

# Critical pedagogy critical thinkings examples

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



Amy Tan's "Two Kinds" is a passionate recollection of her experience growing up in America to immigrant parents whose cultural values and beliefs are at conflict with her own. Tan explores her rebellious childhood under an overwhelming mother who appears to have planned the entire future for her daughter without even taking her opinion into account. Like many immigrants to America, Tan's mother believes America to be the home dreams where everyone can achieve anything they want. This is depicted in the first line of the essay; "my mother believed you could be anything you wanted in America" (Tan, 1990). Unfortunately, parents may have dreams and aspirations for their children that are totally different from what the children themselves want. This is mostly the case when their cultural general gap or difference between the two. Tan is American by birth and, therefore, her cultural orientation would be towards the American culture. This culture is characterized by freedom to do what one desires without any kind of imposition or influence from others. On the other hand, her folks are Chinese where culture dictates that the parents are the center of almost all of their children's life decisions. Her mother, in fact, boldly tells her of the only two choices she has in life. She can either be the obedient daughter or be one who follow she own mind. Tan choses the latter, and this creates a conflict between the two parties.

The first two chapters of Gloria Anzaldua's *Borderlands* detail her experience in her native culture. She talks about the border that separates two culturally and socially different groups of society. This is the Mexican and the United States border. Anzaldua describes how this border is essentially used by the white man to keep him safe and away from the people of the south who are

of mixed cultures. Anzaldua then takes time to explore her native culture and focuses on the cultural limitations of women there. It emerges that women in this culture supposed to serve the man without any question. The women are also expected to remain virgins until marriage. Women in her native culture have only three options; to become a prostitute, a nun or wife. There is however a fourth option which is not achieved by many and this is to be educated and to become autonomous and as Anzaldua states, only a few reach this category. From her description, it appears that the only woman who is safe is the one who is stuck in the rigid culture. However, Anzaldua manages to escape this culture as she immigrates to the United States. Her deviation from her rigid culture is further exemplified by her bold decision to become a homosexual. However, she is extremely fearful of going home because it is obvious that she is going to be rejected.

The cases of Tan and Anzaldua are synonymous with some of the concepts explained by McDermmot and Verrene's " Culture as a Disability".

McDermmot and Verrene (1995) claim " disabilities are less the property of persons than they are moments in cultural focus." The two authors contend that the society has a habit of enforcing some cultural norms and persecuting or negatively labelling people who deviate from these norms. By doing this, society fails to realize that people are born different, and the perceived strengths of one individual do not necessarily resonate with another individual. Therefore, it emerges that disability is essentially a cultural fabrication, and a change is only possible when studies stop focusing on what is wrong with people towards what is wrong with the culture itself. The two cases of Tan and Anzaldua share common elements and to some

point depict the cultural and social change that is sometimes experienced by some members of the society. In the cases of the two ladies, critical pedagogy plays a role in the outlook adopted by the two women. Joan Wink (2005) states that critical pedagogy teaches individuals to name, reflect critically and to act. The two women adopt an entire new outlook of life after both are exposed to an American education system that teaches students to have an open mind and not be restricted by cultural expectations. Tan, for instance, in her reasoning states that she is not in China, and she does not, therefore, have to conform to other people's wishes and desires including those of her family. Anzaldua is given the chance to make a bold decision to be a homosexual because of the exposure to an education system that encourages a free mindedness and personally conscious choices.

## **References**

Anzaldúa, G. (1999). *Borderlands: la frontera*.

Luke, C., & Gore, J. (2014). *Feminisms and critical pedagogy*. Routledge.

McDermott, R., & Varenne, H. (1995). Culture as disability. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 26(3), 324-348.

Wink, J. (2005). *Critical pedagogy: Notes from the real world*.

Tan, A. (1990). *The joy luck club*. Random House LLC.