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**BEING SAME AND OTHER: AN AUTO-ETHNOGRAPHIC INQUIRY INTO THE
RHETORICAL PROCESS OF OTHERING**

An honors paper submitted to the Department of English, Linguistics, and Communication
of the University of Mary Washington
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Departmental Honors

Ana-Maria Hecton

April 2016

By signing your name below, you affirm that this work is the complete and final version of your paper submitted in partial fulfillment of a degree from the University of Mary Washington. You affirm the University of Mary Washington honor pledge: "I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received unauthorized help on this work."

Ana-Maria Hecton
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Being Same and Other:

An Auto-ethnographic Inquiry into the Rhetorical Process of Othering

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Dr. Ohl

COMM 491

Introduction:

Othering is the process by which individuals, groups, and populations are evaluated based on social conventions and categorized in ways that are objectifying, unflattering, and violent. People who are subject to the process of Othering become “Others” by being seen as “less” and are consequentially separated from society. Othering is not just an elitist group objectifying another group; but it also includes any time a person makes an assumption of another person based on preconceived notions, assumptions, and beliefs. Othering is so engrained in our society and societies around the world that it often goes unnoticed because of its seemingly “natural” nature – the beliefs that society has upheld for so long. However, it is a systemic problem that has been going on for centuries. It is essentially the notion that one group of people are better or superior to another group of people – and with that the superior group has the “right” to oppress the “others.” While othering may not seem outwardly destructive, its consequences perpetuate ideals and attitudes of superiority and oppression – these ideals are then passed down from generation to generation and these narratives of oppression become part of the oppressed person’s story. Othering essentially robs the person marked as “other” of his/her story – of his/her agency.

Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* explores the topic of othering, its consequences, and possible solutions. Freire discusses how it affects and harms not only the oppressed but also the oppressor and anyone else who has a role in othering. He states that the only way that this process of othering will end will be by the oppressed liberating themselves and the oppressors (44). Freire calls us all to question our motivations and calls for “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” (51). Ultimately, the oppressed must liberate the oppressors from this cyclical pattern by creating their own agency and their own voice in the

fight against oppression. Many may argue those who have been so marginalized cannot be tasked with liberating themselves from oppression. However, Freire argues that the oppressed are the only ones who are capable of liberating themselves – he argues that the process of liberation begins bottom up rather than vice versa. The oppressors do not and could not possibly begin to understand the oppressed people's hardships. Also, it is important to note that when Freire refers to the "oppressors," he is not simply referring to those who actively oppress; but also, those who come from positions of privilege. While these individuals/groups of people may not actively or intentionally oppress; they still carry with them these notions of oppression that society has instilled. When those who are oppressed tell their own full story and share it with the world, they begin to educate and inform the oppressors and they begin to create their own narrative, their own agency, and empowerment. By sharing their stories, the oppressed are then able to create their own voice and with that can become a catalyst for change. By listening to the oppressed stories, the oppressors begin to recognize that the stories and narratives that they have perpetuated about the oppressed are incomplete and false – only then can the process of othering be slowly diminished. In her TED Talk, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie discusses the dangers of a single story. She defines a "single story" as a story that only tells one side of a person's or population's story. While such narratives are oftentimes attractive due to their simplicity, they do not paint a full picture and in turn is what perpetuates these problematic assumptions and stereotypes. Adichie states that single stories are always dangerous because the consequence is that these assumptions continue to be perpetuated through the single stories. Henceforth, once the oppressors realize that the stories that they have believed (or assumed) for so long are actually single stories of the oppressed; then we can move towards a collective shift in consciousness.

In this paper, I will be reflecting on my experience as a bi-racial, mixed identity person in order to: examine the consequences of othering, the notions that it perpetuates both to the oppressed and the oppressor, and to discuss possible solutions to combat othering. By examining the stories that others had about me, and the stories that I had about others, I demonstrate how the multi-directionality of othering influenced the way I saw the world, myself, and “others.” I will also be discussing how I am both Same and Other – someone who fits in with the “norm,” but also someone who does not and how defining myself as one or the other is unnecessary and in fact not possible. I will discuss how those who are Same and Other and those who are Other must own, share, and celebrate their stories, as it is the only way for the pattern of Othering to be broken. How by owning one’s story we create consciousness and a sense of agency in those who are victims of Othering. I have chosen to examine Othering through an auto-ethnographic lens because its reflective quality allows me to closely explore the complexities of othering by examining my own experiences and drawing connections to Othering research and theory. Salvador Vidal-Ortiz argues that auto-ethnography allows one to highlight one’s own experiences without “assuming generalization of such experiences to a whole group of people” (181). It is important to note, that while some may be able to relate to my experiences; I am not a full representation of those who also identify as being Same and Other.

I want to clarify the meaning of and how I use the term “others” and being Same and Other, that I will be using throughout this paper. When I make reference to “others,” I am referring to those who are marginalized or stigmatized – those who are not fairly or fully well represented in society. Those who have been silenced and oppressed and who have been robbed of their own agency. When I refer to being Same and Other I refer to Same as those who are considered the “norm;” those who fit society’s standards – those who are white and typically

those with privilege and Other being those who do not “fit” with society’s norm – those who are marginalized. I will also be discussing how one antidote to Othering calls for a deep sense of commitment to actively practice compassion, empathy, and active listening and how the discomfort of these values often lead to Othering itself because it is simpler to blindly believe the assumptions that society has instilled, rather than push towards engaging in these oftentimes difficult values.

I will be examining the process of Othering, its consequences and its dangers through my own personal experience. As Mary Canales states, “Othering is a complex, inter-relational process that shifts depending on how identities are constructed and interpreted” (20). By being a person of mixed race, I not able to fully identify as Other or fully identify as Same. Like many people of diverse ethnic and racial background, I find myself somewhere in between. This vantage point does not allow me to speak to the experiences of all marginalized peoples, nor to the experiences of dominant and dominating groups; however, it does grant access to the liminal, dialectical, and paradoxical nature of othering. Standing between two worlds – in between the world of the Other and the world of the Same—I am able to understand and identify with both to an extent and with that I am able to present a different perspective. I highly value this because if it was not for the part of me that identified as Other, I do not think I would be able to fully understand or appreciate exactly how one can be subject to othering, and then also responsible for its perpetuation. Being made to feel as though one is less is truly the feeling that one experiences when one is subject to othering. Throughout this paper I will be reflecting on how I was made to feel less at times.

Being Same and Other:

I am simultaneously Same and Other. My mother is from Nicaragua and moved to the United States at the age of thirteen. My father is of European decent. While from the outside you may think that I am simply “white,” but if you got to know me, you’d soon realize that I highly identify with my Latino identity. But on the same note, I cannot deny the fact that I am very “Same.” I grew up middle class without much worry and certainly with much privilege and opportunity.

I grew up in Northern Virginia, suburbs of Washington D.C. Those who view Virginia as a highly white and southern state may be correct; however, they have never visited NoVa. Northern Virginia is a highly affluent area (the prices reflect that it is a suburb of D.C.). Those who populate NoVa are highly competitive and many work in the city and make the commute in. These people are headstrong and are concerned with getting their kids in the best schools and most (if not all) minivans are covered with “My Child is an Honor Roll Student at _____ Middle School” bumper stickers. Now, there is a different part of NoVa that not many are familiar with and this is the high immigrant population that exists in the area. A large Asian community in Annandale and a huge Hispanic/Latino community in Culmore, Columbia Pike, and Bailey’s Crossroads.

Once you enter any of the aforementioned neighborhoods things look entirely different than the rest of Northern Virginia. Small, old apartments, clustered together with multiple families living inside one. Tiny stores with Spanish storefronts – *La Tienda Latina, Pollo Campero, Paz Pastelería* – selling unique goods, native of Spanish speaking countries. And a mix of Spanish and English (Spanglish) is spoken on the streets. It is an entirely different lifestyle than the rest those who populate Northern Virginia. These are people who have left their

home countries in the hopes of building a new life. These are people who cannot understand how the rest of the community of NoVa lives – where college for their children may not quite seem like a reality and working a nine to five job would be a dream rather than a burden.

I grew up in close proximity to these neighborhoods, yet slightly removed. My mother and her family when they first arrived in the U.S. moved into one of those small apartments that I mentioned – hardly getting by, trying to adjust to the new lifestyle and culture of this country. Yet my grandparents worked hard and moved their way up. My mother and her siblings all went to college and built a life for themselves. Now, I as a second-generation child don't have the same life that my mother lived – but I can understand to an extent. Those small apartments located in Culmore and Bailey's stand for something. They have constantly been where immigrant families live once they arrive to the area. They almost remain unchanged. The buildings are the same and the families who reside within them come from the same type of story. Yet families work their way up and leave and new families enter. As I see those families and children living the life that my mother and her family once did, I can understand – although I can't fully understand. I am straddled between the two.

Kent Ono, an Asian American writer in academia wrote a letter to his mother in which he discusses being both Same and Other. He states, “I stand in between the weave of voices, in a non-space and a non-location. I can squeeze between spaces yet never fully inhabit my own space” (118). That is how I view myself in the dichotomy of the Same and the Other. I stand in a space that is non-identifiable – that is without a label or a name. I am not fully one or the other. I cannot fully understand being one or the other. With this I wonder what exactly is my position in the world. Where do I stand? In a society that loves to label, organize, and categorize things we long to give this space “in between” a title – a name – to neatly put it in a box. Utilizing the

scholarship of Miles, Ortiz states that racialization is “the process of categorization, a representational process of defining an Other (usually, but not exclusively) somatically” (75). And precisely so, this space in between cannot be racialized – cannot be organized or categorized due to its sheer nature. The space in between is messy in its nature; henceforth, unable to be labeled. This space in between stands for those who cannot identify as fully one or the other. It stands for those who can see and understand both perspectives. The space in between, where many others and I stand, cannot and should not be labeled because it simply stands for the experiences of those who are in between. It stands for those who have a b-racial or mixed identity. That may be someone who is Asian American or someone who is Afro-Cuban. This space in between is different for Asian American than it is for the Afro-Cuban person. This is precisely why the space in between cannot be labeled or organized – the space in between is vastly different for each person who stands in it.

Growing up, I lived a short 10-15 minutes away from my mom’s side of the family – her parents, her sister, and her great aunt. They were all only a phone call or a short drive away. And like any typical Latino family, we were very (very) close. Sunday dinners together after Mass, piñatas at every birthday party, a litany of Spanish songs sung, and heaps of Nicaraguan food – gallo pinto, arroz con chori, yucca, platanos, queso nica. I grew up being picked up from school by my loud and embarrassing grandparents with strong accents whom didn’t quite understand American norms. I grew up gathering at my Lula’s house after school on Fridays with my cousins for Spanish lessons. I grew up singing Spanish songs, reading Spanish stories, and memorizing Spanish prayers.

So often I was entirely embarrassed of my culture and of my big, loud family. I was beyond mortified of my grandparents and their quirks and embarrassed of my family’s general

traditional view of the world. And while I have certainly moved away from some of the strict principles and expectations my family instilled in me and I have created my own sense of viewing and interpreting the world; I have to attribute my Latino culture for giving me a baseline for what is “right and just” in this world. It gave me a sense of family, a sense of community, and really provided me with morals values – a sense of responsibility and commitment. I entirely took for granted the value of having a family that instills some kind of moral code into its children. Whether or not that child winds up choosing different morals or adjusts his/her view of the world; that baseline understanding that a family provides is of utter importance.

The realization that my full name is Ana-Maria (a clearly Spanish name) and that I speak fluent Spanish, is often followed by the ever so subtle question about my identity: “So what even are you then?” I clearly remember in fourth grade when a classmate said to me, “So your dad is white and your mom Latina?” or being told, “You look nothing like your mom,” as if I wasn’t already aware of this or the best yet, “Are you adopted? You must be adopted.” I remember taking this really seriously and my mom having to show me pictures of myself in the hospital with her holding me. Now, I can only imagine how this must have hurt my mom.

“What even are you then?” This question befuddles me. What even am I? I am white and I am Latina. I may look very white, yet so much of me is Latina. And I may feel very Latina on the inside, yet so much of me is very white. It is clear that I cannot fully state that I am one or the other – I cannot fully “pick” or “choose” one identity over the other. In *Whiteness: A Strategic Rhetoric*, Thomas Nakayama and Robert Krizek examine what it means to be “white” and how those who are white see and identify themselves. They highlight the six strategies of the discourse of whiteness in which they examine the various ways that white people identify and perceive being white. These six strategies vary greatly from the white person not viewing being

“white” as a label to the white person perceiving white as a power status. However, they conclude that aside from the six strategies, there is no denying the power related with being white. “The dynamic element of whiteness is a crucial aspect of the persuasive power of this strategic rhetoric. It garners its representational power through its ability to be many things at once, to be universal and particular, to be a source of identity and difference” (302). This inexplicable “power,” “status,” or sense of belonging that comes with being white is where my desire to fit with the “norm” came from.

Growing up, I never quite felt like I belonged – or at least like I belonged fully. To either my white self or my Nicaraguan self – not being enough white to be white and not being enough Latina to be Latina. I remember walking into Elena Marsilii’s house and taking in the beautiful white carpets, the large TVs, dinner at 6pm sharp. They were just so “American” in every way possible and in those moments, I genuinely longed for that – I wished away my Latina-ness and wished that my family could be as uniform and Americanized as the Marsilii’s. And more than anything I longed to have a “normal,” simple America name – Sarah or Emily would have been great.

I believe that this desperate desire to be like the “norm,” in part came from the power of being white as Nakayama and Krizek describe above. That along with my inability to recognize the power and beauty of having a double identity. Being Same and Other leaves one standing in the middle; being able to view and relate with both the experience of the Other and the experience of the person viewed as the “Same.” This longing to be fully like the “norm – the desire to be like the rest of my white counterparts comes from the sense of privilege, power, and status that Nakayama and Krizek describe. They argue that “Whether or not one discursively positions oneself as “white,” there is little room for maneuvering out of the power relations

imbedded in whiteness. Whiteness, stated or unstated, in any of its various forms, leaves one invoking the historically constituted and systematically exercised power relations” (302). Essentially, whether or not one embraces or rejects one’s whiteness, it is impossible to deny or escape the fact that being “white” holds a certain sense of power; of superiority. Mary Canales, an Assistant Professor at the University of Vermont studied the process of Othering and analyzed her own experience of being simultaneously Same and Other, states: “My consciousness of this interdependency, however, does not change the ideology that often constructs me as “la Guerra,” a fair-skinned woman, who has often “passed” through life as a European American. It is my physical appearance that often marks me as a member of the dominant majority. This assumed “membership” has bestowed upon me many privileges that my darker-skinned Latina sisters have often been denied. Consequently, my skin color and subsequent economic status have separated me from many within the Latino community. My own sense of identity, both internal and external, has, and continues to be, strongly mediated by societal constructions of race, class, and gender” (18).

So often I am in a restaurant or a store and I see a struggling mom, clearly not a U.S. native. She is speaking Spanish to her children, pleading with them to listen. In these moments, I think about how she must see me. Does she see as yet another “white” girl, privileged – who doesn’t know struggle? In these moments, I so desperately want to blurt out some words in Spanish so she knows, I’m one of you. But that’s exactly the thing....I’m not. I’m not quite like her, but I’m also not unlike her. In those moments, I desperately want her to know that my family too has struggled. In those moments, I often find myself frozen – paralyzed, by the fear that I am not fully Same, but I am not fully Other. So who am I? Where do I stand? How do I identify myself? How can I relate with those around me?

Looking back, I believe growing up I constantly flip-flopped between which I identity I wanted to “be” – depending on the situation or whichever was convenient in the moment. Before realizing, that I do not have to “be” one OR the other. Now, I am constantly “switching” and shifting between the two – between being Same and Other. Again, making reference to Kent Ono: “never fully inhabiting” one space or the other, rather switching between the two when necessary. Surely this makes identifying a person who is bi-racial difficult, but it allows for bi-racial persons to connect with two “groups” of people. If we imagine the person who is “Same” as being positioned in the center of a circle and the person who is “Other” as being positioned at the edge of the circle – the person who is Same and Other occupies the space in between the center and the edge. The person who is Same and Other is positioned in the unique space that allows him/her to move between the two – to experience the two and to create a new space in and of itself built on these mixed experiences. Switching between the two and standing in the space between the two allows for one to wear one hat or the other when necessary, without denying the other. Moving into one space over the other, does not mean neglecting the other – it simply means inhabiting that space because the moment calls for it. When inhabiting one space over the other, the other “identity” should be brought into this space as well. This is an advantage to the person of mixed identity and should be celebrated.

There have been times when I have fallen into the trap of Othering. I remember when I was about four or five there was a Latina girl in my class, she was definitely lower class than I was and I remember feeling a sense of not wanting to be associated with her. Later that year, her and her mother got in a car accident. My mother and I went to their house to bring them some food and pay a visit. As her mother and my mother chatted in Spanish, she and I played and ran around their backyard. I remember afterwards feeling a huge sense of shame that I had wanted

to distance myself from her – from someone who despite being very different from, shared so much in common with the story of me and my family. I felt embarrassed that I had brushed her aside when she would try and talk to me and after visiting her and talking with her I realized that she and I were so much alike.

Navigating the Space in Between:

In *The Standard Remains the Same: Language Standardization, Race, and Othering in Higher Education*, Andrea Sterzuk examines the correlation between language, race, and being classified as Other due to difference in language variation. She studies how international students studying at a Canadian university are subject to Othering due to the fact that their English is not the same as Canada's English (54). She states how those who speak English with an accent are automatically subject to marginalization and specifically how those who have learned a different variation of English are seen as "less" because English is seen as "white property" (55). For example, a student from Nigeria who is marginalized and seen as "other" for having a "lesser" English, even though English is the official language of Nigeria.

There is a strong distinction to be made of Latino culture, Spanish culture, and cultures *within* the Latino culture. Within Latin America there are different dialects, pronunciations, colloquialism, and phrases used. For example, in Nicaragua we use the word *ahorita* for "right now;" however, if you travel to Argentina, you will be made fun for saying *ahorita* instead of *ahora* – *ahorita* is viewed as being a "lower" or less proper way of speaking Spanish and would be something people of lower classes say. However, in Nicaragua this is the most common and acceptable way to use the word – by no means it something that only lower class people say. Now, Spanish in Latin America is much softer and has a sort of musicality about it; whereas in Spain it is a bit harsher and rougher. They use less intonation and it sound much less musical; the

way they pronounce certain letters is rougher. In Latin American countries there is a tendency to add “flavor” (for lack of a better word) to words; in Spain this absolutely does not exist. For example, the word for let’s go in Spanish is *vamos* – in Latin America there is a tendency to say *vamonos*; whereas in Spain it would simply be left as *vamos*. This distinction while being minor and subtle holds a big difference and using *vamonos* in Spain would certainly make one appear as being from lower class. There are all sorts of intricacies and complexities in the Spanish language in one country versus another and each country likes their version best. I clearly my mother telling me: “You better not come back with an argentine accent,” when I was traveling to Argentina and when I was going to Spain: “You better not come back saying *vale, vale, vale* after every sentence.” It’s mostly a joke, but these perceptions are very prevalent within all Spanish speaking countries.

After spending six months in Spain, I unintentionally picked up so many of their gestures, mannerisms, and way of speaking. There is a whole different lifestyle and way of perceiving the world that exists there that I adapted and it is entirely different from the United States or from countries in Latin America. In Spain there exists an attitude – a way of carrying oneself, a way of speaking to others and gestures that go with them. It is impossible to not pick these up after living there for a certain amount of time. And so I come back different – with these new mannerisms incorporated in my already state of being.

I firmly believe that we as human beings are a mix of all of our experiences and encounters. This means that aside from having white and Nicaraguan culture engrained in my being, I have also adopted the culture of Argentina, the Basque Country, and Spain. To say that we each only have “one” self is to separate us from our experiences and encounters. Henceforth, all of these: my white, Nicaraguan, argentine, Basque, and Spanish culture, create one new

human experience – one new way of being and seeing the world. All of these create one *singular* mode of being, that does not exist for anyone but myself and it is not necessary to pick one over the other – to BE one over the other. Being simultaneously Same and Other takes a conscious effort in creating one’s own voice. A voice that is uniquely built off of one’s experiences and cultures.

I must ask myself: Who in this world truly sees themselves as being able to fully identify with one singular category? If we incorporate something from every place we visit and every person we meet into our own state of being than how is anyone ever truly one single “thing?” The young girl who is the first in her family to be born in the United States and is of full Guatemalan decent – now growing up amongst English speakers and culture, surely is assimilating to a degree and seeing herself as more than just Guatemalan. Surely, the white girl who travels all around Asian, and meets extraordinary and unique individuals, begins to see and interpret the world differently. And so, I myself do not have a singular way of viewing or understanding the world. Standing in the middle of being Same and Other and having traveled to different places – I’ve adopted ways and cultures outside of the realm that I was born in to. Jacqueline Jones Royster, professor at Ohio State University says, “I find it a necessary aspect of self-affirmation not to feel compelled to choose one voice over another, not to claim one as more authentic, but rather to construct social realities that celebrate, acknowledge, and affirm differences, variety” (Ono 119). And so I am all the parts of myself: I am the Nicaraguan, and the white girl, and the tough and a bit cold Spaniard, and the loud and rambunctious Argentine. All of those voices together, create one singular, unique voice. A voice that has yet to exist. Instead of trying to find one voice that is *my own*, embracing the multiplicity of all my voices provides me with a unique opportunity to view the world from a different perspective altogether.

When I was young we would sometimes attend the Spanish Mass. Spanish Mass was held at 1:30pm and 3:30pm at St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church. If you wanted to attend Spanish Mass you had to AT LEAST be there an hour before. See, St. Anthony's is located in the heart of the Latino community, right in Culmore, and all Latinos are incredibly religious. These were the only two Spanish masses offered in the area, and so the house was packed. You were lucky if you found a seat. These masses were lively filled with loud and energetic music. Little girls and boys in their Sunday best. A priest who learned Spanish to serve the community, gives a homily in a broken Spanish. Looking at these low income families gathered, I always remember feeling really weird...feeling a sense of guilt because I know we had more and also feeling like I could understand because my mother and her family had that type of life. I understood – but I was also removed. I could understand, but I also couldn't fully understand. And I could understand, but I also didn't want to fully understand. A bit of me wished that I couldn't understand, that this wasn't a part of me – a part of my culture and my upbringing.

Lisa Flores discusses having a “foot in both worlds” in her article about creating a discursive space through rhetoric of difference. A foot in both worlds as Flores explains is “the sense of being neither truly Mexican nor American often results in isolation, where Chicanos/as may find that they do not belong in either land” (142). In most of Flores' article, she relates to the Chicano/a experience, however I would argue that most of her points are relatable to any person who sees him/herself as being neither fully Same or Other; neither fully one or the other. This relates to any mixed or bi-racial person, coming from and being able to understand to distinct cultures and worldviews. Flores, discusses the concept of being “unable to negotiate one's mixed identity.”

My sister and I took after my father's coloring and my brothers took after my mother's coloring. This always just really made me upset. I hated that if my mom and I were out together, that people wouldn't think that she was mine and I was hers. I hated that if I was out with my brothers, people wouldn't think we were related. I hated that. I wanted everyone to know. I am theirs and they are mine. I wanted it to be clearly obvious – but the color of our skins didn't allow that to happen. I remember when I was about six or seven, my mom and I went to Chuck E. Cheese. When you enter Chuck E. Cheese, they stamp both you and your guardian with the same stamp so that when you leave they make sure that you're leaving with the right person. Somehow my mom's stamp got washed off and when we were leaving the guard couldn't "assure" that I was leaving with the right person. He asked me several times – are you sure this is your mother? I kept saying yes, and he can't asking with a suspicious look in his eye: Is this your mother? Looking back, I can't help but wonder if this was simply because my mother's stamp was erased and he was doing his job, or if the fact that my mother and I didn't look quite like "mother and daughter" had anything to do with it.

Mary Canales analyzes being simultaneously Same and Other – states "I locate myself as a Latina, specifically as a Chicana, a woman of mixed Mexican and European ancestry. From this position, I am very conscious of the interdependency between the "different" Mexicana world and the "same" European-American world, including their ideologies" (18). She argues that there are two process of Othering – Exclusionary and Inclusionary. She defines Exclusionary Othering as the traditional definition of Othering – the process by which others are stigmatized and marginalized. She defines Inclusionary Othering as the process by which we "utilize the power within relationships for transformation and coalition building" (25). She states that Inclusionary Othering is done by role-taking or world-traveling, in which one person tries to

better understand someone else's situation or world view. She states, "Knowing the Other's world is essential for an intimate knowledge of, and appreciation for the Other – through 'world-traveling,' persons can come to know and understand the Other and interact based on these understandings" (26). Essentially Canales offers Inclusionary Othering as the solution to Exclusionary Othering and while I agree with how she defines Inclusionary Othering as how one should combat Othering – I tend to disagree with her labeling the solution to Othering as another form of Othering itself. I believe that Othering itself is negative and that Inclusionary Othering cannot be called Othering. The solution, along with "others" owning their stories and creating their own agency, is for the oppressor to try to *understand* the others point of view. Once the oppressor begins to see the world from the "others" perspectives, the stories that the oppressor has created about the other begin to break down. Inclusionary Othering, presents us with the opportunity to create empathy and compassion – it pushes us to *understand* rather than assume. It asks us to listen rather than tell and it implores us to look beyond ourselves for answers.

In high school when I was a junior my brother was a sophomore – my brother shared similar skin color with my mother, whereas I shared similar skin color with my father. One day after school got out I was waiting for my brother at my car with some acquaintances and when my brother arrived one of them said: "Damn, your brother got the good genes, huh?" Highlighting the fact that he had tan skin and I had a fairer complexion. This comment while being minute still made me feel separated from my brother – my own flesh and blood. I also couldn't help but wonder how this made my brother feel. I didn't understand why people had to point out this difference? Yes our skin colors didn't match, but that didn't make us any less and for some reason it did.

Call to Action:

I have come to believe that the cyclical process of Othering is not only perpetuated by the oppressors by continuing the assumptions and narratives that are blindly carried on, but also by the oppressed person's reluctance to share his/her story (and surely this feeling of hesitation to own one's story comes from the oppressor's attitude toward the oppressed). However it is a continuous process and will take both the oppressed and the oppressor to combat Othering. I believe that oppressor must be willing to actively listen to the other's stories. The oppressor must be willing to question his/her preconceived assumptions – must be willing to take a closer look and really investigate to find the “truth.” Oppression will never be broken down if we as a society simply believe what past generations have upheld as the truth. I believe that the oppressed person's role in ending the cycle of Othering is to fully share his/her stories. This sharing of stories will allow for some type of agency/empowerment and as Freire states, “by fighting for the restoration of their humanity they will be attempting the restoration of true generosity” (45).

Flores states that “The naming that comes about through a rhetoric of difference allows groups to reflect on the uniqueness of their identity. Pride and solidarity within one's group are essential to a group's interaction with other groups. By building group pride and solidarity, marginalized groups can combat their internalization of themselves as subordinate. Marginalized groups then find security and a sense of home within. Both the rejection of dominant definitions and the affirmation of self-identity contribute to feelings of pride and solidarity” (146). Again, she calls for oppressed individuals or groups of people to share their stories – by doing this she argues that it builds a sense of community and “sameness” through their shared experiences.

Freire states that “it is only when the oppressed find the oppressor out and become involved in the organized struggle for their liberation that they begin to believe in themselves. This discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism, but must include serious reflection; only then will it be a praxis” (65). In other words, the combating Othering cannot only be done by the good intentions of the oppressor – the oppressed must be involved in the fight for their own liberation. Indeed, the oppressed person must take the primary role and the oppressor must assume a secondary role in the fight against Othering.

Ultimately, it requires a sense of partnership between the oppressed and the oppressor – the oppressed must be willing to speak openly and the oppressor must be willing to actively listen and engage in conversation. While one may argue that those truly oppressed may not have the ability to share their stories and in many cases this may be proven as either true or false. However, I would argue that it is even more so the responsibility of the mixed identity person – the person with as Flores said “a foot in both worlds” – to actively and almost forcefully share and own their stories. The person in the middle – the person who occupies that space in between being Same and Other – holds a special responsibility to share his/her stories. This person is uniquely in the space between and is able to reflect on both experiences. This person is in turn able to get the attention of the Other and the attention of the person who is Same since he/she is both Other and Same. This person in the middle has the unique opportunity to understand both perspectives and has the ability to make the experience of the Other understandable to the person who is Same and vice versa.

Conclusion:

After years and years of trying to “fit in” or understand “what I was” like others had so gracefully put it, I came to realize that I don’t have to be one OR the other. I can be both – I can float in the space between the two. I can occupy that space fully and shift between the two when necessary. I can stand in between the two and create my own singular space through my mixed identity and experiences. I think more than anything it was not the realization that I *can* be both Same and Other, but rather the realization that I *want* to be both – that I *want* to embrace, acknowledge, and incorporate both into my life. To not incorporate the two would be an incomplete life and would truly be denying who I really am. I think that it is important to be entirely clear on the difference between realizing that I *can* be both versus realizing that I *want* to be both. While surely much of what I felt growing up was not realizing that I *could* fully incorporate my “two selves” into my state of being; I would argue that much of it was not fully *wanting* to be both – not fully wanting to accept both parts of me.

It was not until I traveled to Argentina the summer after my freshmen year of college that I fell in love with my Latina culture and I realized the need to fully embrace it – to fully own it and not shy away from the discomfort of having a mixed identity. It was on this trip that I realized how absolutely wonderful and powerful it is to be able to identify with multiple types of people and experience – how it really is only an advantage and something that should be embraced and celebrated.

I am able to see now not only the fact that it is “o.k.” to have one more than one voice or identity; but rather the utter importance of owning all of one’s voices. Even more so, as Jacqueline Jones Royster points out: *celebrating* one’s multiple voices. Royster calls each of us to not only accept one’s voices or incorporates one’s voices into one self, but to go beyond that

and celebrate one's voices. This causes me to believe that there is a sort of honor – of responsibility, that one with multiple voices must take on. It is a responsibility to own all of our voices and celebrate them. It is a deep sense of commitment to fully owning our differences – our uniqueness. A sense of commitment to not shying away from the absolute discomfort that having multiple voices or identities can cause and actively sharing one's stories and experiences.

Lastly, I would like to conclude by highlighting the very important and unique role that those who are positioned in between multiple identities hold (and clarify that when I refer to people with multiple identities, I am not just referring to people of mixed race; but also; people with varying experiences and encounters). Those with mixed identities instead of viewing their duality has a burden, should view it as an opportunity to understand and appreciate two distinct perspectives and cultures. These people have the ability to stand in a space positioned between the two and in a sense form a bridge between these two worlds – connecting the stories of the Same to the Other and vice versa. Those in the middle have the ability to switch between the two and create their own singular identity that incorporates the two. Being positioned in the middle grants people with mixed identities the ability to bridge the gap between the two and the opportunity to fully share and own their stories.

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