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### Divided We Stand

Gloria Anzaldua relates a childhood memory “I remember being caught speaking Spanish at recess-that was good for three licks on the knuckles with a sharp ruler. I remember being sent to the corner of the classroom for “talking back” to the Anglo teacher when all I was trying to do was tell her how to pronounce my name. “If you want to be American, speak ‘American.’ If you don’t like it, go back to Mexico where you belong” (521). This was one of Anzaldua’s first experiences with “othering”. This is how she remembers her childhood filled with fear and confusion. To a child the world is a huge scary place even without the pain and suffering caused by others. Her memories should be about playing with friends and racing around the playground not about being punished for speaking her native language. Is this the way that we as members of such a great nation greet and welcome people? Is this how the majority should view and treat the minority? Our founding fathers of this nation wanted equality and fairness between all who lived in this country. Have our views and actions towards those who want to enjoy this land of many opportunities with us changed since the beginning of this country? I regretfully submit my answer to you that yes they have.

One of the first documents in the forming of the United States of America is titled The Declaration of Independence. Part of that document reads “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain

unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”. Our founding fathers adopted this document on July 4<sup>th</sup> 1776. They were men of great integrity, honesty, and courage. They were brave enough to stand up and declare independence from Great Britain and start this country. Today it is hard to find men who are of that caliber. Yes we have changed from the beginning of our nation as a people. Othering is a term that is used to describe how a majority treats, views and respects the minority in any situation. My heart saddens at the realization that there will always be that classification of the “othering” or in other words the classification of minority and majority.

I am not alone in my thoughts that we have changed since the infancy of our nation my friends and family think so too. Fredrick Douglass was a slave who escaped bondage and later became one of the most influential people for black civil rights in history. Douglass gave a speech in it he shares a great point of how the minority was viewed at that time by the majority. Douglass said “There are seventy-two crimes in the state of Virginia, which, if committed by a black man, (no matter how ignorant he be), subject him to the punishment of death; while only two of the same crimes will subject a white man to the like punishment” (466). To me these laws are a heart wrenching reminder of how far off course we have gotten from our nation’s founding principles that all men are created equal.

“This is where we are right now. It’s a racial stalemate we’ve been stuck in it for years. Contrary to the claims of some of my critics, black and white, I have never been so naïve as to believe that we can get beyond our racial divisions in a single election cycle, or with a single candidacy-particularly a candidacy as imperfect as my own.

But I have asserted a firm conviction- a conviction rooted in my faith in God and my faith in the American people-that working together we can move beyond some of our old racial wounds, and that in fact we have no choice if we are to continue on the path of a more perfect union” (Obama 480). Even our current leader of this nation acknowledges that there is still to this day bad views and treatment towards the minorities of our country. He does express hope that we can one day get past it, which should give us the courage to try to stand up for the equality of all man.

September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 the United States of America fell under attack from terrorists. The whole nation was weighed down with pain and suffering from the loss of many lives and the fear that we had just been attacked. The fear and suffering soon turned to anger and this country bonded together and was united as one to seek revenge on those who attacked us. It did not matter what race or ethnicity you were everyone was united for a short while. There is hope and we have proven to ourselves as a country that we can stand united together as Americans.

I know that we have come a long ways since slavery and some of the harshest conditions in history but we still have changed since the birth of this country. At this point I feel that the division between the races we have in America is better than it was but there is still feelings of hatred and jealousy that exist from all parties towards one another. Until all of the races can forgive each other and let the past be the past and live in the present there will not be full unity. Min-Zhan Lu said “I adopted this view of language as a tool for survival” (154). I agree with Lu that language is a tool for survival it is our tool to overcome all of this racism and othering issues. We need to communicate with each other and work this stuff out.

Will you ever be able to let all of your prejudices and biases go by the wayside? To solve this problem of othering it will require all of us to look deep into our souls and change our ways of thinking and our views of others. It has to start with us and then we have to help someone else see that they too are the problem. Are you ready to do what it takes to stand united or will we always stand divided? It is up to you united we stand or divided we stand the future is in your hands.

**Part Two:**

The piece of writing that I have chosen to analyze and write about is called “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”; it is written by Gloria Anzaldua and is published in the reading culture textbook. Eighth edition pages 521 through 527. The reason that I chose to write about this is because this author was very good at getting her point across to me. I knew exactly what her points were and what she wanted me to learn from her writing. In her opening paragraphs she starts using rhetorical questions to get you thinking. I would like to share a story that was in her writing to show you an example of how she makes her points and then I will discuss them.

“We’re going to have to control your tongue, the dentist says, pulling out all the metal from my mouth. Silver bits plop and tinkle into the basin. My mouth is a motherlode. The dentist is cleaning out my roots. I get a whiff of the stench when I gasp. “I can’t cap that tooth yet, you’re still draining,” he says.

“We’re going to have to do something about your tongue,” I hear the anger rising in his voice. My tongue keeps pushing out the wads of cotton, pushing back the drills, the long thin needles. “I’ve never seen anything as strong or as stubborn,” he says. And I think, how do you

tame a wild tongue, train it to be quiet, how do you bridle and saddle it? How do you make it lie down” (521). She starts out with using an example that we can all relate to, the dentist. She uses the example of the dentist to relate how hard it can be to control a tongue. She then asks some very good rhetorical questions to get you thinking about things. Throughout the writing she switches from English to Spanish. Anzaldua uses a language to help us understand how frustrating and difficult it can be to live in two worlds with two languages. Because she used Spanish and I do not understand Spanish it was very difficult for me to understand what she was trying to communicate and that got her point across to me. Her method of using different languages was very successful in making her point. She used good life examples to make her point that it is not easy to live on border rather it be between actual physical locations or by language or other things. In my opinion she successfully made her point by using rhetorical questions, language choices and good example choices.

**Works Cited Page**

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Douglass, Frederick. "What to the slave is the fourth of July".460-475

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