. It may be that critical thinking must be feminist if it is truly to be what it purports to be, viz., reasonable and reflective activity aimed at deciding what to do or believe.**
> **--Karen J. Warren, from "Critical Thinking and Feminism" in Re-Thinking Reason.**

In recent years, many theorists and practitioners in the field of critical and creative thinking have moved beyond a discrete skills understanding of critical and creative thinking to advocate more holistic, interconnected, complex and deeper approaches to thinking. Current theorizing and practice focus on recognizing and examining underlying assumptions, analyzing frames of reference, recognizing and understanding different paradigms of theorizing, and even attending to personal and social biases (e.g., Richard Paul's assertion that "strong sense" critical thinking requires an understanding of and movement beyond "egocentric" and "sociocentric" thinking).

Yet despite this much needed move towards contextualizing thinking and the thinker, there is little attention given to the role that power and privilege play in the development and teaching of thinking. While there are pockets of vigorous and illuminating efforts in critical and creative thinking to put forth a more inclusive, effective and subtly complex understanding of thinking (Gallo 1989; Walters 1994; Martin 1993), a discussion of power within the field of critical and creative thinking is most often absent.

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Neglecting such a discussion has many ramifications regarding canon-formation and the persons in whom authority is invested in the critical and creative thinking field (teachers, theorists, writers, and other practitioners). In turn, "who is teaching what material" affects and effects who ends up in our classrooms and workshops. Recently here at the University of Massachusetts, we have had discussions on how to make our program more multiculturally diverse, and how to attract a student body more diverse in terms of class, race, ethnicity, and open sexual orientation. Our fairly homogeneous student body is connected to this issue of power, and to the discourses that are used, and perhaps more importantly, the discourses that are not used, in this interdisciplinary, but not yet fully multicultural, field of critical and creative thinking.

In order to bring an understanding of power and privilege into the critical and creative thinking conversation, I would like to compare the work of some lesbian and women of color feminist theorists with that of critical thinking theorist Richard Paul. I am particularly interested in looking at the ways in which Richard Paul's conceptualization of the thinking subject may differ from Gloria Anzaldúa's *mestiza*/borderdweller portrait of a thinking subject. I believe such an examination of the thinking subject will help us to see that the way we conceive of the thinker has implications for how we theorize knowledge formation and how we define good, effective, or sound critical thinking.

Like many other theorists and thinkers in the critical thinking field, Richard Paul's work is marked by an insistence that a successful critical thinker must be able to move between different frameworks of thinking. He delineates two kinds of critical thinking: weak sense critical thinking and strong sense critical thinking. One way of describing the

difference between weak and strong sense critical thinking would be to say that the weak sense critical thinker is stuck in one frame of reference, that her thinking is bound by her own framework for thinking about a particular thing. Paul suggests that it is quite possible for the thinker to make intelligent and even sophisticated arguments, and yet not be thinking deeply because the thinker is confined within a single frame of reference. In other words, one may invoke rules of logic, create neat, tidy arguments, and come to reasonable conclusions, but actually not have done much effective thinking because one has essentially stayed within a narrow point of view.

Paul asserts that truly creative, useful, transformative thinking requires one to step out of that point of view by investigating and revealing the assumptions that underlie one's own framework. Furthermore, one must learn to examine and empathize with the assumptions that inform another person's framework.

Many of us (including myself) in the Critical and Creative Thinking Program embrace Paul's ideas as sound and useful, especially in terms of their implications for teaching critical thinking in various institutional education settings.

Yet, as a student, as an educator, and as a critical thinker, I must ask some questions, questions that we might consider in three clusters. First, given Paul's exhortations that we must employ multiple frameworks in the practice of strong sense critical thinking, why does his theorizing still bear the marks of a fairly unexamined white, formally educated, masculinist, heterosexist voice? Of what significance is it that an educator so sensitive to the foregrounding of assumptions chooses not to characterize the particularity and partiality of his own voice as speaker, as a writer? Second, how does Paul's failure to examine his own voice and particular grounds of identity affect the way

he imagines "The Thinker" and the steps such a thinker needs to take in order to move from weak to strong sense critical thinking? Is Paul's image of the universal thinker an image into which all thinkers can fit? By extension, do all thinkers have a relationship to egocentricity and sociocentricity similar to the general description that Paul provides? And third, what part of the thinking picture is missing if Paul is willing to talk about the role that power plays in forming prejudicial thinking, yet does not discuss the ways in which cultural, social and institutional contexts can and have created hierarchies in which certain kinds of thinking and thinkers are given more credibility or authenticity than others? In other words, what are some of the differences between Paul's view of the thinker and thinking and other critical theorists who do examine the unequal play of power over different kinds of thinkers and different kinds of thinking?

The first section of this thesis reviews some of Paul's central concepts, those briefly characterized above: strong and weak sense critical thinking, and issues of prejudice, egocentricity, and sociocentricity as obstacles that must be wrestled with if a thinker is to progress from weak sense to strong sense critical thinking. I then allude to the dissonance that might occur if we try to insert marginalized identities into Paul's framework for becoming a strong sense critical thinker, especially in regard to his formulation of egocentricity and sociocentricity as blocks to effective critical thinking. Exploring this dissonance leads to questions of Paul's unexamined authorial voice and the apparent homogeneity of his imagined audience, which reveal a larger shortcoming in Paul's work: his failure to theorize pedagogy as a practice that operates within the field of power, and his failure to examine how in such a field, value attaches to difference in socially constructed, unequal ways.

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The second section of the thesis introduces Gloria Anzaldúa's *mestiza* figure in a further exploration of what happens when we imagine thinkers as real, specific people who occupy multiple and marginal identities in particular cultural and institutional contexts in the United States. Unlike the generalized ideal thinker around whom Paul builds his theories -- a thinker who apparently inhabits a fairly unified self in a fairly supportive and stable cultural and institutional setting, and to whom the notion of "universal" seems quite self-evident (so like him_self_, after all) -- these other theorists deal with thinkers whose lived experience gives rise to a self made up of multiple identities, a self who already lives and thinks within multiple frameworks that are not always neatly resolved or harmonious or rational. The thinker who inhabits a *mestiza* consciousness draws our attention to issues of voice, authority, and audience that inform, but are not directly discussed, in Paul's formulation of thinking and the thinking subject, which is more deeply explored in the next section.

In the third section, I further consider the issue of power in thinking by looking at the ways in which Anzaldúa theorizes power and thinking differently than does Paul. I argue that because of their marginalized identities, Anzaldúa and other borderdwellers such as Audre Lorde, Norma Alarcón, and María Lugones understand that critical thinking requires more than multiple points of view. Because our lives are inscribed and conscribed by institutional frameworks, different kinds of thinkers are accorded varying degrees of authority depending on the context in which they do their thinking; hence, power must be a part of any discussion of thinking.

While the discourse community out of which Anzaldúa, Lorde, Alarcón, and Lugones arise is feminist theory, I think it is instructive to critical thinking theorists such

as Richard Paul and programs such as ours. In describing their thinking subjectivities, these feminists question assumptions of white feminist theorizing, some of which are remarkably similar to unexamined assumptions in Paul's work. The main assumptions I will be concerned with are the implicit ideas that the thinking subject is unitary, and that difference does not need to be named and theorized in terms of both particularity and power. Examining some of the mistakes that white feminists have made in theorizing the subject of critical consciousness reveals some of the parallel gaps in the work of Richard Paul and illumines how we might strengthen the Critical and Creative Thinking Program.

The work of Anzaldúa, Lorde, Alarcón, and Lugones is marked by a very conscious attention to power and empowerment in hierarchical, unjust settings, whereas Paul tends to see power as something available to anyone who will just learn how to be a strong sense critical thinker. Though Paul does talk about power imbalances that allow some points of view to get more airtime than others, his fairly stable position as a straight white educated male blocks his view of his own privilege, and makes it less compelling for him to attend to his own authorial voice and the possibility and implications of a heterogeneous as opposed to homogeneous audience. Hence, he more confidently asserts a belief in objectivity, universality, and Western constructs of rationality than any of the other critical thinkers herein examined.

In the fourth and final section of the thesis, I contend that if Paul is to fully actualize his own standards for strong sense critical thinking, he must theorize power and the thinker in more complex ways so that everyone can get into the building and be heard in the room where he imagines a truly democratic, critical thinking discourse might take place. No matter how bent on justice we may presently be, we must remember America's

very constitution did not extend full citizenry, humanity even, to most of the people inhabiting the country at the time. Though we have made corrections over time, our institutions still bear the mark of these founding flaws, and many of our citizens still bear the injustices remaining in the structural fiber of these institutions. This requires that he -- and all of us -- face up to the fact that in imperfect, unjust societies power is divided unequally, and difference often equals deficient. Because thinkers live inside, not outside, this unfair set-up, thinking itself is affected by unequal power dynamics.

This is not to say that our thinking need be overly determined by unequal power dynamics, for it is precisely the meta-analysis the mind is capable of, a meta-analysis Paul wants to foster, that can move us beyond unequal systems. But we cannot move beyond what we refuse to see. Comparing Anzaldúa's vision of the thinker with Paul's allows us not only to see several facets of many truths, but to also understand that multiple viewpoints without an attendant analysis of context and power gives us a false and incomplete view of the field of opportunity in critical thinking, and thus delimits thinking itself. The mosaic of voices I bring together here with Paul's offer alternative visions of the thinker as a continually evolving, sometimes conflicted, but nonetheless creative self who must continually work at re-assessing and integrating multiple identities for various purposes and shifting contexts. The idea of the thinking self as a multiple, fluid entity -- such as the *mestiza* figure -- is perhaps not as comforting as are stable formulas or universal descriptions of the thinker as a unitary subject. The strength of the *mestiza* figure, however, is that it characterizes the lived experience of most people better than a lot of traditional ideas about objectivity and universality ever have.

CHAPTER 2
AUTHOR'S CHARACTERIZATION/CONTEXTUALIZATION

Locating the Author

Before proceeding further, let me first locate myself within this discourse and acknowledge (as far as I can see them) the assumptions undergirding my own thinking here. I am a white Irish-American lesbian feminist. I was raised working class, but am formally educated (as a result of my family's hard work, white skin privilege, and some good fortune) and thus now operate out of a position of middle-class or upper middle class privilege. I work to overcome the insularity of that privilege, as well as share the resources and advantages of such privilege, through activist and community work, through friendship, through spiritual and critical self-reflection, and through my writing and critical, lesbian-feminist, anti-racist, student-centered pedagogy in various teaching arenas.

I understand this investigation and responsible re-deployment of privilege to be an ongoing and always incomplete endeavor. In our hierarchical, profit-driven consumer culture, it is not improbable to conceptualize power and privilege as functioning like drugs. In *Gender Outlaw*, Kate Bornstein, a male-to-female lesbian transsexual writes, "to have [male privilege] was like taking drugs, to get rid of it was like kicking a habit. I gave it up because it was destroying me and the people I loved" (Bornstein, 108).

Recovery from addiction to the immediate, albeit short-term or unfulfilling gratification that marks such power and privilege is a lifetime, daily process. Putting human and spiritual concerns in the center of one's life, one's community, necessitates a vigilant evaluation of and painful disentanglement from the profit-driven, materialist,

convenience oriented, thrill-promising American culture that threatens and seduces us from a frighteningly wide array of venues. Not to do so, however, dulls our thinking, stunts our imagination, and jeopardizes not only our integrity, but our quality of life, and perhaps even our continued physical existence.

It is my belief that all forms of thinking, creativity, and especially education, spring from a political frame of reference, however normalized or concealed that frame of reference may be. Beyond the feminist notion that the personal is political, I understand everything to be informed by politics. Hence, everything operates within the field of power, as power is variously and often contradictorily defined, contested, and deployed in a culture such as ours that claims, but does not yet fully enjoy or even embrace, democracy.

This understanding of the ubiquitous nature of power dynamics is born of my experience as a woman and lesbian in a heterosexist society. My own experience of oppression, developing critical consciousness, and empowerment, as well as my connection to working class and racial liberatory critical consciousnesses (through activism, reading, and friendship) vitally informs my particular -- and partial -- view of the world.

My academic understanding of power, thought and agency is postmodernist in flavor, though not without a competing romantic sense or desire for modernist certainty or security in the exhilarating yet disorienting whirlwind of choice, anxiety, urgency, freedom/oppression and chaos that comprises our American society in the present moment.

As we face the turning millennium in a smaller global community, we need ever more complex yet graspable, sustaining visions and critical consciousnesses that will support hope and foster agency. The hard, white, one-piece golf ball shell of our world is now pulled back, revealing the inner core -- the substance -- of our world: tightly wound multicolored elastic thread, hopelessly/hopefully bound together, its shape and form dependent on the tension of interconnection, a tension characterized both by explosiveness and transformative flexibility, a tension the essential nature of which is mobile, shifting, rather than stationary or static.

Multiple Identities and Power: Inadequacies of Language and Linear Discourse

In accounting for such complexity, I must also acknowledge a difficulty inherent in the task of talking about the thinker or the self in a way that honors the multiple identities that one person may inhabit. As Gloria Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde and others remind us, the self cannot be reduced to one singular socio-political identity (African-American, gay, female, mother, etc.), nor can a single identity position be isolated for discrete observation without distorting what it means to walk in the world claiming or marked by multiple identities. To speak of the simultaneity of identities, to explore the multiplicity of the postmodern self in the linear, discursive written word is a task fraught with intellectual, technical, and emotional difficulty.

For the sake of manageable explanation there may be times when I am speaking of a discrete identity aspect of a thinker, nonetheless realizing that many other identities simultaneously obtain in this thinker, and not always harmoniously so. For example, when I identify as a lesbian, I may do so, in part, to combat heterosexual assumptions that

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invisibilize lesbian reality. I see this as a political, oppositional stance. However, embedded in a claim to lesbian identity is a binary gender system which I may ultimately reject as restricting. Thus, my claim to lesbian identity is also not oppositional, in that it supports an oppressive gender code. Politically then, in claiming a lesbian identity I may be both supporting a progressive agenda (the right to same-sex love), and re-inscribing the status quo (a strict male/female binary gender system).

Further complicating the identity matrix, I am also "raced" as white. Unlike my lesbian identity, my whiteness is curiously visible and invisible. It is apparent to the eye, but in conversation or writing, in referring to myself, it is often not necessary to "mark" myself as white because "whiteness" is the norm. The socio-political assumption is reflected in our language, where white people are just "people," and people of color are "of color": "black," "Asian," "Native American," "Latino," etc. People of color are adjectively (and often abjectly) defined: they are the qualified, the delineated, the different, the other, while white people are normalized, naturalized, as just people, as the standard by which difference is marked (Appiah and Gutmann Frankenberg; Morrison).

And even as I try, in the previous paragraph, to expose such white-centered assumptions, I may unwittingly perpetuate such assumptions, for a person of color reading this might say, "When I use the word person or people, I don't just think of white people." And that same reader may indeed mark me as white. The point I am trying to make here is that as a white person in America, I grew up with the luxury (and incompleteness) of being able to think of myself as just a person and not a raced person. Most people of color in our country have not enjoyed that luxury.

It is impossible, in writing, to convey the entire web of experience, history, biology, culture, politics, and power that inform, create, and lay at the disposal of each person's identity and agency. And yet we must make an attempt to narrate that complexity and to grapple with its difficulty. Otherwise, we are likely to oversimplify the thinking self, and reinscribe the notion that we are seamless, unproblematized, unitary identities, when in fact we are selves who live in many, sometimes conflicting, "identity points" (Phelan, 70).

A further problem inheres in terms such as "minorities" and "marginal." Though in common parlance such terms have come to refer to what is not "mainstream" or "traditional," often the minority is actually a majority in number who nonetheless do not hold the majority of institutional, financial, or cultural capital. Thus, who or what is marginal in terms of institutional power may in fact be more common or mainstream in everyday reality. In "Toward a New Manifest Destiny," the essayist and poet June Jordan addresses such sleight-of-hand language regarding who is marginal in America:

> I have worked here, inside this country, and I have kept my eyes open, everlastingly. What I see today does not support a media-concocted controversy where my life or the lives of African-Americans, Native Americans, Chicano-Americans, Latin-Americans, and Asian-Americans amount to arguable fringe or freak components of some theoretical netherland. We have become the many peoples of this nation--nothing less than that. I do not accept that we, American peoples of color, signify anything optional or dubious or marginal or exotic or anything in any way less valuable, less necessary, less sacred than white America. (Jordan, 198)

Similarly, people or cultural ideas and practices that have been termed "traditional" or "American" often refer to a fairly narrow spectrum of people and practices in the United States (i.e., white people, especially men, of the middle or upper class). For example, I find it odd to hear Native American students or literature referred to as "non-

traditional," when in fact, Native American cultures comprise some of the oldest

traditions known to this country.

Furthermore, the term "Native American" itself is problematic. The indigenous

people of this continent long precede the appellations "America" and "American." These

are terms originally imposed on the land and people by European conquerors and settlers.

Additionally, despite the fact that the word "native" is meant to denote "indigenous" in

"Native American," the use of the word "native" has a history that makes me squeamish.

Too often, this word has been used by colonizing powers to dehumanize indigenous

people as a means of justifying conquest, slavery, and economic exploitation. More often

than not, this process of dehumanization through language (and concomitant structures of

institutional power) has been carried out by whites on brown-, yellow-, or redskinned

people.

This thesis offers no solutions to the problems of power, identity, representation,

and authority that are built into our language and into the linear nature of written

discourse. Rather, I see these problems as challenges which any program that is serious

about pedagogy and thinking must face. I would be remiss if I did not name these

tensions, for they are examples of the labyrinthine structures of power and difference that

inform representation of people, culture and thinking. Again, June Jordan's voice is a

clarion call for us to push beyond the myth of American homogeneity:

> Shall we submit to ceaseless lies, fantastic misinformation, and fantastic
> omissions? Shall we agree to the erasure of our beleaguered, heterogeneous truth?
> Shall we embrace traditions of insanity and lose ourselves and the whole real
> world? (Jordan, 198)

So often our "heterogeneous truth" -- with all its vibrant, potentially destructive,

potentially creative tension -- is literally not seen, or ignored, by those who do have

institutional power in education. If a program such as Critical and Creative Thinking does not provide a venue in which heterogeneity, power, and difference in thinking may be explored, what program will?

Author's Motives

When I am asking for inclusion of other theories of critical thinking and of other models of the thinker, sometimes I am doing so because I feel the pain and frustration, the disempowerment, of not seeing my own experience reflected or valued in our program. Other times, I am speaking as one who has benefited unfairly from such models of thinking and thinkers, one who has achieved recognition and praise for "mastering" methodologies that support my white skin privilege and/or my social privilege. I want to break complicity with this privilege by naming it as such. In so doing, I hope to better see and hear other ways of being and thinking that foster the critical and creative potential of all kinds of people, rather than an elite few. This is an issue of justice, and of my own enrichment. Still other times, I am asking for inclusion of *mestiza* and other thinkers because, despite the fact that I have been raised to value whiteness and middle-class norms, people of color and working class people have been my friends, lovers and teachers; to see them excluded is painful to me, as well as just plain wrong. Thus, the motivation for this thesis comes partly out of direct experience of being silenced, invisible, or not taken seriously, and partly from watching how others who are different from me are also disempowered. Thus, I am both the person calling for corrective measures, as well as the person who needs to learn corrective measures, in terms of theorizing the thinker and thinking. Finally, I know from experience that despite the

trappings of privilege and the seduction of hierarchical models of power, when any one of us is diminished, we are all diminished. Audre Lorde wrote movingly about the connection between power and our many and different selves in the following way:

> My fullest concentration of energy is available to me only when I integrate all the parts of who I am, openly, allowing power from particular sources of my living to flow back and forth freely through all of my selves, without the restrictions of externally imposed definition. Only then can I bring myself and my energies as a whole to the service of those struggles which I embrace as part of my living. (Lorde, 120-1)

The characteristics that Lorde values in this description -- flux, multiplicity, an honoring of particularity, tolerance for ambiguity, an internal locus of definition/evaluation, motion, openness, life-centered service -- are characteristics that I think should be a part of critical and creative thinking. This thesis is a meditation on some thinkers and some theories that might create the kind of "power flow" which Audre Lorde imagined, and which I long for in our program.

CHAPTER 3
RICHARD PAUL AND CRITICAL THINKING

Weak Sense and Strong Sense Critical Thinking

In this section, I will explore some of Richard Paul's central ideas regarding critical thinking and the critical thinker. Of particular interest are Paul's conceptualizations of weak and strong sense critical thinking, and his belief that strong sense critical thinking cannot be achieved without the thinker overcoming two particular kinds of prejudice or partial consciousness: egocentricity and sociocentricity.

Paul's distinction between weak and strong sense critical thinking is useful as a demarcation between bullying sophistry and a deeper, more thorough and honest kind of thinking. Moreover, his concepts of egocentricity and sociocentricity remind us that our own individual subjectivity and social frameworks can prevent us from seeing multiple points of view, from entertaining frameworks that are new or alien or distasteful to us, as well as prevent us from understanding our own frameworks as models rather than truths or reality.

The work of Richard Paul urges us to develop a metaconsciousness that helps us become better thinkers by examining the often hidden assumptions or invisible scaffolding undergirding our own thought. A central point of reference in Paul's conceptualization of critical thinking is the distinction he draws between weak sense critical thinking and strong sense critical thinking. Paul summarizes weak sense and strong sense critical thinkers as follows:

> **weak sense critical thinkers:** 1) those who do not hold themselves or those with whom they ego-identify to the same intellectual standards to which they hold "opponents." 2) those who have not learned how to reason empathically within

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points of view or frames of reference with which they disagree. 3) those who tend to think monologically. 4) those who do not genuinely accept, though they may verbally espouse, the values of critical thinking. 5) those who use the intellectual skills of critical thinking selectively and self-deceptively to foster and serve their vested interests (at the expense of truth); able to identify flaws in the reasoning of others and refute them; able to shore up their own beliefs with reasons. (Paul, 668)

strong sense critical thinker: One who is predominately characterized by the following traits: 1) an ability to question deeply one's own framework of thought; 2) an ability to reconstruct sympathetically and imaginatively the strongest versions of points of view and frameworks opposed to one's own; and 3) an ability to reason dialectically (multilogically) in such a way as to determine when one's own point of view is at its weakest and when an opposing point of view is at its strongest. (Paul, 666)

In Paul's conceptualization, one of the most telling differences between a weak and strong sense thinker is the ability to move between points of view in a deep way. A strong sense critical thinker is able to acknowledge her own framework of thought or world view so as to move beyond it, not necessarily to abandon it, but to fully see and consider the frameworks and world views of other thinkers. To this end, Paul instructs us to overcome prejudices in our own thinking by learning to transcend, as much as is possible, egocentricity and sociocentricity. In other words, we must be able, through a kind of meta-analysis, to move beyond thinking that merely supports our individual and our group self-interests. We must be willing to examine those places in our thinking where an idea, conclusion, or assumption seems obvious, or natural, or just common-sense, for these are the places where beliefs, prejudices, and habit collude in the formation of frameworks which are sometimes flawed, and always partial. In uncovering and foregrounding the assumptions behind our own frames of references, we are better able to see the incompleteness of our thinking. This then allows for an openness to and hopefully, curiosity about, other thinkers and their points of view so that critical thinking

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may proceed as a collaborative, dialectic practice, rather than a polarized battle between thinkers who each believe they possess the ultimate Truth or Knowledge.

Toward Strong Sense Critical Thinking: Identifying Egocentric, Sociocentric, and Monological Thought

In describing prejudices and self-serving beliefs that impede critical thinking, Paul articulates two related concepts -- "egocentricity" and "sociocentricity" -- to describe what he sees to be natural and often unexamined tendencies in human thought. He defines them as follows:

> **egocentricity:** A tendency to view everything in relationship to oneself; to confuse immediate perception . . . with reality. One's desires, values, and beliefs (seeming to be self-evidently correct or superior to those of others) are often uncritically used as the norm of all judgment and experience. (Paul, 646)

> **sociocentricity:** The assumption that one's own social group is inherently and self-evidently superior to all others. When a group or society sees itself as superior and so considers its views about the world as correct or as the only reasonable or justifiable views, and all its actions justified, there is a tendency to presuppose this superiority in all its thinking and thus to think closemindedly. All dissent and doubt are considered disloyal, and rejected without consideration. Few people recognize the sociocentric nature of much of their thought. (Paul, 666)

Two other important concepts in Paul's theory of critical thinking are monological and multilogical thinking. Monological thinking is "one-dimensional thinking that is conducted exclusively within one point of view or frame of reference" (Paul, 659), whereas multilogical thinking "sympathetically enters, considers, and reasons within multiple points of view" (Paul, 660).

A cornerstone of Paul's analysis is that much of American education for critical thought takes a monological approach to multilogical issues. Paul asserts that traditional cognitive psychological studies that feed into education theory "rarely focus on messy

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real-life multilogical problems that cross disciplines" (Paul, 184). Breaking out of

monological thinking requires a vigilant awareness that all thinking occurs within a

framework, and that we must be able to go beyond our own egocentric or sociocentric

framework into the more complex and ambiguous terrain of multilogical thinking.

People cannot begin to think critically until they are able to ascertain the difference

between monological and multilogical problems, and until they can recognize and

transcend their own egocentric and sociocentric thinking:

> Teaching for critical thinking in the strong sense is teaching so that students
> explicate, understand, and critique their own deepest prejudices, biases and
> misconceptions, thereby discovering and contesting their own egocentric and
> sociocentric tendencies. Only if we contest our inevitable egocentric and
> sociocentric habits of thought can we hope to think in a genuinely rational
> fashion. Only dialogical thinking about basic issues that genuinely matter to the
> individual provides the kind of practice and skill essential to strong sense critical
> thinking. (Paul, 666-7)

This issue of mono- and multilogical thinking is connected to Paul's construct of

weak and strong sense critical thinking:

> . . . we distinguish two important senses of critical thinking, a weak sense and a
> strong one. Those who think critically only with respect to monological issues
> and, as a result, consider multilogical issues with a pronounced monological bias
> have merely mastered weak sense critical thinking. They would lack the ability,
> and presumably the disposition also, to critique their own most fundamental
> categories of thought and analysis. They would, as a result, lack the ability to
> enter sympathetically into, and reconstruct, the strongest arguments and reasons
> for points of view fundamentally opposed to their own. When their monological
> thinking arises from an unconscious commitment to a personal point of view, their
> thinking is egocentric; when it arise from an unconscious commitment to a social
> or cultural point of view, their thinking is ethnocentric. In either case they think
> more or less exclusively within their own frames of reference. (Paul, 184)

Paul goes on to say that to think multilogically, to break out of egocentric and

sociocentric thinking, is to cultivate a "Socratic character" through which one is able

think beyond simple self-serving strategies. Paul maintains that this Socratic character is rare in thinkers, subsequently, "most everyday critical thought is egocentric" (Paul, 191).

Imagining the Thinker in Multilogical Terms: Paul's Exclusion of Relevant Discourses

Paul's assertion that "most everyday critical thought is egocentric," sets up a masses/elite equation that troubles me. It suggests that special training, rather than life experience, is the only route to strong sense critical thinking. But even more disturbing is that this assertion ignores many well-established streams of critical thought which have developed in response to the egocentricity and sociocentricity that inform Western patriarchal rationality. When Paul makes such a statement, he is obviously not thinking about feminist theory, critical race theory, Freirian pedagogy, lesbian philosophy. As I will later illustrate in subsequent chapters, these are all schools of thought that might serve as examples of critical thinking that complexify the thinker's relationship to egocentricity and sociocentricity.

Beyond ignoring these particular strains of critical thought, Paul is not imagining the thinker in fully multilogical terms. For all his insistence that we must approach multilogical issues with multilogical tools, his configuration of the critical thinker remains relatively monological, if not monolithic. For example, he maintains that "[F]ew adults have experience in reciprocal critical thought, that is, in reasoning within their antagonists' point of view" (Paul, 189). Paul, as a straight white man whose identity is the norm by which other identities are judged, does not consider that there are whole sectors of the American population whose everyday survival depends upon an ability to "reason within their antagonists' point of view." Because we live in a society in which

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racism, sexism, classism, homophobia are built into its institutions, people "on the margins" of institutional power must learn how to think like those with power over them in order to get by. Furthermore, the 'antagonist point of view" is often inculcated in a person on the margins to such an extent that rather than learn how to think like the antagonist, such a person must instead unlearn the mindset of the oppressor. People on the margins don't always experience the luxury of holding "vested interests" that are backed up by institutional power. Often, such people need to excise the internalized vested interests of their antagonist in order to find out what interests will support their own thinking and agency in an unsupportive environment.

I am not saying that, for example, a black lesbian is automatically a more generous or deeper critical thinker than a white man. However, her relationship to the culture and to traditional critical thought is more vexed than someone who is comfortable in and supported by the culture and by Western rational traditions. She is not mirrored but "othered" by traditional discourse on thinking and rationality; she is not represented but rather fractured or erased by universality. Unless she has completely internalized white male heterosexist reality, a black lesbian's very positionality cultivates a multilogical stance in our culture. Critical thinkers thus have something to gain by paying attention to the discourse of black lesbians and other marginalized thinkers.

In his description of "typical" thinkers, Paul further asserts that "[f]ew [people] have experience in making the structures of their own thought conscious" (Paul, 189). Yet people on the margins are often asked to account for their point of view, to justify it, while the mainstream identities go unchallenged because they are the norm, the standard, the "natural." For example, there is intense cultural pressure on gay people to explain

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their affectional/sexual desire, to find its source, to figure out the reasons they are gay. Yet it would seem odd to most of us to ask a straight person, "What do you think caused your heterosexuality?" Gay people are thus often quite adept at understanding the codes of heterosexuality. At the same time, they are forced into examining their own desires in order to know themselves in a society that does not support or reflect them very well, and in order to try to represent themselves to that society. Issues of representation are extremely complicated for everyone. This complexity is particularly salient for those on the margins, and often engenders sophisticated critical and creative analyses that might not be required of someone who sees him- or herself as "normal," as a member of the dominant culture.

This issue of reality and representation runs throughout Paul's work. He maintains that one of the biggest stumbling blocks to strong-sense critical thinking is the human tendency to conflate one's perspective, one's framework, with reality. The assumptions we take for granted, the "givens" that appear self-evident, the information that seems mere perception rather than conception, are exactly the most important things to investigate and unpack, for these are the elements of egocentric and sociocentric thinking:

> One manifestation of the irrational mind is to uncritically presuppose the truth of beliefs and doctrines embedded in social life and values. We intellectually and affectively absorb common frames of references from the social settings in which we live. Our interests and purpose find a place within a socially absorbed picture of the world. We use that picture to test the claims of contesting others. We imaginatively rehearse situations within portions of that picture. We rarely, however, describe that picture as a picture, as an image constructed by one social group as against that of another. We cannot easily place that picture at arm's length, so to speak, and for a time suspend our acquiescence to it. (Paul, 191)

I have no argument with Paul's belief that serious critical thinking demands this ability to see the "picture as a picture." Yet again, I would argue that there are sectors of the American population who are not "uncritical" of certain "absorbed frames of references," who know the picture to be a picture because they do not easily fit in the frame, or because they are cropped from that picture. I am not talking about the odd philosopher or artist here, but about entire streams of critical and creative discourse that have come out of the experiences of being "different" in America. There are, to name a few, such African-American discourses, feminist/womanist discourses, gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered discourses, working-class discourses. Many people who are not "in" the so-called "traditional" American social picture are in several of the pictures I just named, so not only do they experience dissonance or invisibility in the white-male American construct, they embody the harmony and/or discord inherent in occupying several identity positions. Can we comfortably say of such people that "[they] cannot easily place that picture at arm's length . . . and suspend [their] acquiescence to it?" For many people in the groups I named above, opposition -- or at least ambivalence -- rather than acquiescence, is the more typical relationship to supposed shared American beliefs.

I do not wish to imply that a straight white middle class American man has single or simple affiliations to dominant American frameworks. He too, will have many intersecting and or conflicting relationships to certain social values. Yet, there may be things he does not see, as I think is the case with Paul. Because major parts of his identity have traditionally composed the norm, he can still operate with a more unified sense of self. Examining his multiplicity would take a conscious effort on his part to look

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at how social and institutional power consolidates his unified self while distorting or erasing the selves of people on the margins.

Problems With the Idealized Thinker in Paul's Work

As I indicate in my introduction, this thesis addresses a number of inter-related issues that arise from what I perceive to be a generally white, upper or middle class, patriarchal bias to the Critical and Creative Thinking canon. I was led into thinking about these issues by the lack of adequate feminist, lesbian, and people of color representation in course readings, and by my feeling that even exemplar theorists such as Richard Paul posit ideas and approaches that did not always fit or work for me as a thinker who occupies particular stances in the thinking field: white, anti-racist, mixed working/middle class woman, lesbian intellectual.

Embedded in Paul's writings are unexamined assumptions about the self or the thinker. Paul does not question the Western concept of rationality that promotes the unitary self, universality, and the consistent stable subject as the marks of the integrated, whole, thinking person. Issues of agency, subjectivity, objectivity, the self, along with matters of personal, collective, and institutional power are important to any discussion of thinking, yet Paul does not deal with these issues in more than a cursory fashion.

I think the fact that he does not include critical discourses of marginalized people within the scope of his discussion on critical thinking allows Paul to gloss over such issues of the self, agency, and power. This is a serious omission because Paul's failure to acknowledge entire streams of thought -- such as various theories of feminism, difference, and class -- not only reinforces an oppressive pattern that privileges certain

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voices over others, it compromises his ability to carry out his own ideas for educational reform and limits his ability to fully imagine the thinker.

Though much of Paul's work is concerned with how we must attend to the diversity of frameworks and assumptions that undergird all thinking, his approach nonetheless ignores historical and social structures of power that have historically marked certain thinkers and certain structures or traditions of thought as rational, normal, or natural, while relegating others as alternative, marginal, or invisible.

Beyond the populist or democratic merits of mere inclusion of many kinds of people, it is important that the critical literatures of many peoples and sites be investigated in our program because it changes the very nature of the make-up of the thinker, how we imagine and conceive of the thinker. By extension, this changes what we mean when we say "good" or "strong" or "effective" critical thinking. Simply including those that have been excluded not only brings more voices to the table, it forces us to ask questions about the very subject of thinking, because definitions of the thinker and thinking are for the most part still based on masculinist ways of being in the world.

By masculinist I mean a patriarchal world view, a chauvinist consciousness that not only privileges a masculine point of view but conflates that point of view with human experience in general. An example of masculinist language would be the use of "mankind" and "man" to refer to humankind and human. I use the term "masculinist" as opposed to "male" purposefully here. I do not conflate masculinist or patriarchal with the biological male. Being male does not automatically mean one is masculinist or patriarchal in one's thoughts or actions, nor does being female guarantee that one is not masculinist or patriarchal in one's thoughts or actions. It may be true, however, that men,

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more than women, raised in a patriarchal culture are more susceptible to buying into and purveying masculinist ideas, just as the privileging of whiteness in our culture fosters white supremacist ideas in white people.

This distinction between masculinist and male is important for a couple of reasons. One reason is to avoid the placement of negative or positive values on the states of being male or female. Another is to avoid a kind of biological determinism. Being male does not mean one automatically holds sexist or masculinist views; being female does not mean one is free of such views. The most important thing I wish to convey is that I am talking about attitudes and consciousnesses where there is an imbalance of power backed up by institutions and historical processes that result in supremacist, oppressive world views.

I agree with Paul that one of the most fruitful endeavors we might undertake as educators would be to help people acknowledge and step out of egocentric and sociocentric thinking. However, I feel that Paul's construction of the weak and strong sense thinker does not get at how different kinds of people in America might have very complicated relationships to egocentricity and sociocentricity. Though Paul is obviously very consciously trying to account for difference (the very terms egocentricity and sociocentricity imply multiple, if insular, perspectives), by acknowledging that everyone has biases, prejudices, partial world views, there lurks in his writing a notion of a generic thinker who need only follow certain steps in order to move into strong sense thinking. Furthermore, one senses vestiges of realism in Paul's work: a belief that "truth" is attainable, that objectivity is possible, that "good thinking" equals a rationality that has

consistency at its core. Such a rendering of human thought and social relations is at best uncomplicated, at worst naive or willfully ignorant.

I would like to complicate this portrait of the strong sense thinker and these issues of egocentricity and sociocentricity by juxtaposing Paul's work with theorists whose critical thinking happens in very specific marginalized bodies, lives, settings. What I want to look at here is how Paul's ideas work out by inserting a very specific lesbian feminist of color "I" as the thinker and non-dominant "we" as the audience here. How do Paul's notions of egocentricity and sociocentricity consistent rational thought play out for someone other than a straight white male, someone whose relationship to agency, subjectivity -- even full citizenship -- is complicated by unequal distribution of power (economic, legislative, and cultural capital, etc.). We might start by imagining an audience or thinker different from what Paul seems to imagine.

A movement to a deeper thinking may indeed be "primarily logical and driven by a commitment to a consistent and fair use of logical principles" (Paul, 230) for those who are completely or to a large extent supported by the social/political paradigms of a given culture. But for individuals comprising groups systemically marginalized by the dominant culture, I think the process may be different, may be primarily experiential and may perhaps "feel" intuitive.

To illustrate the poor fit between Paul's prescriptions for the betterment of the generic thinker and the experience of specific, actual thinkers, I will turn, in the following chapter, to Gloria Anzaldúa's theory of the *mestiza* thinker.

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CHAPTER 4
MESTIZA CONSCIOUSNESS AND CRITICAL THINKING

Thinking in the Borderlands: Gloria Anzaldúa's *Mestiza* Consciousness

In her book Borderlands/*La Frontera*, Gloria Anzaldúa uses multiple languages --
English, Spanish, *tejano* -- and multiple forms (poetry and both analytic and lyric prose)
to develop her idea of *mestiza* consciousness. She uses *mestiza* to refer to a person who
lives in the interstices of many identities, identities which overlap, which rub against each
other sometimes creatively, sometimes painfully. The *mestiza* figure is defined not
simply through her multiple identities (in Anzaldúa's case, queer, Indian, Mexican,
tejana, woman, working class, to name a few), but through the process of having to
navigate and integrate several identities, often under conditions that devalue some or all
of those identities.

Writing of her experience as a Mexican/Indian living in an Anglo world,
Anzaldúa asserts that she and others like her must learn the codes of two different worlds
or cultural systems in order to survive: ". . . people who inhabit both realities are forced
to live in the interface between the two, forced to become adept at switching modes"
(Anzaldúa 1987, 37).

This is not a simple exercise of switching modes horizontally. Because white or
anglo culture is more powerful and claims more legitimacy, the *mestiza* is forced to live
in the interface of unequal power dynamics that array themselves along a vertical,
hierarchical axis. This has effects ranging from internal (impact on one's self-esteem,
one's identity) to external (what counts as good thinking, as sane, rational behavior in the
public domain). While mode-switching is necessary for survival, the *mestiza* runs the

risk of losing or devaluing her home cultural knowledge in order to make it in the

dominant culture:

> Like many Indians and Mexicans, I did not deem my psychic experiences
> real. I denied their occurrences, and let my inner senses atrophy. I allowed white
> rationality to tell me that the existence of the "other world" was mere pagan
> superstition. I accepted their reality, the "official" reality of the rational,
> reasoning mode which is connected with external reality, . . . and is considered the
> most developed consciousness--the consciousness of duality. (Anzaldúa 1987,
> 36-7)

Anzaldúa's life and work attests to the limits of duality, to a system that says, choose

male or female, white or colored, Indian or Mexican, queer or straight. Being multiply

identified, living on the borderlands, she sees beyond duality, beyond opposites, to a

synthesis or cohabitation that creates a third perspective, something not dissected in two

for analysis, but created new out of multiple experience. In Borderlands/*La Frontera*,

plurality is not just a political concept, but a descriptor of *mestiza* existence: "[t]his book .

. . speaks of my existence" (Anzaldúa 1987, iii), Anzaldúa writes. Her existence in the

geographical, psychological, political and spiritual borderlands is by definition a

pluralistic experience, an experience that puts one at risk, but furthers a development of

consciousness that is unique and multiple:

> Living on the borders and in the 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 . . . . 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. (Anzaldúa 1987, iii)

Along with this sense of exhilaration, life in the borders also means living with

ambivalence, with conflict. It means the frequent onset of crisis:

> Like all people, we [*mestizas*] perceive the vision of reality that our culture
> communicates. Like others having or living in more than one culture, we get
> multiple, often opposing messages. The coming together of two self-consistent

but habitually incompatible frames of references causes *un choque*, a cultural collision. (Anzaldúa 1987, 78)

And yet, the *mestiza* is more than a fractured, constantly in crisis being. Her multiple experience allows her to fuse fragments, to continually create and recreate who she is, to incorporate the many and the contentious while maintaining a core integrity that comes from honest process, from cultivating evolution:

> That focal point or fulcrum, that juncture where the *mestiza* stands, is where phenomena tend to collide. It is where the possibility of uniting all that is separate occurs. This assembly is not one where severed or separated pieces merely come together. Nor is it a balancing of opposing powers. In attempting to work out a synthesis, the self has added a third element which is greater than the sum of its severed parts. That third element is a new consciousness--a *mestiza* consciousness--and though it is a source of intense pain, its energy comes from continual creative motion that keep breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm. (Anzaldúa 1987, 79-80)

Anzaldúa admits that it is hard to explain or analyze the process whereby this synthesis happens. She is content to simply say, "The work takes place underground -- subconsciously. It's work that the soul performs" (Anzaldúa 1987, 79). Understanding borders, she is comfortable with recognizing the limits of rationality; she does not feel the need to explain all phenomena in order to know it.

Regarding the limits of rationality, Anzaldúa resonates with other critical consciousness educators such as Henry Giroux (1992). She contends that sole dependence on such enlightenment rationality has been far from illuminating; rather, it has kept us in the dark as divided people, fearful of difference in ourselves and in others, and locked into violence as a way of responding to that fear: "In trying to become 'objective,' Western culture made 'objects' of things and people when it distanced itself from them, thereby losing 'touch' with them. This dichotomy is the root of all violence" (Anzaldúa 1987, 37).

Anzaldúa uses her writing, her spiritually grounded creativity, to negotiate the conflict and ambivalence inherent in life in the borderlands. (This is significant, for it is a relatively new phenomenon in patriarchal history that a woman may voice her life in language -- as Anzaldúa notes in reviewing Mexican/Indian history, "the Indian woman's only means of protest was wailing" [Anzaldúa 1987, 21]). As a critically enfleshed writer, as a thinker who does not have the privilege of disembodied objectivity, Anzaldúa contemplates the ways in which the very act of writing itself is an exercise in transformation, in blurring or fusing apparent opposites:

> I ponder the ways metaphor and symbol concretize the spirit and etherealize the body. The Writing is my whole life, it is my obsession. This vampire which is my talent does not suffer other suitors. Daily I court it, offer my neck to its teeth. This is the sacrifice that the act of creation requires, a blood sacrifice. For only through the body, through the pulling of flesh, can the human soul be transformed. And for images, words, stories to have this transformative power, they must arise form the human body--flesh and bone--and from the Earth's body--stone, sky, liquid, soil. This work, these images, piercing tongue or ear lobes with cactus needles, are my offerings, are my Aztecan blood sacrifices. (Anzaldúa 1987, 75)

There is risk and difficulty in raising issues of the soul, spirit, psyche in an academic setting, where such issues are, at best, deemed irrelevant. Indeed, a speaker who raises such issues in the academy may risk undermining her credibility as a scholar or as a reasonable authority. And yet it would seem that to anyone who has lived deeply as well as thought deeply, there are mysteries, paradoxes, inexplicable phenomenon regarding human thought and creativity. To leave these out of the discussion would be tantamount to saying we only have a fraction of a brain simply because it does not appear that we utilize all our brain's capacity.

This understanding of lived experience, the experience of the body and soul under oppressive power dynamics and in self-empowerment, informs the perspective of the

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mestiza. Anzaldúa argues that "those who are pushed out of the tribe for being different are likely to become more sensitized" (1987, 38). She goes on to describe the vulnerability, the lack of safety and violence with which such marginalized people must contend. This is particularly true in institutionalized settings, and often plays itself out fiercely in schools. But in her favor, the *mestiza* has a tolerance for ambiguity (in fact, embodies it) and functions out of a pluralistic mode that relies on both convergent and divergent thinking.

The *Mestiza's* Relationship to Egocentric and Sociocentric Thinking

Given all this, a person with *mestiza* consciousness may need something very different than an admonishment to overcome egocentric and sociocentric thinking. And she may offer those with non-*mestiza* consciousness some knowledge about how to stretch, how to be more inclusive, how to transcend the us/them, the me/other duality that skews power and keeps us all imprisoned in untenable identities.

Since part of learning and growth depend on self-esteem and a position of relative safety from which to take growth-producing rather than wound-producing risks, would Paul really want to ask the *mestiza* student to "overcome" egocentricity or sociocentricity? What egocentricity and sociocentricity might a white male educator like Paul need to examine in order to relate meaningfully to a *mestiza* student? How can the educational institution configure itself beyond the binary and masculinist white, middle and upper class paradigm in order to see and hear from those within it whose consciousnesses go beyond a single sociocentricity? How can we design pedagogies which support and learn from thinkers who have had to overcome sociocentricity in order

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to survive in a world that demands they know their native culture as well as the culture of those in economic and political control?

In other words, given the confusion and damaged self-esteem that can be part of life in the borderlands, and given the privileges held by many people in educational institutions, what can we as educators offer the *mestiza* student, before demanding she work through her "egocentricity" or "sociocentricity"? It may be that we need to create ways for her to strengthen her ego, to explore her culture in a positive, affirming way before questioning it. Chances are, given the multiplicity of life in the borderlands, her questioning will come, if it is not there already. She may need support, not interrogation.

The *Mestiza* Student Reads Richard Paul -- A Hypothetical Case

Let us entertain an example here. Suppose we have two students in a Critical and Creative Thinking class. One is a Native American woman named Pauline, the other is an Irish-American named Thomas. Pauline was born in Arizona and was educated in a government boarding school. The U.S. government mandated Pauline's attendance at this school, where she was separated from her family and community for most of the year, and where her native language was prohibited in favor of Standard English. In her summers at home however, her grandmother does her best to ensure that Pauline learns of her people's traditions and beliefs. These traditions and cultural beliefs are transmitted in oral and communal modes, through story, through ceremony, through observation and participation in tribal life.

Six months ago, Pauline came out as a lesbian to her family and her community. Some family members have accepted this news quietly. Others, both in her biological

family and in her extended kinship community, are distrustful of Pauline's new identity claim. They suspect that Pauline's lesbianism, like her pursuit of formal education, is evidence that she is too immersed in "white culture." Here, in her first semester of a graduate program, Pauline has not come out to anyone at school.

Thomas grew up in a small middle-class town in New Jersey. Most of the inhabitants of his home-town were Irish Catholic, all of them were white. He was raised primarily by his mother; his father died in a car accident when Thomas was six. His small public elementary school reflected the town's demographics -- all white, mostly Irish American and Catholic. His public high school was bigger, and was seventy percent white, twenty-five percent African-American, three percent Hispanic, and two percent Asian. Thomas is heterosexual and engaged to his high school sweetheart.

Let's imagine now, that it is six weeks into the fall semester, and Pauline and Thomas are in their first course of a graduate program called "Critical and Creative Thinking." In this course, entitled "Critical Thinking," they have read several chapters in Richard Paul's Critical Thinking. Pauline and Thomas have been paired up for an in-class brainstorming session. They are asked to work together for an hour and a half on an analysis of a court case in which a white lesbian mother was denied custody of her two children, a boy and a girl, because her sexual preference might adversely affect the children, and because the court felt the boy needed a male role model in his parenting. She and her lover have been co-parenting the children for six years. Guardianship of the children was awarded to the grandparents, who were suing for custody.

Each pair of students has been given a different case or situation on which to work. The pairs are to first read the case aloud to each other, then do some individual

writing on their responses and possible biases that might relate to the case. They are given fifteen minutes for this private brainstorming on paper. Subsequent to this individual writing, they are to have a conversation with their partner about what they have written, and help each other identify any possible egocentricity and sociocentricity in their responses. The teacher tells the class that whatever case or situation you end up with really does not matter per se.; the case is merely to serve as a jumping off point for thinkers to get some practice in identifying and stretching the boundaries of their egocentric and sociocentric points of view.

In conversation with Thomas, Pauline finds herself in a predicament immediately. He begins their work session by saying, "I can't believe out of all the assignments, we got stuck with this one." She is not sure what he means by this -- is his comment a homophobic reaction, or a reaction to the difficulty level he perceives to inhere in the case they were given? Her uncertainty makes her hesitate.

Thomas takes Pauline's silence to mean that he has the floor. "Okay, here are my feelings on the subject. I don't really approve of queers, especially fags. The thought of two guys together turns my stomach. But I guess I think gay people should be able to love who they want as long as they're not flamboyant about it, and as long as they don't try to get married or have kids. I think kids need a mom and a dad; I feel I missed out on a lot by not having a father around for most of my life. I also believe America has the best legal system in the world, so I think the mother in this case should abide by the judge's decision. She had her day in court and she lost." Though in class and in conversation, Thomas often proudly refers to his Irish-Catholic heritage, he does not here

mention his race or class background as variables that might affect his frame of reference in considering this case.

As Thomas finishes his last thought and looks at Pauline expectantly, she stares at the list she has made of her possible egocentric and sociocentric biases. The main points of her writing are as follows: (1) Her tribe does not conceptualize family in the nuclear sense. Rather, they operate within a kinship system in which aunts, uncles, grandparents are as involved -- sometimes more involved -- in the raising of a child as are the biological parents. Furthermore, kinship designations such as aunt, uncle, grandmother, and grandfather are not necessarily dependent on blood ties. (2) As a Native American, her and her people's experience with the United States government and legal system have not been positive. She does not have faith that justice is the usual outcome when ordinary citizens, especially if they are poor or not white, have dealings with government institutions in the United States. (3) Several people in her circle of gay and lesbian friends are parents. It seems to her that being gay has not compromised their ability to parent. It does worry her that both the parents and the children have had to deal with homophobic taunting at school or in the neighborhood. But in some cases, this seems to have created better communication between the parents and their children, and offered opportunities for the parents and children to talk about respect for diversity, as well as how to deal with adversity.

Pauline wonders how much of this list she wants to share with Thomas. She is angry and a bit scared by his blithe voicing of the words "queers" and "fags" as if they were interchangeable with "gay." She does not really want to come out to him, and she wonders if they'll be expected to share all they talked about when the class reconvenes as

a whole. She feels both embarrassed and angry that she does not share Thomas's confidence in the U.S. legal system. If she tried to explain her wariness to Thomas or her class, she would have to back up her position, and she's not sure she wants to share any of the painful experiences that have informed her distrust. But if she doesn't recount any of these experiences, they might think she is paranoid and angry, or too emotional to be rational.

She decides maybe the safest thing she could talk about is the understanding of family and kinship with which she was raised. But it is so complicated, she doesn't know if there will be time to adequately explain it. Plus, some days, she has doubts about her own understanding of her tribe's customs because so much of her time was spent away from her tribe in the government boarding school, where a lot of her cultural practices and beliefs were ignored, maligned, or forbidden. To stall for time, she asks Thomas if they can look again at Paul's definitions of egocentric and sociocentric thinking. She finds herself re-reading the following lines over and over:

> **egocentricity:** . . . One's desires, values, and beliefs (seeming to be self-evidently correct or superior to those of others) are often uncritically used as the norm of all judgment and experience. (Paul, 646)

> **sociocentricity:** The assumption that one's own social group is inherently and self-evidently superior to all others. When a group or society sees itself as superior and so considers its views about the world as correct or as the only reasonable or justifiable views, and all its actions justified, there is a tendency to presuppose this superiority in all its thinking and thus to think closemindedly. (Paul, 666)

These definitions do not help clear Pauline's mind. She wonders how she is supposed to define her social group, and whose perceptions, values, beliefs she is to overcome in order to become a "strong-sense" critical thinker. After years of being taught by the government teachers that her tribal language is not useful, and that her people are

backward, she is just beginning to understand and reaffirm her native culture through all the stories she has heard over the years.

It was only recently, in college, that one of her teachers helped Pauline to begin writing about how torn up inside it had made her to go between the reservation and the government schools. The government schools sometimes made her ashamed to be Native American. English did not come easily to her. That, combined with missing her land and her family, hindered her ability to concentrate and do well in her studies. At home with her tribe she felt out of sync, distant from her relations because the government school made her different. Sometimes English words mixed in with her people's tongue; this seemed to make some of the elders angry or unhappy or sad. For many years now, she has lived in confusion as to what to believe; she has never felt that her thinking was superior. She has often questioned her ability to think in an academic setting. She wonders now, if she belongs in this graduate program. She did well in college, but it took her seven years to finish. Maybe she should drop this course.

But she is angry, too. Why is she always in the position of having to define and defend her experience just because it is different from the experience of some white people? Why is so little of her people's history and literature a part of "standard" education in a country where her people have lived long before its "settlement" (i.e., conquest) by white people? Why do "family values" usually mean white heterosexual nuclear family values? Will this supposedly progressive program in Critical and Creative Thinking deal with these biases, or will she have to be the lone voice raising them in the classroom, just as she did in college? She doesn't know if she can go through a couple of more years of that kind of struggle.

One of the teachers, who has been roving the room to observe student conversations, notices the relative quiet in Pauline and Thomas's exchange. He sits down and asks them how they're doing.

Let's stop the action in this example now and consider a few things from the teacher's perspective. In a situation such as this, it is possible, and maybe not uncommon, that a student in Pauline's position simply withdraws: from the conversation, from the assignment, from the teacher, from her classmates, perhaps from the course and even from school altogether. But let's assume the teacher is lucky for a minute, and Pauline shows him what she has written.

What should the teacher do here? What training, disposition, attitude, or strategy might the teacher need here in order to work with both Pauline and Thomas? Are Paul's descriptions of egocentricity and sociocentricity, along with his insistence that all strong sense critical thinkers must overcome such obstacles, salient for Pauline and useful for the teacher? If Pauline follows Paul's mandate to "overcome" her social group's bias, will her perspective as a Native American find any representation in this classroom? And what exactly is her social group? All Native Americans? Just her tribe? Lesbians? Remember that Pauline attended a government school that forbid her native tongue, that forbid traditional dress and the practice of sacred ritual or the belief in native lore, that valued written rather than oral modes of communication. Is it thus realistic to think that Pauline had the luxury of assuming that her "own social group [was] inherently and self-evidently superior to all others . . . and so considers its views about the world as correct or as the only reasonable or justifiable views" (Paul, 666)? Furthermore, what might the teacher and other students learn about tolerance for ambiguity and multilogical situations

from Pauline's thinking process. In a program such as Critical and Creative Thinking, which has a student pool comprised of so many educators, it would be particularly important for the teacher to model practices useful and appropriate for students like Pauline.

Though brief and obviously not exhaustive, this sketch of Pauline in a Critical and Creative Thinking classroom situation demonstrates the complications a *mestiza* student might experience when she runs up against Paul's unproblematized ideal thinker as a unitary subject. I want to suggest here (and consider in more depth in the following chapter), that Paul's ideas regarding egocentricity and sociocentricity do not encompass the full complexity of the *mestiza's* multiple and simultaneous thinking identities. Though Paul honors multiplicity in his belief that we must cultivate multilogical thinking, and in his belief that we are capable of entertaining multiple points of view by transcending egocentricity and sociocentricity, he seems to envision the thinker as a unitary rather than multiple subject. He writes as if there exists an identifiable American culture to which all citizens can relate, despite the fact that America is made up of several cultures. Nor does he deal with the fact that different cultures are valued or devalued, and different people within cultures are valued or devalued, according to race, gender, ethnicity, ability, and class. Further complicating all of this is Paul's acceptance of dualistic thinking and his reliance on binary paradigms that value analysis, rationality, at the expense of the creative and the unresolved.

In the next chapter, I will further explore this issue of the multiple subject as thinker to illustrate the ways in which difference and power play over the thinking subject and help determine our definition of effective critical thinking.

CHAPTER 5

MULTIPLE SUBJECTIVITY, DIFFERENCE, POWER, AND THEORIZING

> **There is difference, and there is power. And who holds the power shall decide the meaning of difference.**
> **--June Jordan, from "Toward a New Manifest Destiny," in Technical Difficulties: African-American Notes on the State of the Union.**

Having sketched out Gloria Anzaldúa's portrait of the thinker as *mestiza*, I will now turn to a discussion of how an understanding of multiple subjectivity, difference, and power might change the way we think about theorizing the critical thinker and critical thinking. I will do this by looking at how four feminists of color -- Gloria Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde, Norma Alarcón, and María Lugones -- problematize issues of difference and power in theorizing the thinking subject and knowledge formation in relation to white feminist theorizing. I will then note the ways in which the oversimplifications and erasures of white feminist theorizing parallel some of the gaps in Paul's characterization of the thinking subject and of good thinking.

Why Power and Difference Must be Included in Theories of Thinking

In the last chapter, my examination of Gloria Anzaldúa's *mestiza* in Borderlands/*La Frontera* calls into question the model of the idealized thinker that many mainstream critical thinking theorists seem to imagine. In a later essay, the introduction to the anthology Making Face, Making Soul *Haciendo Caras*: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color, edited by Anzaldúa, she asks:

> What does being a thinking subject, an intellectual, mean for women-of-color from working-class origins? . . . It means being in alien territory and suspicious of the laws and walls. It means being concerned about the ways knowledges are invented. It means continually challenging institutionalized

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discourses. It means being suspicious of the dominant cultures interpretations of "our" experience, of the way they "read" us. It means being what Judy Baca terms "internal exiles." (Anzaldúa 1990, xxv)

The thinking subject Anzaldúa refers to here cannot avoid dealing with the issue of difference and power because difference and power affect her daily life. Difference and power are not simply areas of academic speculation or philosophical inquiry for the *mestiza*. Rather, difference and power shape the *mestiza's* day, body, career. Unlike Richard Paul, Anzaldúa is not able to assume a unitary or universalized character in regard to her authorial stance, her audience, or her thinking subjectivity. Nor can she assume that her thinking will be taken seriously as sound, logical, or as constitutive of theory, because of the way in which difference is otherized and devalued.

In her 1980 essay, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," Audre Lorde wrote: "As a forty-nine-year-old Black lesbian feminist socialist mother of two, including one boy, and a member of an interracial couple, I usually find myself a part of some group defined as other, deviant, inferior, or just plain wrong" (Lorde, 114). Both Lorde and Anzaldúa are seen as deviant or wrong for a couple of reasons. One has to do with the particularities of some of their identities, the other has to do with their insistence on the simultaneity of multiple identities.

Let's look first at the particularities issue. In a society where heterosexuality and whiteness are normalized, Lorde's and Anzaldúa's "different" lesbian orientation and their "different" skin color are "deviant." The fact that difference so easily elides into deviance points to the negative values that adhere to certain racial, economic and social differences in American culture. The second way in which Lorde and Anzaldúa might be seen as deviant or deficient by theorists who believe in universality and objectivity has to do with

Lorde's and Anzaldúa's refusal to choose one identity over the other, or to resolve their several identities into the Western myth of the unitary self.

Because she is many identities in a society that valorizes the unitary self and also devalues certain identities (women, queers, people of color, poor people), the *mestiza* is often in a state of inner and outer conflict. As noted in the previous chapter, this state of conflict engenders both crisis and creative tension in the body and consciousness of the *mestiza*. Much of the crisis comes from external and sometimes internalized pressures to choose one identity over the other, to resolve the several aspects of her identity into a unitary identity, the Western model of the individual self.

People like Lorde and Anzaldúa cannot sanguinely operate in a dualistic framework that asks them to be hyphenated people: African-American, or Mexican-American. For one thing, such a designation does not take into account other aspects of their identity (lesbian, working class, women, etc.). And for another, such hyphenated designations, in American culture, do not give equal weight to the identities they invoke. "American" becomes the operative descriptor, the noun, which is modified by the adjective "African" or "Mexican." Thus, what we end up with is what María Lugones, in her essay "On Borderlands/*La Frontera*: An Interpretive Essay," describes as a "dual personality" rather than a "plural personality":

> Because I think it is important to distinguish this dual personality from the plural personality and the operating in a pluralistic mode of the new *mestiza*, I will venture my own sense of the distinction. . . . The dual, hyphenated, personality is an Anglo creation. According to this concept, there is no hybrid cultural self. It is part of the Anglo imagination that we can keep our culture and assimilate, a position that would be contradictory if both cultures were understood as informing the "real" fabric of everyday life. But in thinking of a Mexican-American, the Anglo imagination construes "Mexican" as the name for a superexploitable being who is a practitioner of a superfluous, ornamental, culture. Being "American" is what supposedly gives us (dubious) membership in that "real" culture, the culture

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of the ideally culturally-unified-through-assimilation polis illegitimately called "America." Being American is what makes us functioning citizens. (Lugones 1992, 35)

The expectation of assimilation is one of the most demanding, complicated and deleterious pressures that bears down upon people of color and other borderdwellers. As Lugones notes, this pressure to assimilate derives energy from two powerful cultural forces. One is the Western ideal of the unitary subject, while the other has to do with the white, patriarchal, heterosexist particularities that inform the normative category of "universal man." This refusal to let go of the unitary subject, along with the flattening out of difference that occurs when "universal" is equated with white, heterosexual male specificity prevents the "cultural cross-pollinization" that Anzaldúa characterizes as a strength of the *mestiza* consciousness. Lugones elaborates on the limitations of the dual-personality construct that arises from a belief in the unitary subject, and points to the dynamic power of the plural personality actualized in *mestiza* experience:

> The Mexican and the American in the dual-personality construct are both animated from the outside; that is why there is no cultural "cross-pollinization." But the plurality of the new *mestiza* is anchored in the borders, in that space where critique, rupture, and hybridization take place. Though she cannot choose not to be read, constructed, with a logic of hyphenation, demoralization, instrumentality, stereotyping, and devaluation, she can imbue that person with a sense of conflicted subjectivity and ambiguity. So the dual, hyphenated, personality is externally animated and characterized by an absence of the ability to respond and create. The plural personality of the new *mestiza* is a self-critical, self-animated plurality. (Lugones 1992, 35)

We can see how this dynamic mode of thinking in the borders might invoke and complicate Richard Paul's construction of egocentric and sociocentric thinking. Instead of compartmentalization, we have a continuing process of integration that is open and unfinished and has meaning in its doing, not its completion. The dual or hyphenated personality is split, neutered, as opposed to the symbiosis or the adaptive regeneration of

the hybrid. The dynamic possibility of flux and rupture is both the pain and the power of *mestiza* liminality.

It is precisely this risk and richness inherent in *mestiza* liminality that can enhance our understanding of the thinking subject, and raise questions about how we theorize thinking itself. I will first deal with the question of what it means for the woman-of-color to be a thinking subject in territory that has been the domain of a unitary, universalized thinking subject derived from white masculinist consciousness. Following that, I will turn to a discussion of how theory has been defined in much the same way, and how *mestiza* theorizing could change the way we think of theorizing.

Woman of Color as Thinking Subject: Multiplicity, Difference, Power

In 1981, Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga co-edited an anthology entitled This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color. Frustrated with the absence and marginalization of women of color in feminist discourse, Anzaldúa and Moraga conceived of an anthology that would put women of color at the center of feminist theorizing. A major assumption informing This Bridge is the belief that if feminism is to succeed, women of color must be able to name and honor their differences. Concomitantly, white women must learn to see and honor these differences. A second informing principle of this volume is that we all must acknowledge the ways in which power in our culture is unevenly attached to certain differences, such as gender and race, and in fact, affects the way we perceive difference and grant authority.

Feminists of color challenge white feminist assumptions of knowledge formation and the thinking subject.

In her 1990 essay, "The Theoretical Subject(s) of This Bridge Called My Back and Anglo-American Feminism," Norma Alarcón, one of the contributors to This Bridge, explores how Anzaldúa's and Moraga's anthology challenged received notions of knowledge formation and the thinking subject which mainstream feminism took for granted:

> the editors and contributors believed they were developing a theory of subjectivity and culture that would demonstrate the considerable differences between them and Anglo-American women, as well as between them and Anglo-European men and men of their own culture. As speaking subjects of a new discursive formation, many of Bridge's writers were aware of the displacement of their subjectivity across a multiplicity of discourses: feminist/lesbian, nationalist, racial, socioeconomic, historical, etc. The peculiarity of their displacement implies a multiplicity of positions from which they are driven to grasp or understand themselves and their relations with the real, in the Althusserian sense of the word. (Alarcón, 356)

Alarcón argues that white feminists have not been able to hear or learn from women of color because most white feminists have an allegiance to the unitary subject. Such an allegiance prevents one from truly accepting the multiply identified subject and the many differences which inform that subject. White feminists momentarily see the differences between themselves and women of color, only to subsume such differences under the rubric of "woman" (Alarcón). This impulse towards unity, towards universalizing, functions as a totalizing maneuver in which difference, and the power inflecting difference, is erased. As a result, the norm for woman remains "white" woman. As Alarcón puts it, "[t]he difference is handed over with one hand and taken away with the other" (Alarcón, 364).

> Citing postmodern feminist theorist Jane Flax, Alarcón says that feminism has not problematized the subject of knowledge and her complicity with the

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notion of consciousness as "synthetic unificatory power, the center and active point of organization of representations determining their concatenation." The subject (and object) of knowledge is now a woman, but the inherited view of consciousness has not been questioned at all. As a result, some Anglo-American feminist subjects of consciousness have tended to become a parody of the masculine subject of consciousness, thus revealing their ethnocentric liberal underpinnings. (Alarcón, 357)

In order to problematize the subject of knowledge, we must be aware of such an inheritance. Furthermore, we must be aware of the fact that subjectivity and consciousness are formed in large part by linguistic conventions and institutional processes which ignore, marginalize, or dehumanize women and people of color. Such conventions and processes are not likely to recognize or foster the subjectivity of women of color:

> Bridge leads us to understand that the silence and silencing of people begins with the dominating enforcement of linguistic conventions, the resistance to relational dialogues, as well as the disenablement of peoples by outlawing their forms of speech. Anglo-American feminist theory assumes a speaking subject who is an autonomous, self-conscious individual woman. Such a theory does not discuss the linguistic status of the person. It takes for granted the linguistic status which founds subjectivity. In this way it appropriates woman/women for itself, and turns its work into a theoretical project within which the rest of us are compelled to 'fit.' By 'forgetting' or refusing to take into account that we are culturally constituted in and through language in complex ways and not just engendered in a homogeneous situation, the Anglo-American subject of consciousness cannot come to terms with her (his) own class-biased ethnocentrism. (Alarcón, 363-4)

What anthologies like This Bridge and characterizations such as the *mestiza* thinker can offer us then, is a not only a multiple subject but a decentered subject in which critical thinking is dependent on more than just the self. In Anzaldúa's borderdweller formulation, critical thinking depends upon a dialogic process within the many-selved thinking subject and within/between the many communities and discourses from which such a thinking subject arises and with which she engages.

This emphasis on the multiple self and the necessity of relational thinking between many selves and communities (as opposed to knowledge originating with and authorized by the unitary self) can be seen in Kate Rushin's "The Bridge Poem," which introduced This Bridge Called My Back, and which has since served as an anthem of self-determination for women of color who are sick of the one-way street they experience in educating their oppressors:

The Bridge Poem

I've had enough
I'm sick of seeing and touching
Both sides of things
Sick of being the damn bridge for everybody

Nobody
Can talk to anybody
Without me
Right?

I explain my mother to my father my father to
    my little sister
My little sister to my brother my brother to the
    white feminists
The white feminists to the Black church folks the
    Black church folks
To the ex-hippies the ex-hippies to the Black
    separatists the
Black separatists to the artists the artists to my
    friends' parents. . .

Then
I've got to explain myself
To everybody

I do more translating
Than the Gawdamn U.N.

Forget it
I'm sick of it
I'm sick of filling in your gaps
Sick of being your insurance against
The isolation of your self-imposed limitations
Sick of being the crazy at your holiday dinners
Sick of being the odd one at your Sunday Brunches
Sick of being the sole Black friend to 34
    individual white people

Find another connection to the rest of the world
Find something else to make you legitimate
Find another way to be political and hip

I will not be the bridge to your womanhood
Your manhood
Your human-ness

I'm sick of reminding you not to
Close off too tight for too long

I'm sick of mediating with your worst self
On behalf of your better selves

I am sick
Of having to remind you
To breathe
Before you suffocate
Your own fool self

Forget it
Stretch or drown
Evolve or die

The bridge I must be
Is the bridge to my own power
I must translate
My own fears
Mediate
My own weaknesses

I must be the bridge to nowhere
But my true self
And then
I will be useful

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Commenting on Rushin's poem and <u>This Bridge Called My Back</u>, Alarcón has this to say

about differences in consciousness, subjectivity, and knowledge formation as they pertain

to white women and women of color:

> The speaker's perception that the "self" is multiple and its reduction harmful,
> gives emphasis to the relationality between one's selves and those of others as an
> ongoing process of struggle, effort and tension. Indeed, in this poem, the better
> "bridging self" of the speaker is defeated by the overriding notion of the unitary
> subject of knowledge and consciousness so prevalent in Anglo-American culture.
> Consciousness as a site of multiple voicings is the theoretical subject, par
> excellence, of <u>Bridge</u>. Concomitantly, these voicings (or thematic threads) are
> not viewed as necessarily originating with the subject, but as discourses that
> transverse consciousness and which the subject must struggle with constantly.
> (Alarcón, 365)

Until we let go of this idea of the subject as unitary, there is little room for us to see and

examine difference, and therefore, little room for women of color in traditional feminist

discourse.

Similarly, as long as Richard Paul and other theorists in the critical thinking field

neglect to problematize the thinking subject and thereby rely on the unitary subject as the

default model of a thinker, there will not be room for much more than white, male,

middle class identified thinkers in our program. Furthermore, this will prevent Paul from

realizing his own goals, for the unitary subject as thinker automatically excludes models

of thinking such as that embodied by the *mestiza*.

The "mythical norm," difference, and value.

Richard Paul's work, and indeed virtually all the literature in our program, stresses

that effective critical thinking requires an analysis of multiple perspectives, world views,

and frameworks. In this way, Paul and theories of critical and creative thinking value

difference and divergent thinking. What is often missing, however is an analysis of how

difference is defined in relation to accepted norms, and how, as a result, particular

differences are accorded more value than others.

In "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," Audre Lorde,

speaking as a black lesbian, talks about how power is connected to a "norm" that does not

represent her, but is actually particular to certain kinds of people in our society:

> Somewhere, on the edge of consciousness, there is what I call a *mythical norm*, which each one of us within our hearts knows "that is not me." In america, this norm is usually defined as white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, christian, and financially secure. It is within this mythical norm that the trappings of power reside within this society. (Lorde, 116)

Here we see Lorde exposing this norm as mythical. Despite the fact that such a norm

contains certain class, race, and gender particularities, it gains and consolidates power

through institutionally sanctioned assertions of objectivity and universality that are not

always easy to see or unravel, especially for those whose experience match the norm. To

such a person, the norm seems natural, self-evident. This norm is so insidiously

pervasive that Paul can write a six hundred and seventy page book on critical thinking

and never once identify himself as white or male. In contrast, Audre Lorde must fight

being subsumed or erased by this norm by constantly delineating her particular, and

multiple, identities:

> As a forty-nine-year-old Black lesbian feminist socialist mother of two, including one boy, and a member of an interracial couple, I usually find myself a part of some group defined as other, deviant, inferior, or just plain wrong. (Lorde, 114)

Lorde's experience illustrates the "otherizing" effect operative in defining

difference in our society. Because of the "mythical norm," many identity differences are

not just differences in kind, but in quality. The "mythical norm," parading as

universality, becomes the model of subjectivity, of thinking consciousness. The extent to which this model of subjectivity becomes normalized and even naturalized determines the extent to which different "others" are subjected to that norm, and thereby objectified or erased. In this way, universalizing voices and narratives create false harmonies that are oppressive to those not in the "mythical norm," while elevating a small minority's experience to that of Everyman, to Reality. In order to discern this kind of discursive, naturalizing process, a theorist must acknowledge that defining norms and difference takes place within a field of power outside of which it is impossible to stand. If a theorist resists this acknowledgment through a belief in objectivity as an ideal, or by advocating the neutrality of reason as it plays over difference, the use of multiple perspectives resolves into a framework that may well reinforce the "mythical norm."

Emotion in thinking.

Furthermore, in situations informed by power and oppression, the resulting pain, anger, guilt, and privilege that affect our thinking cannot be addressed through reason alone. In her introduction to Making Face, Making Soul, Anzaldúa declares objectivity to be of limited use in the critical and creative thinking of women of color and other borderdwellers:

> The anthology is meant to engage the reader's total person. I do not believe that "distance" and "objectivity" alone help us come to terms with our issues. Distancing cannot be a major strategy--only a temporary breather. Total feeling and emotional immersion, the shocking drench of guilt or anger or frustration, wakes us up to some of our realities. The pieces in this book awaken the emotions--our emotional bodies "take in" and process the whole spectrum of states of consciousness from waking and dreaming. The intellect needs the guts and adrenaline that horrific suffering and anger, evoked by some of the pieces, catapult us into. Only when all the charged feelings are unearthed can we get down to "the work," *la tarea, nuestro trabajo*--changing culture and all its oppressive interlocking machinations. (Anzaldúa 1990, xviii)

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This focus on the body and the emotional realm, so prevalent in the work of Anzaldúa and others who resonate with her *mestiza* thinker, is missing from a lot of mainstream models of thinking and intelligence. This is due, in part, to the way in which mainstream models of the thinker are constructed. The body of the typical ideal thinker is "unmarked": maleness and whiteness are at once given and invisible. This (white, male) thinker's status as a subject is not contested or maligned; thus his body is not the battlefield of distortion or ambiguity that the body of a *mestiza* lesbian might be. His gender and color, his body and consciousness, are the standard, and the standard does not have to justify or even notice itself. Anything other is different, notable, marked by difference in a way that is not equal to the standard.

Audre Lorde asserts that when we as a society ignore or distort difference in this way, we limit our capacity for effective thinking in that we fail "to develop tools for using human difference as a springboard for creative change within our lives" (Lorde, 116). I believe the focus on feeling and on the body, as well as the mind, as sites of meaning-making and intelligence, is one of the springboards for creative change in critical thinking that *mestiza* theorizing offers.

The mestiza, empathy, and multilogical thinking.

Nor is it just the lesbian, the *mestiza*, the borderdweller, or other marginalized people who need theories of thinking that utilize emotional and embodied experience. In fact, I would argue that what is likely to compel many of us who are supported by the "mythical norm" to question that norm and really "see" the perspectives of others has to do with emotions. The emotion might be pain or guilt sustained by what our privileges

cost others; it might be an empathic impulse born out of love, friendship, or a desire for justice; it might be the frustration or fear we experience when we come face to face with the anger of those whose differences we have not seen, understood, or honored. It might be a combination of all the above. But whatever the combination, the source of dissonance that could prompt a person with some mainstream privilege to investigate that privilege might be, in large part, experiential and emotional as well as intellectual and rational. I think it is rare that a person is compelled to see and revise his or her privilege through rational argument alone; I would contend that rational argument is insufficient by itself in the long thinking journey that revising racist, sexist, classist, or homophobic attitudes requires.

Indeed, Delores Gallo's work on affect and empathy indicate that emotion, and especially empathy, are intimately linked to a thinker's ability to think multilogically and to revise deeply held received knowledge structures that impede critical judgment, openness, and imaginative thinking (and which often function to reinforce ego and sociocentric thinking). In "Educating for Empathy, Reason, and Imagination," she establishes a correlation between empathy and critical thinking and details some of the educational implications of this correlation as follows:

> First, [the correlation between empathy and critical thinking] reveals that an affective component can have a positive effect on both rational and imaginative thought. Second, it suggests that empathy is the emotion of affective disposition to cultivate, since it develops emotional range, which is essential to multiple perspective-taking and genuine open-mindedness. (Gallo, 59)

Gallo goes on to identify role-taking as an important teaching tool in the cultivation of empathy and critical thinking. My experience as a learner and as an

educator is that such role-taking is indeed crucial to the development of empathy and multilogical thinking.

I would like to add that any discussion of critical and creative thinking could use the work of borderdwellers such as Anzaldúa, Lorde, Lugones, and Alarcón in at least two ways. In the first place, the way these theorists describe the thinking subject can stand as a model of a thinker who draws on affect, empathy, and multiple perspectives, along with reason, in the development of her critical consciousness. Second, reading and listening to the experience of these thinkers would create more powerful role-taking experiences in the classroom. For white students, for male students, for straight students, these theorists provide details of realities that are often missing in the classroom or in disciplinary canons. For women students, students of color, and gay students, inclusion of these theorists would create space in the classroom for their often neglected points of view, which can lead to greater and more diverse classroom participation. The more identities and perspectives that are sanctioned by full and complex models of the thinker, the more inclusive and powerful our models of thinking will be. Having reflected on difference, power, and multiple identity in the thinker, I will now discuss some of the implications that difference, power, and multiple identity have for theorizing and thinking.

Understanding Difference and Power: Implications for Theory

In Borderlands/*La Frontera*, Anzaldúa described for us the characteristics of the new *mestiza* thinker: she lives in the interstices of many cultures, she inhabits multiple identities, she values spiritual, emotional, physical knowledge as well as rational

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knowledge, she is familiar with ambiguity and sees the productive possibilities of that
ambiguity.

The authorial "I" and the audience "we" in mestiza *theorizing.*

In her anthology, Making Face, Making Soul, Anzaldúa addresses the issue of

mestiza grounded theory as it relates "traditional" modes of theorizing in the academy:

> What is considered theory in the dominant academic community is not
> necessarily what counts as theory for women-of-color. . . . We need *teorias* that
> will reflect what goes on between inner, outer and peripheral "I"s within a person
> and between the personal "I"s and the collective "we" of our ethnic communities.
> *Necesitamos teorias* that will rewrite history using race, class, gender, and
> ethnicity as categories of analysis, theories that cross borders, that blur
> boundaries--new kinds of theories with new theorizing methods. We need
> theories that will point out ways to maneuver between our particular experiences
> and the necessity of forming our own categories and theoretical models for the
> patterns we uncover. We need theories that examine the implications of situations
> and look at what's behind them. And we need to find practical application for
> those theories. (Anzaldúa 1990, xxv-xxvi)
> Here, in her introduction to Making Face, Making Soul, Anzaldúa is concerned

with creating and validating theories that reflect the reality and support the creative

potential of the new *mestiza* and other borderdwellers like her. Anzaldúa points to the

experience of many women of color in the academy who are silenced or oppressed by

standards of scholarship and theorizing that contain unexamined racism, patriarchal

privilege, and class bias:

> [M]any *mujeres*-of-color in graduate school [feel] oppressed and violated by the
> rhetoric of dominant ideology, a rhetoric disguised as good "scholarship" by
> teachers who are unaware of its race, class, and gender "blank spots." It is a
> rhetoric that presents its conjectures as universal truths while concealing its
> patriarchal privilege and posture. It is a rhetoric riddled with ideologies of
> Racism which hush our voices so that we cannot articulate our victimization.
> (Anzaldúa 1990, xxiii)

Rather than try to assimilate or fit into the rhetoric of mainstream theorizing, Anzaldúa is

interested in naming the ways in which women of color, lesbians, working class women

of color theorize, and how such theorizing might change institutional theorizing space

that is so often closed or damaging to non-mainstream people:

> Theory, then, is a set of knowledges. Some of these knowledges have been kept
> from us--entry into some professions and academia denied us. Because we are not
> allowed to enter discourse, because we are often disqualified and excluded from
> it, because what passes for theory these days is forbidden territory for us, it is vital
> that we occupy theorizing space, that we not allow whitemen and women solely to
> occupy it. By bringing in our own approaches and methodologies, we transform
> the theorizing space. (Anzaldúa 1990, xxv)

In regard to critical thinking, I am concerned with three ways in which women of

color, new *mestizas*, and borderdwellers transform the theorizing space: (1) through their

understanding of difference, (2) through their understanding of how power informs

difference, and (3) through their understanding of the thinker as multiple rather than

unitary. Overarching all of this is an understanding of the ways in which all of these

three things -- difference, power, and multiple identity--are connected to thinking and

theorizing.

María Lugones on difference and the logic of theorizing.

In her essay "On the Logic of Pluralist Feminism," María Lugones deals with the

interrelatedness of these three issues and argues "that the logic of all theorizing is affected

by a recognition of difference (Lugones 1991, 37). Lugones asserts that most white

feminist theorists have gotten to the point of seeing what she calls "the problem of

difference," but not to the point of truly seeing difference, because they don't really

"notice" women of color. Lugones suggests that since the emphasis on theorizing is

toward generalizing, and since white women don't really see women of color, they tend to

theorize "as if all women are the same" (Lugones 1991, 40). She goes on to say, "one can

try to explain away this lack of noticing in many ways related to the received

methodologies, but if white women theorists had noticed us, they would have rejected the methodologies" (Lugones 1991, 40). In trying to account for how this could come about, i.e., how white feminists could see "the problem of difference" yet not notice women of color, Lugones turns to Elizabeth Spelman's powerful example of one of the ways in which whiteness is a ubiquitous but hidden normative organizing principle in American society. Spelman says that white people are schooled in

> boomerang perception: I look at you and come right back to myself. In the United States white children like me got early training in boomerang perception when we were told by well-meaning white adults that Black people were just like us--never, however, that we were just like Blacks. (Spelman, 12)

Lugones argues that not only does this keep the white theorist at the center, but it allows her to keep white theorizing at the center. Rather than explore difference (and thereby notice women of color) white theorists formulate difference as a problem because white theorists are more concerned with keeping their theories intact than looking at how their theories dismantle or erase women of color:

> In naming the problem of difference as such, white theorists place the theory at center: what damages the theory, rather than how their theory damaged women of color. Thus the attempted solutions to the "problem of difference" try to rescue feminist theorizing from several possible pitfalls that would render it false, trivial, weak, and so on. The focus of the solutions is on how to generalize without being guilty of false inclusion. The solutions seem incorrect to me because they are addressing the wrong problem. (Lugones 1991, 41)

Because the primary engagement here is with the theory, rather than the women of color who raise objections to the theory, Lugones names the white feminists' response "noninteractive." Confronted with difference, white feminist theorists return to the theories, and try to resolve difference into that theory, rather than engage women of color, or recognize women of color theorizing and try to fit themselves into the models that women of color describe. This boomerang perception has implications in the territory of

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theory because how we theorize people or groups of people affects both description and prescription, thus it affects people's lives:

> Most of the time what the theory proposes is not just a description of a particular practice or a particular construction or reconstruction of people. Most of the time a prescription is included. But a prescription for whom? How is one who lies outside the limits to correct the prescription? How is one to tell that the discourse that produced this prescription is friendly to oneself? Who is the author in her own eyes with respect to us? Who is the author in our eyes? Who are we in the author's eyes? Why does the author think that all we need to do is to correct the prescription? Why does the author just leave us to write another paper on the subject, but one that is dependent on hers even though she does not really acknowledge us? Why does she think she is justified in doing that? Why doesn't she realize that what she is doing is exercising authority and that the authority she would exercise, if we are not careful, is authority over us? (Lugones 1991, 39)

Lugones' characterization of theory as a prescription is rich and layered in many ways. I want to join Lugones here by emphasizing that theory is a lens by which we see a person or a group, and a vision of where we see that person going, or how she might grow. Theory affects our perception and conception of what a woman is, of what a person is, of what a thinking subject is.

Lugones sees the answer to the above-quoted list of questions as related. White women feminists do not acknowledge women of color, and are not careful about the authority and privilege they exercise over women of color, because white women fear the multiple subject. If white feminists truly notice women of color, they must acknowledge the multiple subjectivity not only of women of color but of themselves as well.

Lugones speculates that this multiplicitous self frightens white feminist theorists in at least three ways. The first is simply that multiple subjectivity itself may be scary for those who are used to operating as a unitary subject. Second, the multiple subjectivity of women of color demonstrates that white women, too, are many-selved, and that some of the selves we animate in our interaction with women of color are selves we may not want

to look at because they are duplicitous in nature. Third, if white women truly see that women of color are comprised of many selves, they will have to face that not all those selves put white women at the center. White feminists may be especially uncomfortable with this third element because it rocks our very sense of identity, agency, and responsibility:

> ...not all the selves we are make you important. Some of them are quite independent of you. Being central, being a being in the foreground, is important to your being integrated as one responsible decision maker. Your sense of responsibility and decision-making are tied to being able to say exactly who it is that did what, and that person must be one and have a will in good working order. And you are very keen on seeing yourself as a decision maker, a responsible being: it gives you substance. (Lugones 1991, 43)

If the locus of responsibility is multiple, rather than individual and independent, and interactive rather than originating with the unitary self, then knowledge formation, theorizing, and "logical" thinking must be reconfigured in order to account for or contain plurality and interactivity. Lugones maintains that many white feminist theorists hold ideas about the unitary self that makes them fearful of plurality and unprepared to recognize or operate within the logic of plurality and interactivity:

> ...you are afraid of plurality: Plurality speaks to you of a world whose logic is unknown to you and that you inhabit unwillingly. It is a world inhabited by beings who cannot be understood given your ordinary notions of responsibility, intentionality, voluntariness, precisely because those notions presuppose that each person is one and that each person (unless mad or in a madlike state or under someone's power) can effectively inform her actions with preferred descriptions that include intentionality, and do so all by herself. All other ways of being are outside value, outside worth, outside goodness, outside intelligibility. (Lugones 1991, 43)

Parallel Flaws in Theorizing Subjectivity and Knowledge: White Feminism and Paul's Idealized Thinker

Lugones' challenge to the "imperialist eye" of white feminists is a challenge that might be made to Richard Paul and to our program. In not being able to imagine the thinker as very different from himself (that is, beyond the experience of a formally educated straight white male), Paul unwittingly creates a totalizing picture of critical thinking, one that excludes many different specific identities of thinkers, and one that does not draw from "marginalized" traditions of critical thinking that might be useful in bringing about the kind of public critical thinking space he advocates.

Like the white feminists challenged by Anzaldúa and others, Paul may be trying to engender an educational or public thinking space where diverse frameworks may be considered. Unfortunately, also like much of white feminist theory, Paul's over-reliance on Western traditions of rationality and his uncomplicated portrait of the thinker in relation to dominant frameworks of thinking undermine his goals. Though much of his work is concerned with how we must attend to the diversity of frameworks and assumptions that undergird all thinking, his approach nonetheless ignores political, social, and institutionalized structures of power that have historically marked certain thinkers and certain structures or traditions of thought as rational, normal, or natural, while relegating others as alternative, marginal, or invisible.

Paul's unexamined reliance on Western traditions of rational thought asks us to cooperate in the reification of a belief in universality and objectivity which have their roots in a white patriarchal point of view. This point of view, or framework, rather than being universal or objective, is often a masculinist specificity or subjectivity that has been normalized or naturalized as "common sense" or "good thinking." Common to whom?

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Good for whom? As this chapter's overview of the work of Anzaldúa, Lorde, Lugones, and Alarcón indicates, these are questions asked by critical thinkers in lesbian feminist theory, in various critical traditions engaged in by people of color, and by working class activists and thinkers. Such thinkers are often discounted for their very specificity, for being too political, not objective, and therefore, not universal or sound in their thinking.

This creates a kind of circular argument, wherein, simply through the weight of tradition and consolidated institutional power, the western rational point of view holds sway, at least, or especially, in many institutional settings. The formation of specific western ideas of what is rational occurs through historical processes which are hidden or erased by "objective" interlocutors. Hence, these ideas or definitions of rational thinking may appear to be apolitical, transhistorical cultural norms into which those of us who are different cannot be "seen" or must contort ourselves to fit.

Thus, we might view Paul's work not simply as an exemplar theory of critical thinking, but as an exemplar of a tradition that conserves theories of thought and the self that do not extend full agency, selfhood, or complexity to all people. Like our constitution, these theories were created by specific people under specific historical and social circumstances with certain goals in mind that did not include everyone's freedom and dignity.

It is obvious throughout Paul's writing that one of his aims is to create, through the teaching of better critical thinking, a more competent citizenry, and a more vibrant, authentic democratic nation and global situation. His failure to examine or give up a romantic, patriarchally rooted conceptualization of rationality prevents the realization of this clearer thinking, more participatory democracy. Whether this is naiveté, arrogance,

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or willful ignorance is hard to say, but it is the kind of process or belief in the possibility of apolitical objective thinking, as well as an over-reliance on white, masculinist, formally educated thinking, that has contributed to the exclusion of feminist and anti-racist thinkers in our courses.

How Women of Color/Lesbian Feminist Discourse Could Strengthen Critical and Creative Thinking

If the Critical and Creative Thinking Program were to use theorists like Gloria Anzaldúa, María Lugones, Norma Alarcón, Audre Lorde, what would we gain? On a simple level, we would at the very least gain some diversity in our canon. Because these women of color theorists come out of discourse communities such as women's studies, race studies, and critical pedagogy, adding them to our course readings would increase both our multicultural and interdisciplinary diversity.

On a more sophisticated and paradigm shifting level, these theorists bring complexity to our understanding of the thinking subject, which in turn enhances our understanding of what effective critical thinking is, and how we might go about fostering such thinking in our classrooms, our communities, our selves.

In summary, these theorists bring the following elements to the critical thinking discussion:

1. An understanding of the self as multiple, not unitary
2. An acknowledgment that difference within and among thinking selves affects theorizing about critical thinking
3. An analysis of the ways in which power is connected to difference and to critical thinking
4. An acute sensitivity to context and frameworks that comes from lived experience as an outsider or a borderdweller
5. An acceptance of -- indeed, a faith in -- ambiguity as an inevitable and productive condition of the multiple self as critical and creative thinker.

These elements honor multiple identity, the role of power in naming difference, and a generative ambiguity, and could thus augment Richard Paul's configuration of the thinker. Paul's model is useful in that he gets us into the arena of multiple perspectives. But there is a sense that ultimately, these will resolve into something more unitary, something "rational" and "consistent," something universal which will speak to everyone, which can be recognized as a standard. This is precisely the kind of process which leads to the normalization and naturalization of some identities and ways of functioning as being more valid, more universal, more authentic, than others. In maintaining multiplicity rather than asserting or seeking the unitary self, *mestiza* consciousness refuses such processes of reification. Yes, the social categories such as race, class, gender are real to the *mestiza* in all their historical, institutional, and private weight and illumination. But as Shane Phelan reminds us, such categories are not simply borne out in simple, essentialized, or unitary ways in the *mestiza* person, who embodies several indivisible identities:

> The strength of *mestiza* consciousness is a result of its multiplicity and ability to sustain contradiction and ambiguity, and this includes the ability to withstand conflict and misunderstanding. The revolutionary force of the *mestiza* is the ability to refuse the reifications of cultural nationalism without abandoning the nation entirely, and to provide links to class-based movements without becoming subsumed within them. Because she never simply "is" any one element of her blended being, the *mestiza* cannot be captured in the oppositions that are presented as inevitable; class or nature, sex or race, or any other reified opposition. The *mestiza* does not dispute the historical or contemporary reality of these designations, but she does operate constantly to undermine their unitary solidities. (Phelan, 74-5)

Paul's construction of the strong sense thinker and his characterization of egocentricity does not acknowledge the complications of self esteem and community identity embodied by those not in the mainstream. This gap occurs in the writing and

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practice of many critical thinking educators who support the use of multilogical

perspectives, but fail to recognize and theorize the power dynamics that necessarily play

over thinkers, schools of thought, and the social/historical positions they occupy. Shane

Phelan, a white anti-racist lesbian feminist, contextualizes the location and power of the

mestiza in this way:

> The belongingness of the *mestiza* for Anzaldúa is not simply a matter of choice, of
> voluntary affiliation, but of history and social density." (Phelan, 66-7)

Throughout his work, Paul speaks of the "thinker" in terms that do not take into

account the multiple subjectivities and socio-political positions that many people inhabit

in today's world. Because the pressures of history and social density that bear down on

the *mestiza* do not apply to white men (though others do), Paul can choose not to identify

his multiple identities; he can just be a normal (white) guy. He is not forced to choose

between identities, or rank them.

Paul's unspecified and unproblematized use of "I" and "we" suggest that he is

often imagining thinkers as more or less the same, that is, more or less like a straight

white man who is formally educated. Reading Paul's work, one does not get the sense of

a shifting, multiple "I" or "we"; rather we sense he is positing a generic, universal speaker

and audience, moving us toward an ideal. This speaker, this voice, avoids or does not

reveal any particularity, but poses as objective and general. This is very different from

Anazaldua's relationship to authorial voice and audience:

> The multiplicity of the *mestiza* is not simply internal fracture, a failure to build
> and integrated personality, but is a sociohistorical reality. . . . This is evident in
> Anzaldúa's writing, in which the "WE" shifts from page-to-page, meaning
> sometimes queers, sometimes Chicanos/Chicanas, sometimes feminists. Her
> contextualization of this shifting "we" removes the possibility of reading her
> statement as simple calls for unity, instead calling on us to acknowledge all of her
> locations at once and equally. (Phelan, 66)

Though Richard Paul champions multilogical thinking that incorporates not only many points of view, but many frames of reference, the "we" and the "I" of his writing seem to assume a unitary voice and a universal we. Nonetheless, a particularity informs and shapes this voice. In other words, his voice does not match up with his theory. Indeed, it undermines his theory in that he does not bring a multilogical perspective to the authorial voice.

Paul believes that a strong sense critical thinker is "comfortable thinking within multiple perspectives, in engaging in dialogical and dialectical thinking, in practicing intellectual empathy, in thinking across disciplines and domains" (Paul, 660). While all of these things are essential to effective critical thinking, I hope this chapter has illustrated that the strong sense critical thinker must also cultivate the ability to feel and examine the power dynamics that inform multiple perspectives, difference, and the context in which thinkers and theories are created evaluated.

CHAPTER 6

MESTIZA/LESBIAN/FEMINIST OF COLOR DISCOURSE AS AN EXAMPLE OF STRONG SENSE CRITICAL THINKING

Summarizing the Thinker: Paul's Default Unitary Self vs. the *Mestiza*

The thinker as *mestiza* illustrates how the profile of the thinker that lurks, unproblematized, in Paul's formulation of a "strong sense" critical thinker pushes us into the territory of identity. What we discover is that the default identity of Paul's thinker is a person fairly supported by the status quo. Further, we see that Paul operates with a notion of the "self" as a unitary entity, the self of Western rationality and the enlightenment. But the experience and work of feminists/lesbians of color such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde, Norma Alarcón, and María Lugones, augmented by the work of lesbians such as Shane Phelan and Marilyn Frye, give us a much more complicated picture of identity and critical consciousness.

We have seen that such thinkers do not fit easily onto the grid of egocentricity and sociocentricity as Paul configures it. Such thinkers move in and out of many identities, thus in an out of many egocentric possibilities. Their egocentricity is multiple and particular, not singular and universal. Nor is their identity formation, and thus their "self," their thinking consciousness, positively formed and supported by a simple egocentricity.

People who live in the borders, who inhabit marginalized identities, have a complicated relationship to egocentricity and sociocentricity. Their individual identities and social communities may be embattled or pejoratively defined in the context of mainstream culture. They may live a complex reality of opposition to and identification

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with that mainstream culture. A further complication is that such people may have internalized some of the negative images of themselves coming from the dominant culture while they are at the same time resisting such malingering conceptualizations of their identities through oppositional, self-defining practices. And yet, people in the borderlands, on the margins, must also know and understand the ways of the dominant cultures upon which economic and other survival may depend. If the identity of the thinker is characterized by this kind of complexity, descriptions of and prescriptions for strong sense critical thinking require more sophisticated theories than the simple binary that Paul sets up in his egocentric/sociocentric formulation.

Broadening the Scope of Critical and Creative Thinking Discourse

Discourses representative of various race inflected lesbian feminist theories and philosophies are not usually considered part of the critical and creative thinking field. I submit that these discourses are examples of critical and creative thinking that have evolved alongside of, or prior to, the critical and creative thinking movement. This relative absence of lesbian feminist theories and philosophies in critical and creative thinking is noteworthy given that these discourses might not only satisfy but render more complex Paul's "strong sense" critical thinking criteria in that the best of them are built upon -- indeed, arose out of -- a very real life need to examine assumptions, foreground frames of reference, and attend to bias. (I refer you back to the Karen Warren quote that serves as an epigraph to this thesis.)

If our program were to examine work in the areas of lesbian feminist philosophy and theory in relation to -- and furthermore, as -- critical thinking, we could highlight the

strengths of Richard Paul's "strong sense" critical thinking, yet question his unproblematized characterization of the critical thinker which emerges in his discussion of egocentric and sociocentric thinking. Paul is right in asking us to become aware of and question prejudices -- our own biases as well as the biases of others. But, as the previous chapters illustrate, his discussion of the process for doing so does not consider the hierarchy of values that attaches to various points of view. Nor does he seem to consider that critical thinkers themselves occupy varying positions of power (depending upon race, class, and gender) which affect their relationship to egocentric and sociocentric thinking.

Theorizing Power and Difference in Critical and Creative Thinking Through the Use of "Marginalized" Discourses

In addition, Paul does not attend to how marginalized individuals, groups, or their theories are heard and received in traditional arenas of discourse. In a society such as ours, in which democracy has yet to be fully realized for all citizens, difference exists on a vertical rather than horizontal scale. In such a configuration, the "different" easily elides into "deviant" or "deficient." So when Paul talks about bringing in many perspectives in order to get beyond one's egocentricity or sociocentricity without considering the value attached to those perspectives -- and the power dynamics that play over the thinker herself -- a false flattening out occurs in his model which downplays or conceals the authority and politics of the mainstream, while devaluing or overly "politicizing" the perspective of the marginalized.

In comparing these "marginalized discourses" to mainstream critical and creative thinking discourse I contend that marginalized discourses could exist within, or at the very least, inform the critical and creative thinking canon. Examining the issue of power

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through several women of color and lesbian feminist discourses that are examples of critical and creative thinking and that do attend to the dynamics of power helps us rethink the critical and creative thinker as well as critical and creative thinking itself. It will reveal the often hidden or neglected role of interactivity, community, particularity, and emotion in the enterprise of effective, humanistic thinking. Such a focus on the multiple subject, community, particularity, and emotion will illumine the limitations of a critical thinking tradition overly invested in rationality, consistency, and objectivity at the expense of the relational, paradoxical, and contextual elements that characterize the critical and creative thinking of marginalized groups.

Marginalized groups have not traditionally enjoyed the power to decree their experience universal, nor the entitlement to set the terms of objectivity in close match to their subjective experience. Yet they have had to learn to live or survive within such a paradigm and somehow reconcile its ill fit with their own experience and values. Those who develop a critical consciousness regarding this ill fit have a lot to offer the mainstream field of critical and creative thinking in that they have a kind of "double-seeing" or "binocular vision" that Berel Lang (1990) terms the "ironic stance of the philosopher." Marilyn Frye complicates the notion of the philosophical "ironic stance" by asserting that those of us on the margins, here specifically lesbians, operate from an experience and consciousness that is by definition beyond the monological or egocentric perspective that Paul cautions us to avoid (Frye 1983).

The Creative as Critical in "Marginalized" Discourses

I would add that marginalized people who develop this critical perspective have necessarily gotten there in part through a creative leap that may be nothing short of artistic in that they have had to imagine a selfhood, full personhood, or agency not automatically accorded them by the dominant culture. Thus, in such a field of vision, the creative and the critical are intimately linked in ways that may not be as apparent or as distinctive in trajectories of being/thinking that are supported by mainstream paradigms. As Anzaldúa puts it,

> For many of us the acts of writing, painting, performing and filming are acts of deliberate and desperate determination to subvert the status quo. Creative acts are forms of political activism employing definite aesthetic strategies for resisting dominant cultural norms and are not merely aesthetic exercises. We build culture as we inscribe in these various forms.
> Inherent in the creative act is a spiritual, psychic component--one of spiritual excavation, of (ad)venturing into the inner void, extrapolating meaning from it and sending it out into the world. To do this kind of work requires the total person--body, soul, mind, and spirit. (Anzaldúa 1990, xxiv)

She goes on to assert that not only does such creativity inform the critical thinking of the *mestiza*, it is crucial to her very survival (Anzaldúa 1990, xxiv).

If we see the identity of the thinker as not fixed but as an active process, then these relations in turn transform identities. As Phelan suggests, rather than operating in the world from one simple individual, essential identity, we create and inhabit many "identity points." Understanding and working with people different from ourselves requires building linkages between different identity groups, while at the same time we are in part deriving our identities and communities from these linkages. This resonates

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with Anzaldúa's idea that the borderdweller lives not just outside the mainstream, but in a fecund space where many worlds collide.

Community, like individual identity, is socially constructed. It does not exist a priori on some static transhistorical plane, but emerges out of discursive, recursive, constitutive processes that are made up of both empowering and oppressive elements, that are, in the clearest moments bewilderingly paradoxical, but most often contradictory and messy.

Authentic Transformative Pedagogies -- Beyond the Universal and the Unitary Self

Our mythologies of the unitary self or the "natural" community based on race, ethnicity, nationalism, tribes, etc., provide certain feelings of security, platforms from which to consolidate energy and power. But they have oversimplified the conflicts inhering in lived experience and consciousness. Their consolidating, totalizing energies often lead to polarization, despair, xenophobia. Narratives of transcendent universality, while appearing at first to be liberating, often flatten out specificity and diversity to a totalizing sameness that mirrors and supports dominant paradigms. This is tantamount to presenting just a part of evolution theory -- that of survival of the fittest -- while omitting the part about diversity and mutability.

The unitary self and rationality that prizes consistency and closure above all else are luxuries of privilege, a privilege not enjoyed by many Americans. The fact that these paradigms of consciousness and thinking have persisted for so long attest not necessarily to their validity, but to the skewed power dynamics in representation and agency that govern private and public spheres of identity and thinking. It is a relatively recent

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phenomenon that we've even theorized that all people should have access to public institutions such as education, and therefore, access to culturally sanctioned tools of self-representation such as writing. Even today, the convergence of historical, social, economic, racial, and gender-based factors still unjustly determine who gets what kind of education. Basic literacy is not a given for all American citizens, nor is the definition of "basic literacy" investigated enough to reveal the biased assumptions informing it.

Programs like ours cannot maintain that they are transformative pedagogies if they continue to exclude the theorizing of certain kinds of thinkers, if they continue to consolidate over-simplified or over-determined notions of what it means to be a sentient being in today's world. We cannot foster ideas such as Howard Gardner's "multiple intelligences" while at the same time denying the multiple subjectivities that characterize all thinkers. Furthermore, we cannot afford to ignore the varying degrees of power and agency that inform the institutional and personal intersections of race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc., that comprise such multiple subjectivities. By not attending to the cultural and social circumstances and the lived experience of thinkers in the world (and thus the power, oppression, and empowerment that is employed in such circumstances and experiences) we fall into the chasm of a kind of mind/body split.

In describing the consciousness and perspective, the thinking and maneuvering required of people who understand their multiple identitied selves in a culture that marks all or some of their identities as "other" or "minority" or "marginal," writers such as Anzaldúa, Lorde, Alarcón, and Lugones help us create a more complex profile of a thinker than Paul provides in his work.

Redefining Critical Thinking Through *Mestiza* and Lesbian Feminist Discourse

Viewing the world as a *mestiza*, as Anzaldúa does, or as a lesbian feminist, as do Frye and Phelan, forces us to rethink the definition of what good critical thinking is. It forces us to abandon rigid notions of consistency. It makes us suspicious of universal claims. It means we must entertain the importance of the subconscious, as well as the rational. It gives creativity a larger role in good thinking, and makes it less easy to divide critical from creative thinking. Imagining the thinker in terms of non-mainstream multiple identities may help us to see that thinking and education cannot be separated from everyday life, from community, from context. The thinker who inhabits a *mestiza* consciousness demonstrates the ways in which thinking and feeling are connected; the *mestiza* helps us to see that empathy is necessary to powerful thinking.

Navigating Power and Multiple Subjectivities: Plural Rather Than Objective Participation in Thinking

Imagining the thinker in the way Anzaldúa, Lorde, Alarcón, and Lugones do means that actual lived experience of the thinker cannot be separated out from socio-political, cultural reality. Thus, thinking cannot be separated from issues of power. The issue then becomes not how to we divest thinking of partiality, subjectivity, and power, but rather how do we navigate all these subjectivities in a way that is useful and empowering to all citizens. How may we create plural (rather than objective) participation in thinking that creates democratic possibility rather than oppressive institutions and situations.

Moving beyond Paul's consistent, unitary, resolved self kind of thinker to a

thinker more like Anzaldúa's *mestiza* figure gives us the opportunity to learn a variety of

strategies for dealing with problems that require supple, sinewy thinking. This less static,

multiple subjectivity of the thinker may offer less psychic certainty, less security, than the

notion of the universal, rational thinker. But we must ask ourselves, who has been served

by belief in the unitary self, by universal notions of consistency and rationality as the

supreme marks of good thinking? Reliance on objectivity has appealed to whom? What

are the subjective identities that have informed objective ideals and then been erased in

the masquerade of "universal"? Who has had privilege enough in their material lives to

believe in the illusion of security?

Anzaldúa and countless others demonstrate that not only does the thinker inhabit

multiple subjectivites, but that context, historical, political and institutional processes

imbue various subjectivities with different power relations. Attending to this view of the

thinker may be more anxiety producing than romantic Western notions of the universal

individual thinker as a self-contained, rational unit able to transcend historical, temporal,

institutional processes of domination and power. Yet understanding the multiple, unfixed

nature of the thinker and her many-layered context can yield more flexible, adaptable,

mobile, and humble thinking (regarding flexibility and adaptability, it may be argued that

these traits have been at least as useful as consistency in the survival and evolution of our

species).

Paul's portrait of the thinker, and his definition of good thinking, under-represents

women, people of color, queers, poor and working-class people. Furthermore, it ignores

important paradigm-shifting discourses, such as feminism, lesbian-feminism,

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postmodernism, critical theory, and the outpouring of critical thinking on race and multiculturalism. These various discourses not only question an array of assumptions and frameworks that Paul ignores, they also place education and thinking within the context of socio-political frameworks in which the role of power must be considered.

Redefining Critical and Creative Thinking: Toward a New Vision of Power

In the foregoing discussion I have contemplated the limits of a traditionally Western concept of good thinking that is characterized by an ahistorical, deculturized rationality; individual or isolated reflection; neutrality; universality; consistency; and a belief in the unitary self. Through Anzaldúa's *mestiza* figure, I have particularized the critical and creative thinker as other than straight/white/male/academic, thus demonstrating how the elements of feeling (particularly empathy), intersubjectivity, lived experience, oppression and radical consciousness might play a vital role in the development of a person's critical and creative thinking abilities. Studying Anzaldúa's work, along with related projects and discourses of lesbian-feminist and feminist of color theory, as examples of critical and creative thought, serves to not only contextualize these discourses within critical and creative thinking, but also to redefine critical and creative thinking and add to it the dimension of power that, whether we recognize it or not, informs all social endeavors.

A hope for the future is that such a redefining move might in turn help us to redefine power. What I envision is really a paradigm shift, in which we come to think of power as internal empowerment gained through self-actualization in the development of critical and creative thinking, rather than simply accepting the notion of power as

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something outside of ourselves, something to be fought for, hoarded, and deployed over

or on each other in destructive, fragmenting ways that foreclose the community

formation, or more pointedly, the communion necessary to the realization of true

democracy.

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