

THE RE-INVENTION OF INGENIUM: GLORIA ANZALDÚA AS A MODERN
ENACTMENT OF THE GRASSIAN “POET AS ORATOR”

A Thesis
by
KAITLYN S. HAWKINS

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APPROVED BY:

Dr. Bret Zawilski
Chairperson, Thesis Committee

Dr. Tammy Wahpeconiah
Member, Thesis Committee

Dr. Olga Menagarishvili
Member, Thesis Committee

Dr. Carl Eby
Chairperson, Department of English

Max C. Poole, Ph.D.
Dean, Cratis D. Williams School of Graduate Studies

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Abstract

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Kaitlyn Hawkins
B.A., B.S., Middle Tennessee State University
M.A., Appalachian State University

Chairperson: Dr. Bret Zawilski

Ernest Grassi is an Italian born philosopher whose primary scholarly focus was Italian Renaissance Humanist (IRH) theory. Part of this study caused him to begin analyzing the principles of rhetoric, wherein he wrote two books discussing the connection between rhetoric and philosophy. In these texts, Grassi posits IRH as a valid form of rhetorical theory, providing thoughts on the philosophers and theorists who contributed to this understanding of Humanism. This project attempts to further Grassi’s work by utilizing his ideas as a framework to analyze the way Gloria Anzaldúa constructs community in her text *Borderlands*. Specifically, this project isolates three key concepts of IRH theory—“work,” ingenium, and the poet as orator—in order to analyze the effectiveness of Anzaldúa’s method of community cultivation and to understand the rhetorical moves she made in this process of cultivating community. This project also examines the way Anzaldúa’s idea of *mestiza* consciousness expounds upon the Grassian poet as orator figure.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Italian Renaissance Humanism (IRH) is a branch of philosophic thought that frames its questions around the intricacies of language, and its importance in helping us construct our own unique realities. This adherence to the word is reflected within the main concepts of the philosophic theory, which are: the poet as orator, “work,” and ingenium. While these concepts will be defined in more detail later in this chapter—and within subsequent chapters in this project—they all emphasize the word, and its use by humankind to construct not only the communities that we choose to situate ourselves within, but also how we begin to construct our own personal realities. This view of the construction of reality and community differs from that of rationalist views of the world, which often orient themselves around external realities separate from language or humankind, which is a reality that humankind can only discover either through an idea of Forms or through Reason. Because of this predominant view, Humanistic philosophy becomes less of an ideology and more of a resistance to a commonly accepted rationalist world-view.

This emphasis on the word—similar to the emphasis I. A. Richards placed on the word and metaphor—and the necessity of the word and rhetoric as a means to construct and define reality makes IRH not only an interesting philosophical ideal, but also positions it as a very useful and pragmatic rhetorical lens that could be applied to modern literary texts. In particular, this project explores whether it may be productive to put IRH in conversation with radical feminist texts, such as Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands*. In the same way that Humanism is a resistance to traditional philosophy, Anzaldúa’s text is also a resistance to the prevalence of the patriarchy and the racism she experienced growing up in the Rio Grande Valley. Using her unique situation as a *Chicana* growing up

on the Texas side of the U.S./Mexico border, Anzaldúa utilizes this text as a means to carve out a place for herself and her people to exist in the Borderlands between the U.S. and Mexico. Her cultivation of a community for her people, and her utilization of the word in order to craft for herself and others this completely unique Borderlands identity, position her text as an ideal piece to be examined through this Humanist rhetorical lens—seeing as the text itself presents as a personal resistance to the hegemonic cultures the text is positioned against, the same way IRH is a resistance to the hegemonic status of “traditional” philosophy.

The reason for this textual analysis is to take the ideas Grassi cultivated and attempt to find a way to apply them to modern rhetorical works. Grassi believed that rhetoric and philosophy were so closely linked that they could not be separated. As such, he makes his claim that rhetoric is philosophy, and postulates throughout his texts about the interconnected nature of both. However, while Grassi goes into extensive detail about his ideas on the confluence of rhetoric and philosophy, to my knowledge, he never utilized his ideas to rhetorically analyze a major modern work. Therefore, while we are left with plenty of material to suggest that there exists the opportunity to utilize the Humanist tradition as a rhetorical framework, Grassi never supplied a pragmatic example of his ideas. Furthermore, to my knowledge, there has been no previous attempt by any other scholar to utilize Grassi’s ideas as a pragmatic rhetorical framework through which to analyze another text. As such, this project attempts to rectify the lack of pragmatic application of Grassi’s ideas by using IRH theory as a lens to view (and subsequently interact with) Anzaldúa’s text.

So, the goal of this project is to emphasize the applicability of IRH by taking IRH ideology and placing it in conversation with the rhetorical conventions present in Anzaldúa’s text. This analysis leads me to ask several questions:

- 1.) How is community constructed through the Italian Renaissance Humanist concepts of “work,” ingenium, and the poet as orator?
- 2.) How does Italian Renaissance Humanism help us to understand the rhetorical strategies at use within Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands*?
- 3.) How does Anzaldúa construct community within *Borderlands*, and how does this method of constructing communities align with concepts within Italian Renaissance Humanism?
- 4.) How can Italian Renaissance Humanism be seen as relevant to twenty-first century rhetorics, especially when viewing Anzaldúa as an unintentional model?

By answering these questions, we will be better able to understand the rationale behind the rhetorical practices within Anzaldúa’s text; the importance of community building to both group and self-identity; and different methods of appropriating IRH philosophy as a rhetorical lens to be applied to various modern texts and rhetorical situations.

These questions will be considered through the application of discourse analysis. “Modern” discourse analysis is a method of analyzing varied texts that has been in use since the mid-1960s and can presently be defined in various ways (Dijk 2). Although this multiplicity of definitions accompany the term discourse analysis, Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen, and Heidi E. Hamilton summarize the essence of discourse analysis rather well when they say that all definitions “fall into...three main categories...(1) anything beyond the sentence, (2) language use, and (3) a broader range of social practice that includes nonlinguistic and nonspecific instances of language” (1). Discourse analysis seeks to go beyond a simple understanding of the standard grammatical use of language, and beyond the simple understanding of the unique morphemes utilized within a sentence, in order to

understand the interplay of sentences as they exist together, and as they exist within a larger framework of socially/politically charged discourse. This project aims to utilize this method of analysis to analyze the specified major texts of Anzaldúa and Grassi—stated later in this chapter and in chapter two—in this manner in order to recognize moments of confluence. Through this utilization of discourse analysis, this project seeks to analyze the innerworkings of the ideas presented by both Anzaldúa and Grassi, to divine the overlap that could exist between Grassi’s Humanist ideas of community construction and language, and Anzaldúa’s application of inclusive language as a method of building historicity and community.

1.1 Anzaldúa Section

Whereas IRH theorizes the common vernacular practices humankind utilizes in order to construct community and human historicity, Gloria Anzaldúa exhibits these practices throughout her text, and serves as a perfect example of the “Poet as Orator” figure. Her work *Borderlands* serves as a productive way to study the real-world applicability of IRH ideals to modern rhetorical theory. In the same way that different IRH concepts focus around the utilization of language in the construction of community and human history, so too does Anzaldúa in her text *Borderlands*. She uses her multiplicity of languages and her lived experience in order to craft a specified history and borderlands community for those she identifies as living within a shared circumstance. Through exploiting this knowledge of IRH concepts, it becomes possible to analyze the Humanist rhetorical concepts functioning within Anzaldúa’s text and gain a higher understanding of their effectiveness.

Gloria Anzaldúa was a Chicana, feminist, lesbian, and activist who became famous for co-editing *This Bridge Called My Back*, and for writing *Now Let Us Shift...* and the text this project deals with, *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Anzaldúa grew up on the Texas side of the

U.S./Mexico border in the Rio Grande Valley, and as such, her life was riddled with misogyny, racism, and oppression. These influences, coupled with the marginalization that she faced from both American and Mexican cultures for existing in the “borderlands,” reflect both in Anzaldúa’s work, and in her personal life. In the face of these different oppressions, Anzaldúa chose to utilize her talent with the written word in order to craft a text that utilizes this fractured self-identity in order to help cultivate for herself and for others a unified “borderlands” community. The actualization of this community is only aided by Anzaldúa’s personal identification as a Chicana, feminist, lesbian, and an activist holistically, refusing to sacrifice one part of her identity in order to fit into a pre-existing mold. This insistence on remaining true to every part of her identity was one of the first, because until this point, the areas of feminism and race politics did not typically converge. The interdisciplinarity that Anzaldúa calls for within these movements speaks to the plurality of identity not only within herself, but also within many people who are encompassed within these different groups. A more in-depth analysis of Anzaldúa, her life, and the influence she has had on these areas of study will follow in chapter two.

What is truly interesting about *Borderlands/La Frontera* is the rhetorical moves that Anzaldúa makes within her text in an attempt to cultivate a more unified borderlands identity. Throughout her text, Anzaldúa utilizes the plurality of languages that she developed living in the borderlands, and the manipulation of the history and mythos that define her people, in order to cultivate for herself and others this unified sense of community from the fractured self-identity that many develop while living within such a tenuous area. With sections of her work bearing names like “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” and “Linguistic Terrorism,” and reading Anzaldúa’s statements about people attempting to whitewash her

language when she was a child, it becomes easy to see the relevance that retaining this multiplicity of language plays to keeping her own personal identity (75, 80). The importance of keeping personal possession of what makes a person unique is easy enough to understand without the aid of rhetorical devices. However, when considering the Humanistic role that language plays in the construction of personal identity and human community, the act of robbing someone of their language takes on a whole new import and gives those of us who have never experienced such trials a way to begin developing an understanding of what Anzaldúa and her people went through. Essentially, through applying the IRH concepts previously discussed, we as active readers are afforded access; we gain a new and different way of engaging with the text in order to achieve a heightened understanding of the different rhetorical moves Anzaldúa makes.

Another appropriate example of both Anzaldúa's rhetorical genius and Italian Humanisms' ability to afford perspective can be found nestled within Anzaldúa's creation of the mestiza consciousness: "*una conciencia de mujer*" (Borderlands 99). Anzaldúa develops this idea of the "mestiza consciousness," which she describes as the existence of three distinct, separate identities within the mind of a single Chicana/o. She states that this multiplicity of identity is necessary for anyone who lives on the borderlands, in order for them to navigate the different demands made of them by the conflicting dominate cultures within which they have to reside. Constructing and maintaining this multiplicity of identity is something that can require the subjugation of different self-identities at any given moment, which is a skill that is difficult to construct and maintain, and which results in internal conflict of conscious identity. This process of constructing a multi-layered identity is a process that many cannot begin to imagine, and yet rings eerily similar to the "work" that

Grassi suggests is necessary for people to participate within when differentiating ourselves from Nature. Grassi, in his texts, speaks of the construction of personal reality and the understanding of the human mind as something that can only be achieved through “work.” Bearing this in mind, it becomes doubly interesting to consider the way that Anzaldúa is postulating this multifaceted construction of Chicana consciousness. When Grassi says “the human mind can only be understood through work,” one then must wonder what this means for Chicana/o’s (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 10). Since they have to construct for themselves this multiplicity of identities, and make the conscious decision as to which self is to be utilized at any given moment, does that mean they understand more of themselves comparatively through the very existence of their *mestiza* consciousness? If “work” is how the human mind is understood, and Anzaldúa is postulating the necessity of these people to balance this demand continuously throughout their existence, is the reflexive consideration of self in relation to Nature (i.e. society) an active effort they participate in everyday, or is it an errant thought that has become so second nature that they think no more of it than the normal person does of any typical situation?

Considering Anzaldúa’s idea of *mestiza* consciousness in relation to the concept of ingenium is equally as interesting and promising. In Grassi’s work—and throughout the history of IRH theory—different philosophers have debated over the definition of the concept of ingenium. Suffice it to say, for the current purposes, that ingenium is the creative driving force behind any reaction that is necessitated of a person by the exigencies of their surrounding environment. Ingenium, in other words, is the creative spark that lies behind thought that allows rhetoric as a whole the ability to be reactionary and fluid. By affording language the ability to be spontaneous, ingenium gives rhetoric a literal creative license that

is not afforded by rational language. In relation to a *mestiza* consciousness, one could analyze this juggling of multiple identities as the most profound example of ingenuity that Anzaldúa provides in her text. If ingenuity is, in part, what allows people to react to the exigencies of any given environment, and *mestiza* consciousness is the juggling of identities to present to different people in different circumstances, then the proper and efficient use of this multifaceted identity should offer ample opportunity to be analyzed as a feat utilizing ingenuity to the fullest extent of the concept. Anzaldúa recognizes those living in this borderlands society as having to respond to the demands made of them by the dominant Mexican and American cultures, while also having to remain true to their own inner self-identity. The appropriate utilization of each of these separately constructed selves in response to any given demand made by outside influences accurately portrays the agility that is afforded to ingenious thinking, while the “discovering quality,” a prevalent attribute of ingenuity, is something that would allow Chicana/o’s the ability to transition between different self-identities with fluidity and ease (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 92).

1.2 Rationalism and Italian Renaissance Humanism

1.2.1 Rationalist Philosophy

In order to understand the way these texts inform one another, an understanding of all terms involving the pertinent texts must be developed. While this project deals predominantly with Italian Humanist Philosophy, some defining principles of this tradition may be best understood through a discussion of the movement they seem to oppose, which is a rational philosophic tradition, specifically, Grassi positions Humanism against a combination of Platonism and Cartesian rationalism. Cartesian rationalist philosophy is what probably comes to mind when most people think of philosophy, and it remains the most

dominant school of thought within the field of philosophy. Cartesian rationalism was founded upon the ideas of René Descartes and his beliefs about metaphysics, God, doubt, and certainty (see Michael Della Rocca pp. 60-79). Most famously, Descartes believed that all his ideas, theories, and assumptions were subject to doubt; including his own existence. This being said, Descartes acknowledges that all his ideas of the world stem from his assumption that he himself is a real living being. It was this thought which caused him to try, and ultimately fail, to doubt his own existence, which led to his most famous phrase, “I doubt therefore I think, I think therefore I am” (Rocca 74). This school of thought, combined with Platonism, is what gives people the ideas of absolute truth, an adherence to reason, and the concept of mind-body dualism.

Platonic philosophy, first and foremost, is ontologically based. In Platonism, one must consider the “problematic of being” above all else (Mercer 30). This problem, the “problematic of being” refers to the question of “the rational definition of entities,” or, the way that we as humans define what it means to “be” (*Renaissance Humanism* 14; 5). In order to understand and attempt to define this problematic, one must use a rational language, because unlike a poetic language, rational language relies on logical orthography, rather than the more subjective metaphorical speech of poetics (*Renaissance Humanism* 6; 27). This rational language—based on the problematic of being—is ontologically based, and therefore must be ahistorical, excluding “all poetic and rhetorical elements” (*Renaissance Humanism* 7). This ahistorical, unchanging characteristic of rational language presumes that the language is based on concrete ideas—the truths that exist within the minds of every man that must be discovered through the discerning power of the mind itself (Urmson & Rée 243). These concrete ideas are what Plato referred to as Forms, which existed on a separate plane

of existence than our material world and go far in explaining this belief in an ahistorical, rational language (Urmsun & Rée 241-247). If there already exists a separate plane wherein the true forms of every object and idea exist, then what need would humankind have for the existence of a poetic language? In *The Concise Encyclopedia of Philosophy and Philosophies* Urmsun and Rée mention as much when discussing the existence of this other plane: “there is a second world, other than our world of visible things, consisting of the Ones Themselves, each of which is perfectly, purely, and eternally what it is, visible only to the mind itself, or rather not visible but intelligible, grasped only by the pure intellect using bare words” (243). Thus, this existence of an ahistorical, unchanging rational language that does not lend itself to fluidity makes perfect sense in a Platonic frame, because the perfect form of all things already exists somewhere within the scope of discernable reality, but one must possess the clarity of mind and the simplicity of language to put the concept into words. As Grassi explains, “Ontology as the foundation of language precludes any change or diversity in the meaning of words” (*Renaissance Humanism* 6). So, this idea of ontologically based orthography presumes that every definition is eternal, because the naming of a thing presupposes the absolute understanding of that thing (Mercer 33).

This also means that the things named, in becoming eternal, exist outside of history; this ahistorical view of language and definitions requires that these objects being named exist solely within themselves (*Renaissance Humanism* 6). In following the platonic view of philosophy, then, language becomes devoid of any true creative or inventive power, because the purpose of language is not to invent, construct, or explore, but rather to label and categorize. This concept of language being eternal (aka existing outside of history and not subject to the change over time) is something that informs platonic ideals; given this

consideration, not much importance is placed on context, which also allows for platonic philosophy to believe in the idea of absolute truth. Absolute truth is essentially a truth that—once proven true—is always going to be true, no matter the given context (Mercer 33). Because of this highly objective, rationally based, eternal view of language and concepts, rationalism discredits and discounts the importance of anything that bases its credibility on something as subjective as a poetic language, which is only capable of constructing contingent truths. This need for a rational proof—for things to be eternally defined—also discredits something so fluid as poetic language, which is seen as being malleable and superfluous because of its reliance on context and its interaction with nature.

The notion of fluidity and ideas based upon metaphor versus a more definitive understanding of concepts and being is also interesting in relation to rationalism as a philosophical line of thought. Within the realm of rational philosophic thought, there lies the belief that the only thing that should be believed is that which can absolutely be proven true. Anything less than certainty cannot constitute real knowledge (Wahl 100). Another tenant of rational philosophy is that the only way to truly discern the true nature of the workings of the world is through pure reason that remains unclouded by empiricist thought (Urmson and Rée 272). Within the scope of rationalist philosophy, then, the senses are not to be trusted in the creation of true knowledge. While it is acceptable to afford attention to the senses, and to acknowledge that they provide sensory information, this information is valid only so far as it can be proven through the use of purely rational reasoning (Urmson and Rée 272). This concept of viewing a world through nothing but an adherence to pure reason affords that, theoretically, one could find the foundation of all truths, though this thought is only held by the most extreme of rationalist thinkers such as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (Urmson and Rée

273). This idea of understanding the world through nothing but pure reason becomes problematic when one begins to question the process of relating the nature of some form of previously unknown truth to other people without making more empiricist appeals in order to relate the initial idea to others. This relation of previously unknown concepts, at the very least, is what necessitates the existence of a more metaphoric language.

1.2.2 Humanism Defined

Alternatively, Italian Renaissance Humanism is non-ontologically based, and the main issue the philosophy works with is the “problematic of the word” (*Renaissance Humanism* 19; 21). This problematic does not assume that the word pertains to man in any way, or that we must start from humankind and move our understanding towards the word; rather it assumes that the word itself is objective and non-ontologically based, with an “understanding of objectivity” that humankind must discover (*Renaissance Humanism* 21). Because the importance of Humanism is placed on the word itself, Humanists place exaggerated importance in a non-rational—also referred to as a poetic—language, which is a language that is characterized by its ingenious capacity, context, and heavy use of metaphor. I. A. Richards mentions just as much in his text *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* when he discusses the contingent meaning of words. Just as IRH, Richards’ ideas of the interanimation of words relies solely on the interaction that exists between words working together within a sentence, and the spoken and unspoken contexts outside of the sentence as well. This idea, the conversation that exists between words, and the importance of words for their synonyms, antonyms, and all other words related semantically, is what interanimation refers to: a conversation between words and all of their possible meanings, both their synonyms and antonyms. It relies on context, one that is ever-changing and ever shifting.

While people consciously consider the meaning of the words they use, Richards suggests that people choose words as much for their antonyms as their synonyms. This idea of meaning being crafted as much by the negative (the antonyms that are signified but absent) as by the words that are being said and understood, speaks towards the Humanist idea of a truly ingenious language.

This contextualized view of the world is what leads humanist philosophers to place such emphasis on a “living” fluidly developing language, because of the presupposition that language will also be used in a contextualized manner as humankind responds to their environment. Having such a fluid and inventive language is also a requirement of Humanist theory because of the idea that the world is constructed through language, and the moments that humankind reacts to and interacts with are all language specific contexts. This subjective, reactionary utilization of language is also what leads humanist philosophers to place an importance on the creative word over the rational; for IRH asserts that much of language is created in response to an appeal that is made of humankind by nature. Thus, language is used as a response to the exigencies of nature. The act of language as a response requires a poetic language because the rigidity of the rational language does not afford the creative ingenuity or agility of a poetic language (*Renaissance Humanism* 23). This need for a response also emphasizes the importance of the ability to utilize rhetoric to form a contextualized response to nature any time the need arises—in other words, it emphasizes the need for ingenium. Through ingenium, one is able to utilize creative, poetic language to create a contextualized response to the exigencies of nature. These responses to nature are oftentimes created and recorded by a poet figure, which IRH refers to as the “poet as orator” (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 74, 76, 83). The poet as orator figure is one of the main concepts in

the Grassian conceptualization of IRH because of the many aspects of everyday life that the poet contributes to. Today, poets are viewed in many different ways—as artists, activists, teachers, etc.—but they are typically not thought of as being historians, or the building blocks of society; two qualities which IRH philosophers readily attribute to the poet as orator (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 74). The creation of human historicity and human community through the recording and deciphering of texts and situations is a job taken up by the poet as orator.

While the poet as orator figure uses ingenuity in order to help humankind understand the exigencies of nature, the creation of this understanding is only made possible for every unique individual through the concept of “work” (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 10, 33, 72, 74). Grassi states that this concept of “work” is inherently necessary for every man to be able to consider themselves as being separate from nature. Part of what affords humankind the ability to see themselves as being separate from the natural order is this ability that humankind possesses to do the work necessary to create an understanding of reality that is separate from nature. So, in the very act of imagining humankind as being humankind, people must necessarily take part in “work” (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 33). Similarly, Lloyd F. Bitzer, in his article “The Rhetorical Situation,” conceives of rhetoric itself as a method that can be used to alter reality (4). Bitzer shares with Grassi this idea that language is both reactionary, and ingenious, allowing humankind the freedom and capability to conceive of a world that is inherently contextualized and unique to every individual. In the same way Grassi assumes that humankind must work to conceive of an existence apart from nature, Bitzer assumes that rhetoric is what individual people use in order to achieve this interaction with their own perceptions of reality.

1.2.3. Nature

Before continuing with the discussion of IRH concepts, it may help to clarify the meaning of the word Nature. This term, when utilized throughout Grassi's two texts, takes on a slightly different meaning than the traditional understandings of the term. The Oxford English Dictionary lists the first two definitions of the term nature as being "the phenomena of the physical world collectively, including plants, animals, the landscape, and other features and products of the earth as opposed to human beings," or as "the basic inherent features, character, or qualities of something." In IRH, however, Nature is understood as having a more direct effect on humankind, which Grassi explains when saying "it is nature which 'forces' us and 'guides' us...and we are, therefore, concerned with the realization of the 'virtues' in actual human society" (*Renaissance Humanism* 56). Nature, when discussed in IRH, often is conceptualized as being that which is separate from humankind, and often makes some form of demand on us. Thus, the IRH concept of Nature does fall in line with the idea of "nature" as being "the phenomena of the physical world," so long as one affords that physical world the agency to constantly make demands of humankind (*Renaissance Humanism* 67).

The demands made of humankind by Nature can be anything from the basic needs for human existence (the need for food, shelter, and comfort) to more existential needs of understanding, stating "the ethical, economic, and political disciplines—as responses to nature—are dis-covered by the ingenium: without these responses man would neither live nor lead a human existence" (*Renaissance Humanism* 69). In Vives view, most of humankind's creations have developed as a case of humankind responding to the appeals made of us by Nature, again with Nature being whatever external force separate from ourselves that is

making demands of us in some capacity. There are other views of Nature throughout Humanism, though, as is shown through the thoughts of Leonardo da Vinci, who believes that Nature is a concept that defies concrete definition. In his own words, “Nature is full of reasons that have never been experienced” (qtd. in *Renaissance Humanism* 103). Even making this qualification, however, da Vinci also affords Nature a more agentic capacity, as Grassi tells us, stating “it is, therefore, impossible to speak of ‘nature’ outside the boundaries of experience,” because Nature’s meaning and existence are known only through its relation to humankind (*Renaissance Humanism* 103).

1.2.4 Poet as Orator

The concept of the Poet as Orator is interesting because of its focus not only on seeking understanding, but also on the utilization of that understanding to help better the community and to construct human historicity. This process of constructing human historicity is interesting to consider in relation to Cartesian Rationalism, and the idea of a fixed or rigid history that—once “created”—can never be changed. With this view of history, one runs the chance of viewing history itself as existing outside of change or being immune to alternative interpretations. With the creation of a human historicity, the poet allows for those within their community to see themselves as being firmly situated within and represented by a common history that is shared with their people. While it may seem similar to a more Cartesian view of history, historicity allows for one to situate themselves firmly within this shared sense of common identity and could aid in the creation of community. Throughout Grassi’s representation of Italian Humanist theory, poets have been hailed as the procurers of truth, the recorders of history, and as a necessity for the formation of the human community (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 75; *Renaissance Humanism* 11, 35). Horace, for

example, refers to poets as “*vates*” or “*revealers*” (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 75). For Horace, the job of the poet is to seek and acquire knowledge that is inaccessible to the everyday person, and then use that knowledge to reveal truths about the world for the rest of humankind. When considering the function of the poet through Albertino Mussato’s point of view, Grassi said that “The poet’s function is to make apparent the significance of the past in so far as it has a decisive effect on the future” (*Renaissance Humanism* 11). So, along with understanding the more obscure reality of the world, poets are also charged with the recording of this knowledge, in an attempt to further contribute to the continued understanding of the world by humankind. This attempt at understanding, coupled with the responsibility of recording the happenings of the world and the insights of the individual poet, as Coluccio Salutati might say, “results” in “the human community in its historicity” (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 35).

Another defining quality of both Italian Humanism, and the Poet as Orator is that it acknowledges the necessity of utilizing a non-rational, metaphoric language when attempting to convey the reality of a situation to those who will never experience it for themselves. While traditional Platonism assumes the use of a rational language to pull these truths outside of the scope of corruption by the senses and metaphoric language, Italian Humanism suggests that this poetic, metaphoric language is necessary to allow others to fully translate a concept from the past into a more modern context. As Grassi explains when speaking again of Mussato’s view of language, “through the divine spirit manifesting itself in the language of poetry, all being[s].... are disclosed by the rhythmic, regulated, and at the same time regulating, language of poetry” (*Renaissance Humanism*, 12).

1.2.5 Ingenium

Ingenium is, simply put, the point of originating formulation of ideas. The moment of ingenium is equated to many different moments and abilities, often being called an answer, a response, an original idea, the “discovering quality” that rests behind ideas, what allows humans to find similitudes, etc. (*Renaissance Humanism*, 24; 27; 56; 67; 69). One thing that these considerations of ingenium seem to have in common is that they are reactionary. While it is improper to reduce ingenium to merely a reactionary happening, this need for a response, the subsequent reaction that occurs via the prompting of nature, and the reactionary nature of language plays a role in the construction of ingenium as a concept. Some scholars view individual moments of ingenium as being individual responses to “the appeal of nature,” which is essentially an exigency made of humankind by Nature (*Renaissance Humanism* 69; Vives, Ovid, Vergil, Statius). Vives, for example, believes that ingenium is the “answer” to the “question” of “the appeal.” This is not to say that ingenium is always the answer to any question made by the appeal of Nature on humankind, rather that the utilization of ingenium is what allows humankind to create the answers needed to respond to the exigencies presented by Nature. When discussing Vives’ views of the concept, Grassi says “The ‘needs,’ the requirements attendant upon man always provide the motivation to seek and find responses” (*Renaissance Humanism* 67). To Vives, this “motivation” is ingenium; ingenium affords poetic language the agility necessary to respond creatively to these demands that a rational language does not afford.

This agility, and even malleability, of language is something that is also necessitated in Burke’s conceptualization of humankind in his text “Definition of Man.” In this piece, Burke describes humankind as being a “symbol using... animal... separated from his natural

condition by instruments of his own making” (16). Burke’s idea of humankind using symbols (i.e. writing) in order to construct our understanding, as well as his claim that people are separated from nature by his/her own constructs, and the idea of this need for hierarchy, all necessitates the ingenious capacity of ingenium. Without the inventive nature of ingenium, humankind would lack the proclivity for creation of the tools that—after conceiving of ourselves outside of Nature—humankind's continued existence ultimately requires.

Ingenium is also a “discovering activity” which helps humankind discern the truth of reality, something that is useful in Vives’ consideration of ingenium being—in part—a response to Nature. In truth, this discovering quality is one of paramount importance to Vives, because it is the ingenious power of poetic language which allows the word the acuteness necessary to “penetrate to the heart of the argument” (*Renaissance Humanism* 69). Grassi tells us that “Vives speaks constantly of the demands made by nature: when they respond to these demands in the *artes*, humans elevate themselves to something greater” (*Renaissance Humanism* 69). So, ingenium is the moment of initial inspiration for ideas, a response that humankind makes to Nature through the use of poetic, rhetorical language to reveal truths that have—as of yet—not been considered.

1.2.6. “Work”

Grassi, in speaking about the process of understanding the “human world” says that “Man can manifest himself only through his own ‘transpositions,’ and this is the essence of his work in every field of human activity” (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 33). In other words, the very participation of humankind in the creation of transpositions in order to understand the human world is the “work” that defines humankind and its reality. These transpositions refer to the way that humankind synthesizes perceived information and turns that information into

understanding of these perceptions; essentially these transpositions are the way that each person defines things from their own unique perspective. So, the very essence of humankind creating their own unique understanding of reality is “work.” Humankind, in being the only known species with the capability of conceiving a reality that exists apart from nature, is inherently given more work to do: the work of constructing a reality that is separate from nature.

It is easy to draw connections between this concept of “work” and transpositions back to Burke’s essay “Definition of Man.” As stated previously, in this essay, Burke describes humankind in multiple unique ways, one of those being “inventor of the negative” (9). Burke defines this idea of the “inventor of the negative” as being a result of “human symbol systems,” stating that it was the creation of language itself that allows for this idea of a negative. Burke also states that no negatives exist within nature, because no tools exist within nature for any creature to create an understanding of negatives (9). While at first this similarity to transpositions may seem ambiguous, the relation comes from considering the work that humankind puts into the creations of these negatives. This idea of a negative, of “no,” is what allows humankind to conceive of himself as being separate from nature. Humankind instinctively takes place in meaning making transpositions to understand what is happening in the greater world, and one of these transpositions is this understanding of the negative. Like Burke says, we understand the world, and ourselves, through this idea of what is not. We know we are humans in part because we know that we are not tables, or chairs. The same way that we understand ourselves as being apart from Nature through this concept of work, so too do we understand of ourselves through this idea of the negative.

One can also understand the concept of work through Burke's ideas in his essay "Terministic Screens." Grassi posits work as the way that humankind creates reality based upon the transpositions that our minds make given the observations made of the greater world around us. So, every person participates in work when attempting to understand their own unique reality. Similarly, Burke says of terministic screens that "Even if any given terminology is a *reflection* of reality, by its very nature as a terminology it must be a *selection* of reality; and to this extent it must function also as a *deflection* of reality," essentially stating that these terministic screens can be used to understand different aspects of reality depending on which one we apply to a given situation ("Terministic Screens" 45). These screens are like camera lenses, bringing into focus whatever aspect of reality we are choosing to focus on; this process of deciding which screen to apply at any given moment reflecting the work that Grassi says is necessary to create our unique versions of reality. Whereas Grassi presents "work" as happening at any given moment in order for humankind to create meaning, Burke offers a smaller view of this work, breaking down the idea of "work" into representable screens that can be changed and reapplied at will. Another interesting similarity is the dependency that Grassi places on work, and Burke places with these screens. Grassi credits humankind's very ability to understand ourselves as being separate from nature to work, stating that this work is what also allows for each of us to craft our understanding of our own minds, saying that "the mind can be known exclusively through its own works" (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 10). Similarly, Burke insinuates that the very creation of every person's understanding of reality may be comprised of a multitude of terministic screens:

for the sake of the argument, I'm even willing to grant that the distinction between *things moving* and *people acting* is but an illusion. All I would claim is that, illusion or not, the human race cannot possibly get along with itself on the basis on any other intuition. The human animal, as we know it, *emerges into personality* by first mastering whatever tribal speech happens to be its particular symbolic environment. ("Terministic Screens" 53)

Thus, Burke too postulates the existence of humankind as we know ourselves to be as being at least tangentially connected to the work of creating screens through which we create our specific understandings of reality.

The very nature of this particular problematic creates an interesting cycle; the reason people exist outside of nature is this ability to conceive of humanity as being separate from Nature, but in order to understand our "human world," humankind must participate in the meaning-giving transpositions.

1.3 Scope of the Project

The scope of this project does not afford the time to explain to the fullest extent all of IRH theory, or all of those who have influenced the ideas over the years. However, this project will further define the concepts briefly laid out in order to present a comprehensive snapshot of these specific subsections of IRH and the relevance that exists in pursuing IRH as a productive theoretical lens through which to analyze modern texts.

Furthermore, this project uses Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* not because she knowingly participated in IRH rhetorics, but because she unintentionally serves as a productive model displaying the role the poet as orator figure assumes in establishing the historicity of a given

community. The goal of this project is not to redefine Anzaldúa's work, but rather to illustrate how modern methods of rhetorical practice emphasize the applicability of IRH ideals, and to argue for the relevance of IRH in modern rhetorical theory.

1.4 Description of Chapters

This thesis project—as it stands—will contain five chapters: the current chapter sets the parameters within which the rest of this project will function, providing a basic overview of the concepts discussed throughout this project, including Italian Renaissance Humanism and Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

Chapter two will provide a review of the literature that further examines the disparate modes of analysis being utilized throughout the project. It will begin by providing a history of the rhetorical theory behind Italian Humanism as a developing philosophy, looking back to the Sophists and the Rationalists in order to situate the theory amongst prevalent, existing modes of rhetorical tradition; then it will move on to a history of feminist theory that is often tied with Anzaldúa's work and personal life; ending with a brief examination into the history of Anzaldúa herself as a self-proclaimed lesbian Chicana activist.

Chapter three will be the beginning of the two analysis chapters, where I will utilize the Italian Renaissance Humanist concepts of “work,” ingenium, and the poet as orator to examine the way Anzaldúa constructs community in her text *Borderlands*. These three concepts will be utilized as rhetorical lenses through which to examine the function of different chapters within Anzaldúa's text as she creates this borderlands community. Specifically, this chapter will analyze the sections titled “*Movimientos de rebeldia y las culturas que traicionan*” and “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” in Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*.

Chapter four will be the second of the analysis chapters, where I will utilize the Italian Renaissance Humanist concepts of “work,” ingenium, and the poet as orator to examine Anzaldúa herself, and the way she suggests bridging communities within her text, *Borderlands*. Through utilizing “work” and ingenium, and by serving as an example of a modern “poet as orator,” Anzaldúa speaks in the languages of lived experience, thus embodying the essence of the concepts of IRH. These concepts will also be utilized as a rhetorical tool through which to examine specific examples of Anzaldúa and her personal involvement with the bridging of community within her text, specifically in the section “*La conciencia de la mestiza/ Towards a New Consciousness*.”

Chapter five will serve as the conclusion for this project and will contain further implications and suggestions for the pragmatic application of Italian Renaissance Humanist theory as a functional section of rhetorical theory. It will also include suggestions for future areas of study and pragmatic application.

Chapter Two: Review of Scholarship

Before attempting to answer the questions posited last chapter, I will provide an overview of the scholarship that will be utilized throughout this project. I will begin by looking into Anzaldúa's life, before discussing her text *Borderlands*, and providing a small amount of insight into the multitude of scholarship written on her text. I will then move on to provide an overview of Grassi's biographic information, before discussing Grassi's pertinent texts, and drawing connections between those and modern rhetorical theorists.

2.1 Gloria Anzaldúa

2.1.1 Gloria Anzaldúa Bibliographic Information

Gloria Anzaldúa, herself a sixth generation Chicana, was born in South Texas just 25 miles from the US/Mexico border. Her parents settled down when she was around nine, so she mainly lived in Jesus Maria, part of the Rio Grande Valley (*Borderlands* 3-5). Anzaldúa was born in 1942 and grew up in a time and place where her Chicana status caused her to face much racism, with teachers and other adults attempting to assimilate Anzaldúa and her peers. In the face of these and other struggles, Anzaldúa still managed to obtain an undergraduate degree and a master's degree in English and education (*Borderlands* 4). While seeking a Ph.D. at UT Austin, Anzaldúa became frustrated that the school would not recognize Chicana literature as a valid area of study, which caused her to leave the program and move to California to pursue other opportunities (*Borderlands* 4-5). The combined experiences of these oppressions and other life experiences, along with the history of the Chicana people, lead Anzaldúa to create the text being studied now: *Borderlands*.

2.1.2 *Borderlands* and Language

Borderlands is a work that combines personal narrative, poetry, and history to create a text that challenges readers to question not only the creation and nature of borders, but also the construction of personal and cultural identity. Through cultivating this holistic borderlands identity, Anzaldúa forces readers to realize that borders are not just a physical representation of a separation of space, they are also constraints that change people and communities on a more mental/emotional and even spiritual level. These borders create an economic, cultural, and social divide that cannot be easily overcome. Through this realization, readers are then able to read Anzaldúa's text while considering the effect that all types of borders have on people, and how these play a role in both the construction of personal identity and the creation of these "border communities."

Sonia Saldívar-Hull has written extensively on Gloria Anzaldúa, her life, and the importance of her works. She is a founding member of the Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa and Her Works alongside Norma E. Cantú and has edited texts such as the *El Mundo Zurdo* series and authored the text *Feminism on the Border*. When describing Anzaldúa's first solo text in *Feminism on the Border*, Saldívar-Hull said "Anzaldúa's feminist theory and methodology in *Borderlands* is ideological analysis, materialist historical research, as well as race, class, and gender analysis. It is never an ahistorical 'politics of equal oppressions'... because Chicana feminism on the border develops from an awareness of specific material experience of the historical moment" (78). Andrea Lunsford also takes a stab at outlining Anzaldúa's creative style in *Borderlands* in relation to the tumultuous personal/political climate that surrounds the borderlands, saying:

Living in and rendering such contradictions and transformations calls for a new kind of writing style. In Anzaldúa's case, this means a rich mixture of genres—she shifts from poetry to reportorial prose to autobiographical stream of consciousness to incantatory chants to sketches and graphs—and back again, weaving images and words from her multiple selves and from many others into a kind of tapestry or patchwork quilt of language. (“Towards a Mestiza Rhetoric” 2)

Anzaldúa utilizes personal narrative, historical narrative, poetry, and historical fiction at different points within her text to create an illuminating work that analyzes the hegemonic Mexican and American societal standards and critiques their non-feminist, reductive views of those who grow up in the borderlands. Anzaldúa's response to the patriarchal, unbending nature of both cultures is to cultivate her own border culture within the borderlands, where she and others like her can live in peace. While many picture the borderlands to be the physical area separating U.S. and Mexico, Anzaldúa describes them as being anywhere that the “third world grates up against the first and bleeds” (*Borderlands* 25). Anzaldúa cultivates this community through her refusal to diminish her language for the sake of one culture or the other, and through her idea of *mestiza* consciousness.

In her article “Storytelling as Oppositional Culture: Race, Class, and Gender in the Borderlands,” Theresa A. Martinez purposes the idea that Anzaldúa's text can be seen as an informed example of storytelling as a method of oppositional culture which allows Anzaldúa the opportunity to critique methods of colonization and domination while also telling her own personal story of growing up in the borderlands. Martinez identifies some of the major themes of Anzaldúa's text as being:

a historic legacy for Chicane/os of internal colonialism, institutional discrimination, and racial formation; the historic resistance of the community and family through kinship and art, Chicane/o experience of the matrix of domination in American society along the axes of race, class, sexual orientation...; the significance of other ways of knowing and other forms of spirituality in struggling against either/or dichotomous thinking and in resisting oppression... and an evident reliance on the power of storytelling as an act of empowerment. (38-39)

Martinez identifies Anzaldúa's text as considering such important avenues as internalized colonization and internalized heterosexism, the same time that it critiques institutionalized discrimination and hegemonic domination on a larger scale. This dualistic goal of Anzaldúa's prose and poetry speaks to her shrewdness as a theorist and a scholar, while the underlying story of Anzaldúa's personal life is recounted with a current of empowerment and hope for a more inclusive and racially accepting future. As Martinez puts it, Anzaldúa's "stories speak of a Chicano/a community that also resorts to sexism and homophobia. At the same time, her stories speak of cultural survival and resistance in myriad forms including tribal thinking in kinship practices and indigenous art, the emergence of *la facultad*... the birth of the mestiza consciousness...and the performance art of the storyteller" (50). For Martinez, the "fractured" identity of Anzaldúa, the Hispanic, the indigenous Indian, the woman, the border-dweller, the lesbian, the story teller, and the spiritual activist all come together to create this idea Anzaldúa poses of someone who is truly a *mestizaje*. Anzaldúa represents a combination of all these different identities, leading to the *mestiza* consciousness, which causes one to be more than the culmination of their parts. Through this supposedly fractured identity

Anzaldúa is able to tell a story, and cultivate an existence for herself and others, which is transcendent of either Hispanic or American societal norms.

2.1.3 *Borderlands* and History

Anzaldúa also uses *Borderlands* as a way to construct for her people (those Chicana/o's who are unrepresented in the borderlands) their own personal history, through her utilization of the historical narrative she weaves through her text (*Borderlands* 23-35; 49-56). While much of Anzaldúa's text is built upon her personal narratives, her poetry, and her analysis of what growing up in the borderlands does to the creation/formation of one's consciousness, she also utilizes her text as a way to formulate for herself and those in her community their own personalized historicity, since theirs is a story that historically gets left out of the American history books. In this amalgamation of historical domination carried out by Anglo-Saxon people, and the myths and stories of the Aztec people and culture, Anzaldúa creates this section [better word] of human historicity that is tailored specifically to tell of the struggle that her people went through. It also explains why the current borderlands culture exists. In creating this narrative for her people, Anzaldúa not only gives them a way to understand where they come from, she offers these [...] in the borderlands a way to take control of their own narrative, and she calls them to utilize this knowledge, history, and affinity for a plural identity to control the future narrative of the borderlands. As Saldivar-Hull points out in *Feminism on the Border*, these historical stories that Anzaldúa recounts may be better labeled as well-researched historical fiction, or as being "based on true events" rather than being accepted as hard facts, but even that authorial choice allows for her readers to gain some insight into what Anzaldúa accomplished (or was attempting to accomplish) with this text (70). While the narrative that Anzaldúa creates in her text would (most likely)

still be as poignant if all the facts were completely accurate, Anzaldúa is showing her readers the power that exists in controlling one's own narrative. While the circumstances that exist within the text may not be completely accurate, enough of the history and traditions ring true for those Chicana/o's reading the text that they can feel a sense of belonging while reading Anzaldúa's story. What's more, Anzaldúa is giving these people something concrete that they can all stand behind and use to give themselves a formal borderlands identity. By taking different aspects of the true histories of her people, and embellishing them to achieve maximum emotional appeal, Anzaldúa shows the power that exists in being able to control the narrative and causes readers to consider the nature of the histories that they themselves accept as fact.

2.1.4 *Borderlands and Mestiza Consciousness*

Possibly one of the most notable of Anzaldúa's creations is her idea of *mestiza* consciousness. In her text, Anzaldúa says "from this racial, ideological, cultural and biological cross-pollination, an 'alien' consciousness is presently in the making—a new *mestiza* consciousness, *una conciencia de mujer*. It is a consciousness of the Borderlands" (99). This *mestiza* consciousness is something that can only seemingly be created when someone (Anzaldúa specifies women) is forced to straddle two or more cultures, being subject to the domination of both while receiving the benefits of neither culture, both undervaluing the work of someone who always remains an "other." She then goes on to specify the purpose of this freshly cultivated consciousness, saying "the work of *mestiza* consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended" (102). Anzaldúa stipulates the creation of this *mestiza* consciousness as the multiplicity of

consciousness's having to exist within the mind of a single person, born out of necessity. When discussing this subversive creation of a fractured psyche, Teresa McKenna, in her article "Intersections of Race, Class and Gender: The Feminist Pedagogical Challenge," says "*Mestizaje*, for Anzaldúa, is a means to draw affirmation from this place of division and separation. Through the mixture of the races, a biological and metaphoric concept, a new consciousness can be constructed based on intersections of race, class and gender" (34). According to McKenna, Anzaldúa utilizes this highly politicized geography as a way to create a conscious identity that defies hegemonic political and social standards, while legitimizing the existence of those in the borderlands. Lunsford says that Anzaldúa's *mestiza* consciousness "rejects either/or in favor of both/and then some, of an identity that's always in process" (2). The way Lunsford sees it, Anzaldúa focused her time on creating an inclusive, rather than exclusive, brand of *mestiza* consciousness. This inclusivity that is noted by Lunsford has been noted by many other scholars as well, though not everyone views it as being beneficial. One such scholar who speaks about this issue in-depth is Yvonne Yarbrow-Bejarano in her article "Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*: Cultural Studies, 'Difference', and the Non-Unitary Subject."

While the main topics of consideration for Yarbrow-Bejarano's article are examining the influence Anzaldúa's ideas had on theorizing difference and studying the reception—and critique—that Anzaldúa's *mestiza* consciousness faced, Yarbrow-Bejarano discusses in detail the critical reception that Anzaldúa's theory of consciousness faced. Of these, Yarbrow-Bejarano states "Primary among these concerns are what are seen as the text's essentializing tendencies, most notably in the reference to 'the Indian woman' and the privileging of the pre-Columbian deity Coatlicue, which obscures the plight of present day Native women in

the Americas” (17). Yarbro-Bejarano also discusses the romanticized link that exists between Chicana/o’s and the role this plays in the construction of Chicano identity, a connection that seems to be present to some extent in Anzaldúa’s text. Yarbro-Bejarano also points to the contrast that exists in different methods of representing the Chicana/o conscious identity, citing the difference that exists between representations of Anzaldúa, and those of Chicana/o’s like Luis Valdez and Alurista (16-20). Yarbro-Bejarano states specifically “this seems to be the crucial distinction between the project of such Chicano Movement artists as Luis Valdez or Alurista and Anzaldúa’s project in *Borderlands*: whereas the first invoked *indigenismo* in the construction of an exclusionary, singular Chicano identity, the latter invokes it in the construction of an inclusive, multiple one” (17). Yarbro-Bejarano also discusses the nature of these essentialist claims themselves, asking why terming Anzaldúa’s representation of Chicana/o identity as essentialist is even an interesting or productive claim to make. Perhaps examining what it is about a text, or a textual representation of a specific cultural identity, could be more productive and answer more questions about the working of hegemonic social and scholarly society than simply making the claim itself. In the end, Yarbro-Bejarano considers these claims of essentialism in conscious identity and her use of the Indian Coatlicue to be shortsighted, and instead focuses on Anzaldúa’s construction of the *mestiza* consciousness and the utilization of this and other communal constructions in the text to further cultivate a borderlands identity (20).

In the same way that different IRH concepts focus around the utilization of language in the construction of community and human history, so too does Anzaldúa in her text *Borderlands*. She uses her multiplicity of languages and her lived experience in order to craft

a specified history and borderlands community for those she identifies as living within a shared circumstance.

2.2 Ernesto Grassi

2.2.1 Ernesto Grassi Bibliographic Information

Throughout much of Ernesto Grassi's career, he focused on Italian Humanist views of philosophy, paying special attention to the importance that rhetorical language plays in the formulation of these philosophic ideals. This idea is not entirely widespread in relation to the field of philosophy, but many scholars seem to view the importance of Grassi's work within this blurred line of philosophical/rhetorical theory (McNabb 82; Marassi & O'Malley 245; Verene 134). That being said, not everyone believes that Grassi's work is important in the realm of creating a new form of philosophical thought, believing it to be lacking the basis necessary in order to make such a claim (Fierz 104-105). Although scholars like Fierz may not view Grassi as important in developing "a new foundation of philosophy," Grassi does offer the chance for something just as promising: a new methodological application of rhetorical theory.

Ernesto Grassi was born in Milan Italy in 1902. Because of certain illness that Grassi contracted as a child, he began to think a lot about how people make meaning, and how the world works, which lead to him gaining an interest in philosophy, one he pursued throughout his academic career. In order to gain a more robust knowledge of different—i.e. non-Italian—philosophy, Grassi attended college at the University of Freiburg, where he obtained his doctorate. During his tenure at the University of Freiburg, Grassi became acquainted, and started working with, Martin Heidegger (Foss et al. 84). Because of Heidegger's disinterest in the Italian Humanist philosophers, and because of his assertion that they provided no new

valuable information regarding true philosophic thought, Grassi was forced to reexamine his own personal views of Italian Humanism in relation to German philosophy, most notably German Idealism and Heidegger's existential phenomenology (Marassi & O'Malley 254; Fierz 104).

While most of Grassi's texts revolve around different issues of philosophy, he began his career as a professor of Italian literature (Fierz 104). This study of literature and Italian Renaissance Humanism is what eventually lead Grassi to his understanding of rhetoric, and his insistence in rhetoric's important role in the realm of philosophy. Through this study of Italian literature, Grassi also ran into what would become one of his largest philosophical influences: Giambattista Vico. It is Vico who solidified Grassi's belief that Italian Renaissance Humanism afforded the proper amount of care to the concepts of rhetoric and the power of poetic language within the realm of philosophy. Because of these studies, and because of Heidegger's influence, Grassi developed an interesting take on philosophy in relation to both the German and Italian traditions. As such, much of Grassi's work is written either about the influence and importance of Italian Humanism, or about the supposed lack that Grassi identified (in his own conceptualization of philosophy) as existing within existentialism and German Idealism. Some of his most notable works in this area include *Kunst und Mythos*, *Macht des Bildes: Ohnmacht der Rationalen Sprache Zur Rettung des Rhetorischen*, *Heidegger and the Question of Renaissance Humanism: Four Studies*, *Folly and Insanity in Renaissance Literature*, *Rhetoric as Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition*, and *Renaissance Humanism: Studies in Philosophy and Poetics*.

Because of the prolific nature of Grassi, this project limits itself to considering just a few of his texts on Humanism and the potency of the rhetorical language, focusing

predominantly on Grassi's texts *Rhetoric as Philosophy* and *Renaissance Humanism*, and his articles "Why Rhetoric is philosophy," and "The Originary Quality of the Poetic and Rhetorical Word: Heidegger, Ungaretti, and Neruda."

2.2.2 Grassi's Articles

In his article "The Originary Quality of the Poetic and Rhetorical Word: Heidegger, Ungaretti, and Neruda" Grassi concisely and poignantly states that his purpose for the article is "to clear the philosophical function of poetical and rhetorical language" and "to demonstrate what... constitutes the deep, tragic quality of all poetic statements as a source of human historicity" (248). Grassi accomplishes this by examining the philosophical work of Martin Heidegger and by examining different works by the poets Pablo Neruda and Giuseppe Ungaretti. In his work, Heidegger states that which Grassi also believes to be unequivocally true, "that reality cannot originally be unveiled in its meaning through a rational process" ("Originary Quality" 249). Because of this belief, Grassi analyzes Heidegger's work in relation to that of these two poets in an attempt to establish the preeminence of a rhetorical language, which is what allows poetics the originary, inventive ability that it possesses (250). Grassi also marries the ideas of Heidegger to those of Giambattista Vico when he discusses the intersectionality of poetics, rhetoric, and history in order to demonstrate the interconnected nature of these seemingly disparate areas of thought. In this piece, Grassi grounds his thesis in the need for rhetoric and poetics when viewing philosophy through the eyes of Heidegger's insistence that the rational language is incapable of achieving the answer to the question of the problem of Being. As Grassi puts it:

poetry therefore is not a referral to something else, but the unveiling of the Being in what is its intimate *alienation* from us and at the same time *intimacy* with us. In other

words, the original form of existential reminiscence deriving from the call of the Being... does not consist in the manifestation of an abstract truth through the rational process, but in a *revelation*. (254)

In this sense, Grassi views language not as a function of what people do in a process of naming, nor does he see language as a tool that is to be merely used by humankind, but rather Grassi gives rhetorical language the power to reveal to us the truth about Nature, ourselves, and Being, whatever form the answer to the question of Being appears in. While what Fierz says—that rhetoric by itself may not be enough of a basis for us to construct an answer to the question of Being—may be true, Grassi posits rhetorical language not as the answer to the problem of Being, but rather as a necessary tool for understanding the nature of the answer once one can be found. Or, put differently, even if rhetorical strategies cannot in and of themselves provide the answer to Being, the ingenious language which rhetoric fosters will be necessary for the conception of the answer to the problem of Being.

In this piece, Grassi focuses solely upon the creation and nature of the word as rhetorical, versus logical. In creating this distinction, and in arguing for the reality of the rhetorical over the rational language, Grassi mentions the multitude of meanings that can be derived from the same words, while discussing the rhetorical function of language as a process of becoming and discovery rather than one of stagnant existence. In explaining this idea, Grassi says “depending on the situation, the same word has different meanings,” an idea that does not seem wholly new (349). Continuing the thought, though, Grassi says “In addition, the being, by having constantly to face new calls while realizing itself in the *here* and *now*, must constantly recur to the metaphor, i.e., to the transferal of new meanings to words, terms, language” (349). This shifting quality that Grassi ascribes to the rhetorical

language is exactly the quality that rhetorician/ semiotician I.A. Richards describes in his book *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* when he creates the concept of interanimation. Richards describes interanimation as the interaction between words that exist together in a single sentence (51). In other words, interanimation is the ability words have to work together to create a new contextualized meaning for themselves within a given sentence. When considering interanimation, the word “red” when used in one sentence can mean something completely different (conceptually speaking) than the word “red” in the next sentence. This holds true, for Richards, because he determines that the word “red” is only given its definite significance based upon the other words contained with it in a single sentence. Richards explains this assertion rather well when he states, “no word can be judged whether it is good or bad, correct or incorrect, beautiful or ugly, or anything else that matters to a writer, in isolation” (51). In the same way that Grassi posits the ingenious and fluid nature of language and the word, so too does Richards recognize this moveable, contextualized existence of language, wherein he calls the “assumption that the same word ought to have or must have the same meaning” nothing more than “bullying assumptions” made by a restrictive conceptualization of an unimaginative language (Richards 61).

With the background on Grassi’s view of language that is provided in the article previously discussed, it becomes easier to understand why Grassi views rhetoric as being a necessary requirement of any form of philosophic thought; a concept that Grassi analyzes in depth in his article “Why Rhetoric is Philosophy.” In this piece, Grassi takes a step back from the Italian philosophers he usually examines in an attempt to make a strongly supported claim that the basis of philosophy, even traditional philosophy (Platonic philosophy, scholasticism, Cartesian rationalism) must admit that the rational language these schools of

thought use is incapable of actualizing their main premise: the ability to generate first principles (68-69). Naturally this creation of first principles comes back to the problem of Being, and (in Grassi's view) rational language's inability to answer the problematic of Being because of its non-metaphoric nature. As Grassi says, "starting from the problem of beings and referring to the rational process of causal link, that is, cause and effect, we obtain only an indication of the temporal succession of beings, never their meaning" (69). With this understanding of the ability, and limitations, of rational language, Grassi begins to build his case for the necessity of a rhetorical language. While arguing for the existence of a rhetorical language, Grassi is attempting to show at the very least the need for this rhetorical language to exist within philosophy—if not instead of then at least alongside a rational language—in order for this first problematic to be known. Continuing this thought further, Grassi says "given that beings are determinable only by means of knowledge of Being... and given that the latter does not have its sphere in the rational, not even the nature of beings is rationally identifiable" (70). Thus, Grassi creates his foundation to argue for the existence and necessity of a rhetorical, poetic language.

These considerations of the seeming lack that Grassi has identified in rational language lead Grassi to ask the question "what is the 'true' language" (70)? In an attempt to answer this question, Grassi presents the existence of this ideological problem of rational language as a game, wherein he breaks down and analyzes the construction of a game of cards (specific card game is not specified) while simultaneously deconstructing the problematic of Being through a rationalist lens. Throughout, Grassi points to the rules created by traditional philosophy for their own school of thought, and points not to how they are wrong, but to how the problematic—if it can ever be resolved—will necessitate the existence

of an agile, inventive language. This is interesting and insightful in relation to the current project because of how it works to situate the nature of rhetoric as understood in IRH in relation to the needs for this type of language in traditional philosophic models. Basically, this text attempts to provide a theoretically solid example of why rhetoric and philosophy are linked, where the current project attempts to find a pragmatically applicable one.

2.2.3 Main Text: *Rhetoric as Philosophy*

In *Rhetoric as Philosophy: The Humanist Tradition*, Grassi claims rhetoric as a building block for philosophic thought. Going all the way back to some of the earliest notable philosophers, such as Plato and Aristotle, Grassi works his way through Cicero, Dante, Descartes, Mirandola, Bruni, and numerous other scholars, examining the way they construct different philosophic principles in relation to the metaphorical nature of the word. Before moving further, let us examine several of these more notable scholars that Grassi deals with in his text, and examine their relationship to both the nature of the word as rhetorical, and their thoughts on philosophy, starting with Vico. Much of Grassi's thought in this book—and over the course of his lifetime—is grounded within the work of Giambattista Vico, a prolific Italian philosopher of the Age of Enlightenment. Grassi focuses on the ingenious nature that Vico ascribes to the word, the metaphorical nature of such ingenious speech, and its usefulness within the scope of rhetoric. Grassi also prioritizes the importance that Vico attributes to the humanities, and his defense of the humanities in relation to the predominant mindset of Cartesian philosophy, one that is still present to this day. In particular, Grassi discusses the importance of metaphor in relation to humankind's ability to create meaning and begin an interpretation of the world around us. Vico's own words can be used to best understand the journey that Grassi begins to make with this particular text. In his *De nostri*

temporis studiorum ratione Vico states “we must... set up a distinction between new arts, sciences, and inventions on one hand, and new *instruments* and aids to knowledge on the other” (6). Vico calls for a separation to exist between that of new thought on one hand, and new instruments for application on the other, in order to understand better what type of tool or concept should be used for a given purpose. In this same way, one can watch Grassi begin to build a bridge between the realm of “rhetoric as philosophy” as a concept, and “rhetoric as philosophy” as a type of tool to be used. It is the continuation of this connection from theory to instrumentation that this project seeks to pursue.

Along with the works of Vico, Grassi also delves into the mind of Cicero, discussing his thoughts on the nature of humankind, and how humankind conceives of reality. To Cicero, nature was initially “hidden” from humankind, and could only manage to be discovered “through human activity” (8). Similarly, Cicero believed that the human mind in and of itself could only be fully understood “through its own works” (10). Cicero also believed in the contextualized nature of the word, and certain situations, and he advocated for works that promoted the betterment of humankind (10). Cicero also focuses heavily on the ingenious power of language, a common theme in nearly all of Grassi’s texts (see *Renaissance Humanism*, “Why Rhetoric is Philosophy,” “Humanistic Rhetorical Philosophizing,” *Vico and Humanism*, and “The Rehabilitation of Rhetorical Humanism”). To Cicero, this ingenious quality of language is what gives humans clarity of thought, and what gives us the ability to create understanding through language and work (10). Following this line of thought, Juan Luis Vives also believed in the ability ingenium has for making known that which is hidden in the world. According to Vives, the main task of ingenium is to “decipher” the world, so that humankind can understand the exigencies of Nature. For Vives,

ingenium is a divine act that allows humankind to see more than a rational language alone. As Grassi mentions, this belief, plus the belief that justice and the word are the two pillars upon which society is built, “is precisely the reason why the orator assumes such an important place in society, for Vives defines the word as ‘the living flow of the soul’” (14). Thus, according to Vives, the poet rests somewhere in between man and divinity because of her ability to command such concepts as metaphor and ingenium. Coluccio Salutati, too, believed that the poet was something altogether greater. In Salutati’s mind, poetry helps remove “*ferinitas*,” thus allowing humankind to see something greater. As Grassi puts it, Salutati believed “in this way, poetry has the power to lead human beings beyond the senses” (86).

Similarly, Poliziano determined the state of the poet, and rhetorician, to be just as important as Vives did. However, Poliziano credited the power of the poet to exist more strongly on this plane, than a spiritual one. Poliziano believed “the study of the emotive speech hence boils down to the study of that which concerns man and guides his self-realization. ‘This matter alone [rhetoric] has united men, who had first been dispersed, to form a community, has reconciled those who fought against one another, and has bound them through laws, customs, and every human or civic culture” (54). Poliziano believed rhetoric to be directly tied to the creation of communities, laws, and the civic society which makes up (in part) the separation between humankind and nature. These beliefs held by Poliziano are reminiscent of Burke’s idea of humankind being “*separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making*” (“Definition” 13). Through the use of rhetoric, humankind creates the tools that then separates themselves further from the nature that created us. Burke goes on to say “this clause is designed to take care of those who would define man as the

‘tool using animal’...In adding this clause we are immediately reminded of the close tie-up between tools and language” (“Definitions” 13). Similarly, Brunetto Latini believed that it is the poet “who creates the human community and human historicity” (*Rhetoric and Philosophy* 73). Latini believed that it was only through the work of the Poet, and the poet’s own function as Orator, that leads to the existence of community and history. Cristoforo Landino also believed in this link between rhetoric and community. Not only did Landino state his belief in the unity of the poet and the orator as holding similar, if not identical purposes in society, he also believed that it was the poet as orator’s job to create human community and historicity through the word as both art and tool (87-92).

2.2.4 Main Text: *Renaissance Humanism*

In *Renaissance Humanism: Studies in Philosophy and Poetics*, Grassi delves even further into the realm of IRH philosophy, examines the construction of this school of thought, and digs deeper into its key concepts. While working his way through IRH, Grassi also highlights the way that language often employs metaphoric, inventive, and poetic methods of conveying ideas. Much of this principal text is spent discussing the way Humanism prioritizes (and problematizes) the meaning of “poetics” or “poetic language.” Grassi starts by mentioning Albertino Mussato and his statement that it is the poet who creates history, and human historicity, a thought that seems to be similarly shared by Giovanni Pontano, with his belief that the fate of humankind rests with poets and the power of the word. Similarly, Leon Battista Alberti and Leonardo da Vinci both discuss the merits of human experience, and the ability that humankind possesses to learn from that experience. While the accruing of experience may not necessitate the utilization of language, language becomes necessary if one ever has hope of taking this lived experience and creating a lesson that can be understood

by themselves and others. Through creating a text that focuses even more explicitly on these listed Italian Renaissance thinkers, Grassi has created a text that is aligned with his *Rhetoric as Philosophy*, while doing something wholly unique. In his previous text Grassi works to argue for the importance of rhetorical theory and invention in both the realms of philosophy and rhetoric as a field of study. With this text, Grassi begins to delve deeper into the personal philosophies of those Italian thinkers that informed his own views of philosophy, the ingenious quality of language, metaphor, and rhetoric holistically.

Grassi also explains the inventive power of language in depth, when he discusses Leonardo Bruni and his thoughts on ingenium. Bruni states that words are extremely contextualized, believing that words are the context within which the philologist must exist (21). This thought can be easily tied to the thoughts of Lloyd F. Bitzer, especially his article “The Rhetorical Situation.” For Bitzer, language is so contextualized that he determines it is every individual rhetorical situation that calls forth rhetoric, inviting rhetoric to change whatever is happening in any given rhetorical situation. In fact, Bitzer displays all rhetoric as being determined by the rhetorical situation, it being the situation that gives any speech or act rhetorical significance. Like Bitzer, Bruni says of language that “it is necessary...to gain reality through one’s own language in and out of given situations: not in rational but in rhetorical language” (Grassi 22-23). The way that this theory of rhetoric is postulated lies so deep within the situation that it mimics the reactionary ingenious nature that Grassi assigns to the poetic language of IRH. The same way that Bitzer posits the rhetorical situation as being reactionary, fluid, and contextualized, so too is Grassi’s, and Bruni’s, poetic language. To Bruni, the versatility of language comes from man’s ability to respond quickly to the claims made by nature, and this ability for quick response *is* ingenium.

Coluccio Salutati similarly believed that in order to create understanding of scientific observations, humankind needed to possess power over a metaphoric language, while Guarino Veronese believed that it is ingenium which allows us to understand Nature, and the place of human beings in history. Juan Luis Vives even goes so far as to suggest that both science and theology necessitate ingenium. Vives believes that the results of scientific experimentation can only be understood through a poetic language; similarly, it is only through this fluid, descriptive method of speaking and thinking that we have the mental capability of understanding a greater theological being (66-70). This final thought, poetry being linked to philosophy and theology, is also shared by Giovanni Pontano, who quite literally believes that it is poetry's function to display reality and uncover the basis of theology (40). This belief, that poetry, and the poetic (aka metaphorical) word are capable of revealing knowledge, is directly related to the divining nature of language that IRH refer to as "work."

Grassi also utilizes this text as a chance to further explore the IRH ideals of "work" and the poet as orator. While discussing the concept of "work," Grassi brings in Brunini's ideas of ingenium as a way to do the linguistic work of creating one's own existence. Similarly, Burke discusses this ability for understanding the world around us in his piece "Definition of Man." In Burke's eyes, people all must do the work necessary to remove ourselves from the "realm of the nonverbal" into the thinking world of humankind (5). This understanding of a verbal world, though, can only be achieved by humankind also having the ability to conceive of that which would be otherwise; a concept that Burke very aptly determines as humankind's ability to create the negative (9). Burke then states that this idea of the negative can only be constructed through the existence of language, which seems to construct this idea

of language and the negative, this separation, as being tied together in the realm of understanding. These assertions about how humankind creates understanding are simultaneously necessary and completely subconscious, making them direct representations of the “work” that Grassi demands is a part of humankind’s process in constructing reality. Whereas Grassi maintains that these processes are how humankind understands themselves, he never really gives the processes a true name, calling them “meaning making transpositions” instead (*Renaissance Humanism* 33). One could argue, then, that the best way to understand Grassi’s work is through the combination of Grassi and Burke. Guarino Veronese continues this idea of “work,” tying it to consciousness, when he states that not only does Nature continuously make appeals of humankind, but these appeals require such action from humankind as to necessitate that people, or at least Veronese himself, is always conscious with any activity he is a part of (54).

Moving from “work” to the poet as orator, Grassi references several scholars, like Lorenzo de Medici. Medici states his belief in the inseparable nature of theory and praxis, and states that the basis of human nature is that we are social creatures. Medici also questions the nature of what he calls the “sage” stating that it is the sage’s duty to help further the understanding of the community. Likewise, Albertini Mussato makes the very interesting claim that it is he, himself, who created the fantastical characters—men and women—who were engaged at the battle of Troy, because he was the one who recorded the occurrence. This serves both as a very interesting statement to read, and a good way to understand his ideas about poets: it is the poet, themselves, who is responsible for the creation of human historicity, because they are the ones who record and analyze the occurrence for others to be able to read and understand it (11). This idea of creation is interesting when tied back to

Bitzer's ideas on the importance of language in constructing reality. To Bitzer, "rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action" (4). When viewing this in accordance to the thoughts of Mussato, it is both the existence of a rhetorical language, and the poet's ability to utilize such a language, that deserve the credit for the existence of our constructions of reality, and the existence of human historicity. This belief of the poet creating history is exactly what Coluccio Salutati believed, stating that the "result" of the poet "is the human community in its historicity" (*Renaissance Humanism* 35). For Salutati, he does not find the utilization of poetry pointless, nor frivolous, but he does describe the search for the original question of Being to be out of humankind's grasp, thus invalidating the need for an answer to the problematic of Being while simultaneously validating the existence of poetic language. While the text covers the ideas of multiple philosophers and IRH thinkers, there are a few key ideals that are continuously restated, such as the importance of metaphoric language, the ability of language to help mankind divine the existence of herself as separate from Nature, and the important role that language and the poet as orator play in creating cultural historicity and community.

In the same way that different IRH concepts focus around the utilization of language in the construction of community and human history, so too does Anzaldúa in her text *Borderlands*. She uses her multiplicity of languages and her lived experience in order to craft a specified history and borderlands community for those she identifies as living within a shared circumstance.

2.3.1 Summary and Forecast of Future Chapters

This chapter has sought to provide an overview of Grassi's texts, Anzaldúa's text, and articles related to both. This overview of Grassi's texts also sought to provide an overview of IRH and some of its main concepts. Specifically, by working through the beliefs of multiple IRH thinkers, this chapter provided insight to the first research question posited at the beginning of this project. This chapter has also begun to show the relationship that exists between IRH and modern rhetorical theorists. In the chapters that follow, this relationship between modern rhetorical theorists and IRH thinkers will continue to be explored. This exploration will occur while applying IRH concepts to Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* and other articles that provide different analyses for Anzaldúa's text. Specifically, chapter three will utilize "work," ingenium, and poet as orator to examine the way that Anzaldúa utilizes language and history/myth to construct community in "*Movimientos de rebeldia y las culturas que tradicionan*," and "How to Tame a Wild Tongue."

Chapter Three: Language and Historicity through lens of “Work,” Ingenium, and the Poet as Orator

The first chapter of this project sought to situate IRH philosophy within the larger discourse of philosophic studies, while dissecting three main concepts from IRH (“work,” ingenium, and the poet as orator) to utilize as a rhetorical lens through which to view Anzaldúa’s text *Borderlands* and her ensuing construction of community. The previous chapter sought to further elucidate some of the finer points of IRH theory, rhetorical theory, and “Anzaldúan” scholarship by providing brief overviews of each specific area of inquiry and through providing a brief gloss of several scholars within each field of study. In this chapter, Anzaldúa’s use of language and history/myth as a means to construct community shall be analyzed through the IRH concepts of “work,” ingenium, and the poet as orator, respectively. This analysis seeks to ascertain how Anzaldúa’s personal construction of community can be viewed through/expand upon IRH ideals. **3.1 Language**

3.1.1 Language and “Work”

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* Paulo Freire says “Human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, and in action-reflection” (69). In *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks discusses the way she approached the teachings of different scholars—including Freire—while she was in school, saying “I came to Freire thirsty, dying of thirst” (50). hooks is not speaking of a literal thirst, but of a thirst for words, for knowledge, for inclusion. This validation of the importance of words to the creation of humankind is something Anzaldúa also attests to in her text *Borderlands*, specifically in sections such as her introduction to the text and “How to Tame a Wild Tongue.” Anzaldúa claims that the best way to invalidate the existence of someone who exists on the fringe of a culture, or in the borderlands, is to take

their language away. This silencing or this metaphorical ripping out of the tongue of those living in the borderlands, is what Anzaldúa pushes against in this text, and the way Anzaldúa utilizes language in order to push back against hegemonic cultures is a quality that aligns with the ideas of IRH thinkers. In the introduction, Anzaldúa claims “we Chicanos no longer feel that we need to beg entrance, that we need to make the first overture—to translate to Anglos, Mexicans, Latinos, apology blurting out of our mouth at every step.” She acknowledges the importance of language to the construction of identity, an idea that is echoed throughout other modern and rhetorical texts on oppression, like hooks’ *Teaching to Transgress* and Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and which can be found in the teachings of IRH thinkers.

In *Rhetoric as Philosophy*, Grassi says that the very essence of mankind understanding reality is “work” (33). So, simply by understanding what is going on in the surrounding world, and by understanding what demands are being made of us, we are inherently participating in “work,” but it is an activity that our minds participate in so inherently that we oftentimes do not realize we are doing it. This “work” encompasses the understanding of cultural demands, language, history, anything that is inherent in understanding the creation of reality (33-34). This ability to participate in “work” without realizing it is a privilege not everyone is afforded, which can be seen when considering the way Anzaldúa presents the complexities of language that face those living in the borderlands. In the chapter titled “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” Anzaldúa utilizes her special blend of reportorial prose and autobiography to explain: her experiences growing up in the borderlands speaking Spanish and learning English; the different blends of Spanish and English spoken in the borderlands; and the shame that Chicana/o’s feel when trying to define

their self-identity to people from the U.S. and from Mexico. Anzaldúa goes into significant detail about the creations of these different permutations of English and Spanish, describing which language (Standard Spanish, Standard English, Chicano Spanish, Northern Mexican Spanish dialect, Tex-Mex, *Pachuco*, etc.) she could use around which people, and identifying herself as a user of Tex-Mex and *Pachuco*, given that is what she typically prefers to utilize when speaking to her close family and friends (77-78). In particular, Anzaldúa says “Chicano Spanish sprang out of the Chicanos’ need to identify ourselves as a distinct people. We needed a language with which we could communicate with ourselves, a secret language. For some of us, language is a homeland closer than the Southwest” (77). The adaptation of this form of language became a way for Chicana/o’s to cultivate community for themselves not only at the U.S./Mexico border, but as a way to situate themselves no matter where they lived throughout the U.S. This ability is afforded them in-part because of the living nature of these multiple shifting Chicana/o languages. Again, this method of finding a situated space, this separating between the self and the exigencies of the hegemonic culture surrounding a given person are directly related to the idea of “work” in IRH. In *Rhetoric as Philosophy* Grassi says “the mind can be known exclusively through its own works” (10). This identifying nature is also what comes to mind when we consider the creation of these different permutations of Spanish and English in Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands*. In the midst of two hegemonic cultures that both privilege people of either homogenous American or homogenous Mexican identity and heritage, these different languages exemplify the “work” that was done in order for these Chicana/o’s, *tejanos*, and other marginalized groups to find a place that would understand and accept all aspects of their identity, the Mexican, the Indian, and the American. Viewing the creation of these permutations of language in light of the

concept of “work” portrays the vast amount of extra effort that these Chicana/o’s actually have to devote simply in order to communicate in a similar way as others who are born of one “culture” or another.

As mentioned in previous definitions of the term, if “work” in large part is the act of separating oneself from the exigencies of nature, then those living on the border must double their efforts to create their self-identity separate from Nature, and truly embody what Burke defines as the spirit of the negative. Anzaldúa recounts her time in school, saying that they got in trouble for speaking Spanish because they were in an American school and they should be speaking English, which insinuates that she—and others in her situation—started out at a very young age being told what they are not (75-76). This understanding of “no” is similar to what Burke says about the existence of the negative. Burke defines this idea of humankind being the “inventor of the negative” in his essay titled “Definition of Man,” wherein he states

We are concerned here with the fact that there are no negatives in nature, and that this ingenious addition to the universe is solely a product of human symbol systems...

The quickest way to demonstrate the sheer symbolicity of the negative is to look at any object, say, a table, and to remind yourself that, though it is exactly what it is, you could go on for the rest of your life saying all the things that it is not. (9)

Why is this relevant to Anzaldúa’s idea of linguistic identity? Because this is—in part—how Chicano Spanish, Tex-Mex, and *Pachuco* (all languages used to identify the ‘real’ Chicana/o or *tejano*) were created. Further on in the chapter “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” Anzaldúa explains that the way a Chicana/o identifies themselves can often change depending on who they are trying to justify their identity to. This uncertainty of identity leads them to identify themselves in large part by what they are not, embodying Burke’s idea of the negative.

Anzaldúa says that sometimes Chicana/o's identify themselves as Spanish or Spanish American or Latin American when trying to explain where they are from to other Spanish speakers from the "Western hemisphere," and sometimes they identify themselves as Mexican-American when trying to identify themselves in the states, but she always identifies this as "copping out" (84-85). I believe part of this feeling of "copping out" and the struggle that exists with ignoring the reality of identity is because these Chicana/o's have a very strong understanding of the negative, one that was forced upon them.

In Anzaldúa's text, we can see several times throughout that she identifies as a multiplicity of ethnicities, not any single one; a trait she seems to have picked up because of her place in the borderlands. Therefore, she cultivated this understanding of self with the idea that she is not American, not Mexican, not Indian, not black, but a mixture of all of these. As Anzaldúa says, "When not copping out, when we know we are more than nothing, we call ourselves Mexican, referring to race and ancestry; *mestizo* when affirming both our Indian and Spanish... Chicano when referring to a politically aware people born and/or raised in the U.S.; *Raza* when referring to Chicanos; *tejanos* when we are Chicanos from Texas" (85). Here Anzaldúa is showing us the multiple aspects of her complex, rich, constructed self-identity, and she is showing how intricate this creation of self is in relation to the exigencies being made of her. Anzaldúa's construction of identity, and the way that she admits to identifying herself differently depending on the people she is speaking to and the situation she is in also aligns with the contextualized nature of language emphasized in IRH philosophy. Leonardo Bruni believed that language was always contextualized, and that the true meaning of any given situation could only be divined from the precise utilization of words. When discussing Bruni's ideas on language, Grassi says "therefore... it is

necessary... to gain reality through one's own language in and out of given situations: not in rational, but in rhetorical language" (22-23). Similar to Bruni's assertion, in "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" Anzaldúa outlines for readers what it means to straddle two dominant cultures linguistically and how she and others have gone about creating this linguistic understanding of themselves through the use of these different languages.

If we view this idea of being the inventor of the negative in relation to the "work" that is necessitated in order to create understanding, we can reach a higher level of clarity on the process that must have been enacted by those like Gloria Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde, Norma E. Cantú, and many others, in order to cultivate a language, community, and culture that encompassed all of these identities, culminating in the creation of the Chicana/o, and their specific languages that hold their own linguistic identity.

3.1.2 Language and Ingenium

The cultivation of this linguistic identity wouldn't be possible, however, without a language that is metaphoric and ingenious, like the language argued for in IRH. Ingenium, much like "work," has a relatively ambiguous definition in IRH theory, spanning anything from being "the definition of beings" to being what "leads to the vision which discovers what is hidden" (*Renaissance Humanism* 68). Essentially, however, we can think of ingenium as being that which affords humankind the ability to quickly and creatively generate new thought; as that which allows humankind the agility of thought and creativity which allows us to utilize the metaphoric, agile capabilities of language (*Renaissance Humanism* 68-69). In order for humankind to possess this skill, however, she must also possess access to an equally ingenious language, one that is agile, creative, and can adapt to any exigency made by nature. In the introduction to the first edition of *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa embodies this

ingenious, malleable, and adaptive language, saying “The switching of ‘codes’ in this book from English to Castilian Spanish to the Northern Mexican dialect to Tex-Mex to a sprinkling of Nahuatl to a mixture of all of these reflects my language, a new language—the language of the Borderlands.” By participating in all of these languages, Anzaldúa is exhibiting the ability of Chicana/o’s to manipulate one (or several) languages in the interest of cultivating one that fits where they exist as a community or allows them to occupy multiple linguistic modes simultaneously. Not only does this show the malleability of both Spanish and English, it also exemplifies the ingenious nature of these people in the way that they utilize these two languages, and their different variants, to cultivate something that only they can truly understand. Through the manipulation of these dialects, Anzaldúa and other Chicana/o’s are creating for themselves a communal identity formed—in part—by their ingenuity. Going back to Bruni, he believed that part of what made a language poetic and rhetorical in nature was its capacity for ingenuity.

Speaking on the subject of Bruni’s ideas about ingenuity and language, Grassi says “The significance of words springs neither from the source of human subjectivity nor from the relativity of beings, but from the individually variable appeals which humans have to face in different situations” (*Renaissance Humanism* 23). So, essentially, the significance of the words is not defined by their dictionary definition alone, instead their significance is also defined depending on the demand that is being made upon the orator by Nature. This is reminiscent to Richards’ idea of interanimation. In *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Richards defines the interanimation of words as the interaction between words that exist together in a single sentence (54). This means that the word “red” used in one sentence is not going to mean the same thing as the “same” word “red” in a different sentence, because it is being

used in a sentence containing a different set of words, in order to respond to a different demand. So, in both IRH and Richards' understanding of language, words derive their meaning in part from the demand they are appealing to. If this is the case—if the significance of the word springs from what demand is being made of the orator—then (when viewing the work through an IRH lens) the work of Anzaldúa gains an even more palpable poignancy. “The significance of words springs... from the individually variable appeals which humans have to face in different situations.” When Anzaldúa says that she will not bend to the dominant discourse by white-washing her text in the introduction, that statement in and of itself is already an open act of defiance and rebellion. But, if the significance of that statement is found also in considering the demands being made of Anzaldúa to elicit such a response, then her resistance is amplified two-fold. Not only is she saying that she directly disagrees with this notion of having to fit in everyone's box, she then creates an entire discourse based around the possibility of what could be accomplished if all of her peers said no and clung to their own tongue, hinting towards her idea of *mestiza* consciousness, which will be covered in the next chapter.

Speaking more on ingenium, Grassi explains “In Vergil, as well as in Ovid and Statius, ‘ingenium’ gains the meaning of a power which determines growth, existence, and passing away” (68). Ingenium is quite literally tied to the birth, life, and death of ideas, and could arguably be tied to the creation of Anzaldúa's specific borderlands language that she and others who work directly with her have cultivated. Anzaldúa describes her language as being created from seven different permutations of Spanish, English, and *Pachuco*, each language working together to allow the Chicana and the *tejano* to make meaning in their own specific community. The ability that these Chicana/o's have to take what has been forced

upon them in these volatile contact zones and cultivate from that malleable forms of language that embodies all different aspects of their cultural identity is a perfect example of the utilization of ingenium, and its ability to “determine growth,” both the growth of the language itself, and the personal growth of those who now possess a language with which they can construct their linguistic identity. Jean Luis Vives believed that this divining power is what leads humankind to further distinguish themselves from the surrounding world, saying “through it [ingenium] man both comes to himself and distinguishes himself from the animals” (*Renaissance Humanism* 68). In the same way that humankind utilizes the power of ingenium to further separate ourselves from the surrounding Nature, Anzaldúa and the other Chicana/os utilized ingenious inspiration to embrace the different languages and expectations of language that were forced upon them and cultivate—out of that difference—a form of blended language they can now use to separate themselves from both Mexican and American cultures and societies. Through this ingenious creation, they found a way to categorize their language, and their identity, in a way that validates every ethnicity that Chicana/o encompasses. Anzaldúa says “ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity—I am my language... and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers rather than have the English speakers accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate” (81). This border language becomes one important way that Anzaldúa constructs identity for herself in the midst of two cultures making separate demands of her and her people, allowing them to distinguish themselves from hegemonic cultures who have previously attempted to impose certain identities on those in the borderlands.

The ingenious capability of language also acknowledges another aspect of language that is relevant to all different types of languages, which is its propensity to grow. Anzaldúa

speaks of a language that is malleable, and constantly shifting to accommodate the multiplicity of dialects that are used in order to construct the borderlands language. In order to account for the continued addition of new, yet necessary, words, ingenuity becomes mandatory. It is through this creative and inventive power that Chicana/o's are continually able to determine and define what language combination/structure would be best utilized to embody their linguistic identity. This malleability of language, and this need for linguistic growth and variation, is a topic that has been taken up by several scholars, including Min-Zhan Lu in her article titled "Living-English Work." In this piece, Lu discusses the idea of having a living language, and what that means for those who are native speakers of English, and those who are not. In the article, Lu cites the growing necessity for people of all ethnicities to speak English as being the need for what she calls a "living English," echoing the words spoken by political scientist Francis Lieber (608). Lu mentions that having a standard, rigid language, when such a diverse number of people are learning to use the language, is an inconceivable and unsustainable idea. Like Anzaldúa, Lu recognizes that a language must reflect its people, and if English is going to be a language spoken by everyone, then it must be willing to grow and reflect the diversity of the people using it.

Lu also identifies people who she refers to as "Living English" users, defining them as people who are approaching English as a second language (or third, or fourth), and who understand that what is gained by using English alone may not be worth what is lost when one decides to neglect their other languages. Lu states that the things non-native English speakers are promised if they speak only English—access to higher education, better job opportunities, the ability to communicate clearly and effectively—do not always turn into a reality (609). Lu also states that those who are Living English users understand the limits that

come along with tying oneself to English alone, acknowledging that using a borrowed or an appropriated tongue does not allow the user to formulate an honest linguistic identity. Like Anzaldúa said, “ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity,” which means a language that has not been grown into, one that did not come to fruition alongside and within the user, can never hope to produce an accurate identity (81). This is similar to what James Paul Gee refers to as primary and secondary discourses in his article “Literacy, Discourse, and Linguistics.” In this article, Gee defines primary discourses by saying that “all of us, through our *primary socialization* early in life in the home and peer group, acquire (at least) one initial Discourse. This initial Discourse... is the one we first use to make sense of the world and interact with others” (7). Secondary discourses, on the other hand, are developed through exposure to “various non-home based social institutions—beyond the family” (8). Thus, our language—at least our primary language(s)—needs to grow with us in order for it to obtain the richness necessary in order to create a functioning definition of self-identity. This identity is created—in part—thanks to our ingenious usage of language and the ways we utilize language to create our linguistic understanding of self. As Anzaldúa states, “change, *evolucion, enriquecimiento de palabras nuevas por invencion o adopcion* have created variants of Chicano Spanish, *un nuevo lenguaje. Un lenguaje que corresponde a un modo de vivir*. Chicano Spanish is not incorrect, it is a living language” [Change, evolution, enrichment of new words by invention or adaptation have created variants of Chicano Spanish, a new language. It is a language that corresponds to a way of life] (77). Like Min-Zhan Lu, Anzaldúa recognizes the need for a living language, but Anzaldúa poses this theory of a malleable, growing language as being her own language, growing and expanding to account for the linguistic identity of all those in the borderlands community. This idea of

growth through and with language is the very spirit of ingenuity and is made possible by the ingenious nature of language and the word itself.

Another example of someone else who understood the ingenious nature of language, and the need to understand and utilize that agility of language, was Richards. For Richards, the meaning behind a word is so contextualized that the same exact word, when used in a different sentence, could very well have a meaning that is completely different from its previous use (70). The word red, for example, can be used three times in three different sentences, and in each sentence the word will come to take a different meaning because of the other words that surround it. This flexibility of language, this ingenious quality that Richards ascribes to language and meaning, is exactly what Anzaldúa calls for when she discusses her need for validation through language. In the same way that linguistic identity is always changing, shifting, and growing to encapsulate ever newer understandings of self-identity, so too does Richards call for a changing, shifting, growing way to communicate meaning through language. Richards discusses the different meanings that already plague words in given contexts, calling them “shifts.” To Richards, these shifts are what make a language rich and unique, and he claims that without the ability of words to shift meaning, we would need so many different words in order to communicate that we would probably lose the ability to speak altogether. He believes that language needs to be contextualized in order for us to maintain a manageable lexicon. When discussing the nature of these shifts, Richards says “without these shifts such mutual understanding as we achieve would fail even within this narrowed resultant scope. Language, losing its subtlety with its suppleness, would lose also its power to serve us. The remedy is not to resist these shifts but to learn to follow them” (73). Richards understands the need for a living, adapting language that supports the

shifting, changing quality of a living organism, which falls directly in line with Anzaldúa's belief in a linguistic identity that is always changing, shifting, and growing. As Anzaldúa says, "I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. I will have my voice: Indian, Spanish, white. I will have my serpent's tongue—my woman's voice, my sexual voice, my poet's voice. I will overcome the tradition of silence" (81).

Anzaldúa calls for an acceptance of a language that does not stop at the inclusion of a single language, but rather an ingenious language that can span multiple languages and allow one to create a multitude of linguistic identities housed within a single self. Anzaldúa calls for the existence of a borderlands language that is validated and recognized as having meaning and purpose, one that embraces the shifts that words can take on, not just within a single language, but when someone decides to mix many languages to cultivate a new form of linguistic identity. This need is one that Richards seemed to agree with, because Richards also argued for the understanding of the multiplicity of definitions that can rest within a single word, and when speaking about it says that "with such a clarification, such a translation of our skills into comprehension, a new era of human understanding and co-operation in thinking would be at hand" (73). This is a concept that Richards pursues further in his section on Metaphor. The same way that Anzaldúa presents her specific presentation of borderlands language as being a language that embraces ambiguity and difference, Richards creates—through metaphor—this understanding of an ingenious language that takes on many different meanings depending on the context of the situation and the subject being discussed. As Richards says, "In the simplest formulation, when we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction" (93). This description of metaphor could even lead

one to question whether Anzaldúa can be seen as enacting multiliterate metaphors throughout her text, given her multiplicity of language and the poetic quality of her prose. If the multiliterate metaphor is something that is a result of maintaining a multiplicity of languages, then the result would be even more avenues of creating meaning and, possibly, understanding.

3.1.3 Language and the Poet as Orator

The adaptation of these languages to realize a new form of hybridized language, no matter how effective it is, risks remaining underutilized and invalidated without someone to promote the continued existence of these multicultural/multiliterate lifeworlds of those who exist within these borderlands. In order to gain the recognition that a language and culture deserves, there often needs to be a figure or figures who cultivate a space for those people/languages/ beliefs to exist within. This is the role that Anzaldúa and others (Norma E. Cantú, Sonia Saldivar-Hull, AnaLouise Keating, etc.) have taken upon themselves, and is a role which makes them perfect examples of a Poet as Orator figure. As Grassi says in *Rhetoric as Philosophy*, “The poet as orator calls the human world into being and realizes it for the sake of the word” (83). It is the poet as orator who cultivates definitions and parameters for the world within which they want to exist, and then—through the utilization of language and poetry—they create the world that they have defined. Through this manipulation of language and access to the public imagination, the poet as orator figure has the limited power to speak a world into existence, with the help of those who find themselves fairly represented within the world that is created by the poet. It should be clarified here, too, that the term “poet,” when referring to this idea, does not have to be singular, but can be applied to several poet figures at the same time. Thus, a group of individuals can participate

in the communal cultivation of a community. In this way, Anzaldúa (and others) takes great strides towards fostering this inclusive Chicana/o community simply by speaking her truth about her past and defining a language that has been created by her people. Cultivating an inclusive language and linguistic identity within such prevalent hegemonic cultures is never easy, however, and Anzaldúa explains this struggle when she says, “Chicanas who grew up speaking Chicano Spanish have internalized the belief that we speak poor Spanish. It is illegitimate, a bastard language. And because we internalize how our language has been used against us by the dominant culture, we use our language differences against each other” (80). Anzaldúa goes on to explain that part of the reason Chicana feminists, specifically, seem to approach each other with trepidation is because of these internalized ideas of illegitimacy. They subconsciously view each other as mirrors, reflecting the weakest parts of their language and identity back to them (80). These internalized beliefs of illegitimacy are one of the many struggles that face those growing up in the borderlands and are one of the issues that poet as orator figures, like Anzaldúa, are pushing back against within their texts.

Through Anzaldúa speaking about the trouble she has encountered while attempting to adapt her linguistic identity, she is legitimizing those issues for everyone else, while also sticking up for the validity of this borderlands language in full view of both Mexican and U.S. culture. By bringing this idea of linguistic illegitimacy to the forefront, Anzaldúa is demonstrating that this feeling of illegitimacy is okay to have, discuss, and ultimately dispel. This idea of linguistic, grammatical “correctness” is also an idea that is discussed, and dispelled, by Anne Curzan in her article “Says Who? Teaching and Questioning the Rules of Grammar.” In this piece, Anne Curzan approaches the false idea of grammatical correctness when discussing the rules of Standard English, citing Min-Zhan Lu and her idea of a living

English. Curzan believes that even native English speakers need to approach the rules of grammar with an open, questioning mind, to avoid simply accepting the prescriptive rules of English because we are told that they are what is “correct.” Curzan wraps up her discussion of “correct” Standard English by mimicking the same need that Anzaldúa calls for in her text. Curzan says,

In public debates about language, we need more informed citizens, who do not condemn nonstandard American dialects as broken English, who understand that students do not need to erase their home languages to understand Standard English, spoken or written. We need citizens who understand that it is not fair to judge someone as inferior because they speak differently or break a prescriptive usage rule. (878)

By choosing not to condemn those who fail to speak Standard English, Curzan aligns with a poet as orator role herself. As such, she calls for a more tolerant English-speaking society, one that recognizes that a person’s mental, emotional, and intellectual worth is not defined solely by how well they can speak Standard English. She also acknowledges that it is going to take work from this more tolerant native English-speaking society for this feeling of an inclusive English language is going to take hold. The time for privileging the ideas of those who only speak flawless Standard English is long over. Anzaldúa mentions as much when discussing her creation of a valid linguistic self-identity, saying “So, if you really want to hurt me, talk badly about my language... until I can take pride in my language, I cannot take pride in myself” (81). Here again Anzaldúa shows the strong bond between ethnic and linguistic identity, while calling upon people of all ethnicities to be more accepting of others and themselves. Anzaldúa is fighting for a more tolerant society on both sides of the

U.S./Mexico border, and to do so she recognizes and utilizes the power of language in order to achieve this goal through her appeals to both Mexican and American societies, and through her public validation of a language that even she viewed as illegitimate; actions which allow readers to align her with a poet as orator figure. As Grassi says in *Renaissance Humanism*, “Human fate rests in the power of the word” (37). When considering this connection between linguistics and the creation of identity, and community, it is even fair to say that human identity rests in the power and validity of the word, something that Anzaldúa seems to understand and appeal to throughout her text.

3.2 History

3.2.1 History/Myth and “Work”

Similar to the way Anzaldúa recognizes the power of language to cultivate community, she also recognizes and utilizes the retelling of history and myths to cultivate a shared sense of cultural historicity within the borderlands community. While the scope of this project does not entail an in-depth examination of the specific representations of indigenous history and religion, nor does it offer an in-depth examination of the adaptation of Coatlicue, an in-depth examination of these histories, myths, and Anzaldúa’s utilization of them can be found in Sonia Saldivar-Hull’s text *Feminism on the Border*, Yvonne Yarbrow-Bejarano’s “Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands*” and Norma Alarcón’s “Anzaldúa’s *Frontera*: Inscribing Gynetics.” This section attempts to analyze Anzaldúa’s construction of history/myth through an IRH lens to see what can be gained from adopting IRH concepts as a rhetorical frame.

In IRH philosophy, the concepts of history and “work” are a “twin skin” of sorts; the historical situation within which any action occurs inherently determines the nature of the divining quality of the “work” the mind must participate within in order to understand the

exigencies being made of humankind by Nature. As Dante believed, historical vernacular is “the fire with which man forges the instrument to create *his own world*” (*Renaissance Humanism* 8). Without a concrete understanding of the roots from which we derive our sense of self, we cannot hope to be very effective in the “work” that humankind must inherently participate in when determining her existence in society. This need for some form of concrete understanding of personal history is something Anzaldúa displays within her text, as she adapts certain indigenous histories in order to create a shared human historicity that can help to identify the historical culture of those living within the borderlands. When discussing Anzaldúa’s representation of history, Saldivar-Hull states in *Feminism on the Border*:

If Anzaldúa’s historical ties are closer to the corrido tradition than to the historical imperatives of postmodern theory, she is creating a new corrido of the mestiza with a political analysis of what it means to live as a woman in a borderland. Through issues of gender politics, Anzaldúa locates personal history within a history of the border people. Legitimacy belongs to the Anglo hegemony; the indigenous population is nothing more than an aberrant species. (70)

Saldivar-Hull, here, is acknowledging the historiographic work that Anzaldúa does in her text to make the “work” that other Chicana/os must do easier. Throughout her text Anzaldúa works to weave a historical and mythological narrative that accounts for the plight of the indigenous peoples of the borderlands so that modern Chicana/os have access to a text that legitimizes and validates their history and myths. While Saldivar-Hull does acknowledge that Anzaldúa takes certain liberties in some places when constructing this historiographic/mythological narrative (64-65), overall Saldivar-Hull is of the same mind as Anzaldúa when discussing the lack of indigenous history and culture, saying “for the New

Mestiza, autobiography *is* the history of the colonization of indigenous Southwestern people by Anglo-American imperialists intent on their Manifest Destiny” (71).

Anzaldúa’s revisions and alterations she makes to the Chicana/o history/myths make her historiographic narrative more accessible and they make the “work” of those who read her text and who discuss her text (and others like it) easier and give these people a more tangible historicity from which to divine their own realities. This process of revision is reminiscent of what Giovanni Pontano says Vergil does in the *Aeneid*. When discussing the way that Vergil describes the eruption of Mount Etna in the *Aeneid*, Pontano says that Vergil was not attempting to describe in exact concrete detail what was happening, because that is not the true intention of a historian; rather, Vergil’s true intent was to describe exactly what it felt like to experience the eruption of the volcano. As Grassi tells us in *Renaissance Humanism*, “Pontano stresses that Vergil’s poetic word does not intend to portray the ‘reality’ of the volcano so much as to present exactly how Aeneas experiences the concrete situation, which he brings to life principally through the senses” (38). Pontano maintains that it is not the true object of the poetic historian to document the exact situation of any historic moment, so much as it is her job to describe in accurate sensory detail what the exact moment *felt* like, thus endowing the reader with the ability to feel like she has experienced the concrete situation for herself. In this way, so too does Anzaldúa often function as the Humanist version of a historian, creating pieces that resemble historical autobiography more often than strict historical accounts. Anzaldúa’s presentation of these historical accounts, and Keating’s commentary about them not being completely historically accurate, raises the question: are these marginalized histories readily available to those who want to learn more about them? As Anzaldúa mentions, “Culture forms our beliefs. We perceive the version of

reality that it communicates. Dominant paradigms, predefined concepts that exist as unquestionable, unchallengeable, are transmitted to us through culture. Culture is made by those in power” (38).

While Anzaldúa continues on to apply this concept to specifically male-driven paradigms of culture, she makes a very good point when saying that culture, and history, is written by those who are in power, those who have won the right to call themselves the cultural hegemony. With this persistence of Anglo-hegemonic power on one side, and the Spanish hegemonic domination of the indigenous peoples on the other side of the border, readers must question if the historiography that Anzaldúa constructs is one of the few mainstream accounts of the Chicana/o struggle that exists. With this consideration, the work that Anzaldúa, and others in her community (Cantú, Keating, Moraga, Alarcon, Castillo-Garsow, etc.) have done becomes even more important to the “work” expected of Chicana/o people. It is expected of those in the borderlands to participate in the meaning making transpositions which help humans discern themselves from Nature, but they are not given any form of history or shared human historicity to situate themselves within; the only discourse provided to the Chicana/o is one of domination and violence. As Anzaldúa says, “What I want is an accounting with all three cultures—white, Mexican, Indian. I want the freedom to carve and chisel my own face, to staunch the bleeding with ashes, to fashion my own gods out of my entrails” (44). Anzaldúa here acknowledges that she and those living within the borderlands have lost a portion of their history and sense of culture to colonization. Their history and culture has been partially erased, washed away in the flood of violent discourse, so she—and others in her same position—must attempt to claim what is left.

3.2.2 History/Myth and Ingenium

When discussing the Grassian utilization of historic language, Massimo Marassi said “the speech which expresses the historical situation allows man to create his world. As the world is always historical and living so also must be the speech which expresses it” (252). This presents an interesting conundrum for Anzaldúa when she hopes to refer to the history of her people, for that history is constructed solely in a patriarchal tradition that systematically devalues women. This being the case, Anzaldúa must adopt an ingenious method of discussing her culture and its history (what history she has access to). As Anzaldúa states, “our cultures take away our ability to act—shackle us in the name of protection... So yes, though ‘home’ permeates every sinew and cartilage in my body, I too am afraid of going home. Though I’ll defend my race... I abhor some of my culture’s ways” (42-43). In this passage, and others, where she recounts the history of her people, readers are brought face-to-face with the violent and patriarchal nature of the cultures Anzaldúa has grown enmeshed within, which causes her to develop new ways of presenting, discussing, and coming to terms with these historical truths; actions that all are made possible through the ingenious capacity of language and thought. Essentially, the appropriateness of any story, history, or myth changes given the historical context within which it is presented. Whereas solely patriarchal, misogynistic myths and representations of history were accepted in the past, these presentations of a culture are growing ever more problematic as modern culture begins to acknowledge the reality of woman’s right to her own body, and her own sexual/ethnic/religious/etc. identity. Thus, new representations of these myths must be created for them to prevail into modern society, while other female-centric myths are being recovered (see

Anzaldúa's chapter titled "Entering the Serpent"). Leonard Bruni broached the topic of contextual importance in relation to history and language, as Grassi explains, saying "language originates in the different situations in which human beings interact with reality. Since this interaction always occurs with regard to the achievement of a particular goal, so language can be effective only within a particular given historical time and a particular social situation" (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 91). It is the ingenious utilization of language which allows one to do the "work" of recognizing these historically different contexts and respond appropriately. Through the rejection of some of her cultures patriarchal myths and practices, and through the reclamation of other practices which privilege the feminine alongside the masculine, Anzaldúa makes relevant those histories and myths that validate and empower her existence as a woman living in the borderlands.

3.2.3 History/Myth and the Poet as Orator

In IRH philosophy, it is the job of the poet as orator to record the history of humankind, as the position of poet and historian were so linked that they could often be seen as being within the same wheelhouse. Albertino Mussato—statesman, historian, and poet—expressed as much when he said "It is *I* who reclaimed Pergamon, the citadel of the Dardanian Teucrian; before the Dardanian arrived at Troy, *I was there*" (qtd. in *Renaissance Humanism* 11). In Mussato's mind, the poet is the historian; not only that, but it is the poet who makes history real, because it is only through the capabilities of the poet that history gets remembered. As Anzaldúa does with her reclamation of the Coatlicue, it is "the poet's function...to make apparent the significance of the past in so far as it has a decisive effect on the future. The origin should not be sought in entities... it is only revealed in and through poetry by the impact of words" (11). The basis of history need not lie in things that exist

within the mortal plane, because they exist, wither, and die as do all things. That which belongs to the fantastical induction of the poet must be historical, mythical figures that can exist outside of time and, therefore, transcend it. Such is the nature of the Aztec woman Anzaldúa identifies within herself, such is the nature of “*la Coatlicue*” as Anzaldúa defines it, saying “*Coatlicue* is one of the powerful images, or ‘archetypes,’ that inhabits, or passes through, my psyche. For me, *la Coatlicue* is the consuming internal whirlwind...the mountain, the Earth Mother who conceived all celestial beings...she is the incarnation of cosmic processes” (68). Is this how Coatlicue was perceived in the past? Is this how all others perceive Coatlicue now, if they think of it (her) at all? The better question is, does it matter how people individually perceive Coatlicue at all?

Another scholar who looks into the agentive nature of the poet as orator and her capacity to shape perceptions of history is AnaLouise Keating in her article “Speculative Realism, Visionary Pragmatism, and Poet-Shamanic Aesthetics in Gloria Anzaldúa—and Beyond.” In this piece, Keating analyzes the effect that a poet as orator figure, or what she terms a “poet-shaman,” can have on her community and their understanding/experience of history and myth. In describing the purpose of the “poet-shaman,” Keating explains that she borrows the term from Anzaldúa and explains the nature of these “poet-shaman aesthetics” as “a synergistic combination of artistry, healing, and transformation grounded in relational, indigenous-inflected worldviews” (51). Keating analyzes Anzaldúa’s writing in this light, referencing the capacity Anzaldúa possesses for utilizing her own understanding of her language, her ideas of history/myth, and her understanding of conscious identity to give others in her community the necessary mental lexicon with which to develop their own understanding of where they belong in this borderspace. Keating says “in poet-shaman

aesthetics, words have causal force; words embody the world; words are matter; words become matter. As in shamanistic worldviews and indigenous theories and practices... poet-shaman aesthetics enables us to enact and concretize information” (52). Throughout this article, the power of making history and myth into a concrete concept that people can then grapple with is a power that Keating bestows to the text Anzaldúa has created and is similar to a power that IRH thinkers bestowed to the poet as orator figure. Grassi explains that within “the art of making human historicity through the word, the task of the poet and orator becomes identical” (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 87). Anzaldúa embodies this notion time and again in relation to questioning the history and myths of her people, claiming it as her right, saying “My Chicana identity is grounded in the Indian woman’s history of resistance...I feel perfectly free to rebel and to rail against my culture. I feel no betrayal on my part” (43). In this text, we can also see how Anzaldúa is reclaiming these histories and myths that have been lost and—while they may not be historically accurate, and while they are the result of many different peoples and understandings of religion—through Anzaldúa’s re-presentation of these histories and myths she is making them accessible to people who may not have had access to the knowledge organically. She even seems to claim this power for herself when she says, “like the ancients, I worship the rain god and the maize goddess, but unlike my father I have recovered their names” (112).

In this chapter, I have analyzed the way that Anzaldúa utilizes the cultivation of her specific borderlands language and history/myth by examining the sections “Overcoming the Tradition of Silence,” “Linguistic Terrorism,” and “*La conciencia de la mestiza/ Towards a New Consciousness*” from her text *Borderlands*. This analysis was accomplished through the utilization of the IRH concepts “work,” ingenium, and the poet as orator. In particular, this

chapter utilized these IRH concepts in order to gain further insight to the way that Anzaldúa cultivates community within her texts through utilizing her own unique brands of language and cultural historicity. In the next chapter, I will utilize these same concepts of IRH to analyze the way that Anzaldúa postulates bridging communities through a look at the chapter "*La conciencia de la mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness.*"

Chapter Four: *Mestiza* Consciousness through lens of “Work,” Ingenium, and the Poet as Orator

The last chapter of this project analyzed Anzaldúa’s cultivation of her specialized borderlands language and history/myth through the use of IRH concepts. Specifically, the last chapter sought to analyze the way that Anzaldúa’s personalized adaptation of language and history/myth cultivates community within the borderlands. As forecasted in chapter one, the fourth chapter of this project will aim to utilize the IRH concepts of “work,” ingenium, and the poet as orator to analyze Anzaldúa’s construction of *mestiza* consciousness. While the previous chapter utilized these concepts to analyze how Anzaldúa cultivates a sense of community through language and history/myth, the present chapter will analyze Anzaldúa’s chapter “*La conciencia de la mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness*” in order to consider how Anzaldúa’s idea of a *mestiza* consciousness broadens the idea of a poet as orator figure and attempts to build bridges between communities.

4.1 *Mestiza* Consciousness

4.1.1 *Mestiza* Consciousness and “Work”

La facultad de la conciencia de mestiza es un atravesando de fronteras....es un aceptando de fronteras. Anzaldúa discusses the difficulties she experienced growing up in the borderlands, mentioning the sexism, invalidation of language, and the homophobia she was faced with from both Mexican and U.S. cultures. These hardships all play a role in her decision to create a text that attempts to carve out a space of existence and acceptance for herself and others who are stuck in this liminal space of the borderlands. This creation of community is validating and important work, but Anzaldúa tells us that there is more to be done, which can be seen in her chapter titled “*La conciencia de la mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness.*” In Anzaldúa’s text, she describes the *mestiza* consciousness as being

altogether different from any existing state of conscious existence. She says that this consciousness is a breeding of multiple different conscious identities, stating, “from this racial, ideological, cultural and biological crosspollinization, an ‘alien’ consciousness is presently in the making—a new *mestiza* consciousness, *una conciencia de mujer*. It is a consciousness of the Borderlands” (99). This new conscious state of being seems to be the culminating moment in the reportorial prose/autobiography portion of Anzaldúa’s text. Everything else that Anzaldúa has built throughout this piece—this linguistic, historically/mythologically situated sense of self-identity—comes together in this idea of a *mestiza* consciousness, a conscious identity that encompasses the complexity of creating a “self” in the ambiguity and turmoil that is growing up in the borderlands. Within the realm of *mestiza* consciousness, we best see the relationship that can be drawn between the ideas of IRH and Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands*. Since the Anglo, the white woman, can never truly experience, or claim knowledge of, the true nature of *mestiza* consciousness, utilizing ideas like “work,” ingenium, and the poet as orator become our way to create the smallest window through which we may be able to gaze into the mind of our darker-skinned sisters without claiming knowledge we don’t have, or causing further injury.

When discussing the concept of “work,” Grassi states “Human work is understood as a response to demands made on man in the situation he happens to be in” (*Renaissance Humanism* 104). This understanding of “work” also becomes the perfect way for those not in the borderlands to understand the complexity and function of the *mestiza* consciousness as described by Anzaldúa. In her text, Anzaldúa explains this concept of a *mestiza* consciousness in several different ways, at one point saying, “the new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an

Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view... she has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode... not only does she sustain contradictions, she turns ambiguity into something else” (101). In this description of *mestiza* consciousness, Anzaldúa describes a people who must embrace a multiplicity of self that is less prominent in hegemonic cultures. This multiplicity of being applies to “work” because Chicana/o’s must do more “work” than most others in order to divine the nature of the exigencies being made of them in order to respond correctly. A *mestizaje*, a *tejano*, has Mexican and U.S. cultures both making demands of her, and is always harboring inside of her the Indian, the Mexican, and the Anglo consciousnesses, which are all waiting to get out. Therefore, the Chicana/o must always discern both what culture (or what mixture of both) is making demands of her, and then decide what consciousness (or what mixture of all three) is the most appropriate to meet those demands. More so than alerting those who exist outside of this borderlands community of the existence of a *mestiza* consciousness, Anzaldúa presents this unique conscious identity as a blending, or as a way of reaching a higher level of acceptance and understanding as a community, and possibly as a greater society. Anzaldúa calls for Chicana/o’s to “see through serpent and eagle eyes,” but this divining quality is an ability that must first be arrested from within, similar to the “work” of IRH (100-101).

Anzaldúa presents this idea of a *mestiza* consciousness as a product of being a *mestiza*, a Chicana/o, and growing up in a place which inherently causes a fractured sense of self-identity. Acknowledging and accepting this fractured identity, and proposing that it is not fractured, but different and welcome, is an important function of Anzaldúa’s community building in this text. Anzaldúa takes this communal acknowledgment of self-identity one step further by proposing that it presents Chicana/o’s with the special ability to sustain a

multiplicity of viewpoints in order to affect social change. When discussing the interiority of the concept of *mestiza* consciousness, Anzaldúa says “the struggle is inner... the struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains... nothing happens in the ‘real’ world unless it first happens in the images in our heads” (109). Similarly, Grassi explains the process of humankind understanding what is happening around them as being an active participation in the “work” of perceiving sensory information, and transposing those perceptions into meaningful information, which we utilize to inform our understanding of the world we exist within. Therefore, the idea of “work,” paired with the idea of *mestiza* consciousness, also alludes to how this cultivation of a shared conscious identity further reinforces the sense of community Anzaldúa has created within the borderlands. As Guarino Veronese sees it, “by comparing our life with the demands which crowd in upon humans in varying situations, and with the varying responses to these demands, we are enabled to educate ourselves... to take a specific stand... and to live with others” (*Renaissance Humanism* 55). According to Veronese, it is only through knowing intimately the life and actions of others in relation to ourselves and our shared community that we come to best coexist within a certain space. This idea allows us to better understand the revolutionary impact that Anzaldúa’s further construction of a *mestiza* consciousness had for constructing this shared borderlands identity, and how this admission of fractured self-identity lead to a space of communal understanding. This idea of “work” viewed alongside *mestiza* consciousness is also where we can see the bridging power of the *mestiza* consciousness. While it may not be possible for everyone to develop a *mestiza* consciousness specifically, if everyone was able to develop a conscious self-identity that is tolerant of ambiguity, then the “work” required to conceive and cultivate an inclusive society would be greatly diminished.

Anzaldúa constructs this concept of a *mestiza* consciousness not as a method of exclusion, but as a method of inclusion; as Lunsford says, “in every case, Anzaldúa rejects either/or in favor of both/and then some, of an identity that is always in process” (Lunsford 2). When discussing this idea of a *mestiza* consciousness in the realm of “work” and affecting change, we must consider the power that an inclusive identity politic could have for a group such as the borderlands community. When individually participating in the struggle of differentiating between the separate selves, the practice can become alienating and disheartening, but when one creates an inclusive communal identity, it becomes possible for marginalized people to come together and begin to create an inclusive identity politic that reflects the needs of the people encompassed within it (*Borderlands* 108). As Brunetto Latini says “two forms of human activity lie at the basis of politics: *work*... and the *word*” (*Rhetoric as Philosophy* 72). AnaLouise Keating, in her text *Women Reading Women Writing* also points out this need for an inclusive political identity, saying “When personal identities become reified and defined as monolithic, coalitions break apart from the inside as members begin focusing on the differences *between* what they perceive to be discrete gender/ethnic/sexual categories. Thus, they inadvertently re-inscribe inflexible boundaries between groups” (87). Part of the “work” that the *mestizaje* must participate within is the distinguishing of the self from Nature without creating such an isolated view of the self that she isolates herself from those in the borderlands who could offer support and help cultivate change. Keating continues by pointing out that “conventional identity politics often base political strategies on humanist notions of stable, unitary identities that fragment groups from within. Yet the solution is not to abandon all references to personal experiences, but rather to take experientially based knowledge claims further by redefining identity” (87-88). Keating’s

idea for a re-invented form of self-identity can be found situated within Anzaldúa's concept of the *mestiza* consciousness. When discussing this new conscious identity, Anzaldúa says:

This assembly is not one where severed or separated pieces merely come together... 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 keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm. (101-102)

So, through the understanding and utilization of *mestiza* consciousness, not only does there exist the possibility for a cultural conscious identity, there also exists the possibility to embrace a shared political identity which can be used to help further spread awareness of the *mestiza* identity throughout hegemonic cultures.

4.1.2 *Mestiza* Consciousness and Ingenium

This *mestiza* consciousness, this juggling of different inner-selves, this tolerance for ambiguity is something that can be more easily understood by those of us on the other side of the borderlands through understanding the idea of ingenium. As conceptualized by Veronese, “Ingenium has been given to man so that he may have control of the ‘copia verborum’ in respect of a variety of situations in which he finds himself” (56). The ability for ingenium is a gift that was given to humankind in order to help us respond to the plethora of appeals being made of us by our surroundings. Thus, ingenium becomes yet another tool for those outside of the borderlands to utilize in order to better understand the reality of those Chicana/o's without claiming knowledge we lack access to, and without attempting to co-opt something

that belongs to a community different from our own. Anzaldúa explains the idea of a *mestiza* consciousness further by saying

in perceiving conflicting information and points of view, she is subjected to a swamping of her psychological borders. She has discovered that she can't hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries. The borders and walls that are supposed to keep the undesirable ideas out are entrenched patterns of behavior... rigidity means death. Only by remaining flexible is she able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically. *La mestiza* constantly has to shift out of habitual formations. (101)

This flexibility that Anzaldúa mentions can be achieved by utilizing the ingenious quality of language and creative thought. Ingenuity allows for both the understanding of a situation in order to create an appropriate response and the manipulation of flexible borders in order for someone—especially someone living within the borderlands—to create a response that appropriately fits the situation and the demand being made of them. The idea of a *mestiza* consciousness, however, is more nuanced than simply being a way to describe a person who must juggle multiple identities in a single self. If we look at the rhetorical implication of this borderlands identity, we can see that it is as much a call to action as it is a mode of conscious self-identification.

While the *mestiza* consciousness is a very real form of conscious identity that is possessed by many (if not all) of those who exist in the borderlands, to assume that this is all that it is or could be is reductive and narrow-minded. The creation of this mode of identification is in and of itself an ingenious response to demands that were being made of Chicana/o's by both Mexican and American cultures. This claim can be more easily understood if we view the necessity and creation of the Borderlands as a rhetorical situation,

and the creation of a *mestiza* consciousness as being the ingenious answer to demands that were being made of Chicana/o's in this borderspace. Lloyd Bitzer, in his article "The Rhetorical Situation," says "when I ask, What is a rhetorical situation?, I want to know the nature of those contexts in which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse" (1). Once we open ourselves up to viewing the existence of a "*mestiza* consciousness" as an answer to an existing rhetorical situation, the move Anzaldúa postulates—growing to "see through eagle and serpent eyes"—becomes an obvious next step to take for the inclusion of Chicana/o's in both Mexican and U.S. societies. Speaking further on the idea of a rhetorical situation, Bitzer says "rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action" (4). Bitzer postulates that through rhetoric humankind can affect change in her environment, not through a physical exertion of effort, but through the utilization and manipulation of words. This "mediation of thought and language" that Bitzer speaks of is what Anzaldúa calls for in this chapter, "*La Conciencia de la Mestiza/Towards a New Mestiza Consciousness.*" Anzaldúa says herself that "it is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank, shouting questions, challenging patriarchal, white conventions" (100). What is required is an ingenious response to the dominant discourse of violence, a response like the cultivation of this *mestiza* consciousness. For this conceptualization to be effective, though, it requires the participation of more than just those who are already locked within this discourse of domination and violence. While the *mestiza* consciousness (as presented in this text) is something that can only truly be experienced by a Chicana/o or *tejano*, the idea behind it—the adoption of a more understanding and accepting conscious identity that revels in ambiguity—is an action that will have to be taken up by people of all ethnicities and

backgrounds. If we want to truly utilize this idea of *mestiza* consciousness in order to create a sense of community that stretches beyond the borderlands, then “at some point... we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once” (*Borderlands* 100). While the mere existence of a *mestiza* consciousness is an example of ingenuity, it is also an open invitation for continued use of ingenious thought and action in order to create a more progressive, actualized sense of community that may one day be able to stretch past the borders of the borderlands.

In order to obtain the highest degree of understanding and cooperation, however, we will have to open ourselves up fully to the malleable nature of language, conscious identity, and even the idea of borders themselves. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a border as being “the district lying along the edge of a country or territory, a frontier.” Anzaldúa describes the borderlands as being “where the Third World grates up against the first and bleeds” (25). Neither conceptualization makes the prospect of crossing sound very pleasant. At best, a border is the point of embarking upon something completely new and foreign, at worst, it is the traversing of a territory marked by the physical, mental, and emotional scarring of a people; and yet this is what Anzaldúa calls for those in her community to do. While the presentation of this *mestiza* consciousness can act as a unifying social/historical/political identity used to create a shared sense of understanding and togetherness in the face of two hegemonic cultures, Anzaldúa also utilizes the malleability and resilience of her people to call them into even further action, through asking them to leave the opposite bank and adopt a conscious identity that will allow room for the opposing cultural consciousness to exist, grow, and change. After all, “*en unas pocas centurias*, the future will belong to the *mestizas*. Because the future depends on the breaking down of

paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures. By creating a new mythos... *la mestiza* creates a new consciousness” (*Borderlands* 102). Anzaldúa demonstrates time and again her mastery of the ingenious nature of language and self-identity, and if those of us existing outside the borderlands have any desire to move into this new realm of conscious self-identification, we should also examine the malleable nature of language, borders, and conscious understanding.

This malleable nature of understanding, this crossing of borders, presents as a more accomplishable task if we consider the nature of words themselves and study the way that we create meaning across different borders. This is the type of consideration that is, once again, taken up by Richards. In *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, Richards dedicates much time and attention to explaining his view of metaphor, and how important metaphor is to effective communication. Richards, metaphor, and the way we draw connections in order to make meaning are important for a few reasons: Grassi discusses metaphor continuously throughout his texts and articles and presents it as an important tenet in IRH philosophy, “work,” ingenuity, and the poet as orator are often discussed in relation to metaphor, and metaphor—which is one of the primary components of language—is used often by Anzaldúa throughout her text. Richards’ understanding of metaphor also offers a productive connection when we look to discern the importance of the *mestiza* consciousness. In *Rhetoric as Philosophy* Grassi tells us that Cicero describes ingenuity as being poetic because of metaphor, saying “the metaphor is, therefore, the original form of the interpretive act itself, which raises itself from the particular to the general through representation in an image, but, of course, always with regard to its importance for human beings” (7). Here, we see that when human understanding of intangible concepts exists, metaphor must exist also. Similarly, many of

Anzaldúa's most poignant refrains that she creates throughout her text are created by her use of metaphor, such as when she says a border is "when the Third World grates up against the first and bleeds" or "not me sold out my people, but they me" or "this is her home/this thin edge of/barbwire" (25; 44; 35). As both Richards and Grassi point out, all of human language is entrenched within metaphor, and Anzaldúa's text is no different. As Richards says, "that metaphor is the omnipresent principle of language can be shown by mere observation. We cannot get through three sentences of ordinary fluid discourse without it... even in the rigid language of the settled sciences we do not eliminate or prevent it without great difficulty" (92). What is interesting about metaphor is that it is a linguistic tool which would not be possible to utilize without an ingenious language. Metaphor requires the unique and creative connection of disparate ideas in order to make a salient example which illuminates a difficult to grasp concept, which necessitates a language that is malleable and agile, or rather, ingenious. Only through fostering the development of a language that privileges this creative, ingenious, malleable nature of communication can we hope to bridge any existing gaps in communication.

This creative blending, this enlightened communication is what Anzaldúa is fighting for within her text when she says repeatedly that her language must be accepted and validated, and this tolerance for an ambiguous language is something she claims we will need to develop if we are going to subvert this discourse of dominance in mainstream society (81; 100-104). Richards makes a similar observation in his text when discussing this need for better communication in the nineteenth century via metaphor. He explains how the old rules for metaphor were much broader and allowed for a wider interpretation of meanings, something that was greatly reduced in the beginning of the nineteenth century. Richards,

personally, believes in a resurgence of the broad understanding of metaphor, believing it could lead us to an even more poignant period of open communication, saying:

It could not be tried out without a better developed theory of metaphor than is readily available. The traditional theory noticed only a few of the modes of metaphor; and limited its application of the term *metaphor* to a few of them only. And thereby it made metaphor seem to be a verbal matter, a shifting and displacement of words, whereas fundamentally it is a borrowing between and intercourse of *thoughts*, a transaction between contexts. (94)

With this idea of metaphor as being a “transaction between contexts” we can see how the idea more closely relates back to Anzaldúa and the way she is utilizing a multiplicity of languages in order to create a space of inclusive existence. It is no longer about hoping that this discourse of domination will somehow change, Anzaldúa claims a growing equality as a right for her people through the developing borderlands language, saying “I seek an exoneration, a seeing through the fictions of white supremacy, a seeing of ourselves in our true guises and not as the false racial personality that has been given to us and that we have given to ourselves” (*Borderlands* 109). This is a fair demand, but it remains one that can only be met with the implementation of an inclusive and validating concept of a language and conscious identity that can bare the crossing of borders, a language and even identity that is inherently ingenious, which Anzaldúa has taken her part in cultivating. This utilization of ingenium is what endows language and linguistic identity to elevate people and ideas to a plane of undiscovered understanding.

In *Renaissance Humanism*, Grassi tells us that Virgil “describes the ability, talent and performance of man as ingenious” (68). Similarly, Cicero describes ingenium as being this

universal, archaic power, and “as such, ingenium lifts man above the habitual forms of thinking and feeling” (68). As Richards says in his text, in order to approach this superior utilization of metaphor and understanding, we first need “to take more note of the skill in thought which we possess and are intermittently aware of already. We must translate more of our skill into discussable science. Reflect better upon what we do already so cleverly. Raise our implicit recognitions into explicit distinctions” (94-95). Richards highlights the impressive ability humankind already possesses for recognizing patterns and similarities, and he calls for us to reflect more upon that latent ability in order to draw those recognitions and distinctions into the realm of conscious understanding, so that we can have a better control of the way we make distinctions and expand our capacity for understanding by discovering ever-newer connections to the exigencies we are presented with. Anzaldúa’s concept of a *mestiza* consciousness sees this consideration and takes it one step further, calling for all people to recognize the depth and depravity of hegemonic supremacist cultures so that we can all work together towards an inclusive state of existence for all people. In creating this call to action Anzaldúa is both utilizing and embodying the idea of ingenium, because “the ingenious power is sagacious” and, furthermore, “when [humans] respond to these demands in the *artes*, humans elevate themselves to something higher... without these responses man would neither live nor lead a human existence” (*Renaissance Humanism* 68-69). Where Richards calls for improved methods of linguistic distinction, Anzaldúa calls for an improved state of conscious existence that can be utilized to bring the Anglo, the Chicana/o, the Mexican, the Other out of this counterstance of violence; but this can only be achieved through the ingenious participation of all members of society. In one of the most poignant

calls to action that Anzaldúa presents within her text, she extrapolates upon the need for this marriage of mindsets, saying

Subconsciously, we see an attack on ourselves and our beliefs as a threat and we attempt to block with a counterstance. But it is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank, shouting questions, challenging patriarchal, white conventions. A counterstance locks one into a duel of oppressor and oppressed; locked in mortal combat... both are reduced to a common denominator of violence... At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both sides at once and, at once, see through the serpent and eagle eyes. (100-101)

Whereas the construction of a true *mestiza* consciousness is at different points presented as a state of conscious existence that is only developed by those who exist in one of these various borderlands, in this quote Anzaldúa presents the idea of an inclusive conscious existence as something that should be developed by those residing in the hegemonic cultures in order to help bridge the gap between “us” and the “other” (99-103). This is another point where the idea of bridging communities becomes prevalent and acts as a good example of the way that Anzaldúa broadens the idea of the poet as orator. Whereas the poet as orator exists within a given community and helps them gain their community and historicity (35), Anzaldúa announces the need for a consciousness that can span several communities, utilizing the multiplicity in order to heal the separation that exists between conflicting cultures. This bridging seems to be, for Anzaldúa, the only way “the split between two mortal combatants” can be healed, so that all may “see through serpent and eagle eyes” (100-101).

4.1.3 *Mestiza* Consciousness and the Poet as Orator

One theme that can be seen throughout the entirety of Anzaldúa's text is this theme of validation of the borderlands identity. Whether it be through language, history, mythos, or conscious self-identification, Anzaldúa seems to be shining a light upon that which makes up the identity of the Chicana/o. This process of illuminating the inner-workings of some members of the Chicana/o community culminates in Anzaldúa's representation of the *mestiza* consciousness. When describing the way Anzaldúa presents the complexities of the Borderlands identity, Norma E. Cantú and Aida Hurtado point out that in Anzaldúa's text "individuals' various sources of oppression are conceptualized as intersecting in a variety of ways depending on the social context. Developing a *mestiza* consciousness allows people to navigate these different social contexts and maintain knowledge of what it means to reside in these different social and political interstices" (*Borderlands* 9). Through this representation of the way that Chicana/os have adapted their own language/history/myths, Anzaldúa becomes the perfect embodiment of the poet as orator figure. In *Renaissance Humanism*, Grassi discusses the link that exists between the poet, poetry, and the effect that poets have on the creation of human community when describing the beliefs of Giovanni Pontano. According to Pontano, "human fate rests in the power of the word" because "it was poetry that first taught us to care for all things human" (37; 40). Therefore, it is the job of the poet as orator figure to help divine the nature of human existence and utilize their power of understanding to help enlighten those who do not possess the capacity for such a divining function. While Anzaldúa does not exist to disclose to other Chicana/o peoples the nature of their own individual identity, she does utilize her text to provide validation for these similar methods of self-identification, while she simultaneously calls for other hegemonic cultures to

privilege this adaptation of language and culture. Teresa McKenna discusses as much in her article “Intersections of race, Class, and Gender: the Feminist Pedagogical Challenge” when she examines the way that Anzaldúa approached ideas like politics, feminism, and the concept of *mestizaje*. In this article, McKenna specifically examines Anzaldúa’s representation of the female consciousness in regards to contradiction, claiming that it is the very existence of these contradictions which define the woman of color as she exists in the borderlands. McKenna praises the work that Anzaldúa does within her text regarding the portrayal of an intersectional *mestiza* identity, saying “Anzaldúa posits a problematic of contradiction. She asks the hard questions” (35). McKenna continues by discussing this understanding of contradictions and the need/capacity for healing through this idea of a *mestiza* consciousness, saying “the consciousness of the *mestiza* is the key to that healing. It is a coming together based on race and class and gender. It is a new vortex for female subjectivity” (35). McKenna accentuates the way that Anzaldúa posits understanding, healing, and new growth that becomes possible not from a deserting of borders, but from a healing of borders.

The capacity for the healing of these borders is a product of the poet as orator figure and can be seen as a product of Anzaldúa’s text as well. This healing of borders is also a goal that can only be accomplished if the personal and the political are recognized as being intertwined. In *Rhetoric as Philosophy* we again return to Brunetto Latini, and his ideas about “work,” the nature of poetry, and human community in relation to Anzaldúa. Grassi tells us “He [Latini] does not consider thereby the notion of politics to be restricted to the act of government but rather understands it as every activity that has to do with the unfolding of man’s nature and the rise of community” (72). In Latini’s view, the word, politics, and

community are all interrelated in the construction of a functioning human society. We can see Anzaldúa participating within this adaptation of a borderlands community, language, and history throughout her text by utilizing her own lived experience to validate the existence of those in the borderlands, but Yvonne Yarbrow-Bejarano provides us with a warning in her piece “Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera*: Cultural Studies, ‘Difference,’ and the Non-Unitary Subject.” While it is easy—especially for the Anglo—to read Anzaldúa’s text within a vacuum, we must remind ourselves that the work Anzaldúa does here is not that of constructing a sense of language/history/ community where previously none existed, but rather she is utilizing what discourse and space her people have been given by hegemonic societies and is building upon that which other Chicana/o scholars before her have accomplished, in order to further validate her community to those who exist outside of it. As Yarbrow-Bejarano says, “given the text’s careful charting of *mestiza* consciousness in the political geography of one particular border, reading it as part of a collective Chicano negotiation around the meanings of historical and cultural hybridity would further illuminate the process of ‘theorizing in the flesh’, of producing theory through one’s own lived realities” (14). Yarbrow-Bejarano reminds readers of the danger that exists with viewing a text with such social and political implications in a vacuum and can also serve to highlight one of the true functions of the poet as orator figure. While Yarbrow-Bejarano’s remark about the necessity for a contextualized reading of Anzaldúa’s text serves to warn readers against essentialist views of unfamiliar cultures, it also hints to a fundamental truth of the poet as orator concept: the poet as orator figure only exists if she has some form of community of people that she can function within. An integral function of the poet as orator is that she helps to piece together the history, language, and shared knowledge of those she has surrounded

herself with. Viewing Anzaldúa and her text as being separate from other people and works within the borderlands community would eliminate her as a poet as orator figure, because “if the sage focuses only on himself and has no relation to his fellow men, what then can his contribution to his community be? ... Honors, trophies and columns of remembrance have meaning only as testimonies to social acts” (*Renaissance Humanism* 58). The function of the poet as orator is only necessary if there is a community of people whom she can offer her services to, and this function is one that Anzaldúa claims that she possesses, saying:

I am cultureless because, as a feminist, I challenge the collective cultural/religious male-derived beliefs of Indo-Hispanics and Anglos; yet I am cultured because I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet. *Soy un amasamiento*, I am an act of kneading, of uniting and joining that not only has produced both a creature of darkness and a creature of light, but also a creature that questions the definitions of light and dark and gives them new meanings. (102-103)

Here, Anzaldúa claims to be one voice participating in the creation of this inclusive borderlands community. She does not claim to be the sole purveyor of a communal identity that she herself created, instead she chooses to highlight the importance of her voice, and others, in the process of creation those living in borderlands are consistently a part of; not being allowed to claim ownership of their roots—which in many cases were ripped away during the process of colonization—these residents of the borderlands are constantly creating an identity for themselves from the affordances that hegemonic societies are willing to grant them.

Through this process of adaptation and creation from that which has been given, a growing borderlands language/history/community has been growing and solidifying, which is what Anzaldúa seeks to illuminate and validate within her text. With her specific conceptualization of the *mestiza* consciousness, however, she goes one step further, and calls for others to do the same. Anzaldúa invites others to develop a neural plasticity around the ideas of borders, language, and history, a plasticity she believes has existed in the borderlands woman for some time. Speaking of the borderlands woman, Anzaldúa says “she communicates that rupture, documents the struggle. She reinterprets history and, using new symbols, she shapes new myths. She adopts new perspectives toward the darkskinned, women and queers. She strengthens her tolerance...for ambiguity. She is willing to share, to make herself vulnerable to foreign ways of seeing and thinking” (104). This malleable capacity of self-identity that Anzaldúa ascribes to those existing in the borderlands seems born of a higher understanding about the conscious capability of those within her community and is reminiscent of the IRH concept of the poet as *vates*, or seer. As *vates*, the poet is able to conceive of a reality that is not afforded to most other scholars, and it lies on the shoulders of the poet to help others of their community divine the nature of this enlightened version of existence. When discussing the view Anzaldúa holds on the concept of identity, Yarbrow-Bejarano says “She sees the term ‘woman of color’ not as a single unity but as a conscious strategy, a new kind of community based on the strength of diversities as the source of a new kind of political movement. Her theory legitimates the multiplicity of tactical responses to the mobile circulation of power and meaning and posits a new, shifting subjectivity” (16). The way that Anzaldúa expands the socio-political function of certain modes of self-identification serve as further proof of her as both the poet as orator figure and as *vates*. The

conceptualization of these intersectional modes of self-identity become possible because of Anzaldúa's utilization of poetry, rhetoric, and her adaptation of history and multiple languages to weave together a process of conscious self-identification that is unique to a specific group of people, which can only truly be defined by those existing within such group. There is more to be done through this utilization of this *mestiza* consciousness, a work that should not be taken up lightly. Still, it is a work that Anzaldúa, as a poet as orator figure, calls for people to participate within. As Anzaldúa explains:

the work of *mestiza* consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner and to show in the flesh and through the images in her work how duality is transcended. The answer to the problem between the white race and the colored, between males and females, lies in healing the split that originates in the very foundation of our lives, our culture, our language, and our thoughts. (102)

Whether that call to adopt a specifically *mestiza* consciousness is meant solely for those residing in the borderlands or if it can be taken up by any of those who have experienced some form of mental/emotional/religious/sexual/racial subjugation is not included within the scope of this project (see Martina Koegeler-Abdi's article "Shifting Subjectivities: Mestizas, Nepantleras, and Gloria Anzaldúa's Legacy" for further elucidation on this topic), Anzaldúa does seem to proselytize for the creation and cultivation of an identity that can entertain and navigate intolerance, ambiguity, and a multitude of perspectives in the hope of creating a more inclusive future for everyone. The cultivation of such poignant ideas, however, would not be possible without the implementation of poetry, rhetoric, and a divine understanding of the mechanics of conscious identity and subjectivity that are interspersed throughout Anzaldúa's text, which make her the perfect figure to examine through the lens of IRH. Such

ideas are attested to by Lorenzo Valla, when he says, “my procedure became possible and permissible because I am free, for I was not introduced to philosophy but to rhetoric and poetry” (*Renaissance Humanism* 81).

In this chapter I utilized three key concepts of IRH theory and applied them to the chapter “*La conciencia de la mestiza/ Toward a New Consciousness*” in Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands*. The goal of this analysis was not to simply argue for the similarity between the ideas of *mestiza* consciousness and these IRH ideals, but to assess the possibility of the *mestiza* consciousness as broadening the concepts within IRH. This shows not only the similarities that exist between the two concepts, but also how the poet as orator can be expanded by Anzaldúa’s ideas. In the next chapter, I will synthesize the findings of my analysis, provide tentative answers to my guiding research questions, and forecast future directions of research.

Chapter Five: Conclusion (Anzaldúa and IRH; Implications and Future Directions)

At the beginning of this project, I proposed the utilization of three key concepts of Italian Renaissance Humanist philosophy—“work,” ingenium, and the poet as orator—as a rhetorical lens through which to analyze Gloria Anzaldúa’s text *Borderlands*. I also posited a few research questions in the first chapter in order to help guide this analysis:

1. How is community constructed through the Italian Renaissance Humanist concepts of “work,” ingenium, and the poet as orator?
2. How does Italian Renaissance Humanism help us to understand the rhetorical strategies at use within Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands*?
3. How does Anzaldúa construct community within *Borderlands*, and how does this method of constructing communities align with concepts within Italian Renaissance Humanism?
4. How can Italian Renaissance Humanism be seen as relevant to twenty-first century rhetorics, especially when viewing Anzaldúa as an unintentional model?

The subsequent chapters that followed the initial presentation of these questions in chapter one all sought to answer the questions presented. As such, the analysis of these questions predominately presides in the third and fourth chapters of this project. This final chapter will work through each of these research questions, synthesizing and summarizing chapters three and four to attempt to provide answers to each of the questions before suggesting further possibilities for future study.

5.1 How is community constructed through the IRH concepts of “work,” ingenium, and the poet as orator?

Throughout the previous chapters of this project, I have provided several different overviews of the concepts “work,” ingenium, and the poet as orator. Looking at it from

Mussato's view, the poet as orator figure functions as an impetus through which "work" is conducted with more efficiency. The poet as orator figure assesses the need of the community within which she resides and then attempt to provide some form of clarity or understanding on the subject that had previously escaped the view of others. The poet is also responsible for the recording of history, for the purpose of helping create a sense of community among the people. This common historicity allows people within that community to more easily participate in the divining function of "work," constructing for themselves a unique form of personal and social identity. The poet, however, is only afforded this talent for seeing and recording that which has happened within her community through the ingenious nature of language and the word. Without ingenium, the poet would have no way of communicating her ideas to others in order to formulate historicity or cultural self-identity. Thus, ingenium must be present for the poet to do her work, and for the people to utilize when constructing their own understanding of their place in/apart from Nature and in their given community. As such, the three concepts must work together and inform each other, so that humankind can utilize all three concepts to cultivate a working understanding of an individual self that is part of a larger communal existence. This interwoven cultivation of concepts is at the heart of community building in IRH theory and can be utilized as a method of examining community constructions throughout various modern texts and social situations.

5.2 How does Italian Renaissance Humanism help us to understand the rhetorical strategies at use within Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*?

Metaphor is a major driving concept in IRH theory and is also something that Anzaldúa utilizes throughout her text to create poignant imagery and develop meaning for

her readers. It could also provide a rhetorical understanding for why Anzaldúa chose to use her own special blend of seven different languages while constructing her text. Anzaldúa explains on the last page of her preface that she utilized her own authentic borderlands language because she—and other Chicana/os—refuses to beg entrance into the hegemonic English-speaking culture. This decision is multi-faceted, because taken at face value, Anzaldúa's choice shows her practicing what she preaches. Throughout the text Anzaldúa says that she cannot be seen as a member of a validated community until she is free to use and take pride in her language, so it makes sense that she would utilize that language when communicating her own lived experience. But, this choice is also interesting for a few other reasons. First off, viewing her choice of using her original language through an IRH lens allows us to think about the power of the multi-literate metaphor. If metaphor is utilized to create meaning within a given language, what extra talent does Anzaldúa gain for meaning making when she can utilize different languages in order to create metaphors that can resonate with people across borders? Then, we can also consider the function of the text itself. Through utilizing language that is not just Standard English or Standard Spanish, Anzaldúa forces her readers to put in extra effort in order to understand what she is trying to say. This choice is a rhetorical representation of the struggle to make meaning of two different cultures simultaneously, just like the struggle she depicts throughout her text.

5.3 How does Anzaldúa construct community in this project, and how does this method of constructing communities align with concepts within IRH?

In her text *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa utilizes language, history/myth, and her idea of *mestiza* consciousness in order to construct and begin to bridge communities. With regards to language, Anzaldúa spends a good deal of time fighting for the validity of a distinct

borderlands language that is different for each unique occupant of the borderlands. She argues that her “ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity” (81). For Anzaldúa, a community of people cannot truly take pride in their identity until their language is acknowledged as being valid. Similarly, Anzaldúa draws strong ties to history/myth and community. Throughout her text, Anzaldúa cultivates historiographic stories in order to provide herself, and others from the borderlands who read her text, with a common historical background they can utilize when constructing their own self-identity. Anzaldúa also utilizes the re-appropriation of myths to resurrect some of the older indigenous gods that she views as being more in line with her life and beliefs, and the attitudes of a changing, more accepting society.

Anzaldúa also shares her idea of the *mestiza* consciousness as something that is shared only by those who exist in some form of borderland. By expressing the existence of this conscious identity and by defining it as an existence shared by those in the borderlands, Anzaldúa constructs a method of communal identification that can span the entirety of the U.S. Anzaldúa’s utilization of language and cultural historicity align with the IRH concept of both work and ingenium; ingenium allows for the existence of the metaphorical, malleable language that Anzaldúa utilizes within her text, while the “work” that people must inherently participate in to construct reality is made easier by the existence of a cultural historicity. Finally, Anzaldúa’s idea of a *mestiza* consciousness can be seen as broadening the concept of the poet as orator figure. While Anzaldúa acts as a re-enactment of a poet as orator figure by presenting her lived experience as a way to demonstrate the struggle that exists in the borderlands, she also transcends the concept. By stating that the *mestiza* consciousness is a conscious identity capable of maintaining multiple conscious identities, Anzaldúa claims that

this *mestiza* consciousness is necessary for people to be able to bridge the gap that exists between cultures. The poet as orator figure—while being pertinent to spreading the cultivated language of a community or recording the history of a people to foster community—has never been considered as a way to build bridges between hegemonic and marginalized cultures for the sake of fostering some form of peace.

5.4 How can IRH be seen as relevant to twenty-first century rhetorics, especially when viewing Anzaldúa as an unintentional model?

In terms of Anzaldúa, the IRH lens allowed us to gain better insight into why her focus on language and history/myth was so useful in cultivating a strong sense of shared cultural community within the borderlands. It also allows us to view Anzaldúa—and others like her—as more than just an author and activist. Through viewing her as a modern re-enactment of the poet as orator figure, Anzaldúa is also afforded the title of historian, borderlands conlanger, and cultivator of cultural myths. Broadening our scope to look beyond Anzaldúa's text, utilizing IRH as a rhetorical lens could afford us insight into different texts, social justice issues, or other rhetorical situations. As showed sporadically throughout this project, IRH ideals are aligned with the thoughts and writings of many different rhetoricians, semioticians, and activists. Anzaldúa, Richards, Lu, Freire, Burke, Bitzer, Gee, Du Bois, hooks all have written on subjects that can be seen throughout IRH philosophy, because they all discuss issues of language, history, marginalization, self-identity, community, and the prevalence of rhetoric in society. As such, IRH ideals of the metaphoric nature of the word, the ability of language to live, grow, and thrive, the understanding of how we designate ourselves from others, and the importance of language to

constructing cultural community and historicity could provide useful insight when examining modern rhetorical texts.

Additionally, in recognizing the potential issues with using a white, European, normative framework, viewing the ideas of IRH in conjunction with Anzaldúa provides us further insight not only into Anzaldúa's text, but into IRH theory as well. While Grassi's postulation that rhetoric is philosophy allows this philosophic theory to fit into a rhetorical framework quite well, his ideas are still those of the hegemonic white European society. By presenting Anzaldúa's voice alongside Grassi's we are able to see the way the two texts can expand upon one another. Not only are we studying the way Grassi's ideas can enlighten certain choices that Anzaldúa makes, we can also see how Anzaldúa can further extend the value of the concepts of poet as orator, "work," and ingenium. Specifically, we can consider the effect Anzaldúa's presentation of the *mestiza* consciousness has on the poet as orator. While the poet as orator figure is typically understood as existing within a single community, Anzaldúa's *mestiza* consciousness supposes that a bridging and healing of communities can exist, thus showing what could be accomplished with a multi-literate conceptualization of a poet as orator figure that is—similar to Anzaldúa—capable of crossing and helping to heal borders. Seeing the way this analysis enriched not only Anzaldúa's text, but Grassi's as well, causes one to speculate whether or not this growth of ideas could happen when applying IRH as a rhetorical theory to other texts.

The next logical step from here, considering no pragmatic heuristic exists for the utilization of IRH theory as a rhetorical lens, is to create a heuristic. If this philosophic theory was useful in examining Anzaldúa's text, then it can prove useful in the analysis of other rhetorical texts and situations as well, but this would be made easier if a framework existed

for people to operate within. While it is true that this is a new, and relatively Euro-centric method of analyzing texts, it still can offer unique insight to the importance of language outside of a strictly academic setting and the normative nature affords modern rhetors the chance of expanding upon these ideas. The same way that Anzaldúa's concepts engage and broaden the functional range of IRH, so too could other marginalized voices expand upon the functional scope of the theory. More varied applications of the theory can also help it expand from its useful—yet somewhat narrow—range.

While the theory does need to be capable of maintaining the voices of more than just the Anglo-normative perspective, a loose framework needs to be created within which scholars and rhetoricians can operate. Similarly, a rough understanding of key IRH terms needs to be created so that others attempting to use or further advocate for this theory have a lexicon from which to work with. Once more concrete definitions for IRH theory exist, then the theory can be more easily utilized as a perceptual frame, making the pragmatic application of the theory easier and more productive. Once this framework and these definitions exist, the theory can then be applied to anything from works of fiction to rhetorical texts to social justice issues in order to offer insight into the rhetorical implications of these texts/events.

Nothing happens in isolation. While it would be inaccurate to assume that Anzaldúa knew anything of IRH theory, she still utilized many tools that are present in IRH because of their universal nature. This unintentional application affords us a unique opportunity to view and expand upon Anzaldúa's text at the same time that we view and expand upon Grassi's. Through allowing texts to work together to provide meaning, instead of using one to understand the other, we can begin to build bridges between works and theories, bridges that

embody those that Anzaldúa wanted us to construct across borders. By utilizing a rhetorical frame that affords this scope, we may be able to see connections between texts or events that were never before considered, while building off of a normative framework to cultivate something transitive and inclusive.

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Vita

Kaitlyn Hawkins grew up in rural east Tennessee, where she cultivated a love of the land and of literature simultaneously. Kaitlyn attended David Crockett High School and graduated in 2011 before heading off to Middle Tennessee State University. Kaitlyn graduated from MTSU with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English, as well as a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, in May of 2015. A year later, Kaitlyn began taking classes at Appalachian State University, eventually enrolling as a full-time student in Spring of 2017. Shortly after that she was able to declare Rhetoric & Composition as her career track, becoming the University's first Rhetoric & Composition masters student. Kaitlyn had the privilege of working for the university in several different capacities while completing her degree. Specifically, she was a consultant at the University Writing Center and she was a GTFA. Both positions helped Kaitlyn discover her true passion for teaching writing. Her favorite quote—one that brings inspiration for the future—is one by Helen Keller, “Many persons have the wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness. It is not attained through self-gratification, but the fidelity to a worthy purpose.”