

# Self-investigating consciousness from different points of view

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so where am I now that I see  
 that art is science  
 the tinkering, the manipulating,  
 the conscious carpentry and construction  
 the what if  
 and that science is art, the emotional, the passionate,  
 the truly irrational sense of discovery from nothing  
 to something new  
 and now that everything is stood on its end  
 like I was when I was born  
 and could hear only my mother's voice  
 with no worldly language to make out her meaning  
 where am I now that I see  
 everything upside down again?  
 (Author's Journal, 22 November 1986)

I have always had an intense curiosity about what makes us who we are. I was drawn to psychology for this reason and was enthralled by my introductory psychology professor's speculations on the reticular activating system and its role in consciousness. I spent long hours reflecting on how I, myself, was thinking with my mind about my brain . . . or was it with my brain about my mind . . . and who was 'I' anyway? Was there a specific location for consciousness?

Those questions led me to a philosophy of mind class in which the professor assigned a book, *Human Senses and Perception* (Wyburn et al. 1964) that took different perspectives on the subject of 'mind' – physiological, psychological and philosophical. Within a short span of time, I found a job washing dishes in a neurophysiology lab. I wanted to look inside the head where I was sure I would find the stuff of consciousness and for a time I was content to look for an understanding of human minds inside rats' brains. At that time, it never occurred to me to think of memory, learning and perception as events that arise out of the process of social interaction; for me, these were events that seemed squarely

located in the head and quite removed from issues of social justice and social change which also preoccupied me. It also never occurred to me to look for understanding inside my own head as one might in psychoanalysis. In short, as an eighteen-year-old undergraduate my views reflected the received view of psychology common in North American psychology departments of the 1960s, namely, that mind was reducible to brain or behaviour, that mentation and social action were separate spheres and that one's own mind was useful for the study of other minds but not for the study of itself.

I might never have altered my understanding of consciousness from cognitive or neurophysiological functioning to social self-awareness had my own social and political identity not been challenged by the civil rights and women's movements of the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, it is the impact of these movements that set me on a complicated and non-linear journey into the realm of social psychology, feminist and minority perspectives in psychology, community and social activism, fiction-writing, the study of body/mind awareness techniques and psychoanalysis that resulted in consciousness as the experience of myself – body/mind/spirit – as both separate and inseparable from the social world. That journey has produced a different type of social psychological enquiry.

Researchers have been cautious about using linear models of consciousness-raising that suggest we move from positions of false consciousness as women to a truer consciousness and about using models of social identity that reify an achieved static end point such as a once-and-for-all feminist position. For example, Christine Griffin cautions against using the idea of 'progress' towards a universal way of understanding feminist consciousness:

There is no clear distinction between feminist and non-feminists that can operate out of social context, based solely on the personal characteristics or idiosyncratic attitude constellations of individual women.

(Griffin, C. 1989: 188)

Griffin goes on to delineate the many 'pressures which operate to discourage overt feminist allegiance' (Griffin, C. 1989: 191). Ironically, it is these discouraging 'pressures' that might well be the key to understanding similarities in feminist transformation. Studying women's lives through historical documents as well as through the retrospective accounts of contemporary and emerging feminists builds an understanding of the common elements in the process of transformation. Out of the 'stubborn particulars' of women's experiences (alone and together with other women and men) grows an understanding of 'feminist allegiance' through time, culture, race and social class. If social psychological practice has taken a narrative direction, it is out of this need to let the particularities of

experience guide the generalities of theorizing. Each of us who has become a feminist has a story to tell that forms part of the transformation of personal and psychological knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

I left my undergraduate studies in psychology in 1969 more or less accepting the idea that the self was best understood through the analysis of personality variables in interaction with social situations. In graduate school I was able to pursue this perspective and incorporate issues of gender into it. I found it easy enough to incorporate the feminist critique of a 'split of human personality' into masculinity-femininity (Constantinople 1973) by working with alternative theories of androgyny (Bem 1974) and sex-role transcendence (Rebecca *et al.* 1976). More difficult to contend with were the critiques of psychology as a discipline that constructed an understanding of womanhood (and women's brains/minds/consciousness) as biologically and psychologically inferior (Bem and Bem 1970; Parlee 1979; Shields 1975; Weisstein 1971). These critiques raised questions about power relations in the discipline itself, in its knowledge-generating and disseminating practices that I began to see in the dyadic relationships of my daily life (e.g. experimenters and subjects; authors and readers; advisors and students; senior faculty and junior faculty). For me, it was the personal experience in power relations both in and out of psychology that transformed the study of 'personality' into the study of 'persons' with political, social, cultural, and gendered identities and it is this transformation that is coincidental with my becoming a feminist and critical psychologist.

When I left graduate school in 1974, my feminist consciousness had yet to become fully integrated with parts of an earlier teenage self that reflected a finely honed sense of social injustice and a commitment to social action. In fact, when I accepted a job as an assistant professor my main sentiments were relief and excitement at the prospect of finally earning a salary. I spent very little time thinking about what it would be like as the only woman in an all-male working environment. At 21, I had worked as one of the first women integrating an all-male mental health facility and I frankly thought it could be no worse than that. I saw the whole business as an adventure, packed all my belongings in my car and headed off to dazzle the world with my factorial designs.

I walked into my new job naively apolitical and ahistorical about women's place in the Academy. I had enjoyed tremendous support as an undergraduate student and felt esteemed by professors who taught me in graduate school. Gender had not seemed to matter personally except in so far as it accounted for a percentage of the variance in my statistical analyses. Within about six months of arriving at my new job, this situation was radically altered. The changes came from personal experiences that challenged my sense of fairness, self-confidence and of legitimately belonging in the Academy. A few examples are in order.

Shortly after I arrived, I was denied faculty housing. While the housing bureau had rented to single male faculty, it was not willing to rent to single female faculty. I fought this discriminatory policy, won my case and had the policy changed but not without being subjected to a level of verbal abuse that seems to flow naturally from those desperate to maintain the *status quo*. Not too long after this, a senior member of a departmental committee reviewing my progress came to speak to me about the concerns he had that my research on gender was becoming too applied for the Psychology Department. Although they had hired me to work in the area of gender, he wanted me to realize that the non-experimental path on which I was embarking would not be favourably received. But not to worry, he would protect me by explaining my work to the review committee. Of course, I felt extremely vulnerable with my fate in the hands of a senior colleague who was known for creating anxiety among junior faculty.

For the three years before leaving to return to Canada in 1977, there were almost daily reminders that I was a gendered being. I remember, soon after my arrival, a woman who passed by my office door, backtracked and yelled, 'I don't believe it, they've hired a woman!' I remember a less than tactful colleague standing at my door hemming and hawing until finally he came out with, 'My wife says that most female professors who stay single are lesbians.' I remember the days before sexual harassment policies when I would arrive at work to find sexually explicit notes under my door from a colleague in a position to judge my work and the feelings of helplessness, disillusionment and self-blame that would ensue. As many of us were to find out with the research of the 1980s, none of these experiences was unusual for women in any segment of the labour force.

On the one hand, these first experiences as an academic created feelings of isolation and self-doubt and sometimes an inability to develop as a responsible educator, researcher and colleague. On the other hand, they started to politicize my life and my work and to connect me to those with similar experiences. I began to read the history of psychology and its often exclusionary and damaging practices of studying women, racial and ethnic minorities. I became involved in the newly developing women's studies programme; in the minority recruitment programmes on campus; in developing a social psychology field placement for black students in the local affirmative action office and many other activities. My allies were those as interested as I was in seeing the university become more inclusive in its student and faculty composition, in what it teaches and takes to be important. In many ways, my actions were beginning to connect with the kinds of social action projects that engaged me in my teens and early twenties. However, my consciousness about social change was changing.

Within about one year of arriving at my first academic job, my personal and intellectual worlds were no longer made up of 'personalities' and 'individual differences' and my practice of social psychology had little choice but to change. I had responded to the categorization of me as a certain kind of woman – a feminist – with an emotional awareness of the social and political implications of the label. I found myself attending to my students' social identities – their sex, race, social class, age, sexual orientation – and wanting to hear their stories. In my own mind, I worked with a kind of calculus I now think of as the PQ (Privilege Quotient). It occurred to me that one could predict incomes and outcomes not by knowing a person's score on a balanced authoritarianism scale but by knowing where the person stood in the PQ hierarchy that seemed so overdetermining in shaping a life course.

In all of this, there was one incident that stands out among others as a kind of turning point of feminist consciousness and allegiance – a bridge crossed that engaged my energies at a deeper level of political commitment and that angered me beyond measure. It happened quite casually, at a faculty meeting at which I was the only woman present. We were in the process of hiring a new faculty member. A woman who had been shortlisted for the position would have been interviewed had a colleague not pointed out that she was having an affair with a professor in another part of the country and would probably not accept the position. I protested, pointing out that her personal situation had nothing to do with her professional aspirations and that our efforts to recruit her should continue. I heard my voice among the 'other' voices in a very new way, namely, as a member of the group called 'women' for whose rights I felt compelled to fight. That small gesture of resistance was to become a very significant psychological turning point.

Despite many other examples of injustice, I remember this incident as one of the most transformative. Up to that point – 1975 – I had not relinquished my belief that universities could be set apart from the 'real' world. I believed the university could be a refuge where discrimination and harassment would only occasionally enter and where merit and competence were more generally the rule. Over time, those scoring low on the PQ scale would make their way into the academic ranks through their competence and the assumed benevolence of the Academy. What I saw in this incident symbolized all the poor excuses given for the arrogant history of excluding women, blacks and gays (among others) from the Academy and from the production and dissemination of academic knowledge; it had happened to so many women regardless of merit and it could have happened to me. It was then I understood how much more than benign neglect it would take to change universities. The Academy was not benign; it was much like other institutions with little social accountability – a place of

privilege in our society and a turf protected by those who inherit its rewards.

I remember that this incident moved me to consider my own privilege. How had I come as far as I had educationally? What cracks had I slipped through and how? The answer lies in a mixture of personal and societal circumstances that form the unique way in which my temperament and abilities intersected with the PQ that set both limits and opportunities for me relative to others. Some factors were obvious. For example, it helped that the economy in Canada in the mid-1960s offered readily available summer work, that universities were expanding, and that the Ontario government had a decent system of tuition fees, student loans and awards, not to mention good support for graduate work in the early 1970s. This was also a time when the doors to professional and graduate schools were opening for white women like myself. These organizational and systemic benefits helped because, while my almost middle-class Jewish family had stressed education as a means of advancement throughout my life, I never saw them as financially secure enough to be able to assist me very much.

What is more difficult to describe are those murky levels of attachment that play themselves out in life-long idiosyncratic patterns. For this I find fiction-writing a more suitable medium for expression. Perhaps I can offer this as a way of understanding my sense of belonging in the Academy and my tenacity in the face of challenges to my legitimacy as a woman. As a young girl, I used to play 'school' and I would play the teacher in front of an imaginary class. I had a special affection for the paraphernalia of the job – books, notepads, coloured pencils, yellow chalk. It never seemed to bother my parents that I stole chalk from school or talked out loud to imaginary students as long as I wiped the chalk marks off our small apartment walls. So for me, becoming an academic allowed me to continue to play in my parents' approving presence.

In later years when the playing got rough, it helped to engage in a bit of denial and more make-believe. Once on a return trip home from graduate school, I asked an old friend what had happened to all the women in our undergraduate philosophy club. He regretfully informed me that there were no other women. I suppose I had conjured them up to feel less odd for belonging to an all-male club at the age of 18. And there I was at 28, once again the only woman in an all-male club but this time unable to deny or pretend that the absence of women was somehow just an accident, lack of qualifications or of their own free choice.

You might like to know that we did not interview the female candidate for the job but instead interviewed and hired the next person on the list – a quite competent man. I must also tell you that I was not the only one to feel the injustice of these events. A male colleague who supported my objections in the meeting at which I spoke out found himself increasingly

the object of his colleagues' concerns. I learned from his experience how difficult it was for men in those days, though perhaps less so now, to ally with feminists and still retain the respect and approval of men if they wanted that. Each of us has some points in the privilege game – skin colour, class, friends in high places – and if we don't play the game by the rules in place, we may be in for a very rough time of it, female and male.

Through all these experiences, prejudice and discrimination were the 'objects' of my study in social psychology. Once they became part of my subjective experience and once I shared experiences with other marginalized people, the distinction between subject and object was increasingly difficult to maintain. Ultimately, it transformed the kind of social psychology I have come to practise and teach – one that values narrative as well as experimental techniques for examining power relations and social identities. The liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s created for many women a practice of consciousness-raising and self-analysis that ultimately has transformed the kind of non-reflexive social science we were taught to do.

While most of the 'raw data' for my understanding came from my immediate experiences and talking with other women and minorities, I also started collecting other people's written stories of transformation. In the early 1970s I collected manifestos of various minority groups, primarily in the United States where I was living at the time. For me, they illustrate that models of feminist and minority awareness and allegiance are best understood in historical context. The manifestos I collected represent the writings of numerous groups.<sup>2</sup> They express that phase where the Privilege Quotient is challenged collectively and individually, where a sense of injustice has been ignited and consciousness is transformed, where conscious and non-conscious collaboration with one's victimization is changed to resistance. The language of these documents of the early 1970s seems quite exaggerated to me now, paradoxically inclusionary and exclusionary. I find myself amused by the tone of self-righteousness and taken aback by the unabashed anger for 'the Other'. Yet, it was these manifestos that captured something of my own process of consciousness-raising and its impact on how I have come to practise social psychology.

Let me describe three of them: 'The Fourth World manifesto' by Barbara Burris<sup>3</sup> (Burris 1971) (in agreement with K. Barry, T. Moore, J. DeLor, J. Parent, C. Stadelman); 'A personal manifesto' from *Chicano Manifesto* by Armando Rendon (Rendon 1971) and 'Refugees from Amerika: A gay manifesto' by Carl Wittman (Wittman 1972). Each manifesto is a statement of personal and political change, of defining the oppression of the group with which the person identifies, of separating him or her into self and other, and of expressing the anger that accompanies this sense of

'I' and 'we' versus 'them'. These manifestos were examples to me of the merging of personal experience with political and social advocacy.

### THE FOURTH WORLD MANIFESTO

This document was first published in 1971 and came from a desire of some women to take a separate stance from the male-dominated Left and what they saw as the cooptation of anti-imperialist and anti-war women. The theme of women separating from the Left was not limited to the United States in the 1970s (see, for example, Segal 1987). The words are angry and accusatory. The analysis sets female culture apart from 'national' culture that is taken to be the dominant male culture. 'The female culture is the Fourth World' (Burriss *et al.* 1971: 355). These women accused the Male Left of being in a 'vicious circle of guilt and righteousness' and of being so hung-up on 'who's most oppressed, that they have lost an elemental sense of justice for *all* human beings' (Burriss *et al.* 1971: 333, emphasis in original). It would not be easy in the current climate to find a homogenous categorization of 'female culture' that is even overstated for the time. However, here is what the Fourth World manifesto had to say:

We find it self-evident that women are a colonized group who have never – anywhere – been allowed self-determination.

(Burriss *et al.* 1971: 322)

We do feel that it is crucial to open up a discussion of the emotional and ideological reasons underlying attempts to co-opt the women's movement into other 'more important' struggles.

(Burriss *et al.* 1971: 323)

We have worked out a deeper analysis of the emotional, psychological, and social assumptions underlying the attitude that women's liberation is less important than black liberation, anti-imperialism, anti-capitalism ... we criticize the male definition of oppression which does not recognize the unique position of females as a subjugated group.

(Burriss *et al.* 1971: 323–4)

Many women do identify with white and class privileges. Our task as women is not, as the male Left does, to write them off as white bourgeois but to patiently discuss and communicate with women, as sisters, what our true caste position in society is. Once we really understand our suppressed caste status and begin to move to free ourselves from it, we women can then understand other groups' oppression – but not before. So the understanding of the oppression of other groups needs to be a very conscious and important part of the Women's Liberation Movement, but only from the basis of an understanding

and struggle for our own freedom as females – not as an imposed lecture by some 'movement organizers' who will 'raise our consciousness' about oppression, and try to impose their white male guilt on us.

(Burriss *et al.* 1971: 332)

It is true that women have no recourse other than to rise up in a strong feminist movement to end male domination. We must have our own independent women's movement free from male interference and domination. But we should not lose sight of our ultimate goals. There is a danger that the women's movement will help destroy its own ends if the split between the female and male is made into a new feminist orthodoxy. The women's movement has to be free enough to explore and change the entire range of human relationships and it must be open enough to heal the split between the female and male and draw out the total human potential of every person. If we want to be free as female human beings, we must really be willing to end the split of the human personality that has cut men off from a part of themselves and which has caused untold suffering.

(Burriss *et al.* 1971: 357)

This earlier document expressed a breaking off of 'female culture' and a call for solidarity among women that needs to be read against contemporary calls for a greater recognition of diversity among women. I find myself cautious yet stubbornly optimistic about feminist allegiance in light of the events of the intervening twenty-five years – the declining power of the male Left yet the rise of men's movement and men's studies; increased anti-feminism alongside the increasing inclusion of feminists and feminist research at the universities; critiques of the exclusionary aspects of white middle-class feminism and the publication of non-white women's writings; the rise of the right wing agenda that claims to be silenced by the 'political correctness' of new voices in the Academy alongside the growing power of these new voices.

### A PERSONAL MANIFESTO

Rendon's manifesto was published in 1971 as a personal statement in the context of a broader political awakening of his Chicano people. Upon college graduation, the author chose a job as a reporter and feature writer for a Catholic weekly newspaper in Sacramento. The editor of the paper gave him permission to cover a 'phenomenon called *Cursillos de Cristiandad* (Little Courses in Christianity), intense, three day group-sensitivity sessions whose chief objective is the re-Christianization of Catholics' (Rendon 1971: 323). The effect was to challenge his religious beliefs and to radicalize him as a Mexican American. He wrote:

I am a Chicano. What that means to me may be entirely different from what meaning the word has for you. To be Chicano is to find out something about one's self which has lain dormant, subverted, and nearly destroyed.

I am a Chicano because of a unique fusion of bloods and history and culture. I am a Chicano because I sense a rising awareness among others like myself of a fresh rebirth of self and self-in-others . . .

I am a Chicano in spite of scorn or derision, in spite of opposition even from my own people, many of whom do not understand and may never fathom what Chicano means.

(Rendon 1971: 319)

We who call ourselves Chicanos recognize in that word something that is ours, a name that we have given to ourselves, not one that has been forced upon us by the Anglo.

. . . I nearly fell victim to the Anglo. My childhood was spent in the West Side barrio of San Antonio . . . I lived in my grandmother's house . . . I did well in the elementary grades and learned English quickly.

Spanish was off-limits in school anyway, and teachers and relatives taught me early that my mother tongue would be of no help in making good grades and becoming a success. Yet Spanish was the language I used in playing and arguing with friends. Spanish was the language I spoke with my *abuelita*, my dear grandmother.

(Rendon 1971: 320-1)

When at the age of ten I went with my mother to California, to the San Francisco Bay Area where she found work during the war years, I had my first real opportunity to strip myself completely of my heritage . . . By the time I graduated from high school and prepared to enter college, the break was nearly complete.

(Rendon 1971: 321-2)

My ancestry had become a shadow, fainter and fainter about me. I felt no particular allegiance to it, drew no inspiration from it, and elected generally to let it fade away. I clicked with the Anglo mind-set in college, mastered it, you might say. . . . The point of my 'success', of course, was that I had been assimilated . . .

(Rendon 1971: 322)

My wife and I moved to Sacramento in the fall of 1961 and in a few weeks the radicalization of this Chicano began. It wasn't a book I read or a great leader awakening me, for we had no Chavezes or Tijerinas or Gonzaleses at the time; and it was no revelation from above. It was my own people who rescued me. There is a large Chicano population in Sacramento, today one of the most activist in northern California, but at the time factionalized and still dependent on the social and

church organizations for identity. But together we found each other . . . I found my people striving to survive in an alien environment among foreign people . . .

(Rendon 1971: 322-3)

I owe my life to my Chicano people. They rescued me from the Anglo kiss of death, the monolingual, monocultural, and colorless gringo society . . . Chicano is indefinable, more a word to be understood and felt and lived than placed in a dictionary or analyzed by Anglo anthropologists, sociologists, and apologists . . . It portrays the fact that we have come to psychological terms with circumstances which might otherwise cause emotional and social breakdowns among our people if we only straddle cultures and do not absorb them.

(Rendon 1971: 324-5)

Rendon's awareness of himself as Chicano (and Anglo as 'other') came from immersion in the group, his language and heritage and his awareness as a man. Through the *Cursillo*, he 'became reimmersed in a tough, macho ambiente (an entirely Mexican male environment)' (Rendon 1971: 323). Awareness for Burris and other feminists of her time came from immersion in 'female culture' and separation from the 'male Left other'. More than any of the other manifestos from the early 1970s that I collected, Rendon's was the most personally articulate example of what that feeling was like to find the core of oneself through shared social experience. Yet it does not address how we are to balance the exhilaration of finding ourselves as 'woman' or as 'Chicano' with the feelings of alienation from others defined as 'man' or 'Anglo' or 'Chicana'. Take for example the recent essay by Angie Chabram-Dernersesian (1992) in which Rendon's work is subjected to the criticism of male exclusivity through feminist Chicana analysis. These manifestos are constant reminders to me of the multiple identities and consciousnesses that form out of social and political movements for change and how possible it is to be included and excluded at the same time.

### REFUGEES FROM AMERIKA: A GAY MANIFESTO

The issue of multiple identities is further explored in this manifesto, published in the *San Francisco Free Press*. It began:

San Francisco is a refugee camp for homosexuals. We have fled here from every part of the nation, and like refugees elsewhere, we came not because it is so great here, but because it was so bad there. By the tens of thousands, we fled small towns where to be ourselves would endanger our jobs and any hope of a decent life; we have fled from blackmailing cops, from families who disowned or 'tolerated' us; we

have been drummed out of the armed services, thrown out of schools, fired from jobs, beaten by punks and policemen.

And we have formed a ghetto, out of self-protection. It is a ghetto, rather than a free territory, because it is still theirs.

(Wittman 1972: 157)

It should also be clear that these ideas reflect the perspective of one person, and are determined not only by my homosexuality, but my being white, male and middle class. It is my individual consciousness. Our group consciousness will evolve as we get ourselves together – we are only at the beginning.

(Wittman 1972: 158)

On the subject of lesbianism, he wrote:

It's been a male dominated society for too long, and that has warped both men and women. So gay women are going to see things differently from gay men; they are going to feel oppression as women, too. Their liberation is tied up with both gay liberation and women's liberation.

(Wittman 1972: 159)

On the oppression of gays in relation to others and on the idea of a coalition with other minority groups:

It is important to catalog and understand the different facets of our oppression. There is no future in arguing about degrees of oppression. A lot of 'movement' types come on with a line of shit about homosexuals not being oppressed as much as blacks or Vietnamese or workers or women. We don't happen to fit into their ideas of class (or caste). Bull – when people feel oppressed, they act on that feeling. And we feel oppressed. Talk about the priority of black liberation or ending imperialism over our 'problem' is just antigay propaganda.

(Wittman 1972: 163)

... we can't change Amerika alone, we need coalition with other oppressed groups at some point ... many of us have 'mixed' identities – we are gay, and also we are part of another group trying to free itself – women, blacks, other minority groups ...

(Wittman 1972: 168–9)

And on Chicanos, he had this to say about their interactions with the gay community:

Basically the same problem as with blacks: trying to overcome mutual animosity and fear, and finding ways to support their movement. The extra problem of superuptightness and machismo among Latin cultures, and the traditional pattern of Mexican 'punks' beating on

homosexuals, can be overcome; we're both oppressed, and by the same people at the top. ... [w]e know the system we're living under is the direct source of oppression, and it's not just a question of sharing the pie. The pie is rotten.

(Wittman 1972: 169)

Whether one accepts that the pie is rotten or not, the pie has been increasingly subdivided over the past twenty-five years to the point where only crumbs are available to society's poorest – often the elderly and women from racial and ethnic minorities. As we move outside the context of Western industrialized nations, the pie is increasingly invisible. These manifestos that at one time captured an awareness of inclusivity in social movement now make me more keenly aware of the dangers of exclusivity and the continual importance of building alliances among social movements that engage us in the task of 'human' liberation.

At the same time as I was collecting these manifestos of 'I', 'We' and 'You', I was also reading and teaching the literature of black psychology (e.g. Jones [1972], 1978). This, as much as the newly emerging feminist literature, was a source of understanding social movements and for thinking about eventual coalition-building. Despite the variety of these manifestos I found that a model set in terms of black race awareness (Hall *et al.* 1972) made sense of them. The model was historically based and empirically tested and made no claims beyond what it studied: primarily university students in the 1970s in the era of the black consciousness movement. Yet, the elements of the model could be found in the developing consciousness of feminists and other marginalized groups.

As I slowly abandoned the idea that theories were value-neutral, I found myself using this model continuously in classes in social psychology where I often taught material from a minority perspective. It was a useful analysis because it acknowledged the emotional basis of social awareness. It described a process whereby personal growth and political engagement were valued as were connections among groups rather than divisiveness between them. The model offered an historical and political dimension to research in social psychology, which from the mid-1970s on had become so irrelevant to the politics of my daily life. I was never able to convince myself through the practice of experimental social psychology that the particulars of culture, nationality, class, gender, race or ethnicity were unimportant to social life and consciousness. If there were general principles of human social behaviour, it made sense to me that they would be rooted in the 'stubborn particulars' of everyday life.

Hall *et al.*'s work (1972) on race awareness provided me some insight into how I had traversed the various elements of developing a feminist consciousness. Their model moved me away from experimental

laboratory data and focused me on thinking about 'process', and, in the case of consciousness-raising, a process that would keep changing and taking new forms. Their research pieced the process together through survey and interview methods, through biography, autobiography and all manner of documents, films and novels available to the social psychologist. The model provided a framework for the manifestos I had been collecting. Hall, Cross and Freedle were proposing a model of understanding the change from Negro to Black awareness in America in the late 1960s and early 1970s which I found applicable to an understanding of the development of feminist awareness. Cross revised the model in a 1978 review paper and continued on with research to support a stage-developmental model of movement towards black awareness.

Cross summarized studies done to validate a model of the 'process of becoming Black' (1978: 81), a model that specified 'the various stages Black Americans traversed in seeking a more authentic identity during the late 1960s and early 1970s' (Cross 1978: 81). He saw this as a model that formulated transformations of identity in adults and that located these transformations in the context of a specific social movement. Although I am white, I found the questions of assimilation versus separatism that he posed for black identity quite applicable to my emerging feminist identity.

The stages he was able to identify theoretically and empirically predominantly among college students began with a pre-encounter phase in which a black person held a worldview 'dominated by Euro-American determinants' (Cross 1978: 85). This deracinated frame of reference was changed by an 'encounter stage' that 'describes a shocking personal or social event that temporarily dislodges the person from his old world view, making the person receptive (vulnerable) to a new interpretation of his identity and his condition' (Cross 1978: 85). There followed an attempt to make a transition from the old perspective to the 'just discovered Blackness' (Cross 1978: 85). In this phase, white culture is vilified and black culture is deified. (This is, of course, where my manifesto collection seemed to fit best with its sharp divisions of 'us' and 'them'.) Somewhere in this phase, the person became more critical and Cross suggested that 'the most difficult period of nigrescence comes to an end' (Cross 1978: 85). In the next phase of internalization, there was the development of a pluralistic non-racist perspective, less hostility, anxiety, less defensiveness and, in the last stage of commitment, there were those who continued an involvement as social activists on behalf of Black people and all oppressed peoples. This last stage hinged on Cross's notion that 'in order for Black identity change to have *lasting political significance* (his emphasis), the "self" (me or "I") must become or continue to be involved in the resolution of problems shared by the "group" (we)' (Cross 1978: 86). Cross reviewed the considerable support for the model based on a variety of

methods of obtaining information: asking black and white students to sort statements reflecting the stages of the model, asking black college students to give retrospective accounts of their Negro-to-Black identity transformation, self-questionnaires, and in-depth interviews with college and non-college participants.<sup>4</sup>

The manifestos I've described and the model of the development of black consciousness coincide with my personal development and they have influenced the way I have come to read social psychology. My propensity to turn things upside down and look at things from multiple perspectives continues to grow. As my social psychology classes begin to reflect the multicultural reality of Canadian society, I find myself talking about multiple perspectives in the construction of social knowledge, social identity and social activism. I am experimenting with techniques by which students might think through multiple accountings for social events and different subject positions for producing knowledge claims about the social world. For the past two years, I have put this issue in the context of producing knowledge about indigenous peoples in Canada since the political events of my country have so focused Canadians on the social psychology of nationhood and intergroup conflict. Both within and between native and non-native groups there are real conflicts over land claims, self-government and the justice system to name but a few areas.

My goal is to have students come to question the kind of non-conscious 'speaking for others' that has emerged in academic social science research and that sustains domination-subordination relations. If I can loosen the grip of the dominant position that sees indigenous peoples as either conquered or extinct by reconnecting with historical and contemporary evidence to the contrary, then I am making way for a social psychology that would foster greater social justice. To that end, students are asked to look at their understanding of indigenous peoples from a variety of social psychological perspectives.

Students were asked first to identify their 'own voice' or perspective. I asked them to write about their own racial and ethnic heritage and how they have personally come to 'know about' native peoples in Canada. For their own perspective, students were asked to reflect but not judge as they become the observers of their social identity formation. I asked them to run a camera back through their lives and let emerge the concrete details of their understanding, a technique common to fiction-writing, psychoanalysis and body/mind meditation practices. I stressed that they did not need to provide the information in a linear and chronological way. The collection of 'episodes' and 'fragments' from family life, school experiences, television, books and friendships revealed how Canadian students (whose origins span the globe) have come by their personal knowledge and social prejudices. It is intended to be a self-study of relative privilege and an exploration of the consequences of privilege for



constructing knowledge about others. For native students, it has proven to be an exercise that has elements of the developmental model of self-awareness I have described earlier for African-Americans.

The second perspective required students to take the particulars of their individual experience and to see if concepts in their social psychology textbook – stereotyping, racism, prejudice, inter-group conflict, assimilation, the contact hypothesis – made sense of these experiences. I then asked students to compare insights from social psychology and social history by having them read an essay, 'Stealing history', by one of my colleagues in Canadian Studies, Parker Duchemin (1988). His article connects these general social psychological terms (which he also uses) to the concrete historical reality of colonialism and racism encountered by Native peoples when European settlers arrived. In this way, students can see that the contact experience of Europeans and Native peoples and their subsequent history has shaped consciousness for both groups as well as shaping the kinds of knowledge claims that each group currently makes about the social world. This perspective paves the way for students to re-examine the textbook account of Native peoples they have learned earlier in their lives; it creates a space for alternatives that legitimate the fuller account of the role Native peoples have played in world history (see, for example, Weatherford 1988).

The third perspective for creating knowledge is that of a native person. Students are asked to find material from a native perspective illustrating an aspect of social life. It can be a topic also found in their social psychology textbook (the elderly, socialization of children, conformity, deviance) or missing from their textbook (storytelling, spirituality, connectedness to the land, resistance to oppression). This perspective was the most difficult in that students were often unsure of what constituted 'social psychological knowledge' in another culture. It challenged them to go outside the bounds of personally and/or academically defined ways of understanding social life and to confront the limits of their social scientific understanding and its imposition of academic rules about the structuring of knowledge. Students attended films, plays, exhibits, ceremonies; they brought in poems, stories, songs, newspaper articles, political documents, and interviews with native friends.<sup>5</sup> They had to discuss the generalizability of this one voice to the many native voices emerging in Canada at this time and similarly the generalizability of their own voice to those of their own background.<sup>6</sup> They had to ask about the relationships between knowledge production and social change – whose perspective will be heard and whose point of view will inform social policy and change?

I have come to take the view that experiments are the stories of mainstream North American social psychology. The analytical voice of academic psychology has something to offer in its conceptual generalizations

once grounded in social history, filtered through the voice of 'self' and aware of the longstanding exclusion of epistemic traditions of powerless groups. I have not asked students to choose *the* authentic voice because even within any given social identity there will be conflicting and contradictory perspectives. What I do hope is that they reflect on the question of who has had the power to shape knowledge in the Academy and what have been the implications for consciousness and social change for those historically excluded from speaking on their own behalf.