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DISERTAČNÍ PRÁCE

Chicana Literature:
A Feminist Perspective of Gloria Anzaldúa's Identity Politics

Chicanská ženská literatura:
Feministická analýza politiky identity v díle Glorie Anzaldúy

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2017 Mgr. et Mgr. Tereza Jiroutová Kynčlová

PROHLÁŠENÍ

Prohlašuji, že jsem disertační práci napsala samostatně s využitím pouze uvedených a řádně citovaných pramenů a literatury, a že práce nebyla využita v rámci jiného vysokoškolského studia či k získání jiného nebo stejného titulu.

V Praze dne 31. března 2017 Mgr. et Mgr. Tereza Jiroutová Kynčlová

ABSTRAKT

Chicanská ženská literární produkce v analýzách provedených v předkládané disertační práci vyvstává jako komplexní příklad strategické a reflektované instrumentalizace literatury jakožto politického a aktivistického nástroje, jenž má nejen přispět k genderové a kulturní emancipaci chicanských žen, ale také prohlubovat aspekty uznání marginalizovaného národa, který je typizován specifičností své geografické, kulturní a sociální lokace na americko-mexické hranici, kde se kříží a interaguje množství společensky konstruovaných kategorií. Cílem disertační práce je tedy podat genderovou analýzu způsobů, jimiž chicanské spisovatelky – a primárně pak Gloria Anzaldúa – prostřednictvím literárních reprezentací své žité zkušenosti zásadně formují feministické myšlení nejen na mexicko-americkém pomezí, nýbrž i ve Spojených státech amerických a mimo ně. Práce se dále soustředí na Anzaldúino přetvoření konceptu hranice v relevantní nástroj pro studium socio-kulturního kontextu Chicanů a Chicanek a pro budování situované epistemologie, jakož i na žánrové a obsahové postupy, jimiž ve své tvorbě společně s dalšími autorkami implicitně poukazuje na rozdíly mezi chicanskou literaturou psanou muži a tou, již píší Chicanky. Současně se disertační projekt zaměřuje na téma v opačném směru, tedy na metody, jimiž se feminismus projevuje v tvorbě chicanských autorek a konstruuje a diskursivně vyhlubuje její literární a politickou agendu, a to najmě ve vztahu k chicanskému nacionalistickému hnutí na straně jedné a diskriminačním praktikám americké majority na straně druhé. Disertační práce má interdisciplinární charakter, inspiruje se teoriemi a metodami genderových, kulturních a postkoloniálních studií a přihlíží též k sociologickým a politologickým konceptům. Zmíněná politická zacílenost chicanské literatury je současně ilustrována prostřednictvím literárního rozboru stěžejních básní Glorie Anzaldúy z knihy *Borderlands/La Frontera – The New Mestiza* (1987), jakož i prostřednictvím postkoloniálně a feministicky orientované analýzy hlavních archetypálních postav chicanské femininity, a to v kontrastu k zakládajícím textům chicanského nacionalismu,

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA: chicanská literatura; Gloria Anzaldúa; americko-mexická hranice; gender; nacionalismus; feminismus; politika identity; Aztlán; postkolonialismus; intersekcionalita

ABSTRACT

In the analyses executed in the present doctoral thesis, Chicana literary production emerges as a complex example of a strategic and reflexive instrumentalization of literature in the form of a political and activist tool contributing to Chicanas' gender and cultural emancipation on the one hand. On the other hand, within the Chicana/o context, literature is employed for perfecting the politics of recognition of the marginalized nation typified by the specificity of its geographic, cultural, and social location on the U.S.-Mexico border where a plethora of socially constructed categories interact and intersect. The doctoral thesis further provides a gender analysis of literary representations of Chicana/o lived experience by Chicana feminist writers in general and by Gloria Anzaldúa in particular, and investigates how these representations help shape feminist thought not only in relation to the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, but within and beyond the United States. Moreover, the thesis supplies an interpretation of Anzaldúa's reconceptualization of the border concept as a pertinent means for comprehending Chicanas'/os' socio-cultural context and for forging a situated epistemology, while also critically assessing the author's thematic and genre approaches she and other Chicana writers employ to expose the differences between Chicana and Chicano writing. Simultaneously, the doctoral project also focuses on how feminism manifests itself in Chicana literary production and discursively constructs its political and representational agenda, especially in regards to the androcentric Chicana/o nationalist movement and the dominant society's discriminatory practices. Interdisciplinary in its theoretical and methodological structure, the doctoral thesis draws on perspectives inherent to gender studies, cultural studies and postcolonial studies while also drawing on sociological concepts, and terms relevant to political science. Finally, the political and activist character of Chicana literature is epitomized by comprehensive literary analyses and close reading of relevant poems from Anzaldúa's chief accomplishment *Borderlands/La Frontera – The New Mestiza* (1987). Together with postcolonial and feminist reinterpretations of major figures of Chicana femininity, Anzaldúa's writings are contrasted with the foundational texts of Chicana/o nationalism.

KEYWORDS: Chicana literature; Gloria Anzaldúa; U.S.-Mexico border; gender; nationalism; feminism; identity politics; Aztlán; postcolonialism; intersectionality

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NOTE

Chapter 4 "Elastic, Yet Unyielding: The U.S.-Mexico Border and Anzaldúa's Oppositional Rearticulations of the Frontier" is a longer version of an eponymous article I published in *European Journal of American Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 2014, unpag., which is accessible at http://ejas.revues.org/10384. An abbreviated version of Chapter 5 "A Trio Against Dualism: Postcolonial Re/Interpretations of Hybrid Representations of Chicana Femininity" translated into Czech will appear as "Tři proti dualismu: Postkoloniální re/interpretace hybridních postav chicanské femininity" in a special issue of *Gender, rovné příležitosti, výzkum* on postcolonialism and gender in winter 2017. Minor parts of Chapter 1 "The Feminist Universe of Chicanas' Literary Representations" and Chapter 4 are adopted from my article "On Border and On Murder: Juárez Femi(ni)cides" published in *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies*; Vol. 3, 2015, Pp. 154-174. Also, some parts of the final Resumé are adaptations from "Chicanská ženská literatura: Hybridní identity a politické zápasy na mexicko-americké hranici" which appears as a chapter in an anthology *Cesta Amerikou: Antologie povídek regionálních spisovatelek* I coedited with Dagmar Pegues (Brno: HOST, 2011, Pp. 130-149), and from my article "Teorie (mexicko-americké) hranice: Mestické vědomí Glorie Anzaldúy" that was published in *Gender, rovné příležitosti, výzkum*; Vol. 13, No. 2, 2012, Pp. 50-59.

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PROLOG

It is May 16, 2012 and an air-conditioned bus with twenty-five women on board stops at the designated checkpoint of the American border patrol. The location is less than 40 kms north of the border crossing between Reynosa, Mexico, and McAllen, Texas. The bus is following Route 281 to San Antonio. It is approximately six in the evening. The setting sun is beating down on the left side of the bus relentlessly, causing most of the passengers to retreat to the right side of the vehicle in hopes of finding shade. There are no curtains on the windows. This is why, about two kilometers before the bus is halted by members of the American border patrol with their demand for identification, the passengers take note of the traffic signs lining both sides of the road. Three running silhouettes are depicted: a man, a woman, and a child. Accompanying them is a notice in both Spanish and English: "No trafficking of illegal immigrants." The less graphic versions simply warn drivers to avoid stopping for hitchhikers, for their own safety.

The woman-driver opens the door of the bus and two officers in uniforms climb in. Except for one passenger, everyone present including the driver herself is asked to produce a picture ID. The *la migra* officers are both Mexican Americans. The passengers of the bus, too, would tick the "Hispanic" box on the census form, although they would simultaneously distance themselves from this generalizing umbrella label that catalogs all individuals of the vastly varied Latin American descent under one rubric. For they are Chicanas and American citizens. They are professors of American and Spanish literature, university lecturers, sociologists, academic workers, researchers, and activists with their heritage roots nested mainly in the south of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, that is the diverse U.S.-Mexico border region. They are on their return trip from the visit to the border and a day's workshop dedicated to the literature of the borderlands spanning Mexico and the United States, which has just taken place at the University of Texas-Pan American in Edinburgh, Texas, honoring the eminent local writer and theorist Gloria Anzaldúa. It has been exactly eight years and a day since her untimely death of diabetes-related complications. She had never had health insurance; its costs had always been too prohibitive.

The only person not asked to show an ID is me. I have a light skin and fair hair. The patrolmen do not even consider the possibility that I could be the only one on this bus who is

not a citizen and who has, in fact, recently crossed the border to reach the U.S. mainland temporarily.

After the officers wave us off so that we can continue driving north, I am left with conflicted feelings. It is the proximity of the "busiest and among the most contrasting international borders in the world, with over one million crossings daily" (Romero 2008: 9), a border that is also synonymous with danger, illegal cross-border migration and its frequently lethal consequences borne by migrants, that exposes my racial privilege as well as the privilege of my of Czech/E.U. citizenship guaranteeing my comfortable crossing of international borders. What is more, the conference bus travels through some of the counties in Texas that have, historically, witnessed a significant influx of Czech migrants. Nevertheless, I am the foreigner here, but it is not my affinity that needs to be inspected and verified. My Chicana colleagues are the ones who must prove their legitimate status.

INTRODUCTION: From Western Expansion to Hybridity

As many cultural critics have shown, American identity relies heavily on the idea of an expanding Western frontier[1] which marks the progress of American society and its civilizing mission, a view that corresponds with Western notions of colonialism and capitalism (Turner [1893] 1921, Slotkin [1973] 2000, Madsen 2010, Furniss 1998, Tinnemeyer 1999). Thus, American national myths such as the one of Western expansion, as (re)interpreted in both Frederick Turner's Turner Thesis and 'regeneration through violence' construed by Richard Slotkin, show that American thought and identity are historically conditioned by the concept of the border. The U.S.-Mexico[2] border is therefore understood as a margin that geographically and symbolically outlines the United States and leaves an imprint on how American-ness is viewed both in the U.S. and outside of the country.

The experience described in the prolog is a testament to the paradoxical (in)visibility and (un)identifiability of my Central European origins and the racial/ethnic privilege of white people who travel through the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, as well as to the tangible influence of the border's presence on the everyday life of the inhabitants of this border zone, to whom the term borderland subjects applies (Elenes 2010: 55). Both, the very existence of these borderland subjects characterized by their permanent negotiation between two or more cultural systems and the space they inhabit are stereotyped by the majority white and middle-class American society in terms of gender, class, race, and culture. This fact is taken up by the leading figure of Chicana literature and feminist thought, Gloria Anzaldúa, in her

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[1] Since the argumentation conveyed in this doctoral thesis requires the use of concepts pertaining to the notion of the border that are often deemed as synonymous, clarification on the following terms should be made: I use the word "frontier" exclusively when referring to the myth of Western expansion, whereas "border" and "borderline" are employed interchangeably to refer to the geographical line separating the United States and Mexico, and – in Anzaldúan terms – to the metaphor for othering practices. "Borderlands" then denotes the region along the U.S.-Mexico border, and both "border" and "boundary" for the purposes of this text represent the epistemic category that in abstract terms separates two entities, such the Self and the Other.

[2] To avoid binary hierarchizations that would be in stark contradiction with the content and argument of the present text, alternation of the order of the two countries in the designation of the border as "Mexico-U.S. border" and "U.S.-Mexico border" suggests itself as a fair practice. However, due to the extent of the doctoral thesis as well as the varied use of the geographical names by the authors upon whose works I establish my arguments, I employ Mexico-U.S. border and U.S.-Mexico border interchangeably. My reflecting on such a use also points to the fact that the Chicano/a homeland is actually located on both sides of the border and thus the adjectives differ based on the geographical position from which or from where one looks at the border. Moreover, this split also speaks of the constructedness of the border, be it a geographical site, a topographical marking, or a cultural and/or epistemological concept.

theorizing of Chicana/o[3] identity politics and her re-envisioning of the border's legacy, which are the major topics investigated in the present doctoral thesis.

The issues of cultural, social, racial, economic, and gender(ed) inequities in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands are addressed in the works of many Mexican, Mexican American, Latina/o and Chicana/o authors, as well as in academic literature (regardless of its authors' ethnic self-identification) that may, besides the categories of contemporary ethnic literature of North America and American cultural studies, be subsumed under the category of border theory. Within the context of the U.S. academia – approximately since the late 1980s –, border theory focuses on affirmative contemplations of the Mexico-U.S. border as a phenomenon generating not only differences and hierarchies, but also new cultures and identities (Michaelsen 1997: 3). Border studies[4] today is a discipline that attempts to reflect on the social realities of the southern border of the United States on the level of anthropology, sociology, and literary theory.

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[3] The gender-specific terms "Chicano" for men and "Chicana" for women were adopted into English from Spanish (similarly as Latino and Latina or mestiza and mestizo); "Chicanos/as" is a way of referring to the entire community while avoiding the generic masculine. An alternate spelling is "Xicano", "Xicana" and "Xicanas/os" respectively or also "Chican@".

While, in this doctoral thesis, I consistently use "Chicana/o" or "Chicanas/os" to refer to both men and women within the concerned ethnic group, I distinguish between Chicana and Chicano when making a gender-specific argument. It is my conscious choice to avoid the generic masculine in the belief that its use perpetuates the invisibilization of women in political (and/or postcolonial/decolonial) processes of which they were an inherent part, yet their presence has been neglected or omitted by hegemonic narratives of, for example, colonial expansion, struggles for national self-determination, and national and social progress (cf. Pratt 1993: 860). Thus, I use compounds such as Chicana/o Movement *(El Movimiento)* or Chicana/o nation, although the established practice, even within Chicana feminist discourse, is Chicano Movement or Chicano nation, respectively, in order to accentuate the equal representation of all genders. Simultaneously, I am aware of the fact that within the charged, political contexts discussed in this doctoral thesis, a semantic shift may be induced, causing "Chicano" being understood not only as a referent to males, but also as a referent to patriarchal tradition and heteronormativity, whereas "Chicana" could be perceived as a referent to females and radicality, feminist agenda and queerness. My avoidance of the generic masculine, nevertheless, targets solely the gendered grammatical practice. Where need be, I accentuate radicalness and feminist standpoints contextually or by adding suitable adjectives while making an argument. On quoting other sources, however, I respect their authors' choice of the label and it therefore has to be noted that "Chicano" in some of these instances functions as a generic masculine (such is the case in, for instance, George Hartley's work quoted anywhere in this doctoral thesis).

[4] In European contexts, border studies can have a different focus from its American counterpart, which is a result of a distinct historical and political development, as well as the different geographical and cultural ordering of the relevant continent. Regarding the European Union, the field of border studies has examined the immigration policies of member states, the issues related to the Schengen system, or the discourses of delineating national and cultural borders more generally. In contrast to the European use of border studies, which is concerned mainly with political science, the border studies elaborated on here refers to research in the literary and cultural production of the Mexico-U.S. border and anthropological and sociological research in the same region.

The discipline's inception, according to Michaelsen, owes much to Anzaldúa's masterpiece *Borderlands/La Frontera – The New Mestiza* (1987) – the main work in focus of this doctoral thesis –, and further to the anthropological study *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (1989) by Renato Rosaldo, as well as to the analysis of Latin American multilingual literature *Border Writing: The Multidimesional Text* (1991) by literary theorist Emily Hicks, and, finally, to the essay collection *Criticism in the Borderlands: Studies in Chicano Literature, Culture and Ideology* (1991) by the team of Chicano authors Héctor Calderón and José David Saldívar (Michaelsen: 1997: 1). The unifying theme of these works is their detailed treatment of the hybrid, fluid, and ambivalent character of border identities and of the border itself. Although one of the foundational thinkers of postcolonial studies, Homi Bhabha, is not always explicitly cited in these works, his concept of hybridity – that being the impermanent and multifaceted identity-as-process with its potential for resistance that takes advantage of the errors of colonial discourse (Bhabha 1994: 112-115) – can also be applied to how the U.S.-Mexico border zone is discussed by the aforementioned authors; consequently, I draw on Bhabha's notion of hybridity throughout the thesis.

In contrast to the above processual understanding of the term, the conventional Western conception of the border is instrumentalizing. The border is a tool for controlling geographical or spatial territories at a material level. At the same time, it informs epistemic categories at a social and/or ideological level. The concept, thus, embodies the Western desire for constancy, fixed boundaries (of, for example, states or empires and the established social order) and uncontaminated categories (of personal identity) while, in Foucauldian terms inherently containing the unacknowledged and concealed potential for resistance in the form of exposed symbolic violence that permeates such fixity and stability (Bourdieu 2001).

Opposed to the Western notions is Anzaldúa's approach. She offers a radical deconstruction of the rigid views of the border, remaking it as a concept which is used creatively, not to divisively. As much as the border is believed to manage the inside and the volume or contents of the entity it should maintain, it simultaneously suggests its own productive potential; it creates that entity's Other and thus shows us that the idea that control is exerted over – or by – a boundary is essentially a myth. Anzaldúa exploits this subversive potential. Therefore, according to her, the border region is "in a constant state of transition" and "a vague and undetermined place" inhabited by borderland subjects who defy the desired neat

and clear-cut confines of the normal (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25). Further, borders, whose productive qualities result in heterogeneity, hybridity, fluidity and ambiguity, are heavily laden with the emotional investments made by borderland subjects. Such borders are never a natural occurrence but a construct that is permanently under negotiation and is often violently disputed.

As Corona and Domínguez-Ruvalcaba remind us, the border is nowadays commonly associated with violence, and, indeed, violence caused the border to come into existence (Corona and Domínguez-Ruvalcaba 2011). Following the Mexican 1848 cession of its northern territories to the U.S. stipulated by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, an aftermath of the U.S.-Mexican war, Mexican communities then settled north of the newly demarcated Mexico-U.S. border, lost their original privileges guaranteed by the Mexican state and faced legal and cultural repercussions arising from their inferior status within their new country of origin. Due to their racial identity, predominantly working-class background, Catholic denomination, as well as Spanish-speaking competence, these Mexicans-turned-Americans, whom the delineated border had migrated north without their having to cross the line,[5] faced multiple forms of discrimination. This was because the border in a parallel to Said's concept of *orientalism* – i.e. the discursive practice of othering that presupposes the West as the civilized, rational entity in opposition to the allegedly less developed "rest of the world" and reverse-legitimizes Western colonial expansion (Said 1978) – designated Mexico as the feared and uncivilized Other in relation to the U.S.'s Self.

Subsequently, the United States assumed its role as the second colonizer in the region since the era of the Spanish *conquista,* which later became a defining moment for the Chicana/o national consciousness. To Chicanos and Chicanas, the symbolic mental map of the borderlands was turned into a territory subjugated by white American culture, whereas their

[5] Here I paraphrase the slogan "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us" frequently used ever since the 1960s Mexican American and Chicana/o struggle for civil rights. The motto, being the rhetorical figure of antimetabole that employs contrast and reversal in terms of a mirror image, first points to the historical fact that an extensive part of the Western United States once belonged to Mexico, second, it complicates the idea of static borders and static citizenship, and third it challenges the notion of (im)migration that must inherently entail one's physical repositioning. As Josue Cisneros notes,"[the motto] inverts the common notion of borders as static and natural entities that humans must encounter and cross. In this way, the slogan foregrounds […] that borders and citizenship are dynamic, mobile, and sources of rhetorical enactment and contestation that have crossed over and constituted the identities and social space of Mexican Americans, Chicana/os, Puerto Ricans, and Latina/os throughout U.S. history. [The slogan] points to the historical crossing of the border and citizenship across and by Latina/o communities – including Mexicans, Chicana/os, and other Latina/os – through war, colonial expansion, international treaties, and federal laws" (Cisneros 2013: 12).

historical home was located south of the U.S.-Mexico demarcation line; in addition a myth of originary homeland of Aztlán, the motif of which is examined in Chapters 2 and 3, was recalled, but the artificial border caused its fragmentation. In other words, in Chicanas/os, the offspring of annexed Mexicans, this historical turn evokes notions of uprootedness, lost home, and the onset of cultural, racial, and linguistic discrimination. Also, Anzaldúa's later relating of the U.S.-Mexico border as a source of injuring practices of othering faced by Chicanas/os vehemently subverts the cultural fundament of American national identity, i.e. the myth of the shifting Western frontier as a limit of the country's successful, democratic, and cohesive settlement of the continent (Turner 1921) [1893]). Unlike the dominant and privileged white American society that may subscribe to the national narrative of expansion as a completed civilizing mission, indigenous and mestiza/o communities in general resist and problematize similar discourses not only as traumatizing or dehumanizing but most importantly as Western and/or Eurocentric (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 63-64). Therefore counterhegemonic narratives take root.

In her now canonical and paradigm-subverting masterpiece *Borderlands/La Frontera - The New Mestiza*, Anzaldúa describes the U.S.-Mexico border as a "1,950 mile long open wound […] where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds," which is an image evocative of both the historical injuries that Chicanas/os and other borderland subjects endured in consequence of colonialism and capitalism, and of the symbolic and discursive relegation performed by the myths of Western expansion and regeneration through violence (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25-26). No less, however, is Anzaldúa's figurative depiction representative of the current critical situation at the border noted by Corona and Domínguez-Ruvalcaba (Corona and Domínguez-Ruvalcaba 2011).

Native to the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and Rio Grande Valley in south Texas, Anzaldúa reconceptualizes the border beyond the role attributed to the dividing line in traditional geographical and geopolitical assumptions (Ackleson 2005: 169). Instead, the border, she claims, is an agent that informs the re/deconstruction of one's Self and of the Chicana/o community, and has to do with the historical and cultural legacies of colonialism, economic capitalism, globalizing processes, neoliberal policies, and various types of oppression based on class membership, racial background, gender identity and other ascribed social categorizations. Thus, the border in Anzaldúan thought operates as a metaphor for a process of differentiation which is inherent to Western thought and typified by hierarchical binary

oppositions that may – as feminist and postcolonial/decolonial inquiries have successfully demonstrated – provide grounds for oppressive and discriminatory practices. No less important, however, is also the fact, that to Anzaldúa the border is, besides the said metaphor, actually a lived experience through which new epistemologies can be forged and identities re-negotiated; the social reality of the U.S.-Mexico border triggers new knowledges that facilitate reshaping of the social milieu and, if critically employed, contribute to social change and justice, i.e. the primary goals of Anzaldúan thought. To word it in different terms, besides the symbolic (re)signification of the border, Anzaldúa never fails to theorize the notion in connection with borderland subjects' cultural, social, and material survival.

It is this very focus on one's exhaustively contextualized physical as well as epistemological presence in the world that marks Anzaldúa's identity politics. Minoritized groups, not having the same access to means of (self)representation like do members of the dominant society in positions of power, use subjective experience both to express criticism of hegemonic narratives and to rewrite them. Alcoff and Mohanty argue that the "legitimacy of some subjective experiences is based […] on the objective location of people in the society" and, what is more, that in many crucial instances "experiences are not unfathomable inner phenomena but rather disguised explanations of social relations" and can therefore be evaluated as such (Alcoff and Mohanty 2006: 4-5). Anzaldúa's constant reiteration of her specific location within her culture and of her epistemic positionality matches the above argument entirely and evokes Adrienne Rich's politics of location (Rich 1985).[6]

Identity-based movements in the U.S. date as far back as the 19th century abolitionist or suffrage movements and have shaped American democracy as we know it. Yet, these movements made their claims most prominent during the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and "profoundly transformed the American society" as liberal citizens gradually embraced the critique of various kinds of oppression internal to the U.S. society (Alcoff and Mohanty

[6] Adrienne Rich coined the term "politics of location" as a notion that refers to the responsibility and/or accountability every speaker or a researcher inevitably bears for the way her/his background conditions her/his views. Politics of location voices an appeal for self-reflexivity, a quality (ideally) required of any feminist research and also encouraged in current social studies/humanities approaches. In other words, Rich believes that everyone should learn to recognize and acknowledge her/his racial, cultural or any other heritage that can potentially be formative of and determining for the views held. Rich thus uses politics of location as a notion that resists abstraction and generalization.

2006: 1). Nevertheless, identity politics has since been also the subject of criticism in the activist/political as well as academic realms. In political terms, it is seen as having an (allegedly) divisive, unity-undermining character, whereas in postmodern, poststructuralist thought, identity has been deconstructed as a concept of normalization and control and as such should be done away with (Moya 2000: 3-6).

Unlike those whose subjectivity is associated with positions of power and dominance for it complies with established imperatives of social structures supporting the Western society – such as white, middle class, financially secured, employed, healthy, young, Christian, educated, heterosexual man – members of minorities cannot afford to have their subjectivity deconstructed. It has not yet necessarily emerged as an entity that would not serve as the Other for such aforementioned subjectivities in power. In other words, the dominant discourses make it impossible for minorities to be constructed in their own, positive terms without having to negotiate their inferiority, subjugation, and oppression first. Thus, identity politics is a vital means in minorities' political and epistemological struggles for recognition, equality, subjectivity, and actual survival. As such, it is highly relevant in the present discussion of Chicanas'/os' predicament

Paula Moya, herself a Latina, accurately encapsulates the importance of reclaiming identity and identity politics as notions derived from specific social contexts, thereby avoiding any possible accusations of essentialism (Moya 2000). Thus, what matters to Moya as well as to Anzaldúa and Chicanas or women of color in general, is the highlighting of the material and practical aspects of identity in its negotiation. This is arguably a reflection of the thinkers' awareness that oppression always has adverse repercussions on the immediate lives of minoritized subjects. In case of the oppressed, the criticism of identity politics epitomizes the conflict between theory (e.g. poststructuralist deconstruction of the Self) and practice (e.g. daily experiences of effects of one's ascribed identity). As I then show throughout this doctoral thesis, to Anzaldúa, epistemology is constitutive of identity and the organizational structure of our society has both material and psychological impacts on how one exists as a result of identity. Moya's views of identity actually match Anzaldúa's. Moya argues the following:

> [There are] significant modes by which people experience, understand, and know the world. The significance of identity depends partly on the fact that goods and resources are still distributed according to identity categories.

> Who we are – that is, who we perceive ourselves or are perceived by others to be – will significantly affect our life chances: where we can live, whom we will marry (or whether we can marry), and what kinds of educational and employment opportunities will be available to us. [Further, the] ability to take effective steps toward progressive social change is predicated on an acknowledgment of, and a familiarity with, past and present structures of inequality – structures that are often highly correlated with categories of identity. This correlation undoubtedly accounts for why identity has been a fundamental element of social liberation as well as of social oppression. Finally, [I reclaim] identity because "identities" are evaluatable theoretical claims that have epistemic consequences. Who we understand ourselves to be will have consequences for how we experience and understand the world. Our conceptions of who we are as social beings (our identities) influence – and in turn are influenced by – our understandings of how our society is structured and what our particular experiences in that society are likely to be (Moya 2000: 8).

Moya's take on identity politics perfectly describes Anzaldúa's stance and explains the underlying strategy of the writer's relentless theorizing and political activism. Both, Moya's and Anzaldúa's efforts are directed towards social change and social justice. The U.S.-Mexico borderlands can therefore be viewed as a laboratory of Anzaldúa's revolutionary visions that derive from past, historical experiments instigated through colonialism and, recently, through globalized capitalism.

The frequent citation of quotes from *Borderlands/La Frontera* as the one about the open, gaping wound listed above – along with increasingly common references to Anzaldúa's work in disciplines such as political science, migration studies, political geography, sociology, psychology, and criminology, which all lie beyond the book's original scope of ethnic literature and feminist activism – testify to the mounting pertinence of the author's writing and her argumentation, as well as to the enduring challenge that the U.S.-Mexico border poses to both American and Mexican societies and cultures and the countries' interrelations (cf. Wright 2006, González-López 2005, Gaspar de Alba and Guzmán 2010, Hurtado 2003 and many more). Yet, Anzaldúa's contribution does not consist solely of her literary portrayal of the hybrid identities that are negotiated along the Rio Grande/Río Bravo border; it can also be found in the oppositional terminology and methodology she develops

in *Borderlands/La Frontera* as well as in her later writings, works which have proven instrumental for intersectional research into the complexities and ambivalences of the U.S.-Mexico border region.

It is one of my goals in this thesis to examine how literature conveys theory. More precisely, I analyze selected concepts upon which Chicana/o identity and culture – in a more or less stark resistance to the U.S. current dominance and past Mexican cultural influence (Madsen 2000: 21) – are built in order to expose Anzaldúa's active intervention in the conceptual framework of her community on the one hand, and conventional, academic abstract theorization on the other. I argue that the author, highly reflective of Chicanas'/os' social circumstances, incorporates theory in all her writing. While this is manifest in her essays, speeches, and/or lectures (cf. Anzaldúa 2015) that all eloquently voice conscious self-shaping, feminist perspectives, political and cultural resistance to multiple modes of oppression and marginalization, and a plethora of other pressing issues faced by the author herself or her nation, I here also turn to gender-sensitive close reading of selected pieces of Anzaldúa's poetry for they, too, deliver Anzaldúa's theorizing and contain the author's critical standpoints. It is because poetry, as Quintana observes, supplies Anzaldúa (and her colleagues in Chicana letters) with the "vehicle to voice female concerns much in the way the dominant ideology of the United States provides the medium for male discourse" (Quintana 1996: 32). Anzaldúa's work genuinely invites (and incites) analyses.

In response, this doctoral thesis is based on critical appraisal of the writings by Gloria Anzaldúa with a special focus on *Borderlands/La Frontera* and major concepts incorporated into Anzaldúa's construction of Chicana/o identity politics and Chicana/o cultural representations, such as the U.S.-Mexico border, Aztlán, *mestizaje*, Chicana/o nationalism and its criticism, mestiza consciousness as a new epistemology, and also major figures of Chicana femininity that genuinely embody postcolonial/decolonial notions of hybridity – La Virgen de Guadalupe, La Malinche, and La Llorona. Since these selected concepts are recurrent topics in Anzaldúa's identity politics presented in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, they are critically engaged throughout the thesis. I provide their minute, gender-sensitive analyses and re/interpretations that take heed to the complex reality of the border region. Further, the present text is founded on the theories of postcolonial/decolonial studies reflecting the historical fact that the region of interest has historically been a site of double colonization (Acuña 1981: 29).

The analytical stance I adopt in this doctoral thesis is informed by the constructivist paradigm, feminist epistemologies and theories and it employs an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1991). Therefore, aspects of gender, race/ethnicity,[7] class, and other socio-cultural categories are used as analytical tools with regards to the social reality of U.S.-Mexico borderlands, as they are vital in elucidating how various social affinities of borderland subjects add up, thereby multiplying (and less frequently cancelling) Chicanas'/os' cultural and social marginalization. These strategies of marginalization and othering by the dominant culture are, in accordance with Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 2001: 34-35),[8] often internalized by those who are their targets and whose minds and bodies are thus being disciplined. Although this doctoral thesis mostly deals with representations of resistance to such cultural and epistemic co-optation, I touch upon the concept at relevant moments when internalized otherness and inferiority complicates the negotiation of Chicana/o identity politics and mediates the colonial (and neoliberal) trauma (cf. Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 26).

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[7] Although gender, class and race are among the basic categories of feminist research and analytical practice, there is not a full consensus regarding the use of "race" in the humanities, considering how the term has been shaped by power dynamics and hierarchies and the fact that it makes the discrimination faced by people of color apparent. Occasionally, "ethnicity" or "ethnic origin" are substituted as more suitable terms, but their usage is not entirely consistent either. As stated by Bolaffi, Bracalenti, Braham, and Gindro, race and ethnicity may in some contexts overlap or complement each other, while in extreme cases of generalized usage – often criticized by the social sciences – ethnicity may become a synonym for race (Bolafi, Bracalenti, Braha, Gindro 2003: 94-102, 239-247). Delgado and Stefancic consider race to be a social construct, but point to the fact that the construct is founded on the perceptions of various biological and physiognomic differences in the human population (Delgado, Stefancic 2001: 7-8, 153). By contrast, ethnicity is understood as a more general term that takes into account factors such as one's belonging to a nation, family or clan, language, and culture; the whole concept is highly variable in space and time (Delgado, Stefancic 2001: 146; Bolafi, Bracalenti, Braha, Gindro 2003: 99-102). Although the term "ethnicity" as defined by the mentioned sources offers a wider semantic applicability, I have here, in most cases, opted for "race," because it is the term Chicana/o authors, whose work I analyze in this doctoral thesis, employ in their writings and theories.

[8] Not many theoretical concepts are as effective in elucidating the complex workings of knowledge and power as Bourdieu's symbolic violence, referring to the moment when subjugated persons come to identify with the ideologies and ideological practices of the ruling class. This facilitates their own oppression, as the oppressed lack any critical tools with which to be aware of and examine their position. As Bourdieu states: "The dominated apply categories constructed from the point of view of the dominant to the relations of domination, thus making them appear as natural. […] Symbolic violence is instituted through the adherence that the dominated cannot fail to grant to the dominant (and therefore to the domination) when, to shape her thought of him, and herself, or, rather, her thought of her relation with him, she has only cognitive instruments that she shares with him and which, being no more than the embodied form of the relation of domination, cause that relation to appear as natural; or, in other words, when the schemes she applies in order to perceive and appreciate herself, or to perceive and appreciate the dominant (high/low, male/female, white/black, etc.), are the product of the embodiment of the -thereby naturalized - classifications of which her social being is the product." (Bourdieu 2001: 35)

It follows then, that the character of the doctoral thesis is intrinsically interdisciplinary. Its scope extends beyond literary studies; rather it unites literary analysis, i.e. an examination of cultural representations, with perspectives advanced generally by gender studies, social studies, cultural studies and, in part, by political science in regards to theories of nationalism. Methods and theories promoted by postcolonial/decolonial studies – an interdisciplinary field *par excellence* – are helpful in linking Anzaldúa's thought and writing with struggles for both social change and symbolic valorization of the Other(ed). These qualities are ingrained in feminist, gender-sensitive, constructivist research and – besides the fact they in terms of Rich's politics of location accommodate my personal views of social reality –, they also uphold Anzaldúa's value system in particular and embody the basis of Chicana feminism, i.e. the underlying ideological platform of Chicana literature and Chicana identity politics in general.

This doctoral thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 "The Feminist Universe of Chicanas' Literary Representations" explores the semantic meaning of the label Chicana and its political dimension, which is exemplified in/by a minute dissection of the effect the anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* coedited by Anzaldúa had on the shaping of Chicana feminism and literary production. The opposition from Chicano writers it subsequently encountered is then debated using gender and the dominant discourse of androcentrism as major points of departure. It is argued that Chicana literature and Chicana feminism and theory coalesce; this argument is illustrated by an analysis of Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street* and by a close reading of Alma Villanueva's poem "Witches' Blood" and Cisneros' "Down There." Chapter 2 "Nationalism, Bronze Race and Gender: The Chicana/o Movement and Its Foundational Texts" is an interdisciplinary analysis of Chicana/o nationalist discourse under *El Moviemiento*. Since Chicanas critique the masculinist bias of the Movement, I supply a gender-sensitive close reading of the principal text of Chicana/o canon "Yo Soy Joaquín" and some postcolonial interpretations of the concept of Aztlán, thereby also pointing out the profound differences between Chicana feminist writing and Chicano letters. The following chapter "Queering and Gendering Aztlán: Anzaldúa's Feminist Reshaping of the Chicana/o Nation in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands" continues the palimpsestuous rewriting of Aztlán, this time Anzaldúa's reconceptualizations are the main focus. I further detail the ways the author reinvents the Chicana/o nation and the notions of collectivity by means of the concept she coins as new tribalism, and how the U.S.-Mexico border makes its prominence in the

writer's selected poems. Subsequently, the border is viewed as a matrix for Anzaldúa's central epistemology of mestiza consciousness in Chapter 4 "Elastic, Yet Unyielding: The U.S.-Mexico Border and Anzaldúa's Oppositional Rearticulations of the Frontier." The violent colonial legacy Chicanas/os face is read against the backdrop of American supremacist and national myths, which are challenged by Anzaldúa's poem "We Call Them Greasers" that I propose to read as a representation of Chicana feminist theory. The closing chapter "A Trio Against Dualism: Postcolonial Re/Interpretations of Hybrid Representations of Chicana Femininity" analyzes La Malinche, La Virgen de Guadalupe and La Llorona as genuinely hybrid figures. Chicanas rewrite these women's representations in terms of their feminist identity politics as emancipatory, empowering prototypes of women's resistance to oppressive ideologies of androcentrism and racism while also subverting established master narratives of colonial enterprise and capitalist expansion.

This doctoral thesis comes into being with my painful awareness that a thoroughly exhaustive and complete analysis of Anzaldúa's work and Chicana literature is beyond the possibilities of this project. I have, for the present analysis, therefore chosen the themes that, despite their inevitably reduced scope, still manage to draw a comprehensive representation of the depth and extent of Anzaldúan thought and the pertinence of feminism for Chicana writing. It is thus my hope that the centrality of feminist, gender-sensitive perspective and the rigorous analytical approach I attempt to demonstrate throughout the thesis do justice to Chicana identity politics as well as to the significance of their literary contributions.

CHAPTER 1

1. The Feminist Universe of Chicanas' Literary Representations

Chicana/o literature, as we understand it today, emerged in the wake of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement and served as a vital platform for representation of the Chicana/o community while, simultaneously, helping construct the community in an ideological agreement with the Chicana/o Movement (also *El Movimiento*). In other words, Chicana/o letters and Chicana/o Movement of cultural nationalism were co-constitutive agents and facilitated the development of Chicana/o self-identification. In order to achieve its political goals aimed at the recognition of Chicanas/os and acquiring an equal standing within the U.S. society, the Movement, in itself a heterogeneous enterprise, developed a narrative of compact Chicana/o identity while critiquing the disparities the dominant social system imposed on its racial and class minorities.

However, a rift occurred within the Movement. The nationalist ideology was able to challenge the external, institutionalized power structures that were detrimental to Chicanas'/os' condition, but it remained ignorant to the sources of power that predicated oppression internally, within the Chicana/o community. Alvina Quintana makes a poignant observation that political movements countering patriarchal institutions without questioning the consciousness on which they are founded are bound to duplicate the very hierarchies they combat (Quintana 1996: 19). To put it in different terms, *El Movimiento's* failure to critically examine the patriarchal underpinnings characteristic of the gender(ed) reality of the dominant U.S. culture, consequently led to its failure to recognize the bias of the same sort permeating the very ideological foundations of the Movement. Since the discourse of androcentrism pervades all social and cultural structures, it becomes invisible and thus the patriarchal, default organization of society is mistakenly deemed neutral and impartial. As a consequence, the nationalist ideology transformed Chicanas into a "subordinate class of Chicano nationalist literature" and – as I relate in Chapter 2 and in part as well in Chapter 3 – relegated them to inferior status within the nation itself (Quintana 1996: 19). The suppression of female voices by the nationalist rhetoric and the omission of women's experiences both within the identity politics of the Movement and in the realm of Chicana/o cultural representation instigated the emergence of Chicanas' feminist thought which has found its expression in Chicanas' writing. These processes significantly diversified the canon of Chicana and Chicano literature(s).

With its focus on gender oppression in addition to racial and class discrimination protested against by the Chicana/o Movement, Chicana feminist activism is not dissimilar to the feminist approaches established within the framework of the African American Civil Rights Movement. Both of these types of feminism react to the nationalist projects of the Chicana/o or the African American Movements, supporting their protest against racism and the capitalist reproduction of poverty as it affects people of color while simultaneously identifying sexism of these political groupings (García 1997: 4). If, according to Patricia Hill Collins, "black women must struggle for equality both as women and as African Americans" (Hill Collins [1990] 2002: 153), the same principle applies to Chicanas, as well as other female members of U.S. ethnic movements (cf. García 1997, Yarbro-Bejarano 1996, Jacobs 2006). In 1974, the Combahee River Collective (an organization by and for African American women) expressly pointed out the necessity of resisting intersectional and interlocking systems of oppression along the axes of race/ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality (Hill Collins [1990] 2002: 153, 156-158). This act was already picking up on an African American emancipatory tradition dating back to the 19th century, in relation to abolitionism.

No genealogy of similar length seemed to be available to Chicanas (or even Chicanos), as their community had only partly come into prominence during the Civil Rights Movement itself. Only at the end of the 1960s with *El Movimiento,* do Chicana/o history, literature, culture and legacy begin to be retrospectively excavated (Hartley 2003: 276) within the so-called Chicana/o Renaissance (Madsen 2000).[9] In this respect, Anzaldúa's and Moraga's 1981 women of color feminism anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* analyzed in depth below and – especially – Anzaldúa's 1987 masterpiece *Borderlands/La Frontera – The New Mestiza* represented a significant milestone for the evolution of contemporary Chicana literature. In a way they served also as summary manifestos of Chicana feminism and Chicana lived experience until then silenced by American dominance, Chicano androcentrism and, finally, by mainstream white, middle-class feminism and women's liberation movements.

[9] It would be a mistake to view Chicana/o literary production as one starting off as late as in the 1960s. While, indeed, that period made the writings by Chicanos and later by Chicanas known, and their importance has grown since, plus is currently experiencing an increase interest because of the changing demographics in the U.S., the beginnings of Chicana/o literature date further back. Rebolledo, for example, traces the roots of Chicana literature to 1848 and the works by Mexican women in the post-annexation period. Also, in *Women Singing in the Snow* she provides an overview of relevant women's writings from the beginning of the 20th century to the 1960s, although the label "Chicana" literature was not yet applied at that time (cf. Rebolledo 1995).

Anzaldúa drew attention to the previously invisible and consistently ignored conditions of Chicana existence. She rediscovered and strategically reinterpreted the crucial cultural archetypes of Mestiza/o history and Chicana femininity that symbolically "remained" beyond the 1848 geographical border, such as La Virgen de Guadalupe, La Llorona, and La Malinche. Moreover, she highlighted the fact that besides the intersecting categories of oppression already outlined above, major factors of oppression to Chicana women are heterosexism and their double linguistic affiliation. Both Spanish and English have, to Chicanas/os, historically been the languages of colonizers, associated with territories divided by borders irrespective of the historical and cultural roots the community claims in the U.S. Southwest. Embracing the dual linguistic legacy of double colonization also meant a coming to terms with Chicanas'/os' very name.

1.1 "Chicana": The Feminist Politics of Naming

Mexican Americans who have come to identify with the political aims of the Chicana/o Movement in the 1960s and 1970s refer to themselves in terms of ethnicity as Chicanos/Chicanas, a label that was originally a pejorative used for the most disadvantaged social class in Mexico and later intentionally reclaimed as an expression of a new national and ethnic awareness. This strategic self-labeling has set Chicanas/os apart from the generic terminology employed for inhabitants of the U.S. of Mexican origin, giving further visibility to their specific hybrid cultural heritage and to the fact that Chicanas/os do not simply constitute a *part* of American or Mexican culture, but are a people whose culture is of another kind: a border culture.

Etymologically, the term Chicano/Chicana is derived from the shortened Nahuatl variant of MeXicano/MeXicana, and was originally used as a label for poverty-stricken people of mixed Native, Spanish, and Anglophone heritage and also as an insult underscoring the inferior status of their cultural and class belonging. The exact definitions, or rather the exact meanings ascribed to the term "Chicano" and "Chicana" vary within Chicana/o culture according to context, class, location, culture, and history of one's migration, making it difficult to codify a neat understanding of the term. [10] Yet, the label Chicana/o can definitely be seen as a conscious, strategic, and political step by which the emergent Chicana/o nation

[10] Some of the different meanings and connotations are, for instance, summarized in the introduction to Phillipa Kafka's *(Out)Classed Women: Contemporary Chicana Writers on Inequitable Gendered and Power Relations* (2000), or in Madsen (2000: 6-8) and Hartley (2003: 277).

sets itself apart from the universal label for all American populations of Mexican origin. To the initial pejorative signification of the term "Chicana/o" Hartley adds:

> [The lower social and cultural status] is in fact the way Mexican Americans were viewed by both Americans and Mexicans. Prior to the late 1960s, even within the Mexican American community the term "Chicano" was reserved for recently arrived immigrants. New arrivals from Mexico – often poor and more visibly "Other" than the more assimilated earlier Mexicans in America – threatened the status of those Mexican Americans who often fought hard to prove their American identity by distancing themselves from their Mexican and Indian roots. Later, however, the term was appropriated by Mexican American activists during the 1960s as a way of transforming an insult into a signifier of ethnic strength and pride and as a refusal to assimilate into mainstream white culture. Now "Chicano" came to serve as a badge of militant identity within and against mainstream Anglo-America. After 1967 [release of Rodolfo Corky Gonzáles' poem "Yo Soy Joaquín" that radicalized the Chicana/o Movement] the term "Chicano" served a consciously ideological function among young radicals as a designator of oppositional identity" (Hartley 2003: 277).

Thus, taking up the name Chicana or a Chicano was, in itself, an act of resistance and self-assertion, for to name means to wield power and agency.

As Norma Alarcón points out, the uneven couple of Mexico and the United States was reconfigured following the historical inclusion of Mexican Northern Territories within the U.S. landmass and most profoundly with its people's conscious and political appropriation and recodification of the label Chicana/o. This facilitated the redefinition of the economic, social, cultural, and political standing of the people on the one hand and the erosion of the types of identities associated with racist and classist colonial legacies on the other. In other words, the U.S.-Mexico border region and by extension the United States itself was refashioned and hybridized "through the inclusion of the excluded in the very interiority of culture, knowledge, and the political economy" (Alarcón 1999: 63), or – as I have already argued in "Introduction" – by the Other becoming an integral part of the Self. The (re)claimed label is therefore of a vital significance within Chicana/o national(ist), cultural as well as political struggle.

No less is the 1960s appellation Chicana important for women even to date. As Alarcón documents, most female writers, activists, and scholars of Mexican descent consciously embrace the term and "refuse to give [it] up" notwithstanding the fact that multiple identities such as Latina, Hispanic, and/or Mexican American have become the leading accommodating labels more or less successfully containing the diversity of identities in the contemporary U.S. society (Alarcón 1999: 64). As already hinted at, the term Chicana serves, inevitably, a political agenda and at the same time functions as a site of multiple critiques reflective of the legacy of the colonial, racial, androcentric, and heterosexist usurpation of racialized, mestiza women. While such notions are inextricably linked to feminism, not all women identifying as Chicanas, necessarily simultaneously identify as feminists which, admittedly, complicates the clear-cut use of the term. Suffice it to say, that with the decentered, non-unitary subject put forth by poststructuralist theory, no definite establishment of identity or the term, for that matter, can be reached. Rather, "Chicana" (as well as "Chicano") reflects the political, ideological and discursive negotiations, mere existence of which challenges fixity, definitiveness and hegemony. As Alarcón puts it, "the name Chicana, in the present, is the name of resistance that enables cultural and political points of departure and thinking through the multiple migrations and dislocations of women of "Mexican" descent" (Alarcón 1999: 65).

The migrations and dislocations this leading Chicana theorist has in mind concern both the problems of negotiating the name and cultural and racial identity of the Chicana/o community within the U.S. in general and concurrent negotiations of femininity *vis-à-vis* Chicano patriarchy within this community in particular, as well as the historical shifts pertaining to the Mexico-U.S. borderland region. These migrations and dislocations of the racialized and gendered cultural history of Chicanas are aptly summated in Anzaldúa's rendering of her feeling of not-quite-belonging in *Borderlands/La Frontera – The New Mestiza*. While the writer first addresses her sense of cultural and racial otherness (later on the same page followed by analogous notions of bodily abnormality linked to her extremely early onset of menstruation) in the first person "I was not normal […], I felt alien, I knew I was alien" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 65), immediately in the following sequence written in a poem-like manner she switches to third person, thereby depicting the "reflectory and refractory" (Alarcón 1999: 65) critical position of the self-defined Chicana:

> She has this fear that she has no names that she has many names
> that she doesn't know her names She has this fear that she's

> an image that comes and goes clearing and darkening the fear that she's the dreamwork inside someone else's skull […] She has this fear that if she digs into herself she won't find anyone that when she gets "there" she won't find her notches on the trees […] She has this fear she won't find the way back (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 65).

Anzaldúa's writing here portrays both in the contents and the graphic form the identity fragmentation she as a mestiza suffers under the colonial and racial dominance of the white Anglo America. And since the power to name and label ensues from such dominance, the conscious adoption of the formerly stigmatized label Chicana, which, as I mention above, has roots in the indigenous Nahuatl language, is a method of defying an imposition of an identity by the majority society while claiming agency and autonomy. Chicana, then, is not a name that "women (or men) are born to or with, as is often the case with Mexican, but rather is consciously and critically assumed and serves as a point of redeparture for dismantling historical conjunctures of crisis, confusion, political and ideological conflict, and contradictions of the simultaneous effect of having "no names," having "many names," not "know[ing] her names," and being someone else's "dreamwork"" (Alarcón 1999: 65). The name claimed is, in other words, constructed and invented in regards to the specific historical and social context; it distances itself from any essentialist, reductive notions.

Besides the strategies of Chicanas' appropriation of the name with indigenous origins, the label is, for feminist Chicana writers and thinkers, infused with other dimensions. The links to Nahuatl and indigeneity always already contained in the name Chicana animate the racial and gender experience of today's mestizas. Concretely, Chicanas' literary, multi-genre explorations of racial, sexual, cultural, and/or linguistic oppression are typically evoked through indigenous female figures, or as Alarcón has it, "the" native woman. This tactics should by no means strive for a utopian and/or essentialist recovery of lost, dismembered roots or the finding of a "true" Chicana "nature" – an analogous criticism I point out at further below when discussing the re-discovery of the concept of Aztlán as an originary Chicana/o homeland under the nationalist *El Movimiento*. More specifically, the notion of "the" native woman points to the historical, colonial and androcentric repression of the "uncivilized" dark-skinned femininity. Chicanas' re-membering and subsequent recodification of La Virgen de Guadalupe, La Malinche, La Llorona, Tonantzin, Coatlicue

and many other indigenous, or native, female figures under "many names" (cf. Anzaldúa's poem above and Alarcón 1999: 66) – the first three of which I dissect further in this doctoral thesis in Chapter 5 "A Trio Against Dualism" – proceeds from their awareness that, as Octavio Paz succinctly conveyed in his *Labyrinth of Solitude's* chapter "The Sons of La Malinche," the construction of mestiza/o subjectivity is based on the symbolically violent repudiation and mutilation of the bronze-skinned Indian Mother (Paz [1961] 1985: 65-88).

Thus, Chicanas' name as well as their feminist perusal of native female figures in art and literature signify the basic assaults on what I extensively investigate farther below: the male-dominated nationalist Movement on the one hand, and the androcentric political economy on the other. Thus, as Alarcón concludes "[…] Chicana is […] the name that brings into focus the interrelatedness of a class/race/gender and forges the link to actual subaltern native women in the U.S./Mexico dyad" (Alarcón 1999: 70). The feminist interpretation of the meaning of "Chicana" is therefore always already political. The name implies a politics of location rooted in historical and geographical specificity and, most importantly, it is feminist in the sense that it propagates equality, solidarity, and collectivity with Chicanas' postcolonial/decolonial co-subjects.

1.2 Theory, Subjectivity and *This Bridge Called My Back*

The above mentioned feminist ideals Chicanas strive to follow are, however, dependent on a negotiation of a consensus concerning theory, reality and practice. Reflective of their social, cultural and political context, Chicana authors work eclectically with feminist, postcolonial/decolonial, and indigenous theories, also drawing inspiration from structuralism, post-structuralism, postmodern thought or even psychoanalysis, all the while emphasizing the necessity of cultivating their own original, genuine – and inevitably hybrid – mode of theoretical thinking, currently referred to as Chicana feminism and sometimes as Chicana women's theory (Anzaldúa 1990a).

Chicana feminist authors' theoretical eclecticism is, first, a result of the persuasion that theory and praxis are not irreconcilable and are of the same significance (Rebolledo 1995: 5). Second, it is an effect of Chicanas' racial background. As women of color, Chicanas experience their presence both as members of the American society and as participants in feminist struggles of the women's liberation movement differently than white citizens and

white middle-class women. Because of their race and its interlocking synergy with other categorizations, Chicanas' specificity has been readily neglected in/by general feminist protests and academic scientific and social research. Dionne Espinoza openly grounds Chicanas' approach in their "visceral response to exclusion," experience of which further warrants their caution and skepticism about institutionalized scientific theories that may inspire (white) feminism and vice versa (Espinoza 1998: 46). To phrase it differently, dominant academic theories may be potentially oppressive to women of color (and other borderland or marginal subjects).

As a result, Chicanas view established theories and modes of knowledge production as potentially biased, and therefore monolithic, totalizing, and appropriative. Ultimately, feminist insights into science and epistemology have rebutted the notion of objective, impartial, and unprejudiced knowledge production by exposing, for example, the unreflected, tacit male-streaming in sociological methods. Their results, then, cannot be extrapolated onto the society as a whole if the discipline is to yield reliable findings and interpretations (cf. Abbot, Wallace and Tyler 2005). Because of such perceived threats, Espinoza, while drawing on Anzaldúa, argues, there is a danger that "women of color speaking the dominant language [of mainstream theories] will be "blanked out" and that they will find themselves rearticulating the power plays that make women of color invisible when they inhabit theorizing space without transforming it" (Espinoza 1998: 44). These concerns prompt Chicanas' designing of their own adequate theories.

The aim of this process is not the development of some sort of "pure," "untainted," or "uncontaminated" theory – a refuted notion in social studies and humanities – but a theory capable of maintaining an unsevered contact with the social and material reality of Chicanas' everyday lives without growing alienated from praxis, and with the ability to conceptualize intersectionality with respect to the social categories Chicanas navigate. This is how Gloria Anzaldúa explains the need for theoretical tools relevant to the research of Chicana/o literature and culture in the anthology of critical writing by feminists of color *Making Face, Making Soul* (1990) as follows:

> What is considered theory in the dominant academic community is not necessarily what counts as theory for women of color. Theory produces effects that change people and the way they perceive the world. […] *Necesitamos teorías* that will rewrite history using race, class, gender and

> ethnicity as categories of analysis, theories that cross borders, that blur boundaries – new kinds of theories with new kinds of theorizing methods. We need theories that will point out ways to maneuver between our particular experiences and the necessity of forming our own categories and theoretical models for the patterns we uncover. […] We are articulating new positions in these "in-between," Borderland worlds of ethnic communities and academies, feminist and job worlds (Anzaldúa 1990a: xxv-xxvi).

The author thus calls for a theory tailored to suit Chicanas' particular interests. Anzaldúa evinces the challenges to conventional theory-making that she has in mind by initiating a joint literary project. It proposed to collect essays and creative writings by non-white women of various economic backgrounds and cultural affiliations thereby diversifying the general awareness of and about these women's needs and their methods of dealing with their lived, racialized, gendered, and sexed experiences.

To be specific, in 1981, Gloria Anzaldúa and Chicana dramatist and writer Cherríe Moraga published a pivotal anthology titled *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. The book, since its first release by a white lesbian Massachusetts-based collective Persephone Press to its fourth edition by a major academic publishing house SUNY Press in 2015, sold over 100,000 copies (Moraga 2015: xxii) and gradually gained more influence as it fundamentally swayed both the articulation of Chicana writing and the tenets of U.S. (mostly white, middle-class) feminism as well as the basis of feminism of color. The anthology inevitably touched upon the aspects of making theory corresponding with the concerns of women of color and slowly made its way to progressive universities' syllabi. By doing so, it simultaneously challenged the institutionalized processes in inventing theories in the academia, exactly in the manner Anzaldúa's quote above illustrates.

Despite having similarly oriented precursors voicing the racial and gender "double jeopardy" (Beal 1970) faced, for instance, by African American women, *This Bridge's* significance did not merely lie in providing the space for critique of white, middle-class feminism's narrow conception of female subjectivity and its disregard of the racial, class, cultural, and linguistic heterogeneity of the U.S. women's movement and its heterosexist bias. Most importantly, it was one of the first books of its kind that summoned female writers of heterogeneous ethnic and class backgrounds and of varied levels of cultural and

social capital as well as of diverse sexual orientations to imply the solidarity (but not necessarily unity and unanimity in essentialist terms) of women under feminism of color. Also, the work reflexively spoke from an acknowledged location of the society's margin and consciously and strategically sought to build a coalition of women of color while avoiding the collapsing of differences among them. As AnaLouise Keating, a prominent Chicana theorist and co-editor of the anthology's sequel *This Bridge We Call Home* (2002) published more than two decades later, notes, the collection was a means of conveying women's of color ideas to a wider audience. Also, *This Bridge* heeded "an urgent call for new kinds of feminist communities and practices, a call that simultaneously invited women of color to develop a transformative, coalitional consciousness leading to new alliances" (Keating 2002: 6). *This Bridge's* editors thus perceived literature as a medium with immediate relevance to the reality of Chicanas and of women of color.

Moreover, the underlying dialectic of the anthology sought to expand the idea of feminism as such by making it also inclusive of and reflective of the experiences of minority women navigating the interlocking practices of social ostracism thereby also dilating the subject feminism claimed to speak for. I stress the coalitional and feminism-expanding aims of the editorial project deliberately, for perceiving *This Bridge Called My Back* exclusively as a reaction to white, middle-class feminism furthers the invisibilization of the history of women of color feminism which the anthology inherently defied. While these two principal features – the exposure of feminism's internal heterogeneity and the underscoring of the collection's coalitional potential – set the book apart from its predecessors, Anzaldúa's and Moraga's anthology did, in fact, come into being during a period when other analogous volumes by marginalized groups of women were published. Such are Toni Cade Bambara's *The Black Woman: An Anthology* (1970), *All The Women Are White, All The Blacks Are Men, But Some Of Us Are Brave* edited by Gloria Hull, Patricia Bell-Scott and Barbara Smith (1981) or the Chicana newspaper founded by Anna Nieto-Gómez *Las Hijas de Cuauhtémoc* (1971) (Franklin 1997: 38). It is no surprise then that the aforementioned Toni Cade Bambara, a black writer and activist, penned the foreword for *This Bridge*. This broader context points to the general coalitional strategy of women of color and to the perceived effects of their writing on the re-shaping of social reality.

As the anthology's title itself suggests, the coalitional goal also was to bridge the gaps between various women's groups, academic theories, and non-academic modes of

knowledge and epistemologies. Anzaldúa's invention of new ways of grasping of the world and her appeal to alliances-making and coalition-building that I discuss in detail in Chapter 3 "Queering and Gendering Aztlán" thus permeates the author's identity politics ever since her first publication. Due to its coalition-oriented character and both its content and multi-genre form, *This Bridge* allowed for an expression of a more multilayered and pluralistic Self, which fundamentally marked the subsequent conceptions and representations of Chicana subjectivity as demonstrated in Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera*, but also many other writings by Chicanas, such as Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*, Helena María Viramontes' *Under the Feet of Jesus*, Denise Chavez's *The Last of the Menu Girls*, Norma Cantú's *Canícula – Snapshots of a Girlhood en la frontera*, Ana Castillo's *Mixquiahuala Letters*, Mary Helen Ponce's *The Wedding,* or Alma Villanueva's *Mother, May I?* and numerous novels and short stories by these writers' colleagues (cf. Sánchez 1985, Alarcón, 1994, Rebolledo and Rivero 1993, Rebolledo 1995, Quintana 1996, Jacobs 2006: 4).

By early 1980s, feminism had hardly sufficiently explored how gender relations are co-constituted in and through experiences of existence in a society with asymmetric racial relations that function as an organizing social principle. The new pluralistic woman of color – or in Anzaldúa's later term, mestiza – who forges new subjectivity, complicates the second-wave feminism's dichotomous treatment of gender relations. It views female subjectivity as articulated not only in opposition to privileged men under patriarchy, but also in defining against other women. As Norma Alarcón contextualizes, "[t]he inclusion of other analytical categories such as race and class becomes impossible for a subject whose consciousness refuses to acknowledge that "one becomes a woman" in ways that are much more complex than simple opposition to men" (Alarcón 1994: 32-33). In other words, *This Bridge Called My Back* insinuates a new, decolonial epistemology. For the purposes of the anthology, Moraga coins a "theory in the flesh," an example of such oppositional epistemology (Anzaldúa and Moraga: [1981] 1983: 23). Yet, Chicana feminist writing in general heeds Anzaldúa's call for implementing modes of theorizing that match Chicanas' condition and is therefore replete with new approaches, methods, genres, and theories corresponding with Chicanas' location and praxis (cf. Sandoval 2000).

An alternative method of knowledge production – alternative in terms of its deviation from and opposition to Western binary thought and its reliance on abstraction as a method of theoretical production, and its upholding of unitary subjectivity – theory in the flesh

validates Chicanas' (and all women's of color) lived experience as one that is physically and racially embodied. Further, Moraga's theory in the flesh allows for personal feelings, emotions and desires and besides the urge to engage theoretically one's social and cultural context, it stresses empathy and solidarity as well. More specifically, it is a theory derived from a woman's awareness of her situatedness within a particular social location and her conscious reflection of how the site she inhabits conditions the painful material effects she experiences within her culturally constructed, gendered and racialized body. As Paula Moya emphasizes, theory in the flesh should ideally result it acquiring knowledge of one's oppression that arises from a critical interpretation and assessment of that oppression and violation (Moya 2002: 46).

In her introduction to the first part of *This Bridge*, Moraga defines theory in the flesh as a system "where the physical realities of our lives – our skin color, the land or concrete we grew up on, our sexual longings – all fuse to create a politic born out of necessity. [In this anthology] we attempt to bridge the contradictions in our experience: We are the colored in a white feminist movement. We are the feminists among the people of our [androcentric] culture. We are often the lesbians among the straight. We do this bridging by naming our selves and by telling our stories in our own words" (Anzaldúa and Moraga: [1981] 1983: 23). Later in the anthology, in her autobiographical essay "La Güera" (the fair-skinned girl) Moraga elucidates the principal tenets of theory in the flesh. She personally comes to terms with her lesbian identity and the fact that, although a Chicana-identified woman, her complexion is fair and thus, within the Chicana/o Movement a source of oppression from her own people while a source of privilege in the context of the American majority society.

It is Moraga's body where oppression and privilege clash. Her stressing of the bodily existence, her experiencing of lesbianism in the flesh as well as the reminder of her passing skin color verges on essentialism. But she distances her theory from this paradigm of biological determinism by locating that the body, the flesh, and the skin as texts that come to be "coded by external sources" (Espinoza 1998: 57). In other words, the meanings ascribed to them are products of cultural construction and processes of socialization. By manipulating the conventional constructions of the three notions, Moraga resists established theories and epitomizes possible modes of self-formation. The complex uniqueness of her simultaneously privileged and oppressed existence which is imprinted, felt, and experienced both by and

within her socially constructed, but still material body leads Moraga to elaborate on the pitfalls of wrongly executed theorizing:

> The danger lies in ranking the oppressions. The danger lies in failing to acknowledge the specificity of the oppression. The danger lies in attempting to deal with oppression purely from a theoretical base. Without an emotional, heartfelt grappling with the source of our own oppression, without naming the enemy within ourselves and outside us, no authentic, non-hierarchical connection among oppressed groups can take place (Moraga [1981] 1983: 29).

Vital here is, firstly, Moraga's emphasis put on the emotional, honest introspection and self-reflexivity, which perfectly connects with current discourse of what methodologies and theories should honor if they are to be labeled feminist (and possibly decolonial too). Secondly, it is the author's refusal to equate being a victim of oppression with innocence. As Espinoza notes, Moraga asserts the necessity of making the connection between oppressions, but also realizes that coalition politics is possible only when one looks into her oppression first. What one does to herself, whether or not it can be, in Bourdieu's terms, labeled as symbolic violence, is of the same importance as what comes to be inflicted on one from the external world (Espinoza 1998: 57-58).

As the content of *This Bridge* demonstrates, the editors are well aware of the complex entanglements dominance produces in terms of social relations of power. That is why, in analogy to Moraga's relating of oppression in regards to the theory in flesh above, they accentuate that sources of oppression come both from the outside as well as from within, an observation the nationalist ideology of the Chicana/o Movement failed to recognize. Central to the anthology's view of oppression, a topic *This Bridge* by definition brings to the foreground, are the various kinds of intersecting relations of power and privilege that manifest themselves discursively as well as physically while constituting the structures of the world we live in. The constituting is of such a complex and intertwined character that, as Moya succinctly debunks, "individuals [who] are differentially situated within those relations, […] may be simultaneously constituted as both oppressor and oppressed. So, an upper-class white woman can be oppressed by patriarchy at the same time that she oppresses others (such as poor men of color) through the privilege afforded to her by her race and class" (Moya 2002: 55).

Moreover, the mere fact that one is/becomes cognizant as to extricate herself from symbolic violence is in itself a certain manifestation of privilege. Alarcón, mindful of discursive hegemonies and relations of power, concludes: „It must be noted, however, that each woman cited [in *This Bridge Called My Back*], even in her positing of a "plurality of self," is already privileged enough to reach the moment of cognition of a situation for herself. This should suggest that to privilege a subject, even if multiple-voiced, is not enough" (Alarcón 1994: 39). It follows then, that Chicana authors who have arrived at a critical realization of the social reality surrounding them grasp literature and writing as a means to engage and educate on Chicana theory and feminism; as such, Chicana writing is profoundly radical and political. What is more, the authors are consciously honest about this trait thereby undermining the positivist notions of objective, nonpartisan, and unbiased modes of knowledge production.

I have shown already that due to their position within the social and cultural structures Chicanas' experience of oppression differs from that of men or white middle-class women. Chicanas, not finding established, academic theories relevant for the reflective investigation of their experience, develop their own contextualized and situated methods and knowledges (cf. Saldívar-Hull 2000: 46). These, however, cannot be conveyed in standardized, prevailing conventions of speaking and/or writing. It is because the form, i.e. genre rules, grammar as well as language and hegemonic discourse determining what can be said and thought (cf. Foucault 1978) may impede one's expression especially when embodied experience – as highlighted by theory in the flesh – needs to be articulated, verbalized. Since subjects are, as Lacanian conception of the Symbolic order informs us, constituted by language, the linguistic and discursive practices may by no means be ignored, as they may have silencing and censoring effect on Chicanas. Alarcón – not dissimilarly from Spivak's contention that the subaltern cannot speak when multiplying synergies of power and discursive practices clash under certain historical, social and cultural constellations (Spivak 1988) – relates this threat when she claims that *This Bridge* leads us to "understand that the silence and silencing of people begins with the dominating enforcement of linguistic conventions, the resistance to relational dialogues, as well as the disenablement of peoples by outlawing their forms of speech" (Alarcón 1994: 36).

Thus, not only Anzaldúa's and Moraga's anthology, but Chicana writing in general depart from imposed modes of literary and linguistic representations and permit and promote the

articulation of theory derived from lived experience. Storytelling or mixing of genres such as *testimonios* and poetry, or inventing new literary forms such as *autohistorías* or autobioethnography are fitting examples (cf. Cantú 2012). In other words, Chicanas' theoretical discourse "fuses art and theory through self-reflection and self-(re)construction" (Vivancos Pérez 2013: 53). *This Bridge* laid out many of the areas of interest that still have resonance in Chicana literature today. Quintana provides an eloquent summation of the anthology's contribution which has targeted the multiple tiers of Chicanas' political and representational efforts:

> In coordinating the voices and experiences of many women writers of color, Moraga and Anzaldúa were among the first to produce a text that contemplated critical issues concerning the relationship between linguistics, identity politics, sexuality, cultural heterogeneity, and hybridity – categories of difference that surpass simplistic binary paradigms. As coeditors they orchestrated content and form to depict a model of female subjectivity based on a variety of social experiences (Quintana 1996: 114).

In this respect, I would argue that *This Bridge* was *the* embodiment of Chicana feminist writers' idea of literature: it was inherently tied to theory, lived experience and the political. It was a collective, literary attempt at a social change forging social justice.

1.3 Chicanos' Dismissal of Chicanas' Writing: Possible Explanations

The nationalist ethos of Chicana/o writing established in the context of *El Moviemiento* is no unique phenomenon: literature has often been instrumental in struggles for national self-determination (Anderson [1983] 2006). The uncommon element in case of the Chicana/o community was the unification in the singular moment when the nation recognized its social exclusion, economic oppression and suffering from racially and culturally based prejudice – all in a land that should historically have been their home. Despite this shared experience of discriminatory othering and marginalization, Chicano and Chicana literature boast a great internal heterogeneity both in terms of subject matter and in terms of paradigm, as follows from the gender-attentive debates introduced above. The political aspects of these literatures become exponentially more conspicuous in the 1980s and go on.

In the two decades following the Movement, critical conceptualizations of Chicana/o literature were, according to an influential Chicano theorist Francisco Lomelí, lagging

"behind in proportion to the number of publications that [then came] to light" (Lomelí 1985: 29). Thus, critical theorizations of literary production by male authors were in Lomelí's view deemed insufficient to uphold the Movement's cause in terms of proliferating and circulating its nationalist discourse, a feature that marks the emergence of a nation or, in Benedict Anderson's terms, an imagined community (Anderson [1983] 2006). The situation was, however, exponentially worse in regards to Chicanas' writing, which, paradoxically, marked a rapid increase in the number of works written by Chicana authors, but its critical reception was either negative or virtually non-existent (Lomelí 1985: 29, Jacobs 2006: 49). As Lomelí points out, the level of assessment of women's literary contribution appeared even "bleaker" than men's for Chicanas' efforts were "generally ignored or misunderstood and stigmatized as being less rigorous in their approach to producing literature" (Lomelí 1985: 29).

Although Lomelí made these claims a few years prior to *Borderlands/La Frontera's* release and its subsequent acclaim within women of color critical circles, his observations definitely touch upon the phenomena described before by feminist cultural and literary theorists, such as Kate Millet, Elaine Showalter or Sandra Gilbert with Susan Gubar (Millet [1969] 2000, Showalter [1977] 1993, Gilbert and Gubar 1988). In their analyses, these critics draw attention to the multiple tiers of cultural constraints faced by female writers, which straightjacket and hamper their writing and publishing record. By providing copious evidence, these theorists convincingly expose both the hostility as well as purposeful neglect by male-dominated literary criticism in assessing works by women authors, and by extension, in assessing women authors as women in nearly misogynist ways. Showalter describes the patriarchal attitudes towards women in letters as *ad feminam* criticism, which was in part triggered by a steep rise of number of women taking up literary enterprise (Showalter [1977] 1993: 73). Works by female writers are then seen as lacking quality and relevance because of the topics covered and because they are, essentially, authored by women. As such, women's paths to getting published are cluttered with cultural barriers. In consequence, the genealogy of women's writing is fragmented, which further complicates female writers' participation in literature and authorship.

Although Showalter argues that the acrimonious patriarchal dismissal is an effect of men's fear of female competition (Showalter [1977] 1993: 73-75), the key factor is the issue of access to means of representation. Once women's perspectives accrue prominence, traditional androcentric master narratives receive their blows. Thus, not only does women's

writing diversify and broaden our understanding of the human condition in general, it brings previously suppressed voices and experiences to the fore, while subverting the established authorities and paradigms in the process (Morris 2000). Millet's, Showalter's as well as Gilbert and Gubar's claims about culturally constructed barriers impeding the proliferation of female literary perspectives concern women's writing approximately over the period of one and a half centuries, plus they represent findings pertaining to works written solely by *white,* educated, mostly middle-class female authors. These authors' racial and class privileges intersect here with gender subordination in a test of time, and yet it is the androcentric dominance that is the decisive factor; the female writers' gender identity obliterates the gains derived from their race and class.

To word it differently, despite the social changes that took place between early-19th century and mid-20th century, i.e. the span covered by the said critics' studies, and despite the racial and class prerogative of the writers examined in these studies, it is their gender identity that cancels out the privileges and consigns the authors to the margins of representation *vis-à-vis* dominant literary criticism (Jacobs 2006: 64). This is attributable to the fact that androcentrism, i.e. the foundational mode of social organization that exploits the power in gender relations, in this case takes precedence over other hierarchical power systems that stratify society (and its schemes of symbolic representation), such as the social categories of class, race or, for instance, religion and sexual identity (Smith 1988: 22). Further, this precedence results from the symbolic invisibility and (seeming) inconspicuousness of androcentrism, traits which are reproduced and sustained by Bourdieu's symbolic violence, i.e. the inability of gendered subjects, both women and men, to identify the sources of their epistemic and ideological interpellation and subsequent subjugation. Since the discourse and ideology of androcentrism permeate thoroughly *all* aspects of social organization and thus claim literally all physical as well as mental space, androcentrism becomes (almost) indiscernible.

What is perhaps shocking but not surprising considering the resilience of the androcentric status quo, is the fact that hardly any progress had been made until later 1980s in terms of the approach of Chicano criticism towards writings by Chicanas. This is, possibly, the outcome of the gender rupture within *El Movimiento* I detail above, and of the Movement's male proponents' failure to acknowledge the enduring masculine prerogative as a result of their patriarchal interpellation that yields advantages and cultural/social capital. Lomelí, in

the middle of the 1980s, himself an exception to the rule, indicates that the problematic Chicanos' "not probing the creative production of women" may be associated with the "underlying implication [shared by Chicano literary critics] that the issues women writers raise are not of great magnitude or importance" (Lomelí 1985: 32). While Lomelí's argument[11] certainly holds, I suggest that also other reasons for Chicanos' disavowal of Chicanas' writing can be factored in.

The consequential aspect that offers itself in this regard is *not necessarily* the gender identity of the writer/critic or the themes communicated in any given work, but the *degree of dissent* in the relationship to the Movements' nationalist ideology. In this respect, dividing Chicana/o literary production along gender lines as a literature written by men as opposed to literature written by women would be wrong and inherently essentialist.[12] It would also reproduce the dichotomous understanding of gender, whereas the goal of this very analytical category is, on the one hand, to subvert essentialist notions of mutually exclusive qualities of masculinity and femininity and, on the other, deconstruct these binary oppositions as culturally constructed entities. Thus, assessment of Chicana/o letters based on the degree of dissent (or disidentification) with the androcentric dimension permeating the nationalist Chicana/o Movement is instrumental, because it looks into the content of literary works and beyond the author's gender identity as a person, while still paying attention to the social and cultural context.

Although the discourse of contemporary literary Chicana/Chicano criticism implies – because of the language used – that the division actually does follow the male/female split, I offer the degree of dissent as a more rigorous tool of analysis. At the same time I am aware

[11] Lomelí makes this argument in an article that opens one of the first collections of critical essays on Chicana literary production written from a feminist perspective. It is a volume edited by María Herrera-Sobek, titled *Beyond Stereotypes* (Herrera-Sobek 1985). Curiously, Lomelí's text is misread by Tey Diana Rebolledo in her monograph *Women Singing in the Snow* as well as by Elizabeth Jacobs in her volume *Mexican American Literature* (Rebolledo 1995: 4, Jacobs 2006: 49). Admittedly, Jacobs draws on Rebolledo without consulting the original text. Rebolledo mistakenly attributes rejecting views of Chicana production to Lomelí, while he does not subscribe to such views of Chicanas' writing. Rather, before delving into analyses of two early Chicana novels, he summarizes the dominant standpoint of the Chicano literary criticism which, indeed, ignores and dismisses women's contributions. However, he is critical of this standpoint in his article and does not support the masculine bias.

[12] Due to its compliance with the commands of the Chicana/o Movement (which, as exposed, relies on gender difference and thus also on the tacit imperative of heteronormativity), canonical works of Chicano literature distance themselves from dissenting forms of sexuality, i.e. heterosexuality is the norm. A probe into the heterogeneity *within* Chicano literature as a category would yield further insights into the gender dimensions of Chicana/o literary legacy. It is, however, beyond the possibilities of this doctoral thesis. I only include a very brief illustration of the internal diversity of Chicano writings in regards to heterosexism, heteronormativity, and gay identity in Chapter 2 where I touch upon John Rechy's work.

that this tool implies a redefinition of the current vocabulary and language that would avoid the reproduction of the gender dichotomy. Since this is clearly beyond the scope and possibilities of this doctoral thesis, I should only reiterate the political and radical content of Chicanas' embrace of their name. In this regard, as noted in footnote 1, the semantics of the labels Chicana and Chicano also signify the varying degree of dissent while exposing the limitations of language and its morphology that perpetuate the gender dichotomy in the use of the feminine and masculine endings of the word. I, however, resolve to understand the label Chicana as one that connotes, possibly, a higher probability of opposition to the androcentric tenets of *El Movimiento*, but does not essentially guarantee such resistance, nor warrants it.

The justification for this claim originates in one of the basic arguments of feminist epistemology. Addressing the default, epistemological stance of the Western society as male – i.e. what counts as knowledge within an androcentric context derives from masculine perspectives and interests – feminist academic research has shown that the unreflected, androcentric bias in sociology, among other disciplines, causes the critical lack of awareness of men being gendered subjects (Pilcher and Whelehan 2004: 3). Androcentric ideology and its underlying gendered hierarchy complicate our understanding of masculinity – unlike femininity – as a gendered entity. Chicanas' growth of awareness of their marginalization based on gender is thus actually a result of the organizational structure of both the U.S. society and Chicana/o community, and of the symbolic order.

Pesquera and Segura point out that Chicanas' objections to the malestreaming nationalist ideology were viewed as an expression of disloyalty to the Chicana/o Movement (Pesquera and Segura, 1997: 299). Based on the degree of dissent, it follows then that works by Chicana writers who do not overtly subvert and undermine the significance of Chicana/o cultural nationalism may actually very well be neglected, whereas pieces critical of the propagated program and values, such as Chicano *machismo* and women's domesticity (Jacobs 2006: 32-33), are seen as downright traitorous. Yet, it can be argued that the perceived betrayal does not relate to the nationalist cause solely, but this implied dimension goes misrecognized by the Movement.

Indeed, Chicana writers, including Anzaldúa – whose position I relate in detail in Chapter 3 – are vastly supportive of the recognition of Chicanas/os as a nation, although they differ in

the form the nation should take. What is in my view of greatest significance in the dimension of degree of dissent, is whether Chicanas' reservations about *El Movimiento* simultaneously challenge the patriarchal underpinnings of the Movement as well as the Chicana/o community's social organization. In other words, although a nation is predicated on gender difference, and nationalism, too, exploits gendered representations of masculinity and femininity (Yuval-Davis 2005), Chicana/o nation as a reformed community suggested by Chicana feminists, such as Moraga and Anzaldúa, can function with an implemented gender equality both on the institutional level as well as on the level of symbolic representation. Thus, the Movement's androcentric bias can be displaced. In contrast, patriarchy being an inherently hierarchical system, depends on constructing and maintaining its gender(ed) Other and therefore, by definition, precludes gender equality. An assault on patriarchy is, of course, subject to severe sanctions both in practical reality and cultural representation, whereas criticism aimed primarily at the content of nationalist ideology provokes less stringent reactions. But, paradoxically, Chicano's dismissal of Chicana writing centers on its treatment of nationalism, rather than the treatment of androcentrism. Although nationalism presupposes disparate gender relations, it is able to accommodate their redefinition and deconstruction, for gender difference is not the nationalist ideology's only foundation, condition and focus (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989; Yuval-Davis 2005). This, however, is not the case of androcentrism; equal gender relations signify its collapse.

To explain in yet another way, due to the patriarchal interpellation, the Movement fails to recognize the underlying privilege Chicanos wield and therefore Chicanas' criticism is viewed as criticism aimed *only* at the Movement and its men's privilege, not as an assault on the very patriarchal foundations of Chicana/o and Western society. In fact, Jacobs rightly notes the observations made by the distinguished Chicano literary critic Juan Bruce-Novoa that during the Movement, literary works not displaying sufficient "ethnic and communal content" would be ignored and excluded from the framework of Chicana/o letters. Also, issues pertaining to sexual identity or gender triggered dismissal. And so did criticism perceived as one targeting the nationalist rhetoric (Jacobs 2006: 43). Admittedly, nationalism was *the* ideology the Movement promoted thereby unconsciously beclouding the underlying androcentric foundations. Nationalism thus works to conceal androcentrism.

In contrast, feminism allows Chicanas to probe much deeper into the social structures and makes it possible for them to expose the systemic oppression of women as women in

general, whereas male proponents of the Chicano Movement remain limited in their views. They only apply Chicanas' feminist criticism either onto the Movement's nationalism, or onto themselves as Chicano men, but fail to extrapolate the feminist criticism onto the society as a whole. Again, *El Movimiento* accomplishes to air criticism of class and racial discrimination, but thoroughly fails (or pretends to fail?) to acquire insight into the androcentric structures that buttress the male privilege. Paradoxically, Chicano masculinity, othering of which supports the hegemony of white middle class men, would actually, too, benefit from the deconstruction of the patriarchal rule (cf. (NietoGomez 1997: 98, Pérez 1991: 167). Thus, both Chicanas and Chicanos would profit, if the intersection of power relations arising from racial, class and gender identity were reconfigured in reality as well as in the realm of cultural representation.

1.4 Chicana Writers' R(a)ising (of) Voice: Deliberate Transgressions

Radical Chicana writers redefine, rewrite, or even entirely reject the Chicano literary criticism of their time by unmasking its patriarchal bias. Chicano writers and critics, according to Chicanas, only consider those works that correlate with the interests and the so-called masculine virtues of the Chicana/o Movement to have the requisite seriousness to earn themselves a place in the literary canon (Jacobs 2006: 50, Madsen 2000: 17). In fact, Jacobs quotes Jose Antonio Villareal, the author of the highly acclaimed Chicano novel *Pocho* and a participant of *El Movimiento*, who related in the following way the strictures imposed by the Movement's doctrine on Chicana/o writing and literary criticism: "What resulted then is that an unwritten set of standards began to take form. Codes for [Chicana/o] literature were explicit. First and foremost was the fact that we could never criticize ourselves as long as we followed this developing pattern [established by the Movement's ideology]" (Villareal in Jacobs: 2006: 42).

It follows then that the nationalist ideology decided both the degree of legitimacy of texts written by Chicanos (and less frequently by the ignored Chicanas), as well as the degree of acceptability of interpretations and reading criteria within Chicana/o literary criticism (Jacobs 2006: 42). In this regard, the Chicana/o literary context emerges as strictly policed and the policing takes place along nationalist and gender lines. A form of the instrument of the degree of dissent introduced above thus reappears. Unlike Chicanas though, by no means do Chicanos undermine the privileges stemming from their heterosexual masculinity or

question the hierarchical nature of gendered relationships and the traditional division of gender roles in both the private and the public spheres, let alone the power differentials present in them as a result. If Chicano and Chicana writers are united in their racial/ethnic and cultural identity, they are distinct in how they interpret and articulate this collective identity. Chicanas radically distance themselves from the androcentric order in the Chicana/o community, consciously searching for art forms and political outlooks that facilitate subversion of the patriarchal status quo and of the very concept of a stable gender identity.

Given that the family and the domestic sphere are institutions where women are expected to conform to rigid gender standards throughout their life and where these standards are replicated in Chicana/o culture, Chicana authors have cleverly used this *topos* as a site for subverting not only traditional views of the Chicana/o family, but also the Chicanos' concept of femininity. As I relate in a greater detail in Chapter 5 with respect to the paradigmatic figures of Chicana womanhood such as La Malinche, La Virgen de Guadalupe, and La Llorona, this concept is significantly influenced by Catholic morality and its tabooing of female sexuality. Further, Chicana/o ideas of proper gender roles strictly discipline women's bodies and prescribe self-sacrificing motherhood and committed, long-suffering duty to one's husband as the only desirable fulfillment of Chicanas' lives. García provides a vivid, yet radically critical feminist description of the qualities desired Chicana femininity ought to impersonate:

> Some Chicanas are praised as they emulate the sanctified example set by [La Virgen]. The woman par excellence is mother and wife. She is to love and support her husband and to nurture and teach her children. Thus, may she gain fulfilment as a woman. For a Chicana bent upon fulfilment of her personhood, this restricted perspective of her role as a woman is not only inadequate but crippling (García 1997: 6).

True, many Chicanas do embrace such a model. Except for their gender socialization and/or conscious choice, another reason for their adherence to such androcentric ideals may actually rest in their resistance. Certainly, it is not defiance of the patriarchal rule; rather it is indicative of Chicanas'/os' postcolonial and neocolonial condition. Family life has, of course, nurtured the very survival of the minority nation in the U.S., but for many it has also functioned as a locus from which American cultural domination as well as economic and capitalist exploitation could be resisted (García 1997, Jacobs 2006: 98-100). What Chicana

feminist writers oppose and García with them is the precluded possibility of choice, limited view of femininity, and resulting intrumentailization of women not for the convenience of family members, but for the reproduction of nationalist and androcentric systems. Also, such restrictive representations of femininity and family life by extension gloss over phenomena that actually undermine the celebrated value of Chicana/o heterosexual and patriarchal family.

Therefore, previously ignored family pathologies, such as domestic violence, absent fathers, and tabooed expressions of women's sexuality, or experimental use of language become a central concern in Chicana writers' works, as they are the "the most potent means of expressing rebellion against the strictures of Chicano patriarchy" (Madsen 2000: 25). Chicanas' writing is replete with imagery that long remained beyond the possibilities of representation due to the silencing and censoring effects of androcentric and nationalist discourses. While in this respect I provide analyses of Anzaldúa's stance throughout this thesis by predominantly engaging her theoretical writing and poetry from *Borderland/La Frontera*, I here shortly turn to works by other writers as comprised examples to illustrate the arguments I have so far made about Chicana literature in general.

For example, the possibilities of mutual solidarity to assist women in dealing with the problems of living in an environment hostile to them are explored in the novel by Alma Luz Villanueva *Naked Ladies* (Villanueva 1994). Entertaining the pun that naked ladies is also a folk name for the amaryllis flowers, the title suggests the work is open to various interpretations. Its four main female characters support one another during the trials of a relationship with a violent partner, life with an alcoholic husband, breast cancer, rape, marital infidelity, or a loved one's death as a result of contracting HIV virus. The novel delves in detail into expressions of female and male sexuality, whether it be in the context of hetero- or homosexual relations. It also documents how the consequences of violent behavior of adults towards children are left unaddressed, and how such untreated trauma resurfaces at a later age to generate more evil and paralyze the lives of individuals as well as entire communities.

In this context, the major canonical, non-theoretical work of Chicana literature that explores the issues of patriarchal hegemony in its complexity should be mentioned: Sandra Cisneros' prose debut *The House on Mango Street* (Cisneros [1984] 1991). Throughout the book

Mango's adolescent protagonist Esperanza negotiates the everyday routine of her classed and gendered existence in a barrio in Chicago. Although the book is written in very short, independent, yet interrelated vignettes, it has been cataloged as a novel since it resembles the composition of a major writing of Chicano male tradition, Tomás Rivera's *Y No Se Lo Tragó La Tierra* (Quintana 1996: 55). Quintana observes that this comparison demonstrates the "tendency to categorize women's literary production by measuring it against what has been deemed the universal (generally masculine) standard" (Quintana 1996: 55). The unconventional style of *Mango* − an evidence of Chicanas' general aptitude for working creatively with genres and stretching their limits by engaging, for example, associative logic instead of established linearity − can also be understood as a manifestation of what Madsen observes to be a certain kind of postcolonial fragmentation. She says: "For many of the characters created by Chicana writers, life is [due to the endured oppression] experienced in fragments, in unrelated images or vignettes; these women are denied the authority to create a unified vision of their lives. Chicanas express a sense of powerlessness that arises from life lived on the margins and captured in moments, scenes, and images rather than developed narratives" (Madsen 2000: 37).

While the critic's argument may be valid for *Mango's* style, the grim condition of powerlessness is exactly what Chicana authors attempt to resist by claiming voice and agency for themselves and often for their characters too. For that matter, Esperanza is able to address her position with an insight, even though she will only be able to come to terms with her predicament as she ages. Yet, the fact she does see social incongruities and distills them into a critical observation makes her, one can hope, a candidate for personal empowerment and emancipation in the future. In fact, the novel supports her agency by the act of Esperanza's ditching her very name. She expresses contempt for her name borne before her by her victimized and patriarchy-identified foremother. The female ancestor's example makes the protagonist want to avoid this disheartening feminine genealogy, therefore she goes on to invent a name of her own which clearly demonstrates her agency and power. By calling herself Zeze the X, the heroine abandons Esperanza, but definitely not hope.

In the given temporal setting of Cisneros' book, however, Esperanza finds herself caught between two cultural systems. As such, she embodies the workings of internalized oppression as she believes in her American Dream which, in line with Chicanas' challenging of American national master narratives, proves to be beyond her reach. The literary and

grammatical style Cisneros employs to tell Esperanza's stories builds a tension established on the stark contrast between the simple language the girl-narrator uses to convey her point of view and the disturbing realities she represents. Already the very title of one of the vignettes illustrates fittingly the familial gender determination García's feminist critique voiced in the quote above tries to capture. Simultaneously, the vignette shatters the notion of a functional Chicana/o family. "There Was an Old Woman She Had So Many Children She Didn't Know What to Do" describes a single mother's toll after her husband left her:

> Rosa Vargas' kids are too many and too much. It's not her fault you know, except she is their mother and one against so many. They are bad those Vargases, and how can they help it with only one mother who is tired all the time from buttoning and bottling and babying, and who cries every day for the man who left without even leaving a dollar for bologna or a note explaining how come" (Cisneros [1984] 1991: 29).

If the above excerpt shows the gendered experience of the barrio's women whose fate Esperanza hopes to escape, class is also explicitly present in the heroine's narratives. The very beginning of the book opens with Esperanza's sinister look at her family's class belonging that is negatively symbolized by the house in the title of the book she longs to have, but her background fouls this dream:

> We didn't always live on Mango Street. Before that we lived on Loomis on the third floor, and before that we lived on Keeler. Before Keeler it was Paulina, and before that I can't remember. But what I remember most is moving a lot. […] We had to leave the flat on Loomis quick. The water pipes broke and the landlord wouldn't fix them because the house was too old. We had to leave fast. We were using the washroom next door and carrying water over in empty milk gallons (Cisneros [1984] 1991: 3)

While this quote illustrates the dire economic conditions Esperanza's family navigates because of their class and race that both drive the family members to live in the barrio, it also tacitly questions the relevance of the strict division of gender roles in general and of masculinity in particular. The fact that Esperanza's father is unable to provide for the family and secure a stable place to live implicitly shows him as a man failing in his patriarchal duties. Simultaneously, however, the excerpt can also be read as an implicit illustration of concealed capitalist utilization and taking advantage of non-hegemonic masculinity – in this

context racialized and classed one; Esperanza's father holds a job, but the resources his employment yields are insufficient. He is a representative of the working poor.

As demonstrated, the simple vocabulary employed by Cisneros contradicts the complex, multilayered social reality it communicates. Quintana argues that Esperanza's "voice of innocence and naivité as narrative strategy […] allows the author to construct a safe space from which, paradoxically, she can expose the existential estrangement that derives from cultural and economic subordination" (Quintana 1996: 74). Cisneros' work thus perfectly mirrors the political agenda of Chicana writing: pointing out the effects of Chicana/o oppression and being activist by providing literary representations that educate readers about the community's identity politics.

Another resisting act of Chicana literature lies in touching upon themes of sexuality and embodiment. The notion of the patriarchal Chicana/o family is founded on compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1980), and so it is no coincidence that works by lesbian Chicanas (along with their very existence) disturb the traditional notion of a legitimate Chicana/o identity and morality. Despite harsh marginalization, Chicana lesbian writers utilize their sexual identity and its representation in their work not only to voice their disagreements with Chicano as well as generally American homophobia, but also to call into question the arbitrary dichotomy between masculinity and femininity and, as a result, to imagine a world free of hierarchical categorization. In other words, these writers are not limited to protest, but they also strive to transform the current status quo into a space founded on cultural and social justice, the absence of which is so keenly felt in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. A more detailed and nuanced interpretation of employing lesbianism and queerness by Anzaldúa in her re-formulation of the Chicana/o nation and the homeland of Aztlán is provided in Chapter 3 "Queering and Gendering Aztlán: Anzaldúa's Feminist Reshaping of the Chicana/o Nation in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands."

Similarly to the unearthing of taboo subjects in their portrayals of lesbian as well as heterosexual practices, Chicana authors do not shy away from writing explicitly about women's sexuality in relation to corporeality as such, by which their creative work is also conditioned. In her poem "Witches' Blood," (Villanueva in Rebolledo and Rivero 1993: 219-220) Alma Villanueva affirms women's partnership and solidarity through yet another possible bond between them – menstrual blood. The power of this blood stems from the fact

that it was not spilled by violence at men's fields of war. The poem's imagery evokes parallels to the foundational text of *El Moviemiento*, "Yo Soy Joacquín" thereby creating a strong opposition to the masculinist privilege echoed in the nationalist *corrido*, close reading of which I supply in the next chapter. Villanueava's poems reads:

> Power of my blood, your secret
> wrapped in ancient tongues
> spoken by men who claimed themselves
> gods and priests and oracles – they
> made elaborate rituals
> secret chants and extolled the cycles,
> calling woman unclean.
> men have killed
> made war
> for blood to flow, as naturally
> as a woman's
> once a month (Villanueva in Rebolledo and Rivero 1993: 219/220).

Villanueva's piece exposes the gendered aspects of both femininity and masculinity in quite essentialist terms, yet she is able to deliver the message that nationalist rhetoric actually divides, rather than unites the Chicana/o community. The opposition of what is natural (women's flow) and unnatural (men's spilled blood), undermines the established gender order and showcases men as its victims. The androcentric order, as portrayed by the poem, paradoxically, compels men to die so that their masculinity (and nation building) can be asserted. In another poem, "Down There" (online), overflowing with sensual, courageous imaginative power and wordplay, Sandra Cisneros likens menstrual blood to ink and portrays through it the positive, celebratory relationship of a woman to her own body while distancing herself from the patriarchal notion of the penis as the pen and the exclusively patrilineal idea of authorship. Cisneros' inventive poem is engaging and smart:

> Yes,
> I want to talk at length about Men-
> struation. Or my period.
> Or the rag as you so lovingly put it.

All right then.

I'd like to mention my rag time [...]

In fact,
I'd like to dab my fingers
in my inkwell
and write a poem across the wall.
"A Poem of Womanhood"
Now wouldn't that be something? (Cisneros, online)

Genuinely subversive, yet witty, Cisneros' piece of poetry reclaims female body and rewrites it in a highly celebratory and empowering way that does away with the stigmatized, reproductive potentials of women's corporeality that trespasses, delivers, oozes, and flows beyond the limits of the physical body.

As far as the liberatory and experimental options derived from language identity are concerned, Chicana writers make use of their double linguistic affiliation by incorporating Spanish expressions or entire passages written in Spanish into English text. This approach emphasizes the power of communal bonds, as it clearly points to these authors' target audience. It can also be interpreted as conscious abandonment of the hope that their work could ever be fully comprehensible in terms of language and content outside of the limits of the Chicano linguistic environment, which the society dominant in America does not "understand", linguistically or culturally. Engaging creatively with both English and Spanish modes of expression enables Chicana writers to create a new, functional language, as well as to implicitly draw attention to the aspects of power concentrated within the relationships between these individual languages. Both English and Spanish are imbued with the legacy of colonizers on the American continent. They were instrumental in the marginalization of Native languages and inhabitants, whose suffering the Chicana/o Movement interprets as its mythical roots as well, although these extinct or vanishing colonized languages themselves remain largely inaccessible and/or incomprehensible to Chicanos and Chicanas. Language's diverse roles in relation to Chicana femininity are exemplified by La Malinche's cultural representations are discussed minutely in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 2

2. Nationalism, Bronze Race and Gender: The Chicana/o Movement and Its Foundational Texts

The nationalist discourse as well as the ideological and political legacy of *El Movimiento* has proven to be inseparable from Chicana/o literature. Indeed, the Movement's ideology continues to inspire and influence Chicana/o cultural representations even nowadays. By no means is this to suggest, however, that literary works are necessarily compliant and approving. In fact, Chicana/o literature has been, on the one hand, the instrument for the promotion of nationalist ideas and, on the other hand, a site of their criticism, debunking, and rewriting. In other words, it is a rare case that writings by Chicanos and Chicanas do not relate to or reflect on *El Movimiento*, no matter whether the rendering of such a connection is covert or explicit.

The focus of this chapter, nevertheless, lies in a gender-sensitive close reading of two earliest, foundational texts of the Chicana/o Movement that date back to late 1960s, i.e. the outset of Chicana/o political activism. Most significantly, the examinations of the famous political declaration of "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán" and the canonical *corrido* poem "Yo Soy Joaquín" are informed by critical theories of nationalism (Ashcroft 2009, Anderson [1983] 2003, Yuval-Davis 2005, Gellner 1964, Enloe [1989] 2014). Furthermore, the texts are discussed within the wider contexts of socio-political relations and relevant cultural and/or discursive representations.

Theories of nationalism facilitate the understanding of the Movement's fastidious centricity around the construction and dissemination of discourses that accentuated the myth(s) of common descent, familial bonds, domesticity and home, plus, no less vitally, an unanimous identification of Chicanas/os with their nation. These themes are also some of the topics further explored solely from Anzaldúa's perspective in the successive chapter. Chicanas'/os' resistance to their assimilation into the U.S. society and revolt against the dominant culture's racist and classist bias, was an underlying point of departure for the debate within the Movement. By seeking to design a selective and homogenous identity as the foundation of the emergent nation – a goal more or less intrinsic to every nationalist struggle – *El Movimiento*, in itself a largely varied political body sponsoring a very diverse assortment of Chicana/o or Mexican American organizations (cf. Rosales 1997), succeeded in conjuring up

a community (cf. Hartley 2003) and making Chicana/o precarious experience visible. At the same time, however, it generated "a master narrative that was problematic," because it was "paternalistic and exclusionary" (Jacobs 2006: 2) predominantly in terms of 'privileging' mainly race and class as primary locations of oppression in Chicanas/os. This reductive perspective was the primary cause of Chicana feminists' dissent; emphasizing *El Movimiento's* neglect of gender-related issues and its tacit expectation of heteronormativity, the political platform faced well-articulated criticism from women. Jacobs is correct when she argues that although the nationalist rhetoric "mirror[ed] external modes of repression, […] [it] perpetrated its own ideology of containing differences, only in this case within selected [Chicana/o] rather than American identities" (Jacobs 2006: 2). My analyses of the aforementioned foundational texts aspire to provide an explanation for the dissatisfaction of Chicanas with the Movement's rhetoric both in terms of content and form of representation, which gets eloquently verbalized in Chicanas' literary works. In this regard, the Movement has functioned as a catalyst for Chicana writing as well as Chicana feminist discourse.

While women's position on the Chicana/o Movement's nationalist rhetoric and its reconceptualization represents the major theme of the subsequent chapter, the following lines, mindful of the significance of Aztlán as advertised both in "El Plan" and "Yo Soy Joaquín," also introduce Cooper Alarcón's and Peréz-Torres' critical views of the nationalist concept of Chicanas'/os' mythical country of origin (Cooper Alarcón 1997; Peréz-Torres 2000). Both analyses make an attempt to bring to the fore the internal heterogeneity of the Chicana/o nation and deeply problematize Aztlán as a notion of a unifying national(ist) potential. The framework for the authors' discussions is set by Ashcroft's elaboration on the Chicana/o nation as a transnation whose uniqueness, indeed, lies in the community's recognized socio-historical and geographical specificity and its foregoing of charting a state of its own; Chicanas/os thus form a transborder, transnational nation – therefore a transnation (Ashcroft 2009).

2.1 Political Manifesto and Aztlán as the National(ist) Mythical Home-Land

Like many multicultural – or, perhaps more accurately, intercultural[13] – ethnicities driven to the periphery of the majority society, the Chicana/o community disturbs the idea of a whole, monolithic identity or a centralized culture, while at the same time taking a stance against the U.S.-Mexico border as a concept that produces dichotomies. The Chicana/o Movement[14] shared the non-violent, anti-racist and anti-discrimination approach of the various movements of Latina/o Americans dating back to the beginning of the 20th century (Jacobs 2006: 26-27). Yet, as a significant platform for cultural nationalism and emancipation, it capitalized on its strength in the second half of the 1960s in tandem with the rise of civil and human rights activism across America and its political activities may therefore be in general associated with those of other ethnic groups such as African Americans and/or Native Americans. Besides cultural and social recognition, the major political aim of the Chicana/o resistance was in attempts to lessen the dire working conditions of community members, while lobbying for fair legislation, justice and civil protection under U.S. laws. Although these had already been stipulated in 1848 by the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, they were frequently breached, especially with regards to land ownership. The origins of the Movement, similarly to other racial/ethnic minorities in America, are marked by a social and cultural segregation of the Chicana/o community and by a dissident experience of history and capitalist participation. In sum, racial and class oppression constituted the principal underlying issues faced by Chicanas/os. As I expound throughout this chapter, this

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[13] I perceive the adjective multicultural as one suggesting an ethnically or culturally diverse community respectful of differences among its members who, however, do not necessarily engage fully in a genuine contact with those beyond their respectful ethnic or cultural group. By contrast, an intercultural community invites and supports its members' interest in and deep understanding of those who are different from their group. The intercultural approach inspires new epistemologies and knowledges about the self and other and is suggestive of individual as well as collective transformation, a feature also representative of Anzaldúa's thinking.

[14] The Chicana/o Movement built upon the activities of LULAC (League of United Latin-American Citizens), founded in 1929 and still active today. Various interest groups of Chicanos and Chicanas also identified with the Movement's aims, including the agrarian organization United Farm Workers, the Mexican American Youth Organization, the student organization Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán, or political groups such as Chicanos por la causa and the La Raza Unida Party and many others.

The majority of Chicanas/os worked in agriculture. In many cases, their land ownership rights were infringed upon, resulting in their earning unstable wages as cheap labor in agricultural and manual tasks, which made them a community especially vulnerable to unemployment. Besides these social problems emphasized by agrarian workers' unions within the Chicana/o Movement, Chicana/o students pointed out the racial barriers in accessing education, together with the absence of schooling and university programs that would respect the community's bilingualism. Paradoxically, during the past three decades, education of the bilingual Chicana/o minority has been significantly impeded by revisions of educational curricula in accordance with the strictly assimilationist policies of some states of the union that thoroughly designated English as the only language of education. For the history of the Chicana/o Movement see Acuña, 2000; Rosales, 1997.

perspective was promptly to be contested as deficient by Chicanas who were wary of gender disenfranchisement.

The goal of the Chicana/o Movement, then, was the articulation of a new collective identity as well as an enforcement of a sociopolitical program that would support this identity and contribute to its recognition. According to theorist Elizabeth Jacobs, the aim of *El Movimiento* was dual: it strove for "balancing support for the expansion of the democratic process through direct political action on the one hand, with a more separatist cultural nationalism on the other. In many aspects it was a like-minded attempt to counter discrimination through a celebration of indigenous roots and organized political protests" (Jacobs 2006: 1). In other words, the rediscovery of cultural roots and their explicit promotion, together with political protest, activism, and an appeal to collective solidarity constituted the strategies by which the Chicana/o community addressed and resisted multiple modes of social and cultural exclusion experienced within the dominant American society.

The very outset of the Chicana/o Movement is associated with the first National Chicano Youth Liberation Conference held in Denver, Colorado, in March 1969. The event was convened by *La Cruzada para la Justicia*, the first Mexican American civil rights organization in the United States, which was instituted by Rodolfo Corky Gonzáles – a great Chicano authority since no later than his 1967 poem "Yo Soy Joaquín" discussed below – four years prior to the massive assembly attended by more than 1,500[15] students and young people from across the whole country (Romero II 2008: 122). It was the product of the Conference that explicitly propagated Chicanas'/os' activist struggle for national self-determination and introduced the Movement's first political program. Besides reflecting on the social concerns of the community in terms of demands of improved housing conditions, equal treatment for Chicanas/os as U.S. citizens, better access to education and employment, the document also tapped into the mythical matrix of Chicanas/os. The political manifesto "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán" (1969), preambled by the poet Alurista, articulated the Movement's nationalist orientation, its opposition to white Euro-American culture and the history of colonialism, Chicanas'/os' bond to the nurturing land and – most significantly for

[15] Jacobs speaks of a lower number as she states that the conference "attracted more than 200 delegates representing Chicano students, community organizers and political organizations from across the country" (Jacobs 2006: 120). The confusion regarding the exact number of attendees can be most likely attributed to Jacobs' referring only to registered delegates and Romero's estimate of the overall number of members of the audience.

analyses of Chicana/o cultural and literary representations and identity politics – the anchoring of their Aztec ancestry in the mythical region of Aztlán:

> In the spirit of a new people that is conscious not only of its proud historical heritage but also of the brutal "gringo" invasion of our territories, we, the Chicano inhabitants and civilizers of the northern land of Aztlán from whence came our forefathers, reclaiming the land of their birth and consecrating the determination of our people of the sun, declare […] [w]e are free and sovereign to determine those tasks which are justly called for by our house, our land, the sweat of our brows, and by our hearts. Aztlán belongs to those who plant the seeds, water the fields, and gather the crops and not to the foreign Europeans (Alurista [1969] 1989: 1).

The character of the preamble of "El Plan Espiritual" leads Bill Aschcroft to view the Chicana/o conception of Aztlán as a positive and productive deviation in the kind of utopianism that is widespread in postcolonial societies, for the notion unites ethnicity, geographical place, and nation, which are all imbued with the mythical and sacred while being used for political purposes (Ashcroft 2009: 16-17). Aztlán came to signify the mythical homeland left by Aztec nations in search of a new home, which they found in today's Mexico. Due to the homeland's more or less uncertain geographical location, it was possible to identify Aztlán with the landmass of the present U.S. South-West that Mexico ceded to the United States in 1848 (Jacobs 2006: 119, Pina 1989: 38). The refusal to acknowledge the result of the cession, i.e. the arbitrary emergence of the U.S.-Mexico demarcation line, is declared by the following line of "El Plan Espiritual": "We do not recognize the capricious borders on the bronze continents" (Alurista [1969] 1989: 1). The region was also seen as belonging to Chicanas/os, because they, as agricultural workers, tend to the land, "plant the seeds, water the fields, and gather the crops" (Alurista [1969] 1989: 1). Finally, because of the promulgation of Aztlán, Chicana/o nationality was now grown into a specific place, sprang up from an established mythology and forged a viable cultural and political identity that incited the community's hope for cultural and social regeneration: "Before the world, before all of North America, before all our brothers in the bronze continent, we are a nation, we are a union of free *pueblos*, we are Aztlán" (Alurista [1969] 1989: 1). The Chicana/o Movement thus strategically re-imagined and revised the historical myth of Aztlán as an imagined community (cf. Anderson [1983] 2006) that united the "new nation" around a mutual historical and ethnic heritage.

The parallel between Benedict Anderson's concept of the nation as an imagined community that comes into being through shared discourse, dissemination, circulation, and through its members' "image of their communion" that lives in their minds regardless of their having never met or heard about most of the other members of the nation irrespective of its (little) size holds in relation to the Chicana/o nascent nation and its elysian native land (Anderson [1983] 2006: 6). The enunciation of Aztlán as a source of Chicana/o mutuality constructed a discursive space wherein the nation was convincingly produced and re-produced in the Movement's political rhetoric, as well as in the ensuing journals, presses, newspapers, films, and media that Chicanas/os established, and finally, of course, in art, literature, and concurrent Chicana theory and feminism, that have facilitated, as I show below, the expansion of the original understanding of the Chicana/o nation and of Aztlán in radically anti-androcentric terms. As an imagined community, nations operate as systems of cultural representation. Anne McClintock stresses that nations are not a mere "phantasmagoria of the mind" which deploys nationalist discourse to invent communities where they do not exist, but that they are "historical and institutional practices through which social difference is invented and performed" (McClintock 1993:61). This is why nationalist leanings significantly influence people's identities, for nationalism is inherently present in social and cultural contests and these are, essentially, always already gendered, frequently racialized and classed, a feature emphasized and exploited by Anzaldúa's reconceptualization of Aztlán and nation.

2.2 Racialized Aztlán and the Postcolonial Condition

Despite the fact, that notion of the mythical and spiritual birthplace of Chicanas'/os' Aztec ancestors emerged in "El Plan Espiritual" for the purposes sought by the nationalist agenda of the Chicana/o Movement, Aztlán's origins date back to the colonial era of Mesoamerica where its existence was chronicled, for instance, in the early 17th century *Crónica Mexicáyotl* by Don Fernando Alvarado Tezozómoc or in *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España* by Fray Bernardino de Sahagún. It is first mentioned, however, as early as 1581 in *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e Islas de Tierra Firme* written by the Spanish missionary Diego Durán (Pina, 1989: 20, Jacobs 2006: 119, Cooper Alarcón 1997: 25). Buttressed by its longevity across centuries, Aztlán is quintessential for Chicanas'/os' consciousness. It assisted the community in embracing its unique, and at first geographically displaced and then specifically localized national identity within the context of the U.S.

colonization of Northern Mexico on the one hand, and its mestiza/o, or multiracial embodiment on the other hand, as intimated in the manifesto's catchwords regarding "a bronze people with a bronze culture" (Alurista [1969] 1989: 1). For this bronze culture, Aztlán carries multiple meanings and as Anaya and Lomelí relate, one of its characterizations rests in the Indian, Mexican, and Spanish ancestors' progeny (Anaya and Lomelí 1989: iii).

The reference "El Plan Espiritual" makes to Chicanas'/os' skin color as bronze complexion is a direct link to José Vasconcelos' 1925 notion of La Raza, or a cosmic race which proposes a pluralistic and all-inclusive understanding of the cultures and races of Latin America (Marentes in Watts 2004: 313, Ashcroft 2009: 17). La Raza[16] – a slogan of the Chicana/o Movement and an exclamation repeated in other nationalist texts such as Gonzáles' "Yo Soy Joaquín" – stresses the importance of the mixing of races and cultures, for which Vasconcelos endorses the use of the term *mestizaje* that was later on taken up and in terms of content reinterpreted by Chicanas/os, Anzaldúa and many other Latina/o authors as I show throughout this doctoral thesis. What is, however, deeply problematic about Vasconcelos' thought, is the intrinsic hierarchical valuation of different races. In his views, Latin American mestizas/os herald the arrival of the new, cosmic people and are therefore a superior lot, whereas the Chinese, for example, are seen as a race degrading the human condition because of their fast rate of reproduction, that, according to the thinker, contradicts cultural and social progress (Vasconcelos in Manrique 2016: n.p.). Since Vasconcelos' theorizations regarding race are regularly seen as openly racist, classist and relating back to 19th and 20th century racial supremacism underpinning European imperialism (Watts 2004, Ashcroft 2009, Anzaldúa [1987] 1999, Manrique 2016, Marentes in Watts 2004), it is quite striking that the Chicana/o Movement should reproduce the racial hierarchizations that lie at the very roots of Chicana/o oppression by asserting their ethnic and racial superiority over other races. In other words, the Movement, it may seem, does not deconstruct or subvert the discriminatory racist hierarchy; on the contrary, it reproduces it and utilizes it for its nationalist cause.

[16] The concept of La Raza was also embraced by Chicanas/os in the form of founding La Raza Unida Party that catered primarily to their social and cultural cause. Established in 1970, La Raza Unida Party grew out of Chicanas'/os' and Mexican Americans' dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party whom they had frequently supported. The party was successful predominantly on the municipal level in some cities in Texas, and later spread its activities to California and Colorado (Rosales 1997).

This fact thoroughly complicates the comprehension of the Chicana/o Movement as a racially emancipatory entity, yet, on both the symbolic and practical levels, the positive reception of Vasconcelos' concept of the cosmic race can be explained. On the one hand, it valorizes the multiracial mestiza/o existence in rather optimistic terms, a stance going against the established taboos of miscegenation, genetic impurity, and blood-line dilution underlying the colonial fears and desires. On the other hand, given the colonial and cultural legacy of the continent, La Raza relates to a pan-Latin American condition; when strategically read, it may be suggestive of mutual solidarity and a union among its people. In this regard though, neither critics of Vasconcelos' racial prioritization, nor Chicanas/os take the cosmic race at face value; they rewrite it and rearticulate it.

While the reception of the explicit La Raza innuendos in the nationalist discourse may then appear racist and essentialist after the first reading, I suggest that a closer analysis discloses rather a multifaceted dimension of Chicana/o hybridity or *mestizaje*. Similarly as other theorizations of Chicana/o existence discussed in this doctoral thesis such as Moraga's theory in the flesh or Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness, this hybridity arises from a specific cultural, social and geographical location, rather than from a certain genetic pool. As Ashcroft stresses, *mestizaje's* strength lies in locating La Raza not in genetics but in place and Chicanas'/os' conscious refining it into a resistant discourse that is analogous to the 1930s Négritude Movement initiated by francophone African cultural representatives or the 1960s African-American activism in the U.S. declaring "black is beautiful". Ashcroft adds: "[La Raza's] distinctive feature is not so much that it provides a theory of racial identity for mestizos, but that it locates that identity in the borderlands of the Southwest, in the geographical space of Aztlán" (Ashcroft 2009: 17). Strictly speaking, La Raza, much like Aztlán, has mythical qualities in order to deliver pride at Chicana/o heritage, which – denigrated within and by colonial discourse – can be embraced and re-appropriated as a liberating legacy for forging a viable identity only when it is linked to a particular location. It is therefore through this ethnically and culturally hybrid construction conditioned by both Spanish and American conquests that Chicana/o subjectivity comes to the fore as transcultural and – as I show further by drawing on Ashcroft and subsequently on Anzaldúa – transnational and coalitional.

The deployment of a myth as a narrative that elucidates the structures of a given culture is, as Ashcroft points out, instrumental in developing a postcolonial society's – such as the one

of Chicanas'/os'– sense of identity, location, meaning and above all hope, all of which are important in the everyday-life experience of people who had been, due to historical processes, "previously scattered, directionless, and politically unorganized" (Ashcroft 2009: 18). Moreover, what makes a myth effective in its mobilization of a once disenfranchised nation is the sacred nature or spiritual dimension that dislodges energy for resistance to oppression and political struggle. The drive for a liberated future promised in the sacred, often at least partially utopian myths is vastly triggered and maintained by arts and literature. Yet, Ashcroft, drawing on Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, reminds us about the possible dangers of nationalist utopianism that may, as a consequence of overt romantization, idealization or certain fetishist admiration of the pre-colonial roots, stifle the political resurgence and counter-hegemonic activity of the newly-formed community (Ashcroft 2009: 18-19). In his view, Chicanas'/os' treatment of Aztlán is distinct from other postcolonial myths and/or utopias because it consciously and strategically merges the mythical and the political so directly. Aztlán, as already mentioned, comes to stand for a sacred place of origin, a home, while concurrently encompassing the idea of Chicanas'/os' re-appropriation of the confiscated Mexican land north of the Rio Grande (notwithstanding the impossibility of the goal).

Another out-of-the-ordinary aspect of Chicana/o nationalism, besides its effective combination of the mythical and sacred on the one hand and insistence on situatedness in a concrete place on the other, is the decoupling of the ties between the nation and the state as an organizing institution. While (Western) modernity tends to posit the nation and the state as almost synonymous (cf. the concept of the nation-state),[17] postcolonial and decolonial theories have noted the critical feature of nationalist, anticolonial resistance, which lies in the frequent failure to withstand the cooptation by or absorption into institutions and/or structures that came into being in the course of European colonial expansion (Anthias and

[17] Anthias and Yuval-Davis note that there is not a consensus on the delineation of the boundary between the nation and the state. Both concepts are, indeed, frequently treated as synonymous within the Western academia. This approach can be attributed to the history of the development of the Western nation-states formation of which is inseparable from nationalist discourses and upheavals. Further, the ensuing conflation of state and nation is inherently problematic in its failure to recognize that state processes may be more delimited and restricting than national processes. For example, certain national minorities may reside in more states while being denied equal rights in either of them (such as the Kurds or Palestinians) (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1989: 3-4). In this regard, Chicanas/os inhabit an intermediary position. They claim their national existence that is rooted in the U.S. Southwest, but are not separatist in terms of creating a state of their own. While they have official access to rights and citizenship, they face multiple modes of discrimination and rights infringement.

Yuval-Davis 1989: 3, Alarcón, Kaplan and Moallem 1999: 6, Ashcroft 2009: 19, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2007: 139). The related threat, of course, is the reproduction of authoritarianism and, most importantly, the symbolic reification of European (or Western) models of control and social organization. Ashcroft's reading of the Chicana/o nationalist attempts at creating a nation (a Western concept in itself, nevertheless) without a state of its own is inspired by the reality of complex, culturally, linguistically, and religiously diverse and heterogeneous countries such as India, China, and the United States. He argues that within these multinational societies "the "nation" is actually a transnation," or a transitive and transnational nation, and the Chicana/o community serves as the best example of a social entity that is fluid and functions as "a homeland without boundaries" (Ashcroft 2009: 19, 27). Here, Ashcroft makes an explicit use of Rudolfo Anaya's eponymous essay in which the writer primarily calls for Chicanas/os to move beyond limitations of ethnicity, and to reach "further into our human potential and consider Aztlán a homeland without boundaries […], to create a world without borders" (Anaya 1989: 241).

To Ashcroft, then, the concept of transnation (rather than the established term of intrastate nation, i.e. a national group within an existing state) is vital, because it allows for a deployment of broader strategies for negotiating self-determination as well as Chicano and Chicana subjectivity, for these are, due to their hybridity, fluid and transitional. Transnation "frees [Chicanas/os] from borders" (Ashcroft 2009: 14). In other words, as a nation Chicanas/os occupy a more radical position *vis-à-vis* the American hegemony they critique, than they would occupy with the label of a "mere" national minority; thus, they are more empowered. Ashcroft expands the discursive, strategic and political repertoire by introducing the concept of transnation into the discussion in the belief that it more fittingly correlates with Chicanas'/os' lived experience in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. In his view,

> [t]ransnation does not refer to an object in political space. It is a way of talking about subjects in their ordinary lives, subjects who live in-between the categories by which subjectivity is normally constituted. The concept of the transnation therefore contests three things: the idea that the nation is an integral, imagined whole; the idea that the nation and the state are synonymous; and the idea that diasporas are necessarily *outside* the nation, characterized by *absence* and *loss*. […] Transnation captures the fluidity of national subject moving with and between the borders of the state. The term "transnation," while it pivots on a critique of the nation, and a utopian

> projection beyond the tyranny of national identity, nevertheless acknowledges that people live in nations, and when they move, they do so within and beyond nations. The term […] emphasizes transitivity (Ashcroft 2009: 14).

Thus, Chicana/no nationalism, with its strategic rearticulations of Vasconcelo's cosmic race/La Raza, multilayered adaptation of the concept of *mestizaje*, as well as the diverse reinterpretations of the mythical homeland of Aztlán in the contested Mexico-U.S. borderlands, both practically and discursively disrupts the binaries, such as the center and the periphery, within which, in the context of Western thought, is nation conceptualized. The fluid, transitional character of Chicana/o nation goes hand in hand with a type of subjectivity that is characterized by national, geographical, racial, cultural and linguistic in-betweenness. This in-betweenness is, on the practical level, touched upon by Anaya's vision of Aztlán as the representative homeland that deconstructs boundaries. He claims that Chicana/o "Aztlán can become the nation that mediates between Anglo America and Latin America" (Anaya 1989: 241).

Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* stands in the forefront as an exponent of Chicana/o in-betweennes in the ways the book questions and subverts the borders between two nations, as well as the limits of race/ethnicity, sexuality and, in the context of this doctoral thesis no less significantly, gender, i.e. a concept completely omitted in Ashcroft's discussion of the transnation as well as in Anaya's idea of the Chicana/o nation rid of boundaries. While Ashcroft's or Anaya's views, to their credit, surpass the conventional idea that the border/boundary mark solely the geographical space inhabited by a nation, because both authors also emphasize Chicanas'/os' bronze, i.e. multiracial *mestizaje* which counters the racist assumptions about evading racial contamination, their understanding of the border/boundary is, compared to Anzaldúa's perspective, still limited. I provide a discussion of her interpretation of Aztlán further below and read it against feminist theories of nationalism. These theories explore the gendered characteristics of nations and nationalist rhetoric as well as the assumed heteronormative imperative while revealing that the very idea of a nation is predicated on gender difference, patriarchal family and, inherently, inequality, and exclusion. Anzaldúa's thinking goes beyond these widely accepted, yet unreflected cultural assumptions and outlines alternative possibilities for affinity-based communities without rejecting the importance of community belonging for one's subjectivity.

Before analyzing Anzaldúa's positions, however, I introduce Peréz-Torres' analysis of risks and challenges the myth of Aztlán poses for Chicana/o identity politics and, second, Cooper Alarcón's complex use of palimpsest for navigating Chicana/o populations' inner heterogeneity. Subsequently, I proceed with a close reading of "Yo Soy Joaquín," another foundational text of *El Movimento*, that I link with a gender-informed examination of the cultural and social contexts that influence both Chicana/o literary representations and Chicanas' lived experience. These elaborations are relevant to my reading of Anzaldúa's take on nation(alism), Aztlán, and individual and also collective identity.

2.3 Chicana/o Heterogeneity and Palimpsestuous Re-Visions

While Ashcroft's above reading of Aztlán as a transnation is rather an affirmative and enabling one, as it accentuates the myth's constructive and discursive potential for elaborating a new transnational subjectivity for Chicanas/os and a political outreach, Rafael Peréz-Torres, on the contrary, in his study "Refiguring Aztlán" exposes the discontinuities and ruptures Aztlán poses for the Chicana/o Movement. The differing approach may be to some extent explained by the authors' positionalities. Ashcroft's assenting analysis seems to be informed by a strategic quest for a livable future and some degree of hope for the resolution of the oppressive complexities faced by the Chicana/o community. Although it is reflective of the group's everyday-lived experience, his reception of Aztlán focuses more on the symbolic, metaphorical level. Ashcroft's repeated mentions of hope and his admiration for the comprehensive combination of the mythical, the sacred, and the political that Chicanas/os often contradictorily project onto Aztlán, seem to arise from his critical grasp of his very European location and postcolonial expertise. In this regard, my position resembles his. Peréz-Torres, a Chicano, i.e. an insider, on the other hand, stresses the underanalyzed and in general insufficiently thematized heterogeneity of the Chicana/o community and therefore its largely varied approach to the notion of Aztlán. As he says, his discussion is concerned "less with the worth of Aztlán as cultural/critical signifier than with its role in shifting the horizon of signification as regards Chicano/a resistance, unity and liberation" (Peréz-Torres 2000: 104).

For instance, there are utterly conflicting approaches to how Chicanas/os should go about their social empowerment. To be fair, it is only the Chicana/o cultural and intellectual elite of only a certain political inclination, rather than the majority of the community as a whole, that views Aztlán as an icon invested with historical and emancipatory meanings. The term is therefore paradoxical. Bearing in mind the diversity of Chicana/o experience, Peréz-Torres notes the profound shifts in the possibilities of Aztlán's political deployment. On the one hand, Aztlán, within the nationalist discourse, functions as a common denominator for the Chicana/o populations, yet its effect is rather divisive than unifying.[18] Recent Mexican immigrants, who frequently identify with Chicana/o cultural nationalism thereby stretching the notions of what Chicana/o identity is, frequently support assimilation into American culture, whereas long-established Chicana/o communities seek to preserve cultural traditions within the strictures of political nationalism (Peréz-Torres 2000: 114, Cooper Alarcón 1997: 21). In a similar manner, Aztlán, as already discussed, asserts indigenous ancestry but at the same time, Peréz-Torres claims, it erases the ancestry's cultural, historical, and geographical specificity. Another feature representative of Chicana/o culture's diversity manifests itself in the area of language. Some Chicanas/os are bilingual, i.e. fluent in English and Spanish, whereas others only monolingual, speaking just English (Cooper Alarcón 1997: 8).

These and other unresolved paradoxes pertaining both to Aztlán and Chicana/o nationalism lead the author to speak of Aztlán as "an empty signifier" (Peréz-Torres 2000: 104, 114). Consequently, Peréz-Torres, familiar with Anzaldúan thought, proposes to read Aztlán not as a singular homeland, but as a borderland, for this better prepares the ground for the complexities of heterogeneous subjectivities of the diverse (and yet more diversifying) Chicana/o populations (Peréz-Torres 2000: 105, 114). In other words, Peréz-Torres calls for an understanding of Aztlán as a multilayered, but constantly shifting and fluid concept. Thus, his "refiguring of Aztlán" approximates Daniel Cooper Alarcón's approach to Aztlán as a palimpsest.

Although Cooper Alarcón holds the centrality and significance of Aztlán for the formation of Chicana/o Movement – and by extension, the nation – as valid and legitimate, he diverts his attention to the shifts that have taken place in the community's treatment of the concept

[18] At this point, Peréz-Torres' critique of Aztlán as a concept that obfuscates the heterogeneity of Chicana/o populations is actually identical with the criticism Cooper Alarcón introduces in his book *The Aztec Palimpsest* discussed below (cf. Cooper Alarcón 1997: 10, 21).

in terms of demographics and social categorizations such as sexuality, gender, linguistic background, and/or rural or urban settings, as well as religious affiliation. What stands in the forefront of his study then, is his appeal for recognition of the inner heterogeneity of Chicana/o populations or sensitivity to intracultural differences on the one hand, and for an interdisciplinary, analytical approach on the other. Thus, Cooper Alarcón criticizes Aztlán for having been used as an ahistorical, monolithic, and unresponsive discourse that emphasized collectivity while downplaying individual differences (Cooper Alarcón 1997: 7). Here, he concurs with Chabram and Fregoso's claim that, in retrospect, Chicana/o Movement conceived of Chicana/o identity as static, one-dimensional, and fixed. According to them,

> [this view of Chicana/o identity] failed to acknowledge our historical differences in addition to the multiplicity of our cultural identities as people. This representation of cultural identity postulated the notion of a transcendental Chicano subject at the same time that it proposed that cultural identity existed outside of time and that it was unaffected by changing historical processes. The notion of cultural relations that this concept of cultural identity subscribed to appealed to a cultural formulation composed of binaries: Anglos vs. Chicanos (Fregoso and Chabram 1990: 205).

By the same token, Cooper Alarcón elaborates in a greater detail on the inner differences that have been obscured and elided by the Movement's positing of a homogenous Chicana/o identity, which, in its aftermath, provoked resistance:

> Among the neglected issues related to Chicano identity are (1) the disturbing tendency to focus only on the relationship between Chicano communities and the dominant Anglo culture, at the expense of any discussion of the complex, diverse character of Chicanos and their relationships with other ethnic groups; (2) the tendency to focus on the Southwest, minimizing the attention paid to Chicanos who live in other demographic regions; (3) competing claims to the Southwest − which Aztlán is often intended to be synonymous with − by Native Americans, Asian Americans, and African Americans;[19] (4) the ongoing dialectic

[19] "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán", as I evidence in this section, has been an addressee of various critiques, one of them, of course, being made on the grounds of the biological, ancestral assertion. This "call of blood"

> between Chicano and Mexican culture(s) and the effects on those culture(s) of continued Mexican emigration to the United States; and (5) […] the complex interrelationship of subjectivity, agency and privilege (Cooper Alarcón 1997: 8-9).

Thus, Cooper Alarcón suggests that conceptualizing Aztlán as a palimpsest is a functional method how to avoid glossing over internal heterogeneity of Chicana/o culture and its major myth of origin and unification. Therefore, the author's conception of palimpsest is fully in the service of the desired recognition of this heterogeneity. Cooper Alarcón's palimpsest is a site of interlocking textual superimpositions with no total erasure, or more precisely, an interdisciplinary and fluid structure of competing narratives and territorial remappings which secure that constant textual and discursive revisions do not obliterate earlier significations thereby preventing a single dominant voice from silencing diverse other voices (Cooper Alarcón 1997: 7, 19-20).

In a unique way, Cooper Alarcón's very repositioning of Aztlán is a performative act, for it further brings into being that which it proposes; his readings are inherently and inescapably palimpsestuous and thus add yet another layer to the proposed palimpsest. Ashcroft's and Peréz-Torres' academic analyses, too, have an identical effect. It follows then that also the exemplary feminist critique of *El Movimiento* and its related narratives of Aztlán in "El Plan Espiritual" as sexist, or the opposition voiced by Chicana/o workers' unions that cultural nationalism stressed racial oppression arising from indigenous roots at the expense of encouraging attainment of genuine class consciousness so that social exclusion and class discrimination could effectively be fought (Rosales 1997: 130-151, Cooper Alarcón 1997: 6), form other layers of the Aztlán palimpsest. They are competing, discursive reinterpretations of the understanding of Chicana/o culture and history and as such add up to the continual, shifting process of Chicana/o identity formation. By upholding Aztlán, and by

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discourse beclouds the fact, that "El Plan" legitimizes its claims *vis-à-vis* the European (Anglo American) colonization solely and overlooks the mestiza/o appropriation of the Native American territories in the era of the preceding Spanish colonization of the Southwest (Cooper Alarcón 1997: 24). A decade after the release of "El Plan," while still faced with the criticism for having drafted an exclusivist and essentialist manifesto, its primary author, the poet Alurista, (the other one being Rudolfo Corky Gonzáles) felt obliged to defend the declaration within the scope of cultural nationalism. He argues that while "El Plan" did truly state that Aztlán belonged to those who worked its land, this delimitation is not reduced to Chicana/o workers/farmers only, but may include other people as well. Thus, according to Peréz-Torres, "Alurista disavows what could be interpreted as the most exclusivist [element] of nationalism evident in the "Plan". At the same time, Alurista insists upon a type of transnational "nationalism," a cultural nationalism distinct from the "exclusivist narrow nationalism" of strict political delineation" (Peréz-Torres 2000: 109). In this regard, Alurista's reformulations can be seen as his coming to terms with the criticisms voiced by Chicana feminists as well as representatives of later migrants who claim their Chicana/o or Mexican American identity.

extension Chicana/o culture as palimpsest, the fragmentation of the Chicana/o community in terms of its members' other varied affinities can be avoided, which, as a result, questions the basic rebuke made against identity politics for being atomizing and divisive.

2.4 Chicana/o Movement and Masculinity

Besides the aforementioned "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán," Chicana/o national and racial identity is no less vehemently emphasized in another major literary document of *El Movimiento* that I have already hinted at. It is the epic poem "Yo Soy Joaquín" (1967) by Rodolfo Corky Gonzáles. The poem documents the embattled conditions faced by Chicanas/os in the U.S. at the time. Through copious allusions to pre-Columbian times presented by Gonzáles in images evocative of masculine power, patrilineality, fraternity, and virility, the poem champions an idea of race transcending any strictly delineated set of racial categories. Significantly, the poem became a milestone in the history of Chicana/o literature. As George Hartley states, "before 1967 [the year "Yo Soy Joaquín" was made public] the whole history of Chicano literature from the 1600s to the 1960s suddenly, retroactively came into being." Moreover, Hartley does not limit this argument to literature only and goes on to insist that prior to the year specified, "Chicanos did not exist, and yet after that moment we can see that they had been around for centuries" (Hartley 2003: 276). Chicana/o literature is, in the sense of making the erased or invisible visible, a political phenomenon to the core, as it deliberately carves out an intellectual space for inventing, establishing, and justifying this emergent nation with its unique experience, as well as its oppositionally constructed otherness.

Yet, it would be erroneous to presuppose that the multiple social marginalization stemming from Chicanas'/os' race and class which was critiqued in the Movement's program, had the same impact on Chicanos as it had on Chicanas. While *El Movimiento* did offer solace in terms of cultural belonging and the collective affirmation thereof (a shared social location on the symbolic level), it was an internally heterogeneous movement that did not, in practice, avoid replicating some of the hierarchies it criticized. Despite its efforts to de-hierarchize and loosen the ethnic determination of Chicana/o identity so accentuated from the outside, and to end the economic exploitation of the community, the nationalist Movement – which de facto produced the Chicana/o national identity – had, since the end of the 1960s, been based, as I explain below, on a markedly sexist, heteronormative, and masculine rhetoric

(García 1997, Jacobs 2006). As a result, women, who emphasized the importance of gender equity (regardless of their sexual orientation), as well as gay men, were being driven out of the Movement for not complying with androcentric models of familial and group unanimity. Chicana feminists castigated the Movement for gender blindness and propounded ideological critique of the nationalist agenda as being centered only around classism and racism and not around other categories of social organization such as, besides gender, sexual orientation, age or, later, able-bodiedness. Consequently, Chicanas embarked on writing literary works highly distinct from their male counterparts. While the male protagonists of Chicanos' writing asserted their *macho* identity, Chicana writers explored their carnal desires, female embodiment and used their traditionally censored sexuality as a site of protest against the Chicano (and American) patriarchal culture. As Jacobs succinctly observes:

> Within the Movement, efforts to construct a sense of identity were typically undertaken in an environment that was saturated with unresolved gender conflict. The central and unifying concepts of *familia* and *carnalismo* [brotherhood] were rife with sexism and internal oppression while simultaneously serving as the Movement's mandate for collective action. During this time, family was meant to serve as an organizational model of community cohesion that would both spiritually and materially oppose the subordination of Chicanos in the USA (Jacobs 2006: 152).

Thus, the prominent platform for negotiating a Chicana identity beyond the hierarchical, patriarchal ideology of the Chicana/o Movement then became literature, both belletristic and theoretical, which has – interestingly – provided a point of departure for gay Chicanos besides being one for Chicanas in general. In other words, the Movement served as a catalyst for Chicana writing as well as Chicana feminist theory and concomitant deconstruction of the gender order and heteronormative imperative. What is nowadays understood as Chicana feminism and theory (sometimes referred to as *Xicanisma or Chicanisma*) thus developed alongside two partially contradictory movements. On the one hand, there was the nationalist *El Movimiento* (that in Chicanas' perspective was failing women due to its entrenched male superiority and heterosexism), on the other Chicanas were aware of the advancing women's liberation movement (that, however, disappointed all women of color due to its unreflected white prerogative, middle-class privilege, and promotion of Eurocentric individualism as opposed to Chicanas' focus on collective identity

and solidarity) (Jacobs 2006: 28-29, Yarbro-Bejarano 1996: 213, García 1997: 23). Consequently, Chicana literature can be distinguished by its constructivist, self-reflective, and theory-cognizant approach invoking a more fluid sort of identity, which is in contrast to the traditionally-oriented, mostly heteronormative Chicano literature, which predominantly covers heterosexual and rather fixed identities and remains largely essentialist with its *macho* conceptualization of masculinity and androcentric images of femininity as subservient, secondary, and passive entity (cf. Saldívar-Hull 2000, Jacobs 2006: 73, 100-109).

As implied, viewed from women's perspective, *El Movimiento* conveys a fundamental and gender-exclusionary bias; it is thoroughly androcentric. The inherent characteristics of the Chicana/o Movement have been its explicit nationalist agenda and implicit *machismo* approach of Chicano male activists to Chicana women. Although the Chicana/o Movement dates back well over five decades, the present perfect tense in the previous sentence adequately points to the myriad of ongoing gender-relevant debates both within the Chicana/o community itself and the literary representations thereof in works by Chicana/o writers. How do the interlocking and intersectional categories of gender, class and race inform Chicano masculinity and Chicana femininity that can be taken to represent a type of hybrid, mestiza/o identity?

The line of conceptualization of Chicano masculinity corresponds with the fact that gender is a relational category and in this respect, it were Chicana women who – while analyzing their position within Chicana/o and U.S. cultures – deconstructed Chicano masculinity as an ambivalent entity conditioned first by its relation to Chicana women and second by both factual and symbolic power relations between "white" upper-class Anglo males and "brown" land-working mestizos. Chicano masculinity is thus caught in a double bind between its relation to femininity in general and Anglo masculinity in particular. As Anna NietoGomez points out, "colonized men of color are considered as inferior as women since colonized men do not have the power or authority to rule, provide economically and protect the family. Thus racist sexism considers [Chicano] males as either effeminate, or a "Macho," overcompensating because of his powerless position in his society" (NietoGomez 1997: 98). I dissect Chicanos' symbolic emasculation by other men later in this doctoral thesis in two concrete instances: the historical fact of La Malinche's relationship with Cortés, and the literary representation provided in Anzaldúa's poem "We Call Them Greasers."

Gutiérrez points out, in a similar manner, that Chicanas/os as an internally colonized population within the U.S., faced social emasculation which significantly influenced the conceptions of Chicano masculinity (Gutiérrez 1993: 45-46). As a people, Chicanas/os struggled with social, cultural and economic subordination and faced territorial and partial linguistic segregation from the white America. Since the patriarchal social order prevented Chicanas from partaking in the political life of the community or allowed such participation merely in limited ways that were consistent with traditional, secondary roles played by women in society – which confined women in *El Movimiento* to secretarial and/or clerical positions or permitted them to distribute the organization's literature and pamphlets or do mere picketing (López [1977] 1997: 101, Jacobs 2006: 30) –, it was, in the context of the Movement's political ideology, the responsibility of Chicanos to assert the nation's significance. Decision-making processes were reserved to men and thus inevitably, Chicana/o nationalism espoused the assertion and confirmation of masculine identity. Yet, this masculine identity is always already marked as deficient or lacking, because it is racialized and classed, no less as it is situated in the coordinates of colonial legacy of uneven power relations. In Raewyn Connell's terms, Chicano masculinity cannot be labelled as hegemonic.

Connell and Messerschmidt explore the plurality of masculine identities in the local and global contexts (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Masculinities may be compared to a masculine ideal which Connell coined as hegemonic masculinity, which is not assumed to be "normal" in terms of its statistical occurrence, but in the sense that it conveys a normative ideal to which only a minority of men can be compared and measured. Hegemonic masculinity is thought of as an embodiment of "currently the most honored way of being a man" in any given context; hegemonic masculinity also requires all men to positon themselves in relation to it. Further, hegemonic masculinity is an ideological legitimization of global subordination of women to men (Connell and Messerchmidt 2005: 832, Bourdieu 2000). Hegemony, in Connell's terms, does not mean violence, but rather a preponderance that is anchored in any given culture and its institutions. Men who unreflectively enjoy the benefits of the patriarchal system without having to "enact a strong version of masculine dominance" represent a group in the most powerful complicity and compliance with this particular kind of hegemony (Connell and Messerchmidt 2005: 832).

Besides the dictate of the male norm for the Chicana/o Self promulgated by the foundational texts of *El Moviemiento*, Foster argues that concomitant of the "unrelenting masculinism" and sexism was intense homophobia (Foster 2006: 4). Foster, as well as Gutiérrez, illustrates the stark heterosexism of Chicano culture on the case of John Rechy (Gutiérrez 1993: 62, Foster 2006: 5). In 1963, years before the Chicana/o movement came to being and gathered momentum, Rechy published his autobiographical novel *City of Night*, in which he portrayed a life of a male prostitute in the "sexual underworld" (Gutiérrez 1993: 62) in Los Angeles, New York and other major American cities. Rechy's homosexuality and the thematic focus of his writing excluded him from the community of men defined as Chicanos and it was not until 1989 when the National Association for Chicano Studies prepared a panel on Rechy's work. Prior to this date, Rechy's work was not deemed as part of Chicano literature by some critics (Gutiérrez 1993: 62). In accordance with claims of hegemonic masculinity, then, heterosexual Chicanos, were able to relegate unmanly, homosexual Chicanos to the margins of the ideal, i.e. heterosexual Chicano masculinity that is – even nowadays within the scope of Chicano patriarchy – viewed as *the* representation of Chicano identity. Yet, the substantial challenge for persons who identify as men lies in the fact, that, historically, masculinity bears a legacy of domination and violence against women.

Chicanismo is commonly referred to as a consciously chosen, strategically constructed and adamantly embraced oppositional identity developed within *El Movimiento* especially by its male proponents. To differentiate Chicana/o cultural legacy and legitimacy from the dominant American culture, pre-Cortesian Aztec roots and relations to indigenous past are profusely acknowledged in the construction of Chicana/o identity and become incorporated into the nationalistic ideological discourse (Peréz-Torres 1995, Beltran 2004, Jacobs 2006). Therefore, first, the ideal form of Chicana/o identity carries a hybrid synthesis of a strategically constructed Self that historically, culturally, and linguistically differs from that of white Americans, Native Americans, and that of those Mexican Americans who cannot make claims about their ancestors' presence in the region of Northern Mexico prior to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the consequent annexation of the territory by the U.S. Second, *Chicanismo* carries a notion of biological commonality, as the Chicana/o nationalistic discourse employs appeals to Indian-ness through blood lines linking the nation's men (rather than women) with Aztec rulers such as Cuauhtémoc, heroic indigenous warriors and "Maya prince[s]" (Gonzáles online). The radical site of difference of Chicana/o identity, however, does not lie in romantic notions of pure and innocent origins, but in

simultaneous professing of their Spanish lineage, and thus by extent, interracial existence. The colonial mélange of the Spanish oppressor and the oppressed Indian literally embodies the site of Chicanos'/as' difference in their being mestizos/as. A narrative of Chicana/o identity that maintains the Spanish/Indian hybridity makes it possible for the Chicana/o subject to reinforce her/his status as a "subject defined by resistance" (Beltran 2004: 599). Chicana/o subjectivity is thus always already marked by difference originating in the mestiza/o embodiment and hybrid cultural legacy.

Allusions to heroic Aztec, pre-colonial past spelled out in both founding texts of the Chicana/o Movement promote the notions of manliness and implicitly define the Chicano Self as male by obliterating plausible portrayals of real-life femininity that is *not* reduced merely onto representations of mythical or divine female figures of Virgen de Guadalupe and/or the goddess Tonantzín, or token womanhood mirroring unfailing masculinity as is the case in "Yo Soy Joaquín," a notion I engage further below. Despite the fact that Chicana/o Movement − vastly represented by university students and agrarian workers − refused assimilationist tendencies and vigorously demanded full equality with white Americans, asserted the Chicanas'/os' right to cultural autonomy and national self-determination and fought for an end to racism, issues of gender equality were beyond its scope (Gutiérrez 1993: 45, Moya 2002: 45-47, Rosales 1997). As Jacobs notes, class and race were seen as the primary sites of Chicanas'/os' oppression, therefore "anyone who had an agenda beyond race and class could not be affiliated to the Movement or in extreme cases, consider themselves to be a real Chicano" (Jacobs 2006: 64). Simultaneously, women voicing the fact of gender inequality were perceived as deviating from *la causa*, i.e. the nationalist stance, were besmirched as *vendidas* (sell-outs), *agabachadas* (white-identified) or – drawing on the androcentric rendering of Cortés' interpreter I question in Chapter 5 "A Trio Against Dualism" – *malinches/malinchistas* (betrayers). Such negative labels tacitly functioned as mechanisms of social control; not a dissimilar effect had the label feminist. These discursive strategies consequently impeded Chicanas' involvement both within *El Movimiento* and, especially, women's liberation (Pesquera and Segura, 1997: 299).

2.5 A Gendered Genre: "Yo Soy Joaquín"

Not having made a single reference to Chicanas, "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán" was, in Mary Pardo's words, a "man-ifesto" (Pardo in Orozco 1997: 266) demonstrating a male bias of the

Movement. As I have already shown, *El Movimiento* was a highly gendered establishment and was based on *machist* conceptions of masculinity which, as Chicana feminists point out, excluded femininity as a functional and representative mode of Chicana/o existence (García 1997). While "El Plan" symbolically excluded[20] women from participation in the building of the Chicana/o nation, Gonzáles' text "Yo Soy Joaquín" – which Limón calls in Harold Bloom's terms a "master poem," i.e. a poem that has impacted and influenced subsequent Chicana/o texts (Limón 1992: 2) – was performed as a *corrido*,[21] a musical and poetic genre of a border ballad confronting a border conflict and displaying gendered characteristics (Saldívar R. 2006: 272, Saldívar J. D. 1994: 172, Jacobs 2006: 73).

Emblematic of the *corrido* genre is the portrayal of the post-annexation border region where the male protagonist resists the encroachment by, what he sees as hostile, white American society and negotiates the injustice bestowed upon him by the existing economic and social hierarchy. Gonzáles' protagonist Joaquín reminds us of the sacrifice Chicanos brought as U.S. (second-rank) citizens when fighting in the wars the United States had waged, yet despite their service, they are being deprived of their culture. In a way, Gonzáles' views are rooted *in* the Southwest, but the experience portrayed reaches *beyond* the region, which reflects the globalizing and transnational challenges faced by U.S. minorities in general in the second half of the 20th century:

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[20] Although it ought to be mentioned that Alurista's omission of women in "El Plan Spiritual de Aztlán" was rather an unreflected deed than a conscious and purposeful exclusion, it does testify of the deeply rooted and inherent sexism present in Chicano patriarchal culture, which is rightly the focus of Chicanas' feminist critique.

[21] Academic investigation into the *corrido* genre as a representative feature of the Chicana/o or Mexican folklore linked with the Mexico-U.S. borderlands is most significantly associated with Américo Paredes. In his seminal study *With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and its Hero*, Paredes looks into the story of a ranchhand Gregorio Cortez, whose shooting of a sheriff because of a misunderstanding over a false accusation regarding horse stealing, and his subsequent hiding and final imprisonment made it, in the beginning of the 20th century, into a *corrido* song in the Lower Rio Grande Border region. While the author explores the social and historical context of the story, he also introduces a theory of the *corrido* as a border ballad about a border conflict and traces its history to the Mexican cession of the Northern territories that prompted the original Mexicans' (or, later, Chicanas'/os') resistance to American dominance.

Although, as I argue above, the genre is gendered in terms of overlooking femininity (or providing problematic, i.e. androcentric representation thereof), it must also be noted, that *corrido* is also a racialized form. Paredes effectively shows how *corrido* itself breaks down white supremacist hierarchies (Paredes [1958] 2006).

José Saldívar summarizes Paredes' analysis of the *corrido* genre in *With His Pistol in His Hand* as follows: "In the course of the dialectical reading of form and content, of the *corrido*, Paredes established the following crucial points about the border ballad's ideological form and content: (1) the *corrido* is a multifaceted discourse, with reflective, narrative, and rhetorical-propositional elements; (2) *corridos* as social texts tend to be historical and personal; and (3) *corridos* make assertions which derive from the collective outlook and experience of the Mexican ballad community on the border" (Saldívar J. D. 1991: 172).

My blood runs pure on the ice-caked
Hills of the Alaskan isles,
On the corpse-strewn beach of Normandy,
The foreign land of Korea
And now Vietnam.
Here I stand
Before the court of justice,
Guilty
For all the glory of my Raza
To be sentenced to despair […]
My hands calloused from the hoe. I have made the Anglo rich,
Yet
Equality is but a word–
The Treaty of Hidalgo has been broken
And is but another treacherous promise.
My land is lost
And stolen,
My culture has been raped (Gonzáles 1967 online).

Frequently, the main character of the corrido genre asserts his presence by force and according to Ramón Saldívar the *corrido* tales "[draw] from the heroic worldview of masculine virtue and value […] and mediate the achievement of a collective masculine-gendered, subtly homoerotic *mexicano* identity" (Saldívar R. 2006: 272). Besides these characteristics, Gonzáles' epic poem also invokes a pantheon of figures – notwithstanding whether historical heroes such as Benito Juárez and/or Emiliano Zapata or outlaws, and bandits featured in Chicana/o folklore, a feature also representative of the said genre:

I rode east and north
As far as the Rocky Mountains,
And
All men feared the guns of
Joaquín Murrieta.
I killed those men who dared
To steal my mine,
Who raped and killed my love

My wife.
Then I killed to stay alive.
I was Elfego Baca,
living my nine lives fully.
I was the Espinoza brothers
of the Valle de San Luis.
All were added to the number of heads that in the name of civilization
were placed on the wall of independence, heads of brave men
who died for cause or principle, good or bad (Gonzáles 1967 online).

Although "Yo Soy Joaquín" speaks volumes of the subordinate position of the Chicana/o people in the Southwest and inspires to resist the socio-cultural discrimination, the *corrido* also celebrates brotherly camaraderie among men. It also underscores physical masculine strength in images of soldiers, outlaws or political heroes while simultaneously, yet latently, validating the non-elite, working class identity.

From a gender-sensitive perspective, however, what is most significant, is the fact, that not only the story narrated in the epic poem, but also the genre in which it is conveyed, eliminates the presence of feminine agency and thus foregrounds the gendered characteristics of the *corrido*. Both the content and the form are thus instrumental in preserving the androcentric status quo. As Paredes writes, constitutive of the genre is both the men's authorship and their performing it: "Men were the performers, while the women and children participated only as audience" (Paredes in Esquibel 2006: 178). In other words, "Yo Soy Joaquín" as well as "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán", the two most vital texts establishing Chicana/o nation and identity, employ discursive means that maintain male privilege. Women are thus made invisible and are traditionally relegated to the domestic sphere and the domain of *la familia*.

Their rare inclusion in the *corrido* genre verges on tokenism; the sporadic number of female figures (to which "Yo Soy Joaquín" is no exception) showcases womanhood, but its utilitarian representation is, in feminist terms, highly problematic (cf. Esquibel 2006: 147). The female character serves as a corrective for the overt, almost homoerotic, masculine camaraderie, a potential threat to the ideal masculinity observed by Saldívar (Saldívar R. 2006: 272). Gonzáles' *corrido*, does illustrate Joaquín's relationship to a woman in the

nationalist masterpiece, however, the last four of the following lines suggest that the male protagonist loves the woman's love for him, rather than the woman as a person:

> I am in the eyes of woman,
> sheltered beneath
> her shawl of black,
> deep and sorrowful eyes
> that bear the pain of sons long buried or dying,
> dead on the battlefield or on the barbed wire of social strife.
> Her rosary she prays and fingers endlessly
> like the family working down a row of beets
> to turn around and work and work.
> There is no end.
> Her eyes a mirror of all the warmth
> and all the love for me,
> and I am her
> and she is me (Gonzáles 1967 online).

The woman's identity – who, unlike Joaquín, the narrator, is nameless – is defined solely through her warm emotions directed toward the male hero. She exists to mirror him, an image conveyed explicitly in the excerpt. Her subjectivity is erased. The female figure is instrumentalized, first, to reflect Joaquín's aforementioned masculine heroism and Chicano military sacrifice. Second, her femininity (tacitly predicated on her complying with androcentric familial rules and heteronormativity) serves the purpose of guaranteeing and corroborating the male protagonist's heterosexuality. In this regard, she may be taken to represent Simone de Beauvoir's proverbial inferior "second sex" as described in her eponymous, second-wave feminist canonical opus magnum *The Second Sex* (Beauvoir de [1949] 1956). The similitude between the content of the poem's extract and de Beauvoir's frequently quoted assessment of women's derivative position under patriarchy is extremely striking:

> [A woman] is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other. […] Treasure, prey, sport and danger, nurse, guide, judge, mediatrix, mirror, woman is the Other in whom the subject transcends himself without being limited, who opposes him without denying him; she is the Other who lets

> herself be taken without ceasing to be the Other, and therein she is so necessary to man's happiness and to his triumph that it can be said that if she did not exist, men would have invented her (Beauvoir de [1949] 1956: 16, 200).

Besides implying the female character's instrumental role in providing significance and merit to Joaquín's manhood, the poem further consigns her to immanence (completely in line with de Beauvoir's observation of women's position within the Western culture as being "the Other" who is relegated to the fringes of representation) by stressing her reproductive maternal duty and repeatable chores. In other words, Joaquín lends his physical strength and intellectual prowess to the transcendental, creative act of nation-building, principle, and to providing betterment of social and political conditions of the Chicano "men who prayed and fought for their own worth as human beings, for that golden moment of freedom" (Gonzáles 1967 online), whereas the female in love is bound to immanence, first through her reproductive function as a mother bemoaning the deceased sons (not daughters!) and second, through the infinite nurturing chore of securing the family's everyday survival by providing meals (through tending the field of beets).

Although the rosary she holds may imply a link to the transcendental, I read it rather as a manifestation of devotion and obedience, both to religious and patriarchal rules, and not as a means of the woman's own spiritual development or personal emancipation. It is because the narrative does not allow for a further elaboration of the character as this is the only section when a love relationship is related in the *corrido* and where the woman is mentioned (as opposed to the frequent references made to Chicano brothers, fathers, and co-fighters). And it is also because the woman's lack of name (unlike the individualized male hero) signals her encompassing the universal values nationalism attributes to femininity as I elaborate on in a greater detail in the following chapter (cf. Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989, Enloe [1989] 2014, McClintock 1993, Nagel 1998, Yuval-Davis 2005).

To sum up, women's roles in "Yo Soy Joaquín" are those of mythical figures or religious goddesses dwelling beyond the lived experience of real Chicanas as mentioned earlier, or those of an obedient every-woman that confirms male heterosexuality and who, as Jacobs radically states not deviating from Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence (Bourdieu 2001: 34-35), "represents the paradox of the silent complicity of women who are contained by the

patriarchal family structure, and in their enforced passivity also help to sustain it" (Jacobs 2006: 106).

CHAPTER 3

3. Queering and Gendering Aztlán: Anzaldúa's Feminist Reshaping of the Chicana/o Nation in the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands

If the subchapters above have dealt with nationalist rewritings of Aztlán and the foundations of Chicana/o identity, although with a male bias, what is then the feminist palimpsestuous approach to Aztlán and the Chicana/o nation? As already touched upon, Chicana feminists criticized Aztlán's nationalist reinvention for not truly being a homeland without boundaries – as Anaya and Ashcroft mentioned above suggest – by, contrariwise, pointing at the enduring boundaries of a gender bias and of malestreaming masculinity as the default representation of humanity. Thus, Aztlán, the Chicana/o mythical homeland – or rather *home* and *land* – is in Chicana feminism and most notably in Anzaldúa's reconceptualization posited in terms of one's relationship to and location on a land, i.e. a physical and geographical place. Concurrently, Aztlán and by extension the Chicana/o nation, call for a reformulation of the notions of a home and belonging beyond the restrictive nationalistic, androcentric, and heterosexist terms. As a result, Chicanas' Aztlán emerges as a more inclusive, collective and inherently fluid nation – or in Anzaldúa's vision rather an alliance – of resistance.

In what follows after a brief, feminist, gender-sensitive analysis of nationalist ideology in general, I first discuss Anzaldúa's rethinking of Aztlán in terms of land that gradually collapses into her conceptualization of borderlands, initially physical and geographical, and later metaphorical and culturally revisionist. The concept of metaphorical borderlands is later thoroughly analyzed in Chapter 4 "Elastic, Yet Unyielding." Then the text, drawing on criticisms of the heavily gendered and (hetero)sexualized aspects of nationalism moves to discuss the home, i.e. the familial, domestic sphere that is situated at the core of nation-building processes targeting all members of the community based on gender differences and the assumed compulsory heterosexuality. An exemplary analysis of queerness embraced by Anzaldúa further shows what modes of resistance are available to Chicanas and borderland subjects upon theorizing *mestizaje* on both individual as well as collective, alliance-forging level. Close readings of two key poems shed light on the unique unanimity of form and content representative of Anzaldua's writing; in fact, I suggest the poems can be read as pieces that perform theory.

3.1 Nation and/as the Consequence of Gender Difference

Although the gendered features of nationalisms are not usually the primary focus of philosophical or political debates, nationalist ideologies, as feminist, gender-oriented studies in social and political sciences, postcolonial studies or international relations document, all rely on strict constructions of gender difference (cf. Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989, Enloe [1989] 2014, McClintock 1993, Nagel 1998, Yuval-Davis 2005). Given the underpinning androcentrism of both Western societies and postcolonial societies, as well as of the concept of a nation and nation-state, the power and worthiness of a nation is associated with male power and therefore what drives the nationalist discourse and aims may often be aligned with men's aspirations and/or frustrations; or as Enloe observes, nationalisms have typically sprung from "masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation, and masculinized hope" (Enloe [1989] 2014: 93).

By the same token, Ernest Gellner's views of nationhood also link the foundations of an invented nation and ideology with male identity (at least judging from the scarcity of mentions of women in his work, the time he wrote the following lines, and the generic masculine used): "A man has a 'nationality' […] [and] as he has this thing called nationality, he will generally wish to be in the same political unit as those sharing that nationality" (Gellner 1964: 150). McClintock sums his definition of nationhood more succinctly, "Men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as being from the same nation" (McClintock 1993: 62).

Moreover, Nagel actually sees nationalism as an arena that conditions and confirms masculinity; to her, nationalist politics constitutes "a major venue for accomplishing masculinity" for the entire system of nationalist culture is, indeed, constructed as congruent with masculine interests and themes associated with desired manhood, such as honor, bravery, duty, patriotism, discipline, and fraternity, including the implicit imperative of heterosexuality manifested in sexual virility and related tasks in regards with the protection of family, women, and children (Nagel 1998:245, 251-252). *El Movimiento's* grounding of national(ist) subjectivity in masculinity thus comes as no surprise. Still, this gendered aspect inherent in the construction of nations and national discourses is widely neglected and ignored, since, as I have repeatedly showed from my feminist position, masculinity is the default assumption of human subjectivity. Yet, feminist debates on nationalism uncover at

least two paradoxes that, as a result, further confirm these gendered characteristics of nationalist ideologies and nationhood itself.

These paradoxes speak volumes about the unquestioned gender bias of nationalist discourses, which − without obliquely depending on hierarchy between men and women and the gendered organization of the society − would fail in being effective and instrumental in implementing a nation. First, by making a remark that "[w]omen are both of and not of the nation" the editors of *Between Woman and Nation: Nationalisms, Transnational Feminisms, and the State* point to the fact that within a nation women are refused access to direct action as national citizens, but enter the nation only indirectly through their relationship with men as wives, sisters or daughters (Kaplan, Alarcón and Moallem 1999: 12, McClintock 1993: 65, Jacobs 2006: 125). Thus they are subsumed into the national body politic only symbolically and as a metaphor for the nation's boundary. In McClintock's words then, women are typically "construed as the symbolic bearers of the nation, but are denied any direct relation to national agency" and, as a consequence, are not the nation's creators, builders and/or authors, but − derivatively − its mere biological and cultural reproducers (McClintock 1993: 62). Or, to provide an inverse twist to Nagel's observation, the real actors are *not* women, for they are not the ones "defending their freedom, their honour, their homeland and their [men]" (cf. Nagel 1998: 244).

This essentialist determinism stemming from the notorious androcentric mindset regarding women's biological functions that supposedly condition their capabilities, positions women in an intermediary or interstitial space between both nature and culture, and between nations. Nationalist ideologies sanction women's (reproductive and sexual) behavior for it marks the margins, or boundaries of nations and simultaneously of men's power and dominance. Yuval-Davis and Anthias provide a general, but always context- and time-implicated overview of most frequent gendered practices ascribed to women. According to them, nationalism instrumentalizes women

> 1) as biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivities; 2) as reproducers of the boundaries of ethnic/national groups; 3) as participating centrally in the ideological reproduction of the collectivity and as transmitters of its culture; 4) as signifiers of ethnic/national differences – both as a focus and symbol in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction and transformation of ethnic/national categories; and finally 5) as participants

> in national, economic, political and military struggles (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989: 7).

At the first glance, this enumeration may seem to suggest that women's roles under nationalism are, actually, copious. While this is, undoubtedly, true and Chicanas' feminist activities pertaining to the Movement prove that women do not obey nationalist discourses passively, it must not be overlooked, however, that women's tasks are always secondary, derivative, immanent, and never on a par with men's productive and authorial power.

The second paradox, by no means less laden with gender hierarchies, concerns that what lies at the very heart of most national narratives, to which the Chicana/o nationalist discourse is no exception, – the familial, domestic sphere so habitually identified with women. The family trope on the one hand serves as a metonymy for the whole national collectivity, on the other hand it helps to naturalize and legitimize social hierarchies beyond the family. The subordination of women and children to men within a family, which is in the context of nationalism deemed as natural and given, functions as a parallel for justification of hierarchies based on various social categories within the realm of the national society or even within the vast systems of imperialism or colonialism. At the same time, the family (and by analogy women with whom family is identified) is seen as a unit existing outside of historical time as it is aimed at preserving (and conserving) tradition that should, ideally, withstand historical sways and resist change. Yet, it is there to warrant the nation's continuity through reproduction. Paradoxically then, the family becomes "at one and the same time both the organizing figure for national *history*, as well as its *antithesis*" (McClintock 1993: 64; McClintock's emphasis). As a result, femininity under nationalism is associated with (as if) unchanging tradition, conservative maintenance of continuity, and an existence set in an anterior time within the modern nation, under which masculinity, in contrast, comes to represent national progress, revolutionary shifts, and principles of historical discontinuity. Gender differences intrinsic to patriarchal family therefore underlie also the nationalist conception of time and history.

Anzaldúa's challenge to this gendered understanding of time and history finds a subversive manifestation in the ways she conveys her relationship to her home and the land that stretches from the Valley in South Texas to the shores of the Pacific Ocean. It is a region that is both integral to the mythical homeland of Aztlán and, concurrently, spans the entire length

of the U.S.-Mexico border. Moreover, the nationalist approach to time and temporality receives yet another twist in Anzaldúa's hands, as she combines the narratives of "grand histories" with the seeming ordinariness of stories of her family's daily agricultural routines. Finally, the traditional, patriarchal familial sphere is undermined by the author's broadening of the concept of the family as an inclusive space for those who, to paraphrase Anzaldúa's poem-like structure in the first chapter's subsection ""Chicana": The Feminist Politics of Naming," feel abnormal, alien, not belonging and/or queer and are suffering from "the fear of going home" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 41-42, 65).

3.2 Fencing at San Diego/Tijuana Divide

Anzaldúa's Aztlán is introduced in in the first chapter *of Borderlanads/La Frontera – The New Mestiza* in a complex manner that in fact concerns the critical concepts the writer coins so as to navigate and explicate her Chicana feminist identity politics. She unfolds her argumentation with a preludial poem in which the author sees herself standing by the rusty fence she later claims her home, upon which the salty waters of the Pacific wash, break, and gnaw it away. The iron structure in San Diego's Border Field Park literally lacerates the urban agglomeration of the Californian metropolis and Mexican Tijuana, or more graphically, it embodies the border where "the Third World grates against the first and bleeds" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25). To the writer, the border represents the following:

> 1,950 mile-long open wound
> dividing a *pueblo*, a culture,
> running down the length of my body,
> staking fence rods in my flesh,
> splits me splits me
> *me raja* *me raja*
> This is my home
> this thin edge of
> barbwire […]
> This land was Mexican once,
> was Indian always
> and is.
> And will be again (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 24-25).

The colonial mixture of the "brown blood" she evokes earlier in the poem that oozes from the "1.950 mile-long open wound" that "divid[es] a pueblo, a culture, running down the length of [the writer's] body, staking fence rods in [her] flesh" brings together – despite the agony conveyed – two worlds and forms "a third country – a border culture" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 24-25). This single poem thus outlines, more or less explicitly, the principal concepts of Anzaldúan thought such as the constructedness of the border, borderlands, border culture, *mestizaje*, hybridity, gendered embodiment, location, and their potential transpositions. The border splitting the ancestral Aztlán is an open wound, yet it creates possibilities for points of departure in Anzaldúa's and Chicanas' theorizing as I elaborate on below in a minute analysis of the poem's extracts provided here.

If for Homi Bhabha everything starts at the border as he implies invoking Heidegger in the very opening lines of *The Location of Culture* (Bhabha 1994: 1), it certainly does so for Gloria Anzaldúa. In the following excerpt from the poem partially quoted above, which actually commences on the first page of the introductory chapter of *Borderlands/La Frontera* – the first page being both symbolically and formally a border in its own right – most of the concepts listed above are engaged.

I walk through the hole in the fence
to the other side.
Under my fingers I feel the gritty wire
rusted by 139 years[22]
of the salty breath of the sea.
Beneath the iron sky
Mexican children kick their soccer ball across,
run after it, entering the U.S. (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 24)

The poem's subject matter provides a blueprint not only for reading the whole of Anzaldúa's masterpiece, but chiefly for interpreting her transformation of "the abject identity into which she has been interpellated into a resistant identity, intent on exposing and dismantling the history of oppression to which both her identity and the border stand as citations" (McRuer 1997; 128). In all her writing, Anzaldúa disrespects the boundaries of literary genres, registers, languages or even the customary layout of text on a page. By the same token, she refuses to honor boundaries and limits that restrain her Self as manifested by the processual,

[22] In the time of the writing of *Borderlands/La Frontera – The New Mestiza*, 139 years had elapsed since the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo that established the U.S.-Mexico border at its current shape.

oppositional identity spelled out by mestiza consciousness that I analyze later in this doctoral thesis in Chapter 4 "Elastic, Yet Unyielding."

The space left out immediately before and after "I walk" in the first line of the passage itself represents the activity Anzaldúa describes she is doing; it marks the distance travelled *to* the border fence from somewhere within the U.S. – presumably her home state of Texas, and *through* the border fence into Mexico, while still staying put in Aztlán. Thus, the author can claim the border to be her home as mentioned earlier. At the same time, the space between the words points to the hole in the fence as well as to the slit, open wound incurred by the artificial presence of the man-made iron structure. Further, the exact counting of years since the delimitation of the border alerts us of Anzaldúa's awareness of the grand history of what in Aztlán is perceived as a double colonial conquest executed through Spanish/European *conquista* and later U.S. imperial and capitalist imposition. The poem ruptures the grandness of this history, which is often attributed global significance, by the everyday triviality of children's accidental kicking of the soccer ball across the border to, officially, a foreign country. Anzaldúa's analogy between her walking to Mexico and the soccer balls' entering the U.S. thoroughly demonstrates her disrespect both for the border and for the historical master narratives that relegate Chicanas'/os' multiple otherness beyond the realm of accepted and respected existence. The juxtaposition of grand history and an everyday banal event of a kids' play challenges the nationalist conception of time and temporality as well.

The painful, bleeding wound caused by the fence rods, that metaphorically represent the ongoing historical oppression and that invade the writer's body, her *pueblo* (people) and her culture, also stand at the roots of resistance. Consequently, Anzaldúa's oppositional articulation of Chicana counterhegemonic thought refuses the arbitrary division of "us" versus "them" that the "steel curtain […] crowned with rolled barbed wire, rippling from the sea where Tijuana touches San Diego" both metaphorically and materially represents (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 24). The binarism performed by the chain-link fence also points to its inherent failure, for any attempt at unequivocal, absolute division always produces groups of people who do not fit into either category. Or as the poem aptly reminds us "the skin of the earth is seamless, the sea cannot be fenced, *el mar* does not stop at borders" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25). Here, the sea, of course, stands for the Pacific Ocean, or the human race in general, but more specifically it may also symbolize the peoples of the Americas, i.e. the waves of immigrants making the United States a vastly diverse society it conceives of itself

to be. Moreover, yet in another interpretative twist the sea may represent Emma Lazarus' "tired, […] poor, [and] huddled masses yearning to breathe free" greeted by the Statue of Liberty upon arrival to the Ellis Island. But, on the opposite, western shore, the looming "Tortilla Curtain," – Anzaldúa's apparent reference to the Iron Curtain fracturing Europe – discourages migration across the U.S. Southern border (Lazarus [1883] web, Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 24). The Pacific, unlike the Atlantic, is not a sea of promise, because what tacitly matters in the migrant influx are the incomers' countries of origin and their racial backgrounds.

This oblique racial and cultural double standard – i.e. the celebrated and acknowledged historical European influx establishing the United States as a Western power on the one hand, conflicts with the contemporary Mexican and Latin-American immigration that is government-, military-, and vigilantes-targeted on the U.S.-Mexico border on the other – is, however, undermined by the fact that, firstly, the events in Border Field Park are taking place on Easter Sunday, which, secondly, brings about the "resurrection of the brown blood in [the writer's] veins" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 24). The poem, in other words, gradually evokes a sort of redemption, or at least recognition, brought about by the strategic re-vision of the abject, i.e. migrant, mestiza/o identity. By association with the Christian concept of Jesus' resurrection where salvation applies to all individuals, regardless of socially constructed categories, the poem conveys a subtle hope for the settlement of historical inequalities. The claim to land that "was Mexican once [and] Indian always [...] and will be again" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25) supports the need for historical, cultural, and social re-evaluation of the presence of postcolonial, or rather native or indigenous subjects in the U.S. society and culture.

To elaborate further on Anzaldúa's grasp of the artificiality of the border, it is not accidental that she subverts the authority of the border by her (imaginary) walking/migrating through the hole in the fence. In doing so, her writing juxtaposes the ancient history of peopling of the Americas with tribes arriving across the Bering Strait and gradually settling the continent from the North to the South. Further, to make the connection with Aztlán and Mexico, she links this southward indigenous migration with the Aztecs – in Nahuatl the people of Aztlán – who left today's U.S. Southwest in the 12th century for the area of today's Mexico City. Then she finally focuses on the contemporary history of [Chicanas'/os'] migration, or, as she calls it "tradition of long walks" in which context the continent is witnessing "*la migración*

de los pueblos mexicanos, the return odyssey to the historical/mythological Aztlán, [but] [t]his time the traffic is from south to north" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 33).

This shift, she claims has not always been marked with an unwelcoming approach of the U.S. as the 1940s-1960s Bracero Program the author mentions provides evidence for. While it is highly disputable whether such U.S. programs aimed at acquiring cheap, unskilled Mexican manpower for construction work and U.S. agriculture, of which the Bracero Program is representative (Rosales 1997, Jiroutová Kynčlová 2015), can be viewed from economic, cultural, racial, as well as class perspectives as positive examples that resist links with capitalist exploitation of "the Other", the argument Anzaldúa is making here, lies elsewhere. Although the conjoined millennia of migration on the continent she describes may seem historically random, haphazard and poorly contextualized, the message of this migratory condensation rests, yet again, in Anzaldúa's debunking of the arbitrariness and man-made constructedness of borders. By the same token, Pierre Bourdieu provides a fitting summation of the dominant, essentialist views of border that are dismissed by the constructivist paradigm that unmasks the concept as failing in what it tries to do in terms of separation:

> Nobody would want to claim today that there exist criteria capable of founding 'natural' classifications or 'natural' regions, separated by 'natural' frontiers. The frontier is never anything other than the product of a division which can be said to be more or less based on 'reality', depending on whether the elements it assembles show more or less numerous and more or less striking resemblances among themselves (given that it will always be possible to argue over the limits of variations between non-identical elements that taxonomy treats as similar). Everyone agrees that 'regions' divided up according to the different conceivable criteria (language, habitat, cultural forms, etc.) never coincide perfectly. But that is not all: 'reality' […] and the most 'natural' classifications are based on characteristics which are not in the slightest respect natural and which are to a great extent the product of an arbitrary imposition (Bourdieu 1997: 222).

Similarly, Anzaldúa's walking with ease across the San Diego/Tijuana divide corresponds with her free-flowing switching between English and Spanish. To Anzaldúa, transgressing and crossing borders are fundamental steps which must be taken so that a new epistemology reflective of her specific position can be arrived at. Both the contents and the form of the

poem in terms of its layout as well as language alternating buttress her message as they are imbued with underlying theory, a mode of writing and thinking I explore in detail further below and then in the Chapter 4 "Elastic Yet Unyielding." Although Anzaldúa consistently tries to subvert the significance of the border by exposing its triviality and arbitrariness, she is well aware that no effortless and easy stepping across is, actually, possible. She illustrates this by stories of misrecognition, not dissimilar to the one I and my conference colleagues experienced on the bus from McAllen, Texas to San Antonio as described in the opening lines of this doctoral thesis. Ironically, my story and the ones Anzaldúa relates seem to have taken place in the identical area.

The issue is voiced in a grotesque and, at the same time, rather tragic story of Anzaldúa's relative Pedro, a fifth-generation American, whom *la migra* thinks to be an illegal Mexican immigrant. While working on the fields near the border, Pedro fails to show the Immigration and Naturalization Service officers his documents proving his U.S. citizenship for he never carries them to work. His primary language being Spanish together with his being unable to find proper English words to explain his situation, the youth is deported by plane to Guadalajara, Mexico, although the "deepest [he'd] ever been to Mexico was Reynosa, a small border town opposite Hidalgo, Texas, not far from McAllen" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 26). Anzaldúa's disrespect for the border then springs from the concept's intended purpose and signification, i.e. its supposed capacity to provide lucid, clear-cut separations and categorizations. As Pedro's case shows, however, rather than producing two different entities, or the "us" versus "them", the demarcation line paradoxically contributes to beclouding of the immanent differences on either side of the border.

Robert McRuer correctly reads Anzaldúa's rendering of her and Pedro's mestiza/o identity not as an attempt to show that this identity *automatically* works towards disruption of institutions invested in maintaining the border status quo, such as the Immigration and Naturalization Service, even though its hybrid character challenges cultural and racial purity. To him, Anzaldúan thought is a representation of a process whereby the mestiza grasps and navigates all her multiple identities "as results of unsuccessful attempts to divide people and transposes the meaning of those identities, turning them against ongoing attempts to maintain hierarchical divisions" (McRuer 1997: 131). The border is thus a marker of the Chicanas'/os' otherness that claims them in their very homeland.

Obviously, Chicanas'/os' racial identity in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands severely complicates everyday life and equally impedes their relationship to their homeland and home. Encounters such as the one resembling Pedro's that consistently reiterate misrecognition and denial of belonging from the majority U.S. society constitute a part of Chicana/o existence. This has lead, in many Chicanas'/os' to the internalized of acceptance of – as McRuer and Aldama go to great lengths to word it in Julia Kristeva's psychoanalytical terms – the abject, racial identity (McRuer 1997; 128, Aldama 1998: 52). Anzaldúa describes the self-loathing as "the agony of inadequacy" and elaborates: "we Chicanos blame ourselves, hate ourselves, terrorize ourselves. Most of this goes on unconsciously; we only know that we are hurting, we suspect that there is something 'wrong' with us, something fundamentally wrong" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 26).

3.3 Reproduction of External Oppression on the Inside and Queer Resistance

Although the listed complexes Chicanas/os grapple with may arise from the colonial and capitalist history or multiple external oppressions as related in the first chapter of *Borderlands/La Frontera* titled "The Homeland, Aztlán*/El otro México*" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 23-35), Anzaldúa does not point her finger solely beyond the Chicana/o community; she is quick to divert her attention also to the internal hierarchies existing within her own folk. As McRuer notes, Anzaldúa initially shows how "subjects are cast into abject positions as a result of binary thinking and how identities emerge as casualties of oppression," but she does not yet quite hint at whether such "locations might be transformed into sites of resistance" (McRuer 1997: 139). The internal investigation of Chicana/o interior otherings is the subject matter of "*Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan* (Movements of rebellion and cultures of betrayal)" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 37-45). As the chapter title suggests, Anzaldúa accentuates the depreciation and ostracism that takes place inside the Chicana/o society and exposes it with the same thrust as she exposes the external, mostly race- and culture-related pressures. While the failed racial profiling performed by the Immigration and Naturalization Service officers primarily targets Pedro for his brown-skinned appearance, for Anzaldúa ethnicity is just one of the categories that needs to be negotiated:

> I abhor some of my culture's ways, how it cripples its women, *como burras*, our strengths used against us, lowly *burras* bearing humility with dignity. The ability to serve, claim the males, is our highest virtue. I abhor how my culture makes macho caricatures of its men. No, I don't buy all the myths of the tribe into which I was born. I will not glorify those aspects of my culture which have injured me and which have injured me in the name of protecting me (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 43-44).

It is apparent that gender-related norms are central to the author's critique. Remaining faithful to the second chapter's title, Anzaldúa explains how (specifically women's) sexuality is turned into a locus of Chicana/o culture's betrayal and reprimand of its females while also providing a potential for resistance to such a treatment. It is Anzaldúa's navigation of her own sexual rebellion and Chicana/o familial norms which heavily bear on women's involvement in the society that I discuss in the following lines.

I read the writer's queer identity – declared a willed choice – as an analogy to what she coins in the concluding chapter of *Borderlands/La Frontera* as mestiza consciousness, a concept which I dissect minutely in "Elastic Yet Unyielding." Whereas mestiza consciousness crowns the transformation of hybrid identity at first perceived as abject in terms of recognition and embrace of all sorts of conflicting affiliations and contradictions on a collective, communal level (cf. Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 109), Anzaldúa's employment of queerness is at the outset individual as she deals with the sphere of her family and only then the personal aspect is replaced with the collective and alliance-building quality of queer identity. The author thus proceeds from the singular to the plural, but she constantly ascertains that her argument is contextualized and soundly situated so that generalizations are avoided. To put it differently, queerness and mestiza consciousness are indivisible from one another; in Anzaldúan thought they both share transformative functions and come together in similar disruptive and liminal ways (cf. McRuer 1997: 142, 143, 153).

Besides the already discussed androcentric double standard in treating men and women (although, as the quote above documents, Anzaldúa is well aware of the fact pointed out most explicitly by Connell in regards to patriarchy that disciplines all forms of masculinities (cf. Connell and Messerschmidt 2005)), the author equally saliently voices the homophobia related to the Chicana/o Movement's nationalist discourse of Aztlán which is, as already reiterated, outlined in strictly heteronormative terms. In this regard, Anzaldúa's loyalty is to

fairness, liberation, and to equal treatment for all rather than to the limited determinations within which Chicana/o nationalism operated in *El Movimiento*.

Since the sphere of the family constitutes the core upon which nationalist discourses attempt to build a nation (Nagel 1998, McClintock 1993), it follows that the Chicana/o family represents a strategic site of cultural survival and Chicana/o resistance to the racial and social othering experienced in the American society, but, internally, also a site of strict political, cultural, sexual, and gender(ed) discipline of the family's members. Sociologist Alma García explains that "[at] the cultural level, Chicano [M]ovement emphasized the need to safeguard the value of family loyalty. At the political level, the Chicano [M]ovement used the family as a strategic organizational tool for protest activities" (García 1989: 219). In compliance with androcentric principles then, Chicanas occupied only subordinate and circumscribed positions within the Movement, and although they actively supported the political efforts and were involved in political agenda at every stage and level, "their participation was rarely acknowledged or recorded" and decision-making ranks were regularly beyond their reach (Moya 2002: 46).

No less restrictive were the rules applied to women within the domestic, familial sphere where rigid control over female sexual autonomy was instituted. Women dating and/or marrying white men outside the Chicana/o community were targets of harsh criticism for (symbolically) selling themselves and their people out to the oppressive culture thereby – in analogy to Cortés' interpreter and partner La Malinche – continuing the legacy of colonial rape handed down to the indigenous cultures since the Spanish conquest of Mexico. Labelled once again as *malinchistas* or *malinches* or *vendidas*, deviating Chicanas were viewed as ones helping perpetuate Chicanos' emasculation by white men. Women's alleged Malinche-like treachery was thus linked both to the public sphere (in regards to their voicing reprehensions of *El Movimiento's* gender bias), as well as to the private/domestic sphere (in terms of regulating female sexuality, intimacy, relationships and dedication to family values). Conversely, Chicano men were not targets of such a standard; their relationships with white women were perceived as rectification of the status quo upset by such putatively betraying Chicanas.

The cultural milieu socializes women as transmitters of the society's value system, therefore it requires they display greater assent and commitment to their culture's principles (Moya

2002: 46-47, Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 38-39). Thus, fully in correspondence with the operations of nationalist discourses as exposed by Anthias and Yuval-Davis (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989: 7), marriage and reproduction were exalted in the Chicana/o Movement rhetoric as a condition for cultural reaffirmation (Pesquera and Segura 1997: 297, Jacobs 2006: 105). Chicanas' feminist stance, of course, indicted marriage, the sexual double standard concerning mixed-race couples, and the stringent rules within the patriarchal family as the primary sources of women's subordination, bringing thus to attention (besides some commonalities with the Women's Liberation Movement) what Chicano men and their white male counterparts mutually shared, but were (most probably strategically) hesitant to admit, so that their position within *El Movimiento* could not be mitigated: male dominance over women.

Moreover, a breach of the compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1980) imperative comprised the greatest jeopardy to the nationalist agenda in particular and the Chicana/o people's cultural integrity in general. Anzaldúa is well aware of the threat that an undermining, noncompliant sexuality in women (as cultural transmitters and reproducers) poses for both the nationalist as well as familial discourses, and therefore the author employs it as yet another tool of her intentionally carved out identity that challenges hierarchies and internal discrimination within the community. To put it differently, queer identity exposes the duality and limits of the Chicana/o family ideology which – should all its logical outcomes and consequences be taken into account – render love and respect no longer unconditional (contrarily to the beliefs regarding parental and/or romantic love one is socialized to adhere to and identify with as Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim minutely demonstrate in their study *The Normal Chaos of Love* (cf. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995)), but dependent on one's becoming a subject of and to patriarchy and heteronormativity. By no means is this, of course, a unique observation; the history of feminism engenders a tradition of revealing the highly political and public aspects of the seemingly private, domestic sphere. Having been "raised Catholic and indoctrinated as straight, [Anzaldúa] made the choice to be queer" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 41) claiming queerness as both an affective means of relating to the world and other people and as a political means, whereby she reaches an epistemological vantage point not dissimilar to the positionality of hybrid, border subjects occupying the ambiguous U.S.-Mexican borderlands. Or as McRuer summarizes it, "Anzaldúa's work puts into play a new and transgressive identity but at the same time resists mere transgression for transgression's sake" (McRuer 1997: 128).

A key aspect of Anzaldúa's identity arises here: being able to make a choice concerning her queerness, the author exposes her identity as strategically constructed, politically charged, and contextually negotiated while she simultaneously points out she imbues it consciously with "the coming together of opposite qualities within," a stance perfectly aligned with the notion of mestiza consciousness discussed later (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 41). Anzaldúa acknowledges that "[f]or a lesbian of color, the ultimate rebellion she can make against her native culture is through her sexual behavior. She goes against two moral prohibitions: sexuality and homosexuality" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 41). Queer self-identification enables her to attack the tacit normativity of gender and sexual duality that causes trauma in queer persons and their families, which as a consequence may undermine the politics of recognition within a Chicana/o familial structures of kinship and their love for the family members. By so doing, Anzaldúa criticizes the social dictates that pressure us to choose loyalties restrictively only within the Western binary system as she states: "What we are suffering from is an absolute despot duality that says we are able to be only one or the other. It claims that human nature is limited and cannot evolve into something better" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 41).

Anzaldúa's queer mestiza's defiance of hindering categories of social organization and normative institutional power actually unmasks this "despot duality" or repression – thoroughly in line with Foucault's dispersion of power and resistance described in *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1978) – as productive or as one "giving rise to new forms of behaviour rather than simply closing down or censoring certain forms of behaviour" (Mills 2003: 33). In this regard, the writer's performing her queer identity may be interpreted as a productive effect of her navigating the constant negotiation of power and resistance as universally suggested by Foucault. Likewise, Judith Butler's perspective of social norms inherently containing a potential for their own disruption and dilution is informative here. Since Anzaldúa's sexually transgressive and racially and culturally hybrid Chicana identity inevitably challenges the said duality of Western thought, such an identity partakes in upending the established norms by exposing their fragility that stems from their dependence on their binary opposites. As Butler phrases it: "[the] resignification of norms is thus a function of their *inefficacy,* and so the question of subversion, of *working the weakness in the norm,* becomes a matter of inhabiting the practices of its rearticulation" (Butler 1993: 257; emphasis hers). Anzaldúa's rearticulation of her identity and by extension of radical Chicana existence resisting androcentric, heterosexist practices is fittingly summed up by

Paula Moya: "By engaging in sexual practices that render the male irrelevant, and by refusing to inhabit the culturally mandated subject position of the good wife and mother, Chicana lesbians create the possibility for a resistant Chicana subjectivity that exists outside the boundaries of culturally inscribed notions of Chicana womanhood" (Moya 2002: 47). Anzaldúa's queer identity thus functions, again, as one of the layers of the writer's hybrid, *mestizaje* subjectivity representative of her complex positionality in the border region and skillfully exploits entrenched discourses of heteronormativity and other disenfranchising practices.

It would be a mistake, however, to idealize Anzaldúa's queerness, her carved-out epistemological standpoint, and identity constructions in any sort of romanticized notions of unlimited, unrestrained, and free, independent choices. Rather, I concur with McRuer's suggestion that Anzaldúa's mestiza queer agency is not "simplistically voluntaristic" and reveals the intricacies of the question of one's agency (McRuer 1997: 150). As I show below, the writer's agency is discursively delimited (cf. Foucault 1978) and her subject position is that of a conflicting intersections which are being resisted and rearticulated, but which are also resistant and in their effect bearing on Anzaldúa's possibilities of articulating mestiza subjectivity. Or as Judith Butler has it, the subject "is always the nexus, the non-space of cultural collision, in which the demand to resignify or repeat the very terms which constitute the 'we' cannot be summarily refused, but neither can they be followed in strict obedience" (Butler 1993: 124). In fact, Butler's argumentation employs Anzaldúa's notion of the "crossroads" for the subject as a "juncture of discursive demands" to disclose how "cultural and political discursive forces" render the subject "chiasmic" and nonexistent prior to its constructions, and neither determined by those constructions (Butler 1993: 124). To use Anzaldúa's phrase, "[that] focal point or fulcrum, that juncture where the mestiza stands, is where phenomena tend to collide" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 101). This crossroads of cultures and competing discursive practices gives rise to mestiza subjectivity and a new (mestiza) consciousness which – although being "[sources] of intense pain," as the author admits –, simultaneously represent a "continual creative motion that keeps breaking down the unitary aspect of each new paradigm" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 102). In this regard, the queer mestiza is produced by the U.S.-Mexico border and, in the same degree, by the boundaries of dual Western categories, but is also never fully contained by them.

Anzaldúa's approach, although, as already mentioned, not totally explicit on the coined, Foucauldian notions of subjectivity formation and discursive influences (cf. Foucault 1978), lists the various discomforts of her situatedness in the interstices of Chicana/o and U.S. cultures as well as sexual categories, when she critically recognizes the discriminatory and possibly life-threatening risks her willed identity constructivism brings about: "Most societies try to get rid of their [homosexuals]. Most cultures have burned and beaten [those] who deviate from the sexual common. The queer are the mirror reflecting the heterosexual tribe's fear: being different, being other and therefore lesser, therefore sub-human, in-human, non-human" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 40). In a similar way, Anzaldúa reflects on the epistemological limitations in enunciating one's subjectivity as she is a subject to discourses she enumerates as whiteness, Catholicism, Mexicanness, indigenousness and the (supposedly natural and essentialized) instincts (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 41) which all circumscribe her "path of knowledge" and cause her to "continually slip in and out" of such available discourses (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 41). Once again, her grasp of the discursive and epistemological complexities that both give her voice and silence her in different contexts and locations can be read against Foucault's elucidation of discourse as he states:

> Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it (Foucault 1978: 100-101).

Anzaldúa's above continual slipping in and out of various dis/comfort zones and discourses related to her upbringing, socialization, family, home and the Chicana/o nation thus manifests itself as a symptomatic aspect of the hybridity inherent in her being a Chicana, a borderland subject and a queer.

All these identifications facilitate the writer's rearticulation of the nationalist notions of Chicana/o identity in general, or the homeland of Aztlán in particular, both of which, as already implied, she seeks to reinvent as an ideally inclusive, non-discriminatory and welcoming alliance, for only such an approach corresponds with the non-binary, multilayered, and complex character of Chicana/o existence. In other words, perusing Anzaldúa's perspective, all othering practices conducted internally *within* and *by* the

Chicana/o community as declared in its nationalist, androcentric, and heteronormative rhetoric represent a form of violence the people performs on its own bodies and minds and may be perceived as the nation's misinterpretation and misconception of its own multiple origins. Thus, to feel at home in her culture in an attempt to make it "evolve into something better", Anzaldúa launches her critical attacks against the nation's "intimate terrorism" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 41, 42) aimed both at women and the queer.

3.4 Complicating Home and Nation: Tribal Alliances

The author aptly relates the difficulties her lesbianism constitutes for the institutions of Chicana/o family and nation that – conditioned by the above listed divisive discourses – complicate the acceptance or recognition of the community's others into the national body: a university student of Anzaldúa's once totally misreads the term homophobia as a fear of going home and not being taken in after a long time spent away (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 42). The student's error concerns both the etymology and the meaning of the word homophobia; most significantly, however, it utterly obfuscates the sexual connotations and heterosexism usually conveyed by the miscomprehended term and thus lets Anzaldúa shift her readers' attention away from the identity that causes heterosexual uneasiness and direct it to the concept of home in terms of kinship as well as – in the broader sense – culture, community, or homeland. In fact, later on in her notes, Anzaldúa defines home as "comfort zones, both personal and cultural" (Anzaldúa 2015: 67). In this manner, the writer targets the rigidity of Chicana/o social organization in order to expand the content of what being a Chicana/o means not because she wants to shatter Chicana/o significance and undermine her people's political struggle, but because she feels a genuine love for her origins and home that "permeates every sinew and cartilage in [her] body" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 43) and because – in correspondence with her belief in betterment achieved through accepting ambiguity – she has a vision of a hybrid, inclusive Aztlán as "a community of those previously excluded" (Jacobs 2006: 146).[23]

[23] By no means is Anzaldúa the only Chicana writer expressing a desire at a reformed understanding of Aztlán that would do away with the criticized limitations of *El Movimiento's* nationalist ideology. Cherríe Moraga, too, ponders options for constructing a new nationalism that would achieve revolutionary ends and, equally with Anzaldúa, employs queer identity and racialized femininity as a litmus paper for testing the inclusiveness and tolerance of the envisioned new community. Specifically, Moraga calls her new nation "Queer Aztlán" in an eponymous essay in which she outlines the reformed Aztlán as a "decolonized space." To Moraga, "Queer Aztlán" represents a "Chicano homeland that would embrace *all* its people, including its jotería (queer folk)" (Moraga 1993: 147; emphasis hers). Also, in the essay Moraga elaborates on her feminism-informed idea of nationalism which she, in a great detail, contextualizes with the legacy of the

Yet, Anzaldúa herself admits, she, too, is afraid of the literal going home, of being abandoned by her culture for being unacceptable and inconvenient/inconveniencing. She acknowledges that her otherness and forged epistemological self-development always sets her apart because her "being at home is accompanied by a simultaneous and uncomfortable feeling of no longer fitting"[24] (Anzaldúa 1990b: 218). As a queer mestiza, Anzaldúa argues, she is "mobile" and able to relate to various worlds and their distinct inhabitants, but none of these worlds is an actual "home" to her, yet none of them "not home" either (Anzaldúa 1990b: 218). The mobility she foregrounds is not merely carried out in the form of travel or the undisturbed passing through the border fence to the Mexican side in San Diego's Border Field Park as portrayed earlier. Most importantly, the mobility she has in mind lies in the hybrid, *mestizaje* ability to comprehend, relate to, and recognize difference (as long as it is not manipulatively employed in legitimizing discrimination). Nevertheless, in the writer's immediate surroundings, this hybridity or tolerance for ambiguity as Anzaldúa calls it (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 101) comes at a cost for both, herself and her relatives as relationships may grow sour and turn painful:

> My mother, and my sister and my brothers, are going to continue to challenge me and to argue against the part of me that has community with white

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Chicana/o Movement and the relationships between lesbian Chicanas and gay Chicanos as well as with the values nationalism ascribed to Chicana/o family. I quote at length here on her conception of nationalism:

> Chicanos are an occupied nation within a nation, and women and women's sexuality are occupied within Chicano nation. If women's bodies and those of men and women who transgress their gender roles have been historically regarded as territories to be conquered, they are also territories to be liberated. Feminism has taught us this. The nationalism I seek is one that decolonizes the brown and female body […] It is a nationalism in which la Chicana Indígena stands at the center, and heterosexism and homophobia are no longer the cultural order of the day. I cling to the word "nation" because without the specific naming of the nation, the nation will be lost (as when feminism is reduced to humanism, the woman is subsumed). Let us retain our radical naming but expand it to meet a broader and wiser revolution" (Moraga 1993: 150)

[24] Anzaldúa's views of herself as other, abnormal, and not fitting are grounded in her embodiment and her experiencing constant pain throughout her life because of her ailing body. Since birth, Anzaldúa suffered from hormonal imbalance that caused an extremely early onslaught of menses. She started menstruating when she was only three months old, a condition accompanied by high fevers and severe illness that she faced throughout her childhood years. Further, the hormonal condition resulted in her body going through puberty at the age of seven and subsequently led to hysterectomy (Anzaldúa 2009: 38-40). Besides these health issues, Anzaldúa struggled with diabetes, insomnia, chronic pains and other maladies. Her ailments prevented her from participating fully in her family's life, but the separation meant she had plenty of time on her hands that she dedicated to reading, an activity utterly unusual in her family and community. Thus, not only was she different because of her premature onset of menstruation and hormonally altered body, but she was also othered because of her intellectual interests. Such experiences shaped Anzaldúa as a person, as an author, and as a theorist.

Exploring the issue of Anzaldúa's health and its impact on her epistemology, spirituality, and being in the world is, unfortunately, beyond the possibilities this doctoral thesis permits. However, this context helps explain Anzaldúa's frequent references to both mental and physical pain and her being counted as a representative of new materialism (cf. Keating 2015; Bost 2010).

> lesbians, that has community with feminism, that has community with other *mujeres-de-color* […]. Because I no longer share their world view, I have become a stranger and an exile in my own home. […] After I first left home and became acquainted with other worlds, the [person] that returned was different, thus "home" was different too. […] Though I continue to go home, I no longer fool myself into believing that I am truly "home" (Anzaldúa 1990b: 218).

Despite this angst, nonetheless, Anzaldúa's dedication to thorough introspection and honesty about one's self and culture demonstrated by her stubborn insistence on self-reflexivity, situatedness, and contextualization remains the primary goal in negotiating her true, queer and mestiza Self. Yet, the possible perils her radical demands for political change in Chicana/o culture may entail for her as an individual get once again in Foucauldian terms reassessed as loci of productive resistance, and not as hampering, restrictive curbs. Such awareness emboldens Anzaldúa to declare: "[I]f going home is denied me then I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture – *una cultura mestiza* – with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 44). As already hinted at, the individual and the collective merge here: while the author herself may be deprived of home due to her sexual identity and overall epistemological strangeness, she envisions a collective project – a new, hybrid culture that does not cast out those who do not fit in. This aspect is, again, vital for her rewriting of the Chicana/o homeland and nation; had the author focused merely on chiseling out a single home of her own, her criticism of the heterosexist nationalist discourse in general could hardly have been justified.

In this regard, the valorization of mestiza/o identity and queerness serves to disrupt the masculine-coded nationalist rhetoric and offers a more democratic alternative – a liminal or interstitial space of Aztlán *sin fronteras* (without borders). What matters in Anzaldúa's conception of the homeland is not the mere overcoming of or disposing of borders; rather it is the emphasis put on liminality and interstitiality, or more precisely, it is the recognition of the ambivalences that are brought about by the (present or historical) existence of borders that leave an imprint not only on the landscape, but also the mind. In other words, Anzaldúa's Aztlán implies a consciousness that acknowledges collectivity and community, but not necessarily in geographically and racially conditioned nationalist terms, a feature

that that distinguishes her perspective from those of Ashcroft and Anaya analyzed in the previous chapter. To paraphrase McRuer, Anzaldúa avoids fixing a new Chicana/o nation and/or nationalism by rigorously querying either of the concepts.

In fact, shortly after the publication of *Borderlands/La Frontera – The New Mestiza,* precisely in 1991, Anzaldúa started formulating the notion of "new tribalism," an innovative alternative to nationalism as it is traditionally conceived of in terms of western thought and academia. While the concept is explored in a number of Anzaldúa's essays and notes, it never really constitutes the major topic of these writings; rather new tribalism seeps through her writing and theorizing continually. I would even argue, that its notion, or at least the idea it advances, tacitly permeates *Borderlands/La Frontera* and even her early co-edited, multi-authored anthology *This Bridge Called My Back* (Anzaldúa and Moraga: [1981] 1983), that has, in essence, become a collective, women's-of-color achievement. Although these books do not explicitly mention new tribalism, their purpose and the argument they propound, lies in Anzaldúa's activist and political persuasion that empowerment, emancipation, and self-determination need to be fought for simultaneously on both individual and collective levels thereby altering identities and epistemologies of the individual subject as well as the collective. In other words, the concept of new tribalism helps Anzaldúa, over the years,[25] develop and expand at a greater length her call for alliance building, an activist stance which I explore in a greater detail further below.

[25] In an 2002 email response later developed into an essay titled "Speaking across the Divide" published in a 2003 issue of *Studies in American Indian Literatures* and reprinted in 2009 in *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader* – a version of the text I am using here – Anzaldúa explains that she borrowed the term new tribalism from David Rieff in 1991 (Anzaldúa 2009: 283). The same is reiterated in "Geographies of the Selves – Reimagining Identity," the fourth chapter of 2015 *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo oscuro* (Anzaldúa 2015: 232, 215).

AnaLouise Keating, an editor of Anzaldúa's latest writings included in this book, shows that the coinage of new tribalism was many times modified since Anzaldúa repeatedly redrafted and rewrote her texts; in fact frequently a number of versions of the same text co-exist. The editor documents in *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo oscuro* that an electronic file containing the information on Anzaldúa's appropriation of the term as conveyed in "Geographies of the Selves – Reimagining Identity," was last saved on March 23, 2003 (Anzaldúa 2015: 230). At the same time, Keating points out that as late as April 2, 2004, i.e. slightly over a month before Anzaldúa's passing, the writer made changes to a file in her computer where she again engages the concept. I include this brief chronology here as an evidence that new tribalism (as well as other concepts invented and employed by Anzaldúa) was, first, undergoing constant redefinition and rearticulation for more than two decades which, second, exemplifies exactly what Anzaldúa was pointing to throughout her writing and activist career: identities and their formulations are processual and constantly in the making, never fixed.

Besides the example of new tribalism, such fixity is also evaded in the case of *Borderlands/La Frontera*. I perused, for instance, about five different versions of selected chapters from the book in the extensive archive of Gloria Evangelina Anzaldúa Papers in the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection at the University of Texas at Austin in spring 2008.

In *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo oscuro*, new tribalism employs a vocabulary that is reflective of the earth's ecosystems which points to mutuality and interconnectedness of all living phenomena, and because of the shared parallels, it references Deleuze and Guattari's structural model of the rhizome (Anzaldúa 2015: 67-68). Taking up the deleuzian concept, AnaLouise Keating, Anzaldúa's editor and a close friend, defines new tribalism as a "rhizomatic theory of affinity-based identities" (Keating 2015: xxv). For the author herself, it presents an option nationalism in its pressure on either assimilation or separation (exclusion) forecloses. In other words, new tribalism critiques conservative approaches to collective identity and narrowly-defined nationalism. It challenges conventional concepts of identity and racialized, sexed and gendered social categories, but does not reject them in their entirety, thereby making and intervention into current debates about postnationalism.

According to Anzaldúa, new tribalism means "being part of but never subsumed by a group, never losing individuality to the group nor losing the group to the individual. [It] is about working together to create new "stories" of identity and culture, to envision diverse futures" (Anzaldúa 2015: 85). The latest and perhaps the most pertinent and sophisticated delineation of the theory is contained in an archival word document Anzaldúa sketched out six weeks before her untimely death in 2004. Included in *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo oscuro*, it reads: "The new tribalism disrupts categorical and ethnocentric forms of nationalism. By problematizing the concepts of who's us and who's other, […] the new tribalism seeks to revise the notion of "otherness" and the story of identity. The new tribalism rewrites cultural inscriptions, facilitating our ability to forge alliances with other groups" (Anzaldúa in Keating 2015: xxv).

The relationship between the individual and the collective that drives Anzaldúa's rumination about new tribalism informs her work throughout her writing career. Her critical taking up of the term was, however, triggered by policy analyst David Rieff's criticism of *Borderlands/La Frontera* who found her mestiza consciousness and the identity forging discourse to be exploiting romanticized versions of indigeneity. Anzaldúa explains, that she "appropriated" and "recycled" the term new tribalism from Rieff so that she can articulate other approaches to identity, especially such an identity that is even more expanded than the one communicated in her masterpiece book and definitely more encompassing and non-binary than established conceptions of nationalism (Anzaldúa 2015: 215). I quote Anzaldúa at length on her motivations:

> [It's] not enough for me to be a Chicana or an Indian; it's not enough for anyone to base their identity on race, gender, class, sexuality, or any of the traditional categories. All of us have multiple identities. Besides *lo indio*, *el mestizaje* that I'm comprised of includes the biological mixtures of Basque, Spanish, Berber Arab, and the cultural mix of various cultures of color and various white cultures. I call this expanded identity "the new tribalism." […] David Rieff […] criticizes me for being "a professional Aztec" and for what he sees as my naive and nostalgic return to indigenous roots. He takes me to task for my "romantic vision" in *Borderlands I La Frontera*, and claims that Americans should think a little less about race and a little more about class. I use the term "new tribalism" to formulate a more inclusive identity, one that's based on many features and not solely on race. In order to maintain its privileges the dominant culture has imposed identities through racial and ethnic classification. The new tribalism disrupts this imposition by challenging these categories. The new tribalism is a social identity that could motivate subordinated communities to work together in coalition.

The refusal of Anzaldúa's new tribalism to establish national(ist) kinship solely on race and/or on shared genetic pools (and geographical or linguistic closeness as some nationalist models do as well) resists customary nationalisms' conformity with essentialism. By contrast, both Anzaldúa's expansion of social categories and the simultaneous critique of their insufficiency points to the author's conception of a collective/coalition/alliance/community or a nation – with an altered sense of the last word – in constructivist, inclusive terms.

Thus her theory of home/land and mestiza/o existence in *Borderlands/La Frontera – The New Mestiza*[26] moves from the national, physical homeland of Aztlán to a new, hybrid and

[26] The composition of *Borderlands/La Frontera – The New Mestiza* is plotted to accord the theoretical elaboration and epistemological development of mestiza consciousness discussed in this doctoral thesis predominantly in the chapter "Elastic, Yet Unyielding." Anzaldúa's first chapter "The Homeland, Aztlán/*El otro México*" that serves as a point of departure from the physical homeland to the notion of borderlands, is followed by "*Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan*" which already deals with the individual and collective aspects of one's paradigmatic conscious choices regarding their identity.

Generally, the ensuing four chapters delve more into the intersection of Anzaldúa's psyche and her reinterpretation of mythical female figures and indigenous goddesses while also highlighting Chicana/o linguistic hybridism and the author's own form of writing and employing language as a tool in enunciating mestiza consciousness. The prose section of the book concludes with the summation and eloquent explication of the concept.

flexible awareness that executes a capacity for doing away with the duality-burdened category of nation (McRuer 1997: 145). Unlike Rudolfo Anaya's "homeland without boundaries" (Anaya 1989: 241) or Ashcroft's transnation mentioned earlier that could both be read as partially gender-blind conceptualizations of the Chicana/o nation or as a Western, markedly affirmative projection of borderland subjects' ingenuity in terms of their inventing flexible notions of a body politic (cf. Ashcroft 2009: 14, 19, 27), Anzaldúa deserts the nation(alist) sentiments. For one thing, it is because she is concerned about the material conditions of the said community, for another, she cautions against the dangers nationalist categories themselves pose within the androcentric and capitalist world. Anzaldúa thus appeals to one's mental work, introspection, and self-reflexivity in order to carve out a community and build bridges, rather than to ready-made, traditional discourses that provide epistemological comfort and/or certainty. Anzaldúa's evasion of conventional nationalist notions is reflective of her take on hybridity as it demonstrates that both discourses of identity and identities themselves, individual as well as collective, are perpetually shifting and therefore beyond a firm grasp; they can only exist in the processual making. Thus the queer, mestiza consciousness as well as the author's reconceptualization of Aztlán are far from offering a comfort zone of a stable meaning or a stasis of signification. They embody a state of constant becoming and reworking of one's Self in terms of negotiating the historical

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More specifically, the third chapter in correspondence with its title "Entering into the Serpent" manifests the use of serpentine imagery and the symbolism a serpent bore in the Aztec culture. Anzaldúa employs ancient Aztec deities and symbols to deconstruct the present Catholic image of La Virgen de Guadalupe thereby defying the cultural tyranny of the colonizer. I relate the issue in the chapter of this doctoral thesis titled "A Trio Against Dualism: Postcolonial Re/Interpretation of Hybrid Representations of Chicana Femininity". "*La herencia de* Coatlicue/The Coatlicue State," the next chapter, elaborates on Coatlicue, another female figure inspiration for reinventing Chicana femininity and mestiza consciousness by extension. Coatlicue was an ancient Aztec goddess of birth and death: an embodiment of contradictions and integrations of symbols of Aztec spirituality. According to Anzaldúa, Coatlicue triggers a rupture in the binarisms of Western thought. By doing so it helps construct a new optics that does not discriminate against antinomies which have been united in one's multiple, hybrid identity. The following chapter "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" portrays the evolution of the Chicana/o language – a variety of mixtures of Spanish, English and sometimes Nahuatl – and repeatedly records the writer's refusal to remain silent while knowing her language and herself are not adequate members of the dominant culture or as Yarbro-Bejarano says: "Anzaldúa is both inappropriate according to the dominant norm and inappropriated by it" (Yarbro-Bejarano 1998: 25). "*Tlilli, Tlapalli*/The Path of the Red and Black Ink" is another chapter which shows language as a fundamental constituent of identity. Here, Anzaldúa explores the transformative character of writing and the life which a written word is infused with; the form and the content are merged. Finally, the seventh chapter *La conciencia de la mestiza*/Towards a New Consciousness exposes Anzaldúa's opposition to the established practices of thought and her writing process represents an enactment of mestiza consciousness that provides space for the subjects rendered mute and invisible by the dominant society and/or the hegemonic practices of Cartesian reasoning. Mestiza consciousness grows from the personal awareness of multiple subjectivity and appeals to collective action. According to Yarbro-Bejarano, the concept "not only contributes to the development of a new paradigm for theorizing difference but also addresses aspects of identity formation for which theories of subjectivity alone are unable to account" (Yarbro-Bejarano 1998: 18). I provide a minute discussion of mestiza consciousness in chapter 4 "Elastic, Yet Unyielding."

and social separations, and disavowals the border region perpetuates, while having to work with others on creating a collective identity.

As I show in the chapter "Elastic, Yet Unyielding," Anzaldúa's project of mestiza consciousness develops from the individual level to the collective one. The author's approach to Aztlán, Chicana/o community as well as, for example, women-of-color feminism and women's movement in general, in a way follows an identical route. An accent is always put on commonly shared, critical and reflective cooperation and alliance building since this activist and political aspect, as Anzaldúa views it, leads to social change and helps detect and counter oppressive relations of power. In an essay whose title "Bridge, Drawbridge, Sandbar or Island" (Anzaldúa 1990b) is akin to *Borderlands/La Frontera* for it elicits imagery of geographical locations associated with division, isolation as well as connection and shifting, she marks the importance of collective action: "*coalition work attempts to balance power relations and undermine and subvert the system of domination-subordination* that affects even our most unconscious thoughts" (Anzaldúa 1990b: 224-225; emphasis hers). At the same time she concedes the difficulties inherent to identity politics; joint cooperation entails complex negotiation of internal differences, i.e. a critical recognition of the inner heterogeneity of any given collective:

> Alliance work is the attempt to shift positions, change positions, reposition ourselves regarding our individual and collective identities. In alliance we are confronted with the problem of how we share or don't share space, how we can position ourselves with individuals or groups who are different from and at odds with each other, how we can reconcile one's love for diverse groups when members of these groups do not love each other, cannot relate to each other, and don't know how to work together" (Anzaldúa 1990b: 219).

Although quite general in wording, Anzaldúa's essay continues to target the internal discrepancies within minorities/oppressed groups which she claims affinity with. Cognizant of the vital role played by intersectionality in this regard, she critiques white lesbians for their "unconsciously rank[ing] racism a lesser oppression than sexism," or feels empathy with men-of-color and their struggle against racist emasculation by white masculinity only to be "saddened that they [need] to be educated about women-only space." No less significant is her appeal to her family to scrutinize their antifeminism and, finally, a call to the whole Chicana/o nation to sift through its "heterosexist bullshit" and exclusionary

rhetoric (Anzaldúa 1990b: 218, 219). By such a *cri de coeur* Anzaldúa once again points out the fact, that Chicana/o nationalism *internally* replicates and perpetuates exactly those kinds of ostracism, discrimination, and othering of its own members who "go through the confines of the 'normal,'" which all Chicanas/os are subjected to *externally* by the U.S. majority society (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25).

The exposure of this internal conflict helps Anzaldúa reclaim Chicana/o nation and Aztlán not only as inclusive and fluid, but as a community with an alliance-forging potential; as Peréz-Torres remarks, Chicanas/os now "come to be seen as transfiguring themselves – moving between the worlds of indigenous and European, of American and Mexican, of self and other" (Peréz-Torres 1995: 96). Being both an activist and a writer, Anzaldúa theorizes the issue of conflicts and friction in the course of the communal transfiguration both *within* and *beyond* alliances, communities, or tribes by adopting rich, figurative, symbolic language, which – redolent of the multilayered use of border and borderlands in *Borderlands/La Frontera* – again exposes the fundamental interconnectedness of a geographical location, its historical and cultural specificity and one's epistemology reflective of one's positionality. While I view the concepts of border, borderlands, and the aforementioned crossroads highlighted by Butler in *Bodies That Matter* (Butler 1993: 124) as the climax in Anzaldúa's conjoining literary imagery and political and activist thought, also the metaphors of bridge, drawbridge, sandbar, and island from the eponymous essay speak volumes about the author's drive to fashion a space for communication, acting, and interacting *within* a nation or alliance and *with* an outreach beyond Aztlán to other communities, especially the white U.S. society (Anzaldúa 1990b).

To Anzaldúa, being a bridge means constant mediating that entails navigating dichotomies, dualities and contradictions and attaining a flexible mind; a bridge symbolizes "a boundary between the world [one has] just left and the one ahead" (Anzaldúa 1990b: 223, Anzaldúa 2015: 137). In other words, a bridge may come to represent a point of transformation where the "world ahead" is a vision for a non-exclusionary future. Actually, the notion of a bridge literally *bridges* the concepts of border, borderlands, and crossroads as epitomized in the writer's poem "To live in the Borderlands means you" dissected bellow. Since a bridge connotes a resistance to separation and splitting –, similarly as Butler's nexus where the subject comes to being or Anzaldúa's crossroads where the "possibility of uniting all that is separate" occurs –, it approximates hybridity and mestiza existence (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999:

101). Concurrently, a bridge inherently implicates building of alliances, for, as McRuer notes, "attempts to separate absolutely […] fail, since bridges are always already conjoined to borders" (McRuer 1997: 144). Or opposite banks and shores, I should add.

A drawbridge, on the other hand, permits temporary withdrawal from mediation with others by "pulling up" thereby offering a recluse and avoiding the possible risks that "being down", being a bridge may imply. Anzaldúa, as she repeatedly does with her political appeals for the recognition of difference, once again removes coalition building from utopian spheres by de-romanticizing the activist work and pointing out the difficulties it poses: "You [have to] maintain your ground, or the pull in different directions will dismember you. […] Being "there" for people all the time […] means risking being "walked" on, being "used"" (Anzaldúa 1990b: 223). This awareness of the problems pertaining to political struggle can be read as the author's critical expression of her own activist experience when there were moments she felt appropriated, tokenized, misrepresented, or commodified by those, she was trying to reach out to and develop an equal cooperation with.[27]

Nevertheless, another notion, that of an island which isolates one from external pressures, does not necessarily testify to activist failures, but rather to the social conditions, such as the "disgust with patriarchal culture" that drive "some women-of-color […] to be islands for a little while" (Anzaldúa 1990b: 223). Of vital importance here is the fact, that the author addresses the temporary, provisional character of the insular abode: provided the inequalities in social strata straighten, a new mode of mediation may take place. Fluidity and contextual specificities permeate these activist metaphors. In fact, Anzaldúa's introduction of the sandbar as a shifting position mirrors the impossibility of fixity in the coalition work – no matter which role of the four one espouses – as well as in living in the borderlands. She writes:

[27] Besides the already discussed Chicano heterosexism and androcentrism she is a target of, Anzaldúa also provides an explicit example of an ill-treatment she, as a woman-of-color, encountered from white feminists: "I and my publishing credentials are often "used" to "colorize" white women's grant proposals, projects, lecture series, and conferences. If I don't cooperate I am letting the whole feminist movement down" (Anzaldúa 1990b: 223). This is, by all means, a complicated instance. It is illustrative of tokenism that underscores Anzaldúa's racial difference by exploiting it for the purposes of others. In other words, her racial identity serves to empower (or benefit) other women – especially white middle class ones –, but Anzaldúa herself. Sadly, this occurs within a feminist community that is sensitive (or should be sensitive) to relations of power whose adverse effects need to be acknowledged and, if possible, mitigated. Concurrently, the example conveys the tensions within feminism in regards to intersectionality and multiple forms of oppression that target various women of various backgrounds in various ways, which may be disregarded by white, middle class feminists due to their being unconscious of their racial and class privilege and vantage point.

> The high tides and low tides of your life are factors which help decide whether or where you're a sandbar today, tomorrow. It means that your functioning as a "bridge" may be partially underwater, invisible to others, and that you can somehow choose who to allow to "see" your bridge, […] who you'll make connections with. A sandbar is more fluid and shifts locations, allowing for more mobility and more freedom. Of course there are sandbars called shoals, where boats run amuck. Each option comes with its own dangers" (Anzaldúa 1990b: 224).

Although out of the four concepts – bridge, drawbridge, sandbar, island – Anzaldúa does not incorporate the latter three in her writing beyond the said essay on alliance forging and replaces them with other terms, such as nepantla – an expression for liminal, hybrid position on the threshold that comprises cultural multiplicities and spiritual and psychic dimensions as yet another mode of epistemological perspective – the geographical concepts are informative of the contextual rootedness combined with flexibility and contradictoriness of Chicana/o experience as conveyed by Anzaldúa throughout her literary and political work. No exception is the poem "To live in the Borderlands means you."

3.5 On Being a Crossroads

Besides theoretical analysis of Anzaldúa's fluid reconfiguration of Aztlán and her criticism of Chicana/o stance on nationalism and heterosexism, I have, in this chapter, also offered a close reading of the author's poem set in San Diego's Border Field Park that conveys the traumatic feelings of a divided landmass and separated cultures. Inserted at the very beginning of *Borderlands/La Frontera*, the poem instantly puts forward the topicality of the concept of the border, which – although an arbitrary cultural construction undeserving of Anzaldúa's respect – largely informs Chicana/o existence and identity. The significance of the complex scenes situated at the very San Diego/Tijuana divide that mediate hybridity as well as confusion, are constantly invoked throughout the book. Close to its conclusion, the persistence of hybridity and ambiguity is further developed in the poem "To live in the Borderlands means you." This poetic couple thus creates a framework that employs poetry as a tool for rendering Anzaldúa's radical, feminist theorizing which is otherwise in the book as well as in other Anzaldúa's writings communicated in prose, essayistic style, *autohistorías*, and short vignettes. Thus, the poetic genre, choice of vocabulary and intermingling of Spanish and English illustrate for one thing the (already mentioned)

complementarity and concord of form and content, and for another, the author's dedication to inventing and implementing a theory that is tailored to address Chicana/o situation and is delivered in a manner that suits the hybrid, non-binary epistemology of borderland subjects.

If I claim in the "Border and Genre" subsection of Chapter 4 "Elastic, Yes Unyielding" that the poem of colonial victimization, land dispossession, and gender violence "We Call Them Greasers" can be interpreted as a piece of theory for it attests to Anzaldúa's profound awareness of structural inequalities social consequences of which the poetic narrative explores, I remain consistent in my argument also in regards to the two aforementioned pieces of poetry. As Anzaldúa argues in *Making Face, Making Soul: Haciendo Caras* (Anzaldúa 1990a), dominant modes of theorizing – both in terms of subject matter and style in which theory is delivered – correspond with Western, academic perceptions of the social reality and therefore do not necessarily tackle fully issues pertaining to ethnic, cultural and other minorities. In other words, the author calls for a heterogeneity in theoretical approaches and their practical application in the daily, lived experience, as well as for the hybridization of styles and methods in which theories are presented and proposed.

She writes: "[Theorists-of-color] are articulating new positions in these "in-between," Borderlands worlds […] In our literature, social issues […] are intertwined with the narrative and poetic elements of a text, elements in which theory is embedded. In our *mestizaje* theories we create new categories for those of us left out or pushed out of the existing ones" (Anzaldúa 1990a: xxv-xxvi). "To live in the Borderlands means you" thus reflects Anzaldúa's theorizing of the mestiza, Chicana subjectivity and, by extension, provides a blueprint for a broader conception of Aztlán as a borderland. She no longer sees Aztlán as a static, historical location in which the mythical homeland is set, but as a dynamic, interstitial border region, where events take place and contradictions are interrogated; Aztlán is viewed as a borderland or a nondiscriminatory cultural crossroads – a point of permanent movement and constant flow – where difference is embraced. Thus, Anzaldúa's conception of an inclusive, encompassing Aztlán functions as a manifestation of the collective and the communal, whereas mestiza identity in an analogous way exemplifies the individual level of negotiating ambivalence and difference. Anzaldúa's reshaping of Aztlán is therefore empowering for it permits the assumption of various subject positions, especially those formerly proscribed by the discourse of Chicana/o nationalism. Or as a Chicano literary critic Rafael Peréz-Torres eloquently sums up the aims of the author's

conception of Aztlán and her attempt to bring the individual and collective together, "[the] refusal to be delimited, while simultaneously claiming numerous heritages and influences, allows for a rearticulation of the relationship between self and society, self and history, self and land" (Peréz-Torres 1995: 96). Also, drawing on Cooper Alarcón's and Peréz-Torres' emphasis put on heterogeneity of the Chicana/o community and its varied understanding of Aztlán described in the previous chapter, it is possible to say that the theoreticians' focus on diversity fully corresponds with Anzaldúa's push for inclusiveness; her approach inherently discerns that the social and cultural inhomogeneity need to be explicitly addressed.

Moreover, according to him, "the transformation of "Aztlán" from homeland to borderland signifies an opening within [Chicana/o] cultural discourse. It marks a significant transformation away from the dream of origin toward an engagement with the construction of cultural identity" (Peréz-Torres 1995: 96). The theoretician, in other words, points to the radical departure from essentialism and nostalgic insistence on common roots and to the concurrent paradigmatic move towards constructivism. Even though this position is utterly representative of Anzaldúa's work and thought throughout and no less does it typify Chicana feminist theory and writing in general, the juxtaposition with the nationalist discourse (so adamantly appropriated by and exploited in Chicano men's canonical writing, as I note in Chapter 1, makes the differing paradigmatic approaches to national identity more salient.

While Anzaldúa embraces the U.S.-Mexico border as an "open wound" in the opening poem of *Borderlands/La Frontera – The New Mestiza*, calls the demarcation line her "home," and addresses the internalized pain of othering practices symbolized by the steel "Tortilla Curtain," (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 24), the poem "To live in the Borderlands means you" illustrates coping strategies or modes of survival in navigating borderland characteristics. In brief, the titleless Border Field Park poem may be read as a lead-in, a description of the nuances faced by borderland subjects straddling the artificial divide or as a confession of hurt the divide elicits. By contrast, "To live in the Borderlands means you" suggests, upon listing the series of contradictory and (seemingly) irreconcilable positions, a method of handling dualities, or offers an advice, if not a direct solution.

The formal properties of the poem make shifts in syntactical meaning possible as Peréz-Torres observes (Peréz-Torres1995: 94). The title serves simultaneously as the first line of the poem which heralds transgression of both the physical border and social boundaries, i.e.

motifs the piece intimately explores. Most importantly, however, the "you" in the title may represent an addressee of the poem, but at the same time the addressee gets conflated with the Borderlands it refers to. The merging of separate, individual aspects in the title and the poem itself is representative of the hybridity inherent to the borderlands which is, actually, the fact the poem aims to communicate. The text performs exactly what it tries to convey; Anzaldúa's writing thus corresponds with her call for an enunciation of theory that suits the particular needs of a given context as I have related above.

In terms of content, Anzaldúa throughout the whole poem aptly diagnoses the antagonistic pulls a borderland subject faces in regards to his/her gender, race, culture, and situatedness:

> To live in the Borderlands means you
>
> are neither *hispana india negra española*
> *ni gabacha, eres mestiza, mulata*, half-breed
> caught in the crossfire between camps
> while carrying all five races on your back
> not knowing which side to turn to, run from;
>
> To live in the Borderlands means knowing […]
>
> that denying the Anglo inside you
> is as bad as having denied the Indian or Black;
>
> *Cuando vives en la frontera*
>
> people walk through you, the wind steals your voice,
> you're a *burra, buey*, scapegoat,
> forerunner of a new race,
> half and half – both woman and man, neither –
> a new gender […] (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 216).

The liminal condition of multiracial identity that confirms colonial desires, but rubs against the (unattainable and racist) ideal of racial purity places the mestiza at a center of warfare over belonging that, at this point in the poem, seems to lack a solution. Rather, identity emerges from the multiple mixtures of various forms of belonging: racial, linguistic, cultural etc. that are antithetical. Although it poses a genuine challenge to her identity which may seem to coerce the mestiza to turn against herself a incite self-hatred, acknowledging the significance of the background that the she shares with her oppressor, the Anglo, as related in the second stanza, is a key factor in Anzaldúa's identity politics. Not only does she

expand the concept of a woman-of-color by recognizing the mestiza's partial whiteness, she also subverts race as a concept of social construction *per se*. Concurrently, identifying the colonial and racial oppressor within empowers the mestiza against what Pierre Bourdieu coined as symbolic violence (Bourdieu 2001: 35). The acknowledgment resists the epistemological denial and incapacitation by uneven power relations Bourdieu's concept describes.

Further, the poem introduces gender as fluid; femininity and masculinity are not presented as extremities, but may shift along the gender continuum. This perspective inevitably opens a wider space for experiencing (rather than defining, therefore fixing) one's sexuality, a strategy obviously aimed at validating dissenting sexual relationships and desires of those who do not adapt to compulsory heterosexuality, such as Anzaldúa's queer mestiza. A subject's agency is vastly conditioned by language, discourse, and the capacity to speak and be heard (Gunew, Spivak 1986; Spivak 1988). Therefore the wind that steals one's voice in the third stanza can be read as a factor impeding such an agency. Since non-conforming identities are frequently silenced by dominant discourses – as exemplified by La Malinche in Chapter 5 "A Trio Against Dualism" where I quote Spivak, or as I have demonstrated in the analysis of mestiza's queerness by using Foucault – the borderland subject needs to acquire a voice and carve a discourse that sustains and nurtures the hybrid and liminal existence that embodies "the battleground / where enemies are kin to each other," where "you are at home [and] a stranger" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 216). In order to voice the complexities of what being a borderland subject entails, the poem actually forges a discourse of interstitiality. It "speaks" both English and Spanish in terms of form as the excerpt above confirms and at the same time, in terms of content, it explicitly shows that language choices (as well as culturally conditioned cuisine preferences) are contextually and socially informed:

> To live in the Borderlands means to
>
> put *chile* in the borscht
>
> eat whole wheat *tortillas*,
>
> speak Tex-Mex with a Brooklyn accent […] (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 216).

According to Peréz-Torres, "[the] poem's interlingual expression and evocation of interstitial spaces represents the power of transgression" (Peréz-Torres 1995: 95). I conceive of the discourse of interstitiality in a parallel manner: it embraces ambiguity and provides a platform for articulating borderland subjectivity. However, as Foucault reminds us and as Anzaldúa is well aware, discourses may fail to deliver which, in effect, testifies of the

constant negotiation of power relations (Foucault 1978: 100). An example of such a failure is contained in Pedro's story of deportation and misrecognition of his citizenship by Immigration and Naturalization Service officers as I relate earlier in this chapter.

In Pedro's case, the discourse of interstitiality by means of which he can make sense of his borderland subjectivity is overridden by a discourse that allows for practicing of racist prejudice by the immigration officers. In a similar manner, the discourse of interstitiality is undermined by the fact (arising from discourses of national security and anti-immigrant sentiments) that living in the borderlands means being repeatedly "stopped by *la migra* at the border checkpoints." This is a reality of a global scale which starkly clashes with Anzaldúa's views of seamless earth and sea and migrant people(s) who can neither be contained by a fence, nor stopped by a border, an image drawn by the initial Border Filed Park poem (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25). Once again, the writer demonstrates her knowledge that subjectivity is constantly in the making, has to be permanently negotiated and success and failure are effects of shifting power relations. Yet, having recounted in seven stanzas the various intricacies of living in the borderlands, such as the ones discussed, Anzaldúa then turns to a swift conclusion and provides a succinct climax to the borderland conundrum:

> To survive the Borderlands
>
> You must live *sin fronteras*
>
> be a crossroads (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 217).

The image of the crossroads, an evident interstitial space, deconstructs the duality produced by the U.S.-Mexico border and is accepting of the incompatibility of the multiple phenomena that are inherent to borderland subjectivity. In this regard, the conclusion of the poem seems to suggest a solution to and summation of the hybrid, borderland ambiguity in the very concept of the crossroads; in addition, the concept is also indicative of the extrication from the border's othering and discriminatory effects.

Moreover, an aspect of the poem that deserves attention lies in Anzaldúa's conscious avoidance of painting unrealistic vistas of an ultimate riddance concerning internalized historical traumas on the one hand, and of a simple acquiring of skills for living without borders, on the other. The development is gradual and possible only with an honest introspection and self-reflexivity that invites (self)doubts. I have already demonstrated that every dimension of Anzaldúan thought on *mestizaje*, liminality, and the Chicana/o lived experience is pervaded by a certain kind of prudence and moderation, possibly even an

epistemological caution and controlled skepticism. Bill Ashcroft, as mentioned earlier, recognizes this feature in Chicana/o writing as a detour from utopianism frequently vocalized in/by postcolonial representations that, unlike Chicanas/os, less stress contextual situatedness and positionality (Ashcroft 2009: 16-17). By the same token, Peréz-Torres also implicitly welcomes the poem's stance: "Not offering a vision of another land as the utopian hope for peace or justice, all the poem can offer is advice on how to negotiate through the ruptured terrain of the borderland" (Peréz-Torres 1995: 95-96). Although such moderation and continence could be viewed as insufficiently revolutionary and radical, I view it as an asset to Anzaldúa's theorizing. It demonstrates her ability to link theory, art, and dailiness of the lived experience; in short, it testifies of her activist concern for both the material as well as social reality of the borderland subjects and their imprint in artistic forms of representations.

CHAPTER 4

4. Elastic, Yet Unyielding: The U.S.-Mexico Border and Anzaldúa's Oppositional Rearticulations of the Frontier

Demarcation lines, separation lines, dividing lines, boundaries, frontiers, borders, and limits constitute some of the most productive concepts in Western thought. By highlighting difference, they give rise to power-laden categorizations based on binary oppositions and thus help to make reality knowable and imply that the knower has mastered control over the content of what is being known. These concepts, however, are at the same time elusive and problematic due to their capacity for rendering invisible and suppressing ambiguities and liminalities that occur in and/or along − to borrow Bhabha's term − the "in-between" spaces, which defy the clear-cut distinctions supplied by Western dualism (Bhabha 1994: 13, 22, 219). Within literary postcolonial/decolonial studies, cultural studies, and gender studies, it is these "grey zones" that attract attention as they are spaces where meanings and identities are constantly in the process of negotiation, becoming, and struggle for recognition.

The border functions as a sign that represents the region of U.S.-Mexico borderlands as a "contact zone" (Pratt 1992: 7-8), which symbolizes the ongoing and expediting alteration of American-ness. It is this region which is heavily identified with the browning of America[28] (although this phenomenon applies to the whole of the U.S. mainland) and it is this region where the founding myths of westward expansion and American exceptionalism get explicitly and strategically rewritten by borderland subjects: by Chicanos and Chicanas, but also by members of Native societies, and/or by (recent) migrants.

Also, the U.S.-Mexico border has long posed a security issue for the U.S. government since it is "both barrier and bridge to many transnational flows, including trade, migrants, and narcotics" (Ackleson 2005: 166). According to Corona and Domínguez-Ruvalcaba, there is a correlation between economic transformation or crisis in the borderland region and the increased incidence of recorded violent acts in the area (Corona and Domínguez-Ruvalcaba 2011: 2). U.S.-Mexico borderland violence, then, is linked to forces such as swelling cross-border migration and measures that target undocumented workers including extensive militarization and wall-building as well as the booming *maquiladora* factory system that is

[28] The concept of the "browning of America" points to the fact that the Hispanic/Latino population is the fastest-growing ethnic minority in the United States. According to the 2010 Census, it presently comprises over 16% of the overall U.S. population (see "Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin: 2010").

managed by multinational corporations using cheap Mexican and Latin American migrant labor. Moreover, the current radicalization of drug cartels and organized crime also contributes to an image of the border, widely circulating in the media, as a violent and dangerous place and its function as a topographic metaphor for various kinds of illegality, lawlessness, and impunity (Corona and Domínguez-Ruvalcaba 2011: 3, Gaspar de Alba and Guzmán 2010).

My anecdote conveyed in the prolog or the story of a mistaken deportation – not a completely coincidental occurrence in Chicana/o lived experience – which I discuss in the previous chapter, reveals the problematic nature of the demarcation line between Mexico and the United States. Also, the complexity of the U.S.-Mexico border communicated in the preceding paragraph is further magnified by the incomparable economic and social conditions of the two countries in the globalized context. The home of Chicanas/os, who in general have a strong attachment to land and who have emerged as a nation of farmers and croppers, has traditionally been an agrarian region and therefore has been relatively economically disadvantaged, used as a source of cheap manpower on both sides of the border fence. In this respect, economic inequity and social exclusion, according to Saldívar-Hull, do not have to be stereotypically tied to being a laboring migrant or a (Mexican) citizen here. Rather the marginalization arises from the cultural and historical disavowal of the region and from one's cultural or familial grounding in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands (Saldívar-Hull 2000: 2-9).

Anzaldúa's remarkable, yet underanalyzed poem "We Call Them Greasers" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 156-57), which I dissect in this chapter, makes a connection to Chicanas'/os' love for land and speaks volumes about the legacy of colonial dispossession and land expropriation that befell Chicanas'/os' 19th century farming foremothers and forefathers as the border came to existence. In contrast, Corona and Domínguez-Ruvalcaba's aforementioned summation of the current U.S.-Mexico border predicament relates the adverse results of globalized capitalism of the 20th and 21st centuries. Both, the colonial and the capitalist instances – which are mutually constitutive and often subsumed under the notion of imperialism (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 21, Loomba 2005: 9-10) – render the U.S.-Mexico borderlands as a challenge to U.S. national myths as well as to Western ideas of progress and democratic values of solidarity and humanity.

Throughout this chapter I accentuate the gendered characteristics of the colonial and capitalist system. Although the close reading of "We Call Them Greasers" – besides analyzing Anzaldúa's concept of mestiza consciousness – is the major focus of this chapter, allow me to digress momentarily. The digression draws a parallel between the poem's fictional, 19th century female protagonist's violent death preceded by extreme humiliation resulting from her racial and gender identity, and the current streak of brutal murders of migrant female *maquiladora* workers in Ciudad Juárez also anteceded by unexampled forms of mutilation, i.e. perhaps the most extreme manifestation of gender violence targeting women in the history of the Western hemisphere (cf. Gaspar de Alba and Guzmán 2010). The juxtaposition of Anzaldúa's poem and the Juárez murders in a unique manner showcases the relationship between reality and literature as a means of representation, and the pertinence of feminist, politically charged writing in contemporary androcentric and capitalist society. Also, "We Call Them Greasers" as well as the Juárez feminicides illustrate Paula Moya's insightful argument that identity and identity politics are predicated on a specific social context and that identity, due to this context, influences one's options and choices in life (Moya 2000: 7-8). In this perspective, existing forms of oppression emerge as a product of systemic abuse of power under established status quo. Land expropriation in Anzaldúa's poem and highly precarious labor at Juárez assembly lines, both coupled with killing, expose the consumption of racialized, classed, sexed and othered bodies within colonial and capitalist regimes thereby highlighting the significance of identity politics as a vital form of resistance where identity, but also mere life are at stake.

Towards the end of the millennium, Ciudad Juárez, the Mexican twin town to the U.S. border city of El Paso, Texas, became infamously known for the "longest epidemic of femicidal violence in modern history" (Gaspar de Alba and Guzmán 2010: 1). It is estimated that between 1993 and mid-2010 hundreds of female *maquiladora* employees found death in Ciudad Juárez and vicinity.[29] Besides the enormous number of slain females, what makes

[29] In Gaspar de Alba and Guzmán's edited volume *Making a Killing* that thoroughly engages the Juárez murder issue, the numbers of murdered women do not match in any of the essays included. As the editors state: „There has been no systematic accounting of the victims or accountability by the authorities, which results in only more confusion, more impunity for perpetrators, and less chance of resolution" (Gaspar de Alba and Guzmán 2010: 10). There is a general agreement, nevertheless, that official numbers are much lower than the actual number of women killed. The volume's essays provide a range between three and six hundred victims, yet according to some sources the statistics may have spiked as high as 1500.

Alicia Gaspar de Alba also wrote a harrowing novel inspired by the phenomenon of the murders titled *Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders* (Gaspar de Alba 2005b). I summarize the ways in which feminist research, by employing the analytical tool of femicide/feminicide, has been instrumental in raising awareness of the

the murders equally an unprecedented phenomenon, are the abhorrent ways in which the killings were executed as well as the dilapidated, abject places where the victims' corpses were later discovered. No less significant is also the context within which these feminicides continue taking place. Dynamic factors such as massive industrialization, globalization, gendered stratification of labor market and precarious work, former men's jobs going to women for lower salaries, lack of infrastructure, enormous inequalities between the north and south of the U.S.-Mexico border, as well as androcentric social system dictating strict gender roles, and the Mexican states' failure to promote safety in the streets and/or its production facilities, bring about neoliberal ideas of the worth of a human being. Or more explicitly – as Wright words it – the idea of disposability of unqualified female employees' bodies under capitalism and androcentrism in the borderlands is a systemic failure that puts women "on the road to waste" (Wright 2001: 562). The U.S.-Mexico border can thus be viewed as "the space where the fluctuating booms and downturns of the global, regional, formal, and underground economies and markets have a direct impact on such fundamental issues as the preservation and reproduction of human life" (Corona and Domínguez-Ruvalcaba 2011: 2). Such facts thus necessitate a critical insight into the potentially conflicting views of theory and practice, a feature, as already stated, representative of identity politics. At the U.S.-Mexico border identity politics may very well be directed to survival strategies. Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness, although it does not relate the Juárez extremes, is firmly situated in the region and is among such strategies.

4.1 Defying American National Myths

As implied above, the U.S.-Mexico border is also a demarcation line that in an unprecedented way resists the notion of a national border on a geographical as well as metaphorical level. It inherently stretches across the vastness of the United States as its existence penetrates and informs all aspects of American culture and institutions. Concurrently, it subverts the idea that regionalist literature, among which the literary production dealing with and written about and/or written in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands is often included in the context of U.S. literature, is inherently geography- and region-specific. While this certainly is true in how the U.S.-Mexico borderlands reality informs the literary

gendered violence on the border and in exposing the killings as a systemic failure, in "On Border and On Murder: Juárez Femi(ni)cides" (Jiroutová Kynčlová 2015).

representations relevant to the area, in this regard, as I argue further below, it does not *essentially* entail physical presence of the U.S. Southern border in the author's lived experience. Although this is not the case of Gloria Anzaldúa and most of the Chicana authors discussed in this doctoral thesis, as Aldama shows, the border is so ingrained in all aspects of American culture and minds of borderland subjects no matter whether they actually dwell on or cross both legally and illegally the border, that it bears heavily on how American identity in general and American minorities' identity in particular is constructed. The notion of the border, it seems, cannot be avoided once an American, Latino/a or Chicana/o deals with his/her Self (Aldama 1998).

The border can therefore be perceived as elastic in the way that it poses "a barrier and a zone of violence" for borderland subjects whose identities are readily stereotyped and othered because of their race, gender, and/or class on both material level as well as the level of cultural and political representation. The space they inhabit is discursively driven off to the margins. Materially, however, the border is unyielding, as borderland subjects' racialized and gendered bodies "continually [face] crossing the border… anywhere [they go] in the United States. […] This means that the [borderland subject] continually faces crossing the border even if s/he is in Chicago (or wherever in the United States) – a continual shifting from margin to margin" (Aldama 1998: 46). In other words, following Espiritu, "the border is everywhere" (Espiritu 2003: 211).

Borderland subjectivity is thus characterized by "in-betweenness that goes beyond the reifying effects of national identity" (Ashcroft 2009: 20) and in Chicana/o cultural and activist tradition is eloquently framed and performed by *mestizaje*, i.e., the art of living on the border (in every sense of the word), the ability to navigate in/between/among/within different cultures, languages, and epistemological systems, and to embody this hybridity consciously and constructively with respect to one's own racial/ethnic background, gender identity, class belonging, and reflected lived experience.

Exemplary rearticulations of the unifying narrative of the frontier that pushes the horizon and the limits of the American nation further West are forcefully portrayed in oppositional Chicana writing and Chicanas' counter-discursive practices. They are a form of resistance "that uses language of empire to contest the dominant ideologies of colonialism" (Madsen, 2003: 65). In this regard, U.S.-Mexico borderlands as a region is also the site where struggles for meaning and voice make their presence felt.

Anzaldúa's paradigmatic investigation of the border theme in *Borderlands/La Frontera* is, in what follows, positioned in the context of social structures that inform disparities in a symbolic valuation of difference. These disparities arise from cultural, racial, class, and gender(ed) affinities and therefore shape a viable alternative image of westward expansion that competes with established representations of American history and its foundational narratives. As evidenced by her poem "We Call Them Greasers" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 156-57),[30] Anzaldúa invents a new reading of the so-called civilizing mission in the border area. In this regard, her work partakes in struggles for a rightful representation of borderlands experience and subjectivity, which have had a long history of silence.

Although often included in American literature syllabi, the poem has not − to my knowledge − been frequently analyzed; Sonia Saldívar-Hull's and Deborah Madsen's readings are the only exceptions (Saldívar-Hull 2000, Madsen 2003). I therefore draw on the emphasis both authors put on Anzaldúa's portrayal of colonial violence as a form of subverting canonical images of Western progress and its cultivating enterprise. In addition, however, I offer a gender-sensitive analysis of "We Call Them Greasers" since, as Loomba reminds us, the structures of colonialism and patriarchy are thoroughly intertwined and bear on women as well as men (Loomba 2005: 195). I treat the poem as an example of a rendition of Anzaldúa's theory of mestiza consciousness, for the communication of theory does not, according to Anzaldúa, depend on the genre utilized. Thus, her mestiza consciousness, I argue, is an epistemology applicable for reconceptualizing difference which is performed both by the reflexive disruption of borders of social categories and by rupturing borders of genres and modes of expression traditionally adopted for the (re)articulation of one's Self and one's community. "We Call Them Greasers" fittingly illustrates this argument.

4.2 Border and Genre

I have argued in Chapter 1 that the androcentric Chicana/o Movement as well as the physical presence of the border that separates the prosperity of the United States of America from the poverty of Mexico have fostered a sensitivity to diversity, difference, and otherness in Chicana writers. This sensitivity manifests itself to such an extent that the core of their work, both literary and theoretical, is the exploration of difference—be it the various differences

[30] The poem's title pays tribute to a book by historian Arnoldo De León called *They Called Them Greasers* (1983), in which the author "investigates lynching as an institutionalized threat against Tejanos" (Saldívar-Hull 2000: 74).

along the axes of race, language, religion, gender, class, and cultural conditions, or the concept of difference itself as an epistemological and philosophical prism. The ways in which borders by their very nature produce difference are elaborated on by Anzaldúa in richly symbolic language and in her rife metaphorization of the border as a wound that functions as a sign for pain and inequity arising from the modes of othering the dividing line allows for:

> Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish *us* from *them*. A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants.… Gringos in the U.S. Southwest consider the inhabitants of the borderlands transgressors, aliens—whether they possess documents or not, whether they're Chicanos, Indians or Blacks. Do not enter, trespassers will be raped, maimed, strangled, gassed, shot.… Tension grips the inhabitants of the borderlands like a virus (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25-26).

Anzaldúa's tense definition of the U.S.-Mexico border can be read not only as a list of phenomena of abject undesirability, but also as the author's identity politics derived from feminist standpoint theory: a means to re-evaluate power interests and thus attach value to identities kept out of the limits of "normality" and "acceptability." Linking the deconstruction of discriminatory binaries to lived experience has opened the door to the emancipation and empowerment of overlooked social groups, such as Chicanas or women of color in general.

In light of Anzaldúa's belief that local and localized theories—not methods lifted from white American feminism, which, along with African American and Native American women, Chicanas have found to be insufficient and conditioned by an unequal distribution of power—are best representative of the material and symbolic barriers put in the way of discriminated groups, the Chicana (mainly feminist) community arrived at an activist stance. Self-reflexive, localized theory that is aimed at social change therefore constitutes a quintessential trait of Chicana literary and artistic production. Thus, the situated quality of the Chicana project can be summarized in the following words by Anzaldúa: "*Necesitamos teorías* that will rewrite history using race, class, gender and ethnicity as categories of

analysis, theories that cross borders, that blur boundaries—new kinds of theories with new theorizing methods.… We need to give up the notion that there is a 'correct' way to write theory" (Anzaldúa 1990a: xxv-xxvi). The author's resistance to established modes of theorizing is, for instance, mirrored in the unconventional composition and methodology of *Borderlands/La Frontera – The New Mestiza*.

As mentioned earlier, the book is divided into two parts, the latter being a poetry collection designed to lend interpretative credence to the arguments introduced in the first section of the work, in which legends, analytic essays, and descriptions of personal experiences mingle with the genre of *autohistorías. Autohistorías* do not engage in a causal, linear, and chronological explication of historical events, but describe events with both a real and a symbolic impact on one's own lived experience and/or the life of one's community. As Anzaldúa coins it, "*Autohistoría* is a term […] to describe the genre of writing about one's personal and collective history using fictive elements, a sort of fictionalized autobiography or memoir; an *autohistoría-teoría* is a personal essay that theorizes" (Anzaldúa 2002: 578).

At the same time, the genre works to outline the realm of possibilities in the field of internal emancipation and the construction of one's own personal spirituality. This, in Anzaldúa's view, is achieved through a deliberate and diligent analysis of one's own preconceptions, as well as the ways in which we experience our physical being in the world. Moreover, in *Borderlands/La Frontera*, *autohistorías* help the author reinterpret the history of the borderland region through the lens of power relations and the categories of gender, race, and class, as seen, for example, in the passage "*El cruzar del mojado*/Illegal Crossing" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 31-35). Here, the treatment of illegal Mexican immigrants by the U.S. Border Patrol is read against the author's knowledge of the habitus within which both, the incomers and officers, operate.

In "We Call Them Greasers," the intersecting categories of race, class, and gender provide a scaffolding upon which Anzaldúa builds a story that looks at the American foundational myth of westward expansion and colonial border proliferation from the perspective of a dominant protagonist. A white male colonizer narrates a single story of how he was able to acquire new land, thereby successfully complying with the imperatives of colonialism. The fact that he shamelessly speaks about the violence inflicted in the process on local farmers by his helpers and himself on the one hand testifies to the power he enjoys owing to his racial, class, and gender identity. On the other hand, it speaks of the power of the

institutionalized discourse of civilizing mission that was employed to justify the colonization of Western territories by European Americans to the detriment of Native peoples or people(s) otherwise defined as Other to the American Self.

However, what makes the poem remarkable is the fact that − despite the perspective being the colonizer's − the *effect* of the story is reserved for the Chicana/o historical experience. This experience, then, corresponds with Anzaldúa's appeal to refrain from internalized established practices regarding theory being written (or thought out or done) in a "correct" way. In this respect, "We Call Them Greasers" can be perceived *as theory*, for Anzaldúa incorporates her awareness of structural inequalities in its narrative at the background of which the border functions as a fault line illuminating ideological, cultural, epistemological, racial, and gender(ed) differences.

While discussing the complex reality of the border region along the Rio Grande/Río Bravo, one must keep in mind the fact that the region has, from the Chicano perspective, historically been a site of double colonization (Acuña, 1981: 29). The initial colonization was the conquest of the indigenous peoples of Central America by Spanish *conquistadores*[31] in the early 16th century; the later act of colonialism was the annexation of the Northern territories of Mexico by the U.S. in the mid-19th century. As illustrated by the term mestiza consciousness pioneered by Anzaldúa (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 99-113), the history and the cultural diversity on the U.S.-Mexico borderlands challenge not only the dualism characteristic of Western thought, but also the notion of the ethnically and culturally inclusive American Dream of immigration. The expansive Western frontier that historically exemplified the dominant culture of European settlement on/of the American continent is now − with the rise of what Fisher calls "new regionalism" (Fisher 1991: xiv)[32] − concentrated in contemporary understandings of the U.S.-Mexico border. These

[31] The generic masculine refers to the fact that the sovereign actors of European colonial penetration were men, whereas women – if they were even allowed to assist in *conquista* – fulfilled a largely instrumental role conditioned by the gendered conventions of the time. The generic masculine is not employed here to trivialize or symbolically erase the activities of these women, but to highlight the gendered and inherently hierarchical nature of the colonization process, during which the area being "won" is associated with femininity and the act of subjugating local cultures is linked with masculinity (Loomba 2005: 128-129).

[32] Fisher uses this expression for approaches to studying American culture and identity in the light of political, social, and epistemological shifts of the 1960s and 1970s with respect to diversity and subjugated knowledges that "tore apart the various singular and unifying myths of America." These new disciplines "unmask[ed] the myths of previous generations, among other things as… overwhelmingly white male [ones]" (Fisher 1991: xiv).

theorizations of U.S. national myths are now informed by Anzaldúa's conceptualization of the borderlands as a space that cultivates mestiza consciousness, which is capable of transcending the original binary idea of the border. The following lines sketch out Anzaldúa's attempts at dismantling discriminatory duality:

> As a mestiza I have no country… yet all countries are mine because I am every woman's sister or potential lover. (As a lesbian I have no race, my own people disclaim me; but I am all races because there is the queer of me in all races.) I am cultureless because, as a feminist, I challenge the collective cultural/religious male-derived beliefs… 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. (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 102-103)

Anzaldúa's concept of mestiza consciousness thus points to the constant becoming of one's identity while pointing at the borderland subjects' need of negotiating symbolic and discursive violence induced by Western binarisms.

4.3 Gender(ed) Identities and Colonial Encounters

Apart from reinterpreting national belonging, mestiza consciousness questions established notions of dichotomous gender identity as well. The social order of Mexican-American or Chicano society to a great extent reflects the patriarchal tenets of Mexican *machismo*, i.e., excessive manifestations of male dominance towards women (Baca Zinn 2001: 25; Castro 2000: 147-148). However, as I also detail in the following chapter, these *macho* traits are permanently undermined by virtue of their being performed by a masculinity that bears within itself the burden of double colonial conquest and is thus placed in a feminine role in relation to the white, heterosexual, American man (Loomba 2005: 128-129; Baca Zinn 2001: 25). Moreover, as Baca Zinn argues, an overt −at times almost parodic −performance of masculine traits in Chicanos may point to social structures that systematically block access to other sources of masculine identity. In this regard, *machismo* may be viewed as an

"adaptive characteristic," i.e., a means for resisting racial oppression (Baca Zinn 2001: 30), which on the symbolical level further subverts the consistency and power position of such a type of manhood. In other words, masculine aggression may mask internal weakness and/or lack of status.

Chicano masculinity as a colonized masculinity inherently personifies the "forbidden" mixing of races, attesting to Spaniards' "theft" of indigenous women from the domain of their colonized counterparts (Frank 2003: 29; Paz 1961: 65-87). Anzaldúa exposes this historical inheritance of Chicano manhood in the explicit story-of-rape poem "We Call Them Greasers." When interpreted from a gender-sensitive, rather than a colonialist perspective (as shown above), the poem narrates an incident in which a husband is forced to watch the spectacle of his wife's brutal rape and murder executed by a white Anglo. Because the Chicano husband in the poem is tied to a mesquite tree − in Saldívar-Hull's interpretation the Chicano version of the African-American hanging tree (Saldívar-Hull 2000: 75) − he is deprived of any sort of agency and is made to be a passive, powerless onlooker of his wife's doom, and the subject of victimization carried out by a man who not only represents the colonizer's political, economic, and cultural domination, but also embodies hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

The performance of hegemonic masculinity, as Connell points out, conveys a desired norm or an ideal men should aspire to. However, only a few actually wield the hegemony guaranteed by the type of masculinity that complies with cultural and social institutions whose advantages, including the benefits of racial and androcentric bias, they then enjoy (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 832). In any case, the colonizer's efforts do find support in the values and institutions of Western colonialism, whereas the Chicano in "We Call Them Greasers" is symbolically emasculated and possesses no culturally recognized worth he could lean on to as a subaltern, colonized subject. He lacks power for − as a racialized, colonized man − he has, in the eyes of the Anglo man, never had any.

If Mexican-American or Chicano masculinity is already situated as the other within the model of controlling Anglophone (and implicitly heterosexual and white) masculinity, the marginalization of femininity within the same androcentric societal structure is further exacerbated. Androcentric oppression is present in both the Anglophone tradition of white America and the Chicana/o community. In other words, the subjectivity of the nameless "brown" woman in Anzaldúa's poem is virtually erased, for she is purely instrumental. The

patriarchal system renders her the Other to both − her husband and the white colonizer. Her objectification, however, finds its ultimate expression in the rape scene. Disturbingly, it is not this violent, dehumanizing act itself that effaces her personal integrity and subjectivity, but the fact that the usurper employs the Chicana's femininity as a tool, as an instrument to humiliate and degrade the Chicano man:

> She lay under me whimpering.
>
> I plowed into her hard
>
> kept thrusting and thrusting
>
> felt him watching from the mesquite tree
>
> heard him keening like a wild animal
>
> in that instant I felt such contempt for her
>
> round face and beady black eyes like an Indian's.
>
> Afterwards I sat on her face until
>
> her arms stopped flailing,
>
> didn't want to waste a bullet on her (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 156-157).

As Saldívar-Hull fittingly argues, rape in the poem "is an institutionalized strategy in the war to disempower Chicano men" (Saldívar-Hull 200: 75). Moreover, this sort of institutionalization is underscored by the fact that the violated and murdered woman has no name, therefore her lot might be read as a universal one for all women under both patriarchal and colonial rules.

4.4 Metaphors on/of the Border

After the annexation of the territory of Northern Mexico and the solidification of the border, the formerly Mexican inhabitants became, due to their mestizo/mestiza racial origins, their linguistic competence, and their class belonging, *de facto* second-category American citizens, since the incorporation of Mexican Americans or Chicanas/os into the U.S. nation

would complicate the supremacist imperative for maintaining European racial purity (Madsen, 2010: 379). Thus, under the influence of the border, the economic, but even more so the social, cultural, linguistic, religious, and epistemological diversity reproduced and underscored in the lived reality of borderland subjects as well as in their literary production represents a radical re-evaluation of prevailing notions of American identity. The dominant notion is based on the myth of immigration-as-homogenization, in which European immigrants are those who build a new American nation as an extension of forging a new life for themselves. The traditional immigrant "Dream of Ellis Island" (Tinnemeyer 1999: 475) is, however, deeply challenged by borderland subjects: by mestizo/a Chicanos and Chicanas, but also by members of Native communities, the original targets of colonialism. They all represent an immigration that is never conventionally "completed" (e.g. by acquiring legal citizenship, cultural integration, or an assimilated status), for they cannot by definition "land in America"; they never "arrive." Borderland subjects have been present from the beginning. They take a conscious stance against the idea of American-ness as the product of the proverbial melting pot. Chicanas/os have never been (im)migrants, as they never crossed the U.S. border: the border crossed them. Thus, their non-(im)migrant belonging makes them invisible and thus uncategorizable within the concept of ideally white American-ness with the history of immigration from Europe.

The employment of a metaphor for the conceptualization of borderlands in Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* opens new ways for understanding the complex region and Chicana identity. Mestiza consciousness, an epistemology generated by the proximity of the border, represents an emancipatory and self-reflecting program with the opportunity to theoretically grasp the situation in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and to deconstruct the discriminatory binary oppositions implied by the Western conceptualization of "the border." As already suggested, the border operates not only on the level of its real, physical presence. Harkening back to one of the cornerstones of American cultural identity − the myth of the westward American frontier as proof of the success of the American conquest/settlement project − the border instantly takes on a metaphorical aspect that ties it to the notion of the American "us" and the Mexican "them" (Quintana 1996: 16).

On the metaphorical level, the border in question is "infinitely elastic" (Aldama 1998: 46), allowing us to extend the expression "the American borderlands" to all regions, including internal ones, that show resistance to Euro-American cultural dominance. Among the

symptoms of Euro-American cultural supremacy is an unshakeable belief in westward expansion, as celebrated by Frederick Jackson Turner and others, which gives rise to the American national narrative with its goal to legitimize the conquest of indigenous cultures: the manifest destiny lifted from Puritan tradition. This myth endows Americans of European origin with rule-power over the continent as determined by divine providence, and designates them bearers of a strict code of individualism that enables them to successfully face the trials of the New World and, thanks to this experience of adversity, become the new American nation with functional democratic institutions (Turner [1893] 1921: 5-36). This nation is, however, defined solely within the bounds of European ethnicity and cultural tradition − and any nation defined in such a way that it rests on the values of white androcentrism is "located within a powerful discourse of Anglo-Saxon superiority and inevitable racial destiny" (Madsen, 2010: 381).

According to Slotkin, the Western American frontier stands for one of the major myths that generally inform the American identity − which, from the perspective of the (post)colonial center, is the supposedly desirable white, masculine, and heterosexual tradition − including its mythical belief in a vacant, uninhabited, wild continent ripe for the settling Europeans' mission of civilization and enculturation into something "new" (Slotkin [1973] 2000). This myth also serves to legitimize the violent suppression of the allegedly "uncivilized" "natives,"[33] who are consequently labeled as a "tame" indigenous population and linked to femininity in opposition to the dominating masculinity of the white settlers. In "We Call Them Greasers," as discussed above, the concept of the emasculated Chicano becomes evident in the lynching scene of the tied up farmer and husband who witnesses his wife's rape and demise.

The atrocities of colonialism portrayed by Anzaldúa in the poem can take place precisely because the discourse of racial supremacy and entitlement vested by the divine authority constructs an ideology of imperialism which is meant to legitimize the deeds carried out under its banner. Essentially, this is a tautological logic which is not unlike the workings of the discourse of orientalism detected by Edward Said (Said 1978). The heavenly assignment

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[33] As opposed to the current term Native American, the generically-employed plural noun "natives" in this context would be representative of the objectification and othering of indigenous peoples of America by white settlers.

of manifest destiny is performed by the Anglo colonizer's implied duress arising from his authority, which makes the Mexican-American or Chicano land owners behave as if they were in the presence of a deity (cf. Saldívar-Hull 2000: 75). Their gestures may be viewed as showing respect and/or fear. The poem reads: "they took off their hats / placed them over their hearts / lowered their eyes in my presence" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 156).

Although the colonizer's assumption of such a god-like position equals blasphemy in Christian terms, the poem makes it clear from the matter-of-fact depiction of the treatment of the mestiza/o farmers that the Anglo perpetrator's confidence in his actions is unshakable and his power unmatchable to such an extent that he feels no need to attenuate his explicit language of scorn, contempt for the "brown" people, and an air of boredom he is experiencing while dealing with them and their mild protests: "cowards, they were, no backbone / … oh, there were a few troublemakers / … it was a laughing stock" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 156). The narrator's choice of words nearly makes it seem as if the criminal seizure of land from the hands of the farmers is actually a bothering task for the Anglo figure; not because he is not enjoying the exercise of his white privilege, but because the people he must dispossess of land are not even deemed as worth his effort. In his eyes they pose an obstacle to the civilizing mission of westward expansion. The interjection "oh" also emphasizes the steadfast conviction about the justification of the colonial project: on the one hand, it may be read as fleeing reminiscence of an event that is, within the mission, so generic that it cannot be easily recollected, on the other hand it implies Anzaldúa's attempt at bringing into memory and discourse the representation of events which were overlooked by the dominant versions of history.

The fact that Anzaldúa writes about dispossession, violence, rape, and murder significantly reinterprets and reshapes the history of the Western frontier. She is interested in what I have called above "the grey zone," i.e., the events that occurred between the invention of the frontier destined to be pushed west and its assumed closure. Anzaldúa's poem does exactly what (in Fisher's term) new regionalism aims to uncover and bring into awareness: she confronts us with withheld views of colonization and with previously invisibilized images of both physical and discursive violence. The fact that in "We Call Them Greasers" the Anglo usurper does not differentiate among the Chicano *rancheros,* whose land he strives to confiscate under false pretenses of unpaid taxes, testifies to how, in Anzaldúa's view,

colonization deprived the colonized people of their subjectivity and relegated them into the sphere beyond the human.

The Chicanas/os in the poem lack names and the Anglo narrator systematically uses the third person plural pronoun to speak of the farmers. Thereby he first deletes their individual identity and then he turns their suffering into a universal experience of the colonized people, discursively making such an experience prescriptive for any other clash with any colonial power they may ever face. The farmers who are eventually chased from their land become voiceless because of their linguistic background and, to draw on Spivak, because of the fact that within the context of American colonial expansion they lack a discourse in which they could articulate their rights and be heard (cf. Spivak 1988: 308-309). If some of them who "had land grants / and appealed to the courts" nevertheless manage to resist the colonizing despotism, they are shut up by the institutional tyranny that does not recognize Spanish as a language, "them not even knowing English" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 156). Saldívar-Hull sums up the silencing as follows: "For the Anglo-American imperialist, literacy in Spanish or any other nonstatus language is illiteracy" (Saldívar-Hull 200: 75).

As Slotkin points out, the westward progression of the American frontier has been part of American national identity since the 17th century and related to the myth is the idea that the expected cultural regeneration of the continent could be realized by violence (Slotkin [1973] 2000: 5; Furniss 1998: 22). Therefore, when Anzaldúa portrays the effects of westward expansion as brutal, violent, and dehumanizing, she thwarts the ideal of westward progress as a carrier of a civilizing mission, yet she complies with Slotkin's thesis in regards to the penetrative violence. Despite this congruence, however, her approach in general by no means agrees to the idea of violence having any regenerative potential whatsoever. If regeneration is demanded, in Western dualistic thinking it inevitably reacts to previous degeneration. Such binarism essentially links people of color with impurity and contamination, whereas dominant whiteness is aligned with purity and clearly defined edges and/or borders of identity.

In other words, regeneration through violence poses a discriminatory potential for lethal practices. In this respect, the alarming outcome of Anzaldúa's poem is grounded in a simple, but immensely efficient idea: a woman of color addresses the racial values of American colonialism through a white man's voice but she assigns the story to the Chicanas'/os' experience and their current lives on the border and "in-between." Anzaldúa, through the

manner in which the poem is composed and formally executed, positions the American and Chicana/o perspectives next to each other. Thus, as Madsen observes, the work tells two stories at once: "a story of colonial dispossession and a story of the westward advance of American civilization. […] The poem then articulates what Paul de Man called an 'aporia' − an irresolvable contradiction between two logical positions" (Madsen 2003: 67). Anzaldúa, however, does not seek a final solution to this encumbrance; such contradiction is the reality of mestiza consciousness.

Further, Slotkin's theoretical outlook on the westward frontier as a myth is important precisely because it identifies the functions of the border on the level of metaphor and mythology. By means of repetitive and constantly replicated cultural myths, collective historical experience is codified into a set of standardized and generally recognizable (national) narratives and metaphors, symbols and relations. As such, cultural myth does not explicitly describe a historical experience but, drawing on a rich palette of established metaphors and symbolic expressions, builds a kind of collectively construed *idea* of a national − or collective − identity (Slotkin [1973] 2000: 7; Furniss 1998: 9; Anderson [1983] 2003; Bhabha 1994). The moment the westward American frontier and the border separating Mexico from the United States − portrayed countless times by a concrete wall, metal barriers, barbed wire, electronically operated cameras, and other surveillance equipment − transform from geographical fault lines into a social concept represented by the aforementioned signifiers (among others), the border loses its real, traceable position. It becomes, to recall Deleuze and Guattari, deterritorialized and displaced (Deleuze and Guattari 2007: 507-510). The border thus stretches and can be detected everywhere (cf. Aldama 1998, Espiritu 2003).

As I have already argued, the geographical border has become a metaphorical concept applicable to all categories of social organization, with an emphasis on culturally construed, yet rigidly policed norms. Along with this deterritorialization, more and more locations and subjects appear that resist such strict division into categories or mix cross-categorical boundaries. The metaphorical displacement of the border paradoxically brings into focus the hitherto unnoticed heterogeneity of American society, made yet more prominent by the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Previously disregarded ethnic minorities gradually develop their identity politics and political and activist platforms − in the case of Chicanas/os, *El Movimiento* is the most prominent (NietoGomez 1997: 98; Quintana 1996: 19). The

Movement makes it possible for Chicanas/os to enter the discourse of white, middle-class, patriarchal, and heterosexual American-ness and at the same time to subvert the pantheon of traits traditionally considered to be "American." Those traits are thus shown to have only masked a different America: an America that is multilayered and vastly hybridized, yet at the same time rife with cultural, linguistic, and racial discrimination, an America in which more than a little emotional energy has been invested into the coercive maintenance of borders of all kinds.

It is precisely the double traumatic experience of discursive and cultural disenfranchisement tied to the institutional discrimination of the Chicana/o tradition that drives Chicanos and Chicanas into the ambivalent, discomforting, and hybrid space of the U.S.-Mexican border (Bhabha 1994: 7, 112). On the Mexican side of the border, the Chicana/o existence is stigmatized as it is thought to represent an Americanized and therefore alienated Mexican experience (*agringado/a*), while on the American side Chicanas'/os' (and other Native peoples') agrarian tradition and strong ties to land as well as their racial mestizo/mestiza otherness were exploited by American colonizers as a means of oppression. The colonized subjects were made to "appear as invaders in their own land, as enemies of Western progress" (Madsen 2010: 377), which are techniques that facilitated both the dispossession of their land and the colonizers' unwillingness to consider people of color *as humans*.

Such a racial aspect can again be illustrated by "We Call Them Greasers." Beside the dehumanization arising from racial otherness in the white usurper's lines relating to the raped woman "I felt such contempt for her / round face and beady black eyes like an Indian's" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 157), there is another method of othering. The farmers and their families are likened to animals in the line "heard him keening like a wild animal" or as in "some loaded their chickens children wives and pigs / into rickety wagons," where omitted punctuation renders domestic animals and family members on the level of the same, i.e., worthless value. The utter debasement of the raped woman then lies in the way she is murdered: "I sat on her face until her arms stopped flailing / didn't want to waste a bullet on her" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 156), which is a portrayal of death that goes way beyond conventional and acceptable methods of animal slaughter.

The colonial dispossession of land and its securing in the hands of the colonizer also bears sexual and gender connotations. Newly acquired territories were associated with virgin lands to be conquered by male explorers and settlers and became a terrain where masculinity was

put to test. This is why images of sexual assault and violence are frequently associated with Western progress and processes of colonization in general. Kolodny calls such representations "psychosexual dramas" (Kolodny 1984: xiii). Not only does the rape scene in Anzaldúa's poem, by the same token and as I have already argued, portray the victory of white, colonizing masculinity over the racialized masculinity of the Chicano farmer or the dehumanization of the land workers whom "[the colonizer] found… when [he] came [there]" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 156). Most importantly, it shows a totalizing crusade of white masculine power subduing the feminine, i.e., land, colored skin, and a woman herself. Entities associated with femininity are replaced with androcentric culture and Euro-American, capitalist notions of land ownership as "the white colonizer rejects [Chicanas'/os'] collective farming techniques, cultural remnants of indigenous tribal traditions of the mestizo" (Saldívar-Hull 2000: 75), when he says "they didn't even own the land but shared it" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 156).

4.5 Hybridity and Mestiza Consciousness

The border, being the neuralgic point of the Chicana/o identity, is portrayed by Anzaldúa as an infernal generator of pain, caused by the dualism of Western thinking. At the same time, however, as Anzaldúa notes along with Bhabha, the border can also give rise to subversive yet simultaneously productive acts. While the border serves as a rationalization and legitimization of the disenfranchisement described earlier, it can also be transformed by critical reflection into a springboard for a new epistemology, such as Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness. Anzaldúa calls the demarcation line between the two countries − and metaphorically between American and Mexican identity, between masculinity and femininity, and between other binary oppositions−her home. In her figurative language, this home is portrayed through the oft-cited painful imagery such as a "1,950 mile long open wound" and "thin edge of barbed wire," its border along the Rio Grande being "*una herida abierta* where the Third World grates against the first and bleeds"− but it is also a space where there is potential for the birth of some new, previously unknown quality (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25). In Anzaldúa's metaphorical words, the life blood of both of the neighboring worlds "form[s] a third country" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25).

As suggested by Bhabha's parallel to this situation, the role of culture in the borderlands is determined by "an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present [and that] creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation"

(Bhabha 1994: 7). By locating what is new as well as what is past in an in-between space, a reinterpretation of both becomes possible. According to Bhabha, everything begins on the border. Anzaldúa's borderlands and Bhabha's "space in-between" can thus be interpreted as synonyms that contain the hybrid complexity of multiple emotional investments into all− not necessarily just two− cultures and positions relevant to any borderlands subjects and their intersecting, sometimes mutually incompatible, loyalties. On hybridity, Bhabha adds: "Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal. […] [H]ybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space […] a negative transparency" (Bhabha 1994: 112).

An important aspect of Anzaldúa's concept of mestiza consciousness is the fact that, in the first instance, it is based on the contextualized lived experience of a Chicana lesbian discriminated against on the basis of race, culture, and gender, a woman who came from an exceedingly poor background and who battled severe health problems throughout her life. More broadly, Anzaldúa identifies the causes of the social exclusion that she and her ethnic group have faced− but even in this area, various androcentric and hierarchical practices that disadvantage women persist, and Anzaldúa criticizes those as well. This puts her in yet another kind of symbolic borderlands: her criticism constitutes friendly fire to Chicanos, making Anzaldúa seem "disloyal" to the community. As her quote below suggests, however, discrimination and exclusion are the byproducts of the system of binaries imposed by Western epistemology, resulting even in the kind of androcentrism criticized by Anzaldúa and others, and so it is necessary to deconstruct the effects of such a system in this area as well:

> 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 languages, our thoughts. A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes, bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war. (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 102)

The next phase of Anzaldúa's work transforms mestiza consciousness as embodied by a single person, a figure of emancipated Chicana womanhood who distances herself from the disciplining patriarchal ideal of a pliable and passive femininity, into a collective epistemological project. Mestiza consciousness should symbolically evaluate the hybrid existence of the Chicana/o nation, which was born of "racial, ideological, cultural and biological crosspollinization" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 99). On the epistemological level, it should collectively accept that these border-crossing mestiza/o identities "are in a state of permanent transition," as they "juggle cultures" and cannot "hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 99-101). Mestiza consciousness integrates contradictions and "operates in a pluralistic mode—nothing is thrust out, the good, the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. Not only does [it] sustain contradictions, [it] turns the ambivalence into something else" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 101).

This concept enables Anzaldúa to include, besides Chicanos and Chicanas, other groups of people who resist oppression into the emancipatory project and to consider (in a partly utopian fashion) the possibility that even those who hold power can be met halfway: "[we can] meet on a broader communal ground" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 109). This is the moment when the original dimension of an all-encompassing *personal* identity takes on a *universal* aspect and mestiza consciousness is transformed into a sort of horizontal manifesto of global diversity that respects and reconsiders difference while deliberately working with it.

Anzaldúa's aim is not a simplistic "overcoming" of distinctions and a degradation of mestiza consciousness into an instrument that eradicates all difference for the sake of a bland, generalized sameness. This is a frequent misinterpretation of her work (Naples 2009: 509-511). Anzaldúa's line of argumentation stands in opposition to the strategies employed by the dominant culture, which (ab)uses difference in order to legitimize and justify the political and social pressures exerted on marginalized minority groups in America (and elsewhere). These strategies result in symbolic stereotyping, in the proliferation of cultural and economic barriers, and in the capitalist exploitation of the subaltern. Mestiza consciousness stands for the *representation* of difference. It is also the image of an ideal world order where thinking in oppositions has lost its hierarchical validity and can no longer exclude, as the author mentions, "[*l*]*os atravesados* […] the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato [sic], the half-breed, the half dead; in short,

those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the 'normal'" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25).

Mestiza consciousness offers a radical deconstruction of the border phenomenon, remolding it into a concept used not to divide but to create. In Western epistemology, the very notion of the border generates an interplay of differences that are in themselves boundless, infinite, and uncontrollable by any kind of power, since they are elusive. Aside from this reinterpretation of the concept of the border and the suggestion of an inclusive epistemology, Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness contains a distinct, though perhaps not so overt, gendered element along with the critique of dualistic thought.

Western rationality, which functioned as the motor of colonial expansion as well as its advocate, is associated with masculinity under the current status quo; the same is true for the process of colonization itself. As Elenes aptly remarks: "highly educated European and Euro-American males produced science, art, and philosophy, […] while the rest of the world (including the poor and women) produced folklore" (Elenes 2010: 50). By placing an emphasis on the conscious grounding of her intellectual-emancipatory project in a specific space and time and reinterpreting local epistemologies as well as *teorías* tailored to the given context, Anzaldúa questions the universalizing ambitions of Western thought and its implicitly Anglocentric, patriarchal, and hierarchical gendered imperatives. Mestiza consciousness attempts to emancipate the individual as well as the community from dichotomous thinking divided into mutually incompatible categories, the very thinking that has colonized not only Anzaldúa's home hemmed in by 1,950 miles of barbed wire but also the local people's minds. Theorizing the border is a tool of a holistic "intellectual decolonization" (Mignolo 2000: 45) of both the physical space and of the individual as well as collective psychological dimension.

The concept of mestiza consciousness can thus be understood as a local epistemology that, on the level of deliberate practice, corresponds to what Tuhiwai Smith terms an *indigenous project*[34] − a set of activities and/or a type of research contributing to the survival of

[34] Tuhiwai Smith identifies the following activities—to be undertaken on the individual or collective level—as examples of such projects: claiming, testimonies, story-telling, celebrating survival, remembering, indigenizing, inventing, revitalizing, connecting, reading, writing, representing, gendering, envisioning, reframing, restoring, returning, democratizing, networking, naming, protecting, creating, negotiating, discovering, and sharing (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 142-162).

indigenous nations, the preservation of their cultures and languages, and an acceptance of diversity as a value in and of itself (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 142-161). The approaches and methods employed by the projects are always situated in local conditions, self-reflexive, and up-front about their (political) agenda and identity politics: their goal is to be emancipatory. In this respect, they correlate with feminist theories and methodologies, for instance in their use of experimental approaches to research that, as has been illustrated, disrupt the presumed dyad of (masculine) rationality and (feminine) knowledge, the latter supposedly gathered in areas that have historically been outside of the purview of traditional Western science. Tuhiwai Smith identifies 25 types of projects aiming to effect individual and collective recovery from the consequences of colonialism and the attendant trauma (Tuhiwai Smith 143-160). Anzaldúa's thought reflects many of these projects when she writes about mestiza consciousness in the form of confessionals and recalled memories, when she unearths the cultural genealogy of the origins of the Chicana/o identity in Aztec mythology and gives voice to the silenced history of oppression, and when she defines her own functional categories of the border and of the mestiza existence that allow her to describe and analyze the time-space continuum she inhabits with other people. It is the sphere of local epistemologies that enable the "subaltern" to heal from the trauma inflicted by colonialism and power that most frequently mobilizes the analytical potential of Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness, the employment of which, as the thinker implies, is conceivable also beyond the region of U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

CHAPTER 5

5. A Trio Against Dualism: Postcolonial Re/Interpretations of Hybrid Representations of Chicana Femininity

Chicana writers, whose anti-patriarchal outlook and criticism earned them the pejorative nickname *malinchistas* as in traitors to their community's interests, embrace the figure of Hernán Cortés' interpreter and partner – La Malinche –` as one of the three potent feminine (and feminist) archetypes discussed in this chapter, the other two being La Virgen de Guadalupe and the Weeping Woman, La Llorona. While these archetypes are disparate and so are their multiple representations, in Anzaldúa's and Chicanas' rewritings, the trio merges together and one figure permeates the other two as genuine hybrid embodiments. In what follows, I explore the gendered forms of this hybridity and propose a new perspective that delves into the complex notions of these figures' motherhood. I, nevertheless, begin the chapter with an analysis of a cinematographic representation of indigeneity that is set to chronologically precede the discussed hybridization.

Malinche's story, historical significance, and palimpsestuous reinterpretations within Mexican, U.S. and Chicana/o cultures expose femininity and La Malinche's persona as constructs that are fashioned to serve political interests; in case of La Malinche in particular they are very contradictory interests of androcentric nationalism and racist colonialism as opposed to feminist emancipation and women's empowerment. Patriarchal representations of Malinche convey her figure as a passive victim of the historical events of male domination, but Chicanas resist such portrayals. They celebrate her language skills, her autonomy and her role as the *de facto* mother of the emergent mestiza/o race. Her talent for interpreting is conceptualized by Chicana writers as an image of their own hybridity. Malinche thus symbolizes the possibility of establishing new groupings and collective identities so emphasized by Chicana literature and criticism. This non-hierarchical, bridging symbolism is present both in Anzaldúa's concept of mestiza consciousness and in the purpose of Chicana feminism itself as discussed earlier.

A different but no less vital archetype constantly re-imagined in Chicana writing is personified in the cult of the Virgin Mary – the Black Virgin Mary of Guadalupe (La Virgen de Guadalupe). Her religious significance lies in her role as Christ's mother. Besides this spiritual aspect, she personifies the normative model of valued femininity, which is care-

giving, motherly, self-sacrificing and passive. La Virgen symbolizes an unattainable ideal, but remains an important figure with currency even in contemporary popular culture. Given the fact that La Virgen is said to have appeared near the site of the temple of the pre-Columbian goddess Tonantzin and that her skin color references indigenous roots as well as the birth of the mestiza/o race, her character has gone through many literary and artistic metamorphoses that have made use of her ambivalence. Tonantzin is closely linked to the goddess Coatlicue, a different female archetype that stands for independence, inner strength and power, with the capacity to take on both positive and negative traits. In addition to their spiritual qualities, both goddesses may represent creation as well as destruction, benevolence as well as wrath, all of which demonstrates their propensity for transformation and internal change. It is precisely the unclear origin of La Virgen and the pliability of her archetype and spiritual embodiment that provides Chicanas with the material for transforming this symbol itself, along with their femininity, spirituality, sexuality, and independence.

A widely known figure of Chicana/o folklore, La Llorona represents an archetype in which femininity is associated with water and with the search for one's children lost as a result of violence. She is depicted as the ghost who eternally and hopelessly searches for her dead offspring whom – here interpretations begin to conflict – she either drowned in revolt against her oppressive husband, or found already drowned in the river's current. She is the antithesis of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe, being the embodiment of a mother who failed as well as of the perceived danger of mysterious female sexuality. At the same time, she can, however, be read as a symbol of radical change and a promise of healing historical trauma, personal as well as collective.

5.1 Shortly before the Mestiza/o Race Emerges…

In the final minutes of the epic adventure feature *Apocalypto* (2006) director and screenplay author Mel Gibson brings the audience to a sandy Yucatán beach at the exact moment when the main protagonist Jaguar Paw appears from the jungle, running from extraordinarily violent and bloodthirsty pursuers, and falls to the ground. In the following moment, the scene on the screen betrays the notion that he is not only brought to his knees by the physical exhaustion and psychological pressure resulting from the experienced trauma but also due to the unusual sight at the horizon. By then, Jaguar Paw has experienced life-and-death combat and raced against time as minutes went by until the moment when his partner

delivered her baby. At the beginning of the movie, he had hidden her and her young son in a *cenote* from an attack at their village that is in fact a hunt for future Maya human sacrifices; the *cenote* is filling up with water in a sudden downpour and threatens to take three innocent lives. At the same moment, the viewers of this movie have finished watching a spectacle that may be a challenge for their viewing pleasure, not because the narrative plot would be too complicated or because of the changes in perspective, the experimental camera and editing, or the fragmented chronology of the story, but because of the explicit, accented, dynamic, and highly brutal violence.

The targets of the violence and its perpetrators alike are strikingly bare and almost naked bodies of men and women; thus the injuring and murdering swings of their arms and the impact of the attacking weapons are instant, undisguised, immediate, and uninhibited while being unstoppable due to the force of their rage. The movie intensifies the atrociousness of the portrayed terror by depicting the city Maya as they turn their weapons against the village Maya; nevertheless, it does not treat the conflict as a potential civil war; it treats it rather as mad, chaotic, and unstructured human reaping. The form used to depict the violence makes it into an all-encompassing, all-penetrating, somewhat perversely permanent, and almost essentially conditioned phenomenon; and at the moment when Jaguar Paw escapes the fate of a human sacrifice and wades through an immense field of layered naked rotting corpses, the violence appears to have irreversibly swallowed the whole universe. In that instance, human bodies only represent spent and consumed material and the initial attack on the village can no longer be read as a hunt for future human sacrifices to the gods but as a furious flesh harvest.

Violence perpetrated by half-clad bodies on other half-clad bodies is presented as another indispensable protagonist of the movie in addition to Jaguar Paw. Its pictorial and metaphorical openness carried by the absence of clothing (or more precisely clothing that shows more than it disguises) seems to underscore the absence of civility (not civilization). Gibson's spectacle does not indicate in any shot that the constant presence of violence and the form of its representation in the film should be explained by any genre means or narrative methods because it implicitly relies on the general awareness of Maya sacrifices. With the use of such a pictorial representation, the staggering form of the movie violence thus constructs the Maya society as perverse and (self)murdering barbarian riff-raff. The viewers are thus necessarily interpellated by the structure of the plot (the hero is fighting for his life) as well as the form of the representation of the surroundings (the society of the

enemy is buffeted by murdering agony) to lend their sympathies to Jaguar Paw. That is why at the moment when he sinks to his knees because there is nowhere else to run and his gaze turns to the distance with resignation and his pursuers slow down because their victim can no longer escape, it is hard to believe that the good would not win over the evil and that the main protagonist would lose his fight after all the suffering.

Nevertheless, the final scene of *Apocalypto* is not shot with as much bravado. One of the reasons is the fact that the movie relies on viewers' awareness of human sacrifices; therefore, it cannot fail to anticipate the awareness of the European colonial conquest of the Americas. In addition to portraying the monstrosity of the disintegration of the Maya civilization, the movie also betrays its ideological point very early on in the opening credits as it quotes William Durant, an American historian, who said that "A great civilization is not conquered from without until it has destroyed itself from within" (Apocalypto 2006). In this respect, *Apocalypto* as a whole is a portrayal of inner moral and social disintegration of the Maya society which predetermines it (in terms of screenwriting) to be conquered, subdued, and civilized. That is why the instant when Jaguar Paw falls to his knees and his eyes find the horizon, while his human hunters stare ahead in confusion, brings viewing pleasure. The hero is finally redeemed.

The following image emerges before him and his pursuers as well as the viewers: rowboats with Spanish sailors are slowly approaching the Yucatán shore, while their tall ships are gently rocking on the waves behind them. Jaguar Paw resourcefully seizes the moment of awe caused by the arrival of the Spanish in his pursuers and escapes to save his son and his wife who by then had already given birth to her baby. The soles of European boots have not yet even touched the Central American beach and four human lives had already been saved! The landing of the Spanish is thus portrayed in accord with the director's optics as an unprecedented promise of civilization and it heralds the establishment of order in the savage community. The movie accentuates this interpretation formally by the use of paradoxical contrasts of natural elements, or to be more exact, water. The Maya land is being lashed by unrelenting rain causing a (new) Flood of the (New) World while the sea level on which the European boats are gliding is completely calm and the land is being gently washed by sea foam. The flooded *cenote* and the anchored sailboats thus create a simile to the Old Testament cataclysm and Noah's arch as the vessel of salvation.

5.2 Postcolonial Critique of Cultural Representations, Resistance, and Hybridity

Thus, the essence of Gibson's feature film *is* representation – or rather misrepresentation – of the Maya apocalyptic rampage that is stopped by a contact with the European culture and Christianity, i.e., the exact opposite of the infernal chaos that has so far been portrayed. In other words, the film ultimately legitimizes and celebrates European colonial expansion and participates in the colonial discourse that treats the colonized subjects as degenerate and uncivilized, which implicitly justifies the acts of subjugation and dominance (cf. Said 1978, Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 2002: 175). Via the prism of postcolonial studies, the implied disembarkment may actually be interpreted as apocalyptic for all inhabitants of Central America.

From this perspective, „the greatest genocide in human history" (Todorov 1999: 5) thus begins where Gibson's movie apocalypse ends.[35] However, postcolonial literary studies are in essence complex and intersectional disciplines that are skeptical towards binary optics, dual solutions, and dominant interpretations since their objective is to bear witness to "unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority within the modern world" (Bhabha 1994:171). Postcolonial critique opens up a space for further syncretic or hybrid possibilities of reading of both history and fiction and facilitates the uncovering of contradictory and ambiguous narratives that legitimize the current form of modernity (Bhabha 1994: 171, Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 2002: 35). Postcolonial approach allows us to interpret the fate of Jaguar Paw as both salvation and apocalypse at the same time. On the sea shore, the protagonist as an individual

[35] Gibson's *Apocalypto* provoked negative reactions from experts in the field of history of Mesoamerica. Their reactions related especially to the significant historical misrepresentation of the Maya culture and organization of their society due to portrayed anachronisms and mixing of disparate elements of Maya culture from various historical periods and centuries as well as inclusion of ritual acts that belong to other societies than the Maya; furthermore, they referred to the selective optics that ignore, for instance, the advanced knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, and geography as well as the historically unsubstantiated portrayal of the village inhabitants who are unaware of their own civilization and cities. Although these voices grant Gibson poetic license and are aware of the fact that the film is not a documentary, they agree that the extensive distortion of historical events and the ways of portraying the Maya in the movie are Eurocentric, paternalistic, racist, and they reproduce discriminatory "savage" stereotypes of the indigenous inhabitants. The movie thus finds itself in a highly ambivalent position because, on the contrary, the fact that it was shot in the Yucatec Maya language and the historic plausibility and relevance of the costumes has been praised as being unusually high with respect to the missteps mentioned above. Nevertheless, we can simultaneously object that such positives significantly amplify the misrepresentation of the Maya in Gibson's movie because they create a falsely realistic and "authentic" portrayal that in fact underscores the orientalist or other "othering" features of the movie. For more on this topic see Canuto 2006; Badhistory Movie Review 2013.

is indeed saved by the arrival of the Europeans; however, during the following decades, his homeland will suffer from subjugation, extinction of a vast amount of cultural values, and death of an unprecedented number of inhabitants (Todorov 1999). If our fictitious hero and his offspring that were pulled out of the flooded *cenote* along with his partner survive these historical epochs, they will most likely become completely different Maya and the generations of their children will negotiate the ambivalent diversity of the forming hybrid culture.

Cultural representations – including literature, of course – testify to the tensions and ambivalences faced by the center with respect to confrontation with its "other", i.e., with the colony or the periphery. In literature, the meaning becomes appropriated or expropriated, colonial discourses become inverted or, on the contrary, they become reified. According to Loomba, literature is the main cultural space where the complex process of transculturation takes place due to the fact that both the colonizing and the colonized cultures somewhat absorb their opposites, inscribe themselves into each other, and allow for the origination of not only new genres but also new ideas and identities (Loomba 2005: 63). Therefore, Jaguar Paw on the Yucatán beach, which has just been claimed by the Europeans, can metonymically represent not only Gibson's dual optics of the extinction of perverse barbarity on one hand and the salvation of a fearless man who honors family values on the other hand – but in opposition to the interpellation of the screenplay – also a significant challenge for Western thought and concept of the self. Jaguar Paw and his world, as well as the universe of Spanish seamen is becoming hybridized in Bhabha's sense of the word; from the perspective of postcolonial criticism, this first contact irretrievably destabilizes the existing epistemologies and paradigmatic anchoring of the Western subject, since „colonial identities are always a matter of flux" (Loomba 2005: 148, 194, Bhabha 1994). The objective of this text is to analyze such modifications and hybridizations of cultural representations of indigenous femininity or, to be exact, Chicana femininity.

In spite of the introduction of the movie, the objective of this text is neither to analyze *Apocalypto* and its distorting colonialist optics, nor to analyze its androcentric and almost misogynist charge in greater detail; women – especially the partner of Jaguar Paw – are portrayed exclusively with the use of stereotypes and as one-dimensional victims of violence, and as mothers (often concurrently) or, as the case may be, as supporters of the hegemonic ideology of violent subjugation that could be suitably expressed with the use of

the term "collaborators of patriarchy" (Knotková-Čapková 2005: 145). This movie illustration serves as a clear example of the functioning of postcolonial analysis that attaches equal weight to the form of representation and the content of the representation within the framework of the study of historical and social context while testifying to the inherent characteristics of the colonial discourse that is in essence contradictory, i.e., the colonial system needs to civilize its "others" (i.e., describe them as backward and lacking culture) while constantly keeping them in the position of the "other" in order to function properly; and it needs to constantly perpetuate their otherness (Loomba 2005: 145). Last but not least, the discussed motion picture offers a concentration of androcentric discourses and notions of European colonial expansion that treat "canonical ideologies of conquest and resistance as a masculine and heroic enterprises" (Pratt 1993: 860). Femininity is thus marginalized and rendered passive. In other words, the enslaving and materializing effects of colonialism and patriarchy are intensified in relation to subaltern subjects in general and to racialized indigenous women in particular; quite often, these effects erase their chances of self-representation and agency. To sum up, the "subaltern cannot speak" (Spivak 1988: 308). Not many types of literature are typified by conscious, reflexive, and collective effort to reinterpret femininity to allow it to correspond to the lived female experience (Blake 2008) on the one hand and disrupt the colonial and patriarchal dictate on the other hand, as is the case of Chicana literature.

Nevertheless, Spivak's subaltern silence does not testify to the inability or incompetence of postcolonial subjects to verbalize their experience; rather, it testifies to the fact that colonial and patriarchal systems of gender, racial, and class oppression and broadly speaking identity oppression prevent the existence of discourse in which the subaltern could speak and be heard (Spivak 1988, Gunew, Spivak 1986). The unfeasibility of subaltern speech is, however, related particularly to the nonexistence of experience and identity uncontaminated by colonialism as well as to the nostalgic yet unsustainable notion that although the indigenous cultures were subject to the colonizing center, their cultural roots remained unaffected by the impact of the subjugation and can be reconstructed with the use of some miracle method, dusted off, and understood. However, such cultures and pre-colonial experiences are both inaccessible and unrealistic because they are a social construct that discloses the enduring Western desire for clearly defined, fixed, and genuine categories (Loomba 2005: 196).

However, such a desire is dystopic for colonized subjects with indigenous roots because directly "in [their] flesh, (r)evolution works out the clash of cultures" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 103). Chicana/o bodies and indigenous bodies and their cultural representations are a crossroads of mixed races, cultures, spiritualities, languages, sexualities, and antagonistic social expectations. In other words, postcolonial subjects – referred to with the use of the Spanish term *mestizaje*, embody and perform the negation of the Western desire for immaculateness. In Bhabha's terms, the colonial hybrid personifies ambivalence and therefore represents a negative transparency (Bhabha 1994: 112). In such interpretations, hybridity can be read not only as a mix of separate cultural traditions but also as a form of epistemology, i.e., recognition of the fact that identity is an arena of permanent negotiations where the efforts of the dominant culture to enclose and control the hegemonic notion of subjectivity are repaid by subversive narratives and strategic approaches of appropriation and re-evaluation by the minorities (Smith 2004: 252).

As explicated in the preceding chapter, Anzaldúa addresses the issue of hybrid identity that combines Mexican and North American roots as well as the heritage of Mesoamerican indigenous societies via the concepts of mestiza consciousness (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 78-91). Arising from the specific geographic and cultural milieu where values and identities, which are seemingly opposing intersect, mestiza consciousness seeks to form politics that is able to capture the difference beyond the established othering hierarchy that would support liveable and non-injuring identities. However, mestiza consciousness is not only an epistemological standpoint allowing for "intellectual decolonization"[36] (Mignolo 2005: 45) of subaltern subjects that live at the border between the United States and Mexico (and on the border/fringe of representations), but also a conscious, continuous, strategic, and reflected work aimed at the healing of individuals from multiple oppression on the one hand and the whole Chicana/o community from colonial trauma on the other hand:

> 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 four lives, our culture, our languages, our thoughts. A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could […]

[36] Walter Mignolo uses the term "intellectual decolonization" for positive results that so-called border thinking, in which we can identify methodologic and epistemological parallels with Anzaldúa's notion of mestiza consciousness, can bring to subjugated postcolonial subjects.

> bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war. […] The struggle has always been inner, and is played out in the outer terrains. Awareness of our situation must come before inner changes, which in turn come before changes in society. Nothing happens in the "real" world unless it first happens in the images in our heads (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 102, 109).

To stress again the argument developed in the previous chapter, mestiza consciousness as one of the forms of expressing the hybridity of the Chicana community does not represent the effort to simply combine opposing loyalties and antagonistic belongings (Rebolledo 1995: 128). On the contrary, it is an examination of limitations of the conceptualization of a brand new and locally rooted epistemology and new (self)awareness in the global space of the postcolonial and concurrently neocolonial[37] social order.

Projects such as the concept of mestiza consciousness can also be perceived as a way to overcome Spivak's skepticism regarding subaltern ability to speak. The intellectual effort to grasp the multilayered nature of the oppression within the Chicana/o community in general – and with respect to gender and sexual identity of the author and the androcentrism of the Chicano Movement – and in Chicana women in particular, is characterized not only by Anzaldúa's feminist activism but also by her literary works. As Rebolledo aptly noted: "[In Chicanas] oppression, pain, alienation, and disappointment are first suffered in silence, then expressed in language, and eventually transcended through writing" (Rebolledo 1995: 128). Literature written by subaltern or postcolonial subjects can thus acquire a therapeutic effect, and in case of Chicana authors who are negotiating various hybrid and subordinate positions, we may almost claim that Chicana literary works and Chicana feminism are one and the same. In other words, the contemporary form of Chicana literature created a discourse that is the basis of Chicana feminism; thus it is both an artistic and a political

[37] Due to their intersectionality and inherent cultural and historical sensitivity, postcolonial studies take note of both decolonizing effects in various geographic and cultural contexts and the flexibility of the capitalist system and its ability to adapt to changing social and power structures. In other words, colonialism was the catalyst of the transformation of European society towards capitalism; yet formal decolonization of a specific territory in the sense of acquiring political independence does not necessarily mean that such a territory will not become so-called neocolonial territory, i.e., economically or culturally dependent on the former colonial center. As Loomba points out: "[w]e cannot dismiss either the importance of formal decolonization or the fact that unequal relations of colonial rule are reinscribed in the contemporary imbalances between 'first' and 'third' world nations. The new global order does not depend upon direct rule. However, it does allow the economic, cultural and (to varying degrees) political penetration of some countries by others." (Loomba 2005: 12).

I have engaged what could be labeled as neocolonial influences partly in article "On Border and On Murder: Juárez Femi(ni)cides" (Jiroutová Kynčlová 2015).

domain where acknowledged and reflected processes of strategic reconfigurations of cultural representations encumbered by colonialism, androcentrism, homophobia, and racism take place (Quiñonez 2002: 138).

5.3 When the Language of a Woman Betrays: La Malinche

Although the introductory part of this article brought us to a Yucatán beach at the beginning of the 16th century, this retrospective is not simply a purposeful detour in place and time; it is a highly relevant moment for the postcolonial situation of Chicana writers. In case of Gibson's *Apocalypto*, it is not important whether the commander of the arriving Spanish fleet was Francisco Hernández de Córdoba, Juan de Grijalva, or Hernán Cortés. What is important is the fact that the vessels represent European civilization and civility, Christianity, and colonial expansion as a promise of a new world (Eurocentric) order. However, for the current situation of Chicana women, the crucial fact is that – metaphorically speaking – *instead* of Jaguar Paw, who kneels *before* his two potential murderers (let's imagine the film scene), a woman stands *between* the two commanders, makes vivid gestures, and speaks (and now let's imagine this historical scene).[38]

It is La Malinche,[39] Cortés' interpreter, who played a prominent historical role during the Spanish crusade through Mexico that culminated by the fall of the Aztec Empire in 1521. Since the essence of interpreting lies in the ability to mediate knowledge with the use of language, the position of La Malinche is intermediary and thus highly ambivalent because it arises from a controlled discourse:

> [Malinche's] role entails radically divided objectives: it functions to acquire the power of the new language and culture in order to preserve the old, even whilst it assists the invaders in their overwhelming of that culture. In that divided moment the interpreter discovers the impossibility of living completely through either discourse. The intersection of these two

[38] This description is inspired by the depiction in the so-called Florentine Codex, which is printed in Todorov's *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (Todorov 1999). The image portrays Cortés and the Aztec ruler Moctezuma each placed at the margin of the illustration. La Malinche is positioned between the two men (and the two cultures and worlds they come to represent). Thus, she not only occupies the symbolic space, but also the physical space that can be labeled as liminal. According to Bhabha, liminality refers to space-in-between that is typified by ambiguity, hybridity, fluidity, and the potential for subversion, transgression, and transformation (Bhabha 1994: 142-146).

[39] The historical figure of La Malinche is often referred to by other names, i.e., the Spanish (Doña) Marina or Aztec Malitzin or Malitzín Tenepal or Malinal/Malinali.

> discourses on which the interpreter balances constitutes a site both exhilarating and disturbing. […] [She] is caught in the conflict between destruction and creativity (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin 2002: 79).

The masculine image of the conquest described above (Pratt 1993: 860) thus acquires first gender-related cracks through the agency of an indigenous female interpreter. Although Malinche's empowerment by her being an interpreter could be called into question by referring to her gender and racial subordination to a white male, her former enslavement, or the fact that she had been presented to Cortés as a gift along with 19 other girls (Cypess 1997, Todorov 1999) – an example of objectification par excellence arises here – and the fact that via her service to the colonizer, she performs symbolic violence according to Bourdieu (Bourdieu 2001), I tend toward the opposite interpretation. La Malinche is endowed with unusual power that determines the conditions and characteristics of the communication and contact between Cortés and the Aztec elite; thus also impacting the history of Mexico. She is the one to define meaning and she mediates knowledge because "the limits of her understanding […] were [Cortés'] limits" (Greenblatt, 1991: 191). The conquistador and his mission are thus both in the hands of Malinche whose language competence resulted in the merging of Cortés and his interpreter under her name in the awareness of the indigenous inhabitants – as Todorov aptly noted "for once, it is not the woman who takes the man's name" (Todorov, 1996: 101).

However, this interpretation-defying couple (Todorov, 1999: 101; Greenblatt 1991: 143) is linked not only by overcoming the limits of the existing knowledge but also by transgressing the sexual norms and taboos of racial miscegenation that are, according to Mexican writer and Nobel Prize winner for literature Octavio Paz, situated in the core of both Mexican and Chicana/o national identity (Paz 1985: 65-88). Malinche is not just Cortés' interpreter, she becomes his partner and the mother of their son Martín, the symbolic first mestizo and "origin of the Mexican nation"[40] (Cypess 1997: 9). Chicanas who critically articulate and

[40] In this context, Cypess points out that the notion of Malinche being the first in the sense of giving birth to the mestizo race is truly symbolic, since historical records show that children had been born from European-Indigenous unions even before the arrival of the son of Cortés and Malinche, to be exact, from the marriage between Spanish seaman Gonzalo Guerrero, who shipwrecked in the area of the Mexican Gulf, and his Maya wife. Guerrero supposedly assimilated into the Maya community so much that he refused to "be saved" (Cypess 1997: 173) when Cortés was moving across the region. The reason that it is Malinche who is considered to be the mother of *mestizaje* and not Guerrero's nameless Maya wife can be seen not only in Cortés' social status and his historical significance but also in the fact that the famous conquistador never veered away from his colonial civilizing mission and remained faithful to his culture; whereas Guerrero's

address their hybrid and intermediary identity consider themselves to be the "symbolic daughters of La Malinche" because they are also intermediating meanings and representations between two cultures and they are bearers of mestiza blood and mestiza consciousness (Cypess 1997: 142).

Nevertheless, the relationship of Chicanas to Malinche exists not merely within the framework of her liminal, intermediary, and maternal role. First and foremost, it is motivated by the gradual, patriarchal, and nationalistic transformation of this historic figure, which was respected by the Spanish, into the negative archetype of Mexican femininity that gives her mind and body to the white colonizers. Within the discourse of the Mexican struggle for independence from Spain, she becomes the greatest traitor of the nation, the Mexican Eve who succumbed to the seduction of the serpent in the Garden of Eden (Cypess 1997: 2, 9). Indigenous cultures yielded to the Spanish Crown because Malinche embraced otherness and symbolically castrated the indigenous men by having a relationship with a European man (Alarcón 1989: 61). She is the historical and mythological mother of the Mexican nation and simultaneously the rejected whore, the raped and dirty *La Chingada* (Paz 1985: 76-77). Her transgression is so grave that her name became a part of the Spanish lexicon – in the word *malinchista* – as the synonym of betrayal and treacherousness. Femininity is thus by default discursively linked with betrayal, and to betray someone means to become a woman or appear as a woman (Pratt 1993: 860, Gaspar de Alba 2005a: 47, Jiroutová Kynčlová 2012: 104).

By labeling Malinche *La Chingada*, Paz attempts to explain the somewhat masochistic self-understanding of the Mexican self and of Mexican machismo that by extension applies to Chicano masculine position as well (Paz, [1961] 1985: 65-88). The label strongly accentuates the sexual subtext and violent possession of a woman. At the same time this is also stressed by the epithet Paz gives La Malinche, which denotes her passive, inactive role. In this regard, every woman is already a whore – *La Chingada*, as the Spanish verb *chingar* (to fuck; to screw (up)) within the context of a heteronormative order a priori discursively signifies and connotes (male) activity and (female) passivity on the one hand, and implied sin of (interracial) sexual intercourse on the other. In Western culture, the sexual act always

decision to stay as a member of an indigenous society, in fact, betrays and challenges this mission. Thus, Guerrero can be partially considered as Malinche's precursor in the sense of cultural and physical betrayal; however, the fact that he, unlike Malinche, never became the subject of disgrace and representations of contemptible masculinity can be ascribed particularly to his position at the fringes of historical events and no less significantly to his gender identity.

inherently entails all such meanings and, further, is associated with violence which is actually dictated and instigated by the very aforementioned verb, the meaning of which "always contains the idea of aggression, whether it is the simple act of molesting, pricking or censuring, or the violent act of wounding and killing. The verb denotes violence, an emergence from oneself to penetrate another by force. It also means to injure, to lacerate, to violate – bodies, souls, objects – and to destroy" (Paz, [1961] 1985: 76-77).

The sin of sexual encounter which is implied by both the verb *chingar* and by the derived feminine label *La Chingada*, and which arches over to the mythical past of a virgin, innocent Eden that becomes according to traditional understandings corrupted by Eve's original sin, leaves an impression solely on the bodies of women. By the effect of this verb, La Malinche, *La Chingada*, Eve, mother, woman all become prisoners in their sexualized bodies, bearers of stigmatized sexuality they cannot escape, embodiments of hated sin, and, finally, representations of abject passivity. Because of the always-implied sin, La Malinche is a metaphor of betrayal, since the verb *chingar* in its significance makes any other intercourse but rape impossible and discursively drives the grammatical, targeted patient into a single role – that of a victim and/or an object. Thus, if the sexually possessing subject, the *chingón* (who discursively and semantically cannot be anyone else but a rapist) is at the same time the colonizer himself, the woman's sinful transgressions are, of course, doubled. La Malinche's sin casts a shadow on her (symbolic) sons, Paz's *hijos de la Chingada*. The transfer of responsibility from the rapist colonizer onto the victim is discursively accomplished.

Such associations, as I have already shown throughout this doctoral thesis, have a negative impact on gender and racial milieu of Mexican and Chicana/o societies and cultural representations of gender: femininity stands for an abject identity and masculinity is characterized by internalized racism and machismo (cf. Paz 1985). The ambivalence of Mexican-Chicano – i.e. mestizo – masculinity is explained by Emma Pérez:

> Within a racist society, the mestizo male is a castrated man in relation to the white-male colonizer father. His anxiety is not only reduced to the fear of losing the phallus, but also to the fear that his will never match the supreme power of the white man's. While the white son has the promise of becoming the father, the mestizo, even when he becomes the father is set apart by his skin color and by a lack of language, the dominant language of the colonizer. Moreover, he must repudiate *la india y la mestiza* for fear that he

> could be like her, a weak, castrated betrayer of his people. Hence, he colludes with the white-colonizer-father as they both condemn *la Chicana* (Pérez 1991: 167).

Within the context of postcolonial Chicana/o society, the mestizo man is thus biased in favor of his patriarchal privilege rather than in favor of his racial roots. He affiliates with his white father, who came to colonize the original cultures and their territories and who functions as a representative of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, Messerschmidt 2005). Since colonized cultures are being symbolically emasculated and the subjugated territories are typically associated with femininity (Said 1978, Loomba 2005: 128, 130), the mestizo's affiliation with the father-colonizer is a desperate effort to validate his own masculinity. However, since his masculinity is being continuously undermined by his mother's racial stigmatization, the mestizo reaches for another tool of androcentric power, i.e., machismo and/or misogyny (Gaspar de Alba 2005a: 45). That is one of the reasons why Anzaldúa is able to uncover the whole patriarchal logic of female betrayal and say: "not me sold out my people but they me" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 45), because as a result of racism and due to patriarchal claims that men use to shield themselves, mestizas must fight symbolic violence. The author sees this moment as the prime example of betrayal: "The worst kind of betrayal lies in making us believe that the Indian woman in us is the betrayer" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 45).

It is evident that the nationalist and androcentric mythologization of Malinche across the centuries were subject to significant changes of content; yet the negative aspects of their interpretations of femininity remained regardless of historical facts (cf. Riebová 2013: 130).[41] Paradoxically, the ideology of androcentrism thus purposefully hybridizes the myth

[41] Markéta Riebová gives a concise and accurate summary of the ideological modifications of La Malinche as a historical figure that had been recreated into a myth: "Within the fundamental Christian imagination during the colonial period, Malinche is put on an equal footing with the foremother Eve and her sin. This myth complemented by the myth of the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe is an offshoot of traditional patriarchal view of a woman as a virgin or a harlot in the Western civilization and, what is more, is further reified by the myth indigenous women's unrestrained sexuality that widely spread following the European arrival in the Americas. In the course of the 19th century, during the formation of the Mexican national identity following the country's won independence from Spain, the former symbolism of sinful sexuality is supplemented with a motif of her betraying the "indian nation" arising from the strategic service that Malinche provided for the Spanish conquistador. And, finally, the 20th century (as seen in [Paz's] *The Labyrinth of Solitude*) adds yet another metaphor to the existing context; it is the metaphor of conquest as rape. In this regard Malinche captures a woman's situation (a matter with no will of her own), who is destined by nature to a vulnerable "openness" and to passive enduring of violence perpetrated by a "closed" and therefore invulnerable man" (Riebová 2013: 130; translation mine).

of Malinche and alters it. Since Malinche is an integral part of the Chicana/o cultural heritage and the Chicana/o ethnicity has indigenous roots, Chicanas as women who are bridging cultures view the mentioned pathological representation of femininity as "direct defamation of themselves" (Cypess 1997: 12); thus they stress "the urgent need to dominate the written word in order to smash stereotypes and rewrite history from the perspective of the oppressed" (Yarbro-Bejarano 1996: 216). Therefore, these authors extricate Malinche from traditional misogynist narratives in their works and place her within the historical context, where they perceive her as an active and intelligent woman who was able to make decisions and use her knowledge and skills to become a confident partner to political elites during diplomatic negotiations, whereby she managed to defy the prescribed social roles. Her ability to lead and intermediate to undermine gender expectations show Malinche as a pragmatist who uses the more or less limited possibilities of the patriarchal order to become empowered. By deciding to speak, Malinche establishes herself as a speaking subject or a "feminist prototype" (Candelaria 2002: 1, Alarcón 1989, Esquibel 2006: 24, Gaspar de Alba 2005a: 55, Jiroutová Kynčlová 2012).

While such reinterpretations of La Maliche may be empowering for Chicanas, women's use of language is still vastly burdened with gender stereotypes as for example documented by Dale Spender's extensive study *Man Made Language* or Robin Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* and other linguists' research (Spender 1987, Lakoff [1975] 2004, Cameron 1992, Mills 1997). Since Malinche's historical significance is so narrowly bound with language, utterance, discourse, and translation, the issue also needs to be addressed here. As Jacques Lacan (1977) infers in his theory of subjectivity based on the prerequisite that an individual be a subject only upon entering the realm of language (which is further elaborated on and problematized by Lacan's feminist disciple and critic Luce Irigaray (1985 [1977])), in an androcentric system (be it subject to the influences of colonization or not) women exist beyond what he calls the Law of the Father and beyond the Symbolic order or representation, and thus the language they have at their disposal, is not theirs (cf. Morris 2000: 113-125, Grosz 1990: 146, 177). Irigaray with Lacan in mind, similarly as Spender mentioned above, questions the seeming neutrality and impartiality of the system of representation as follows: "A language that presents itself as universal, and which is in fact

maintained by men only, is this not what maintains the alienation and exploitation of women in and by society?“ (Irigaray in Grosz 1990: 177).

With regards to the symbolic distribution of gender roles and power relations, nevertheless, it is symptomatic of the androcentric society that – while positing women as inferior in language (Lakoff, [1975] 2004, Spender 1987: 10-12, 15, Simon 1996: 1) – it places, in a peculiar manner, the responsibility for the abuse, misuse, and use of language on women and furthermore makes this responsibility a deeply arbitrary phenomenon, as the purpose(s) that both women’s speaking and/or silence are to serve are frequently punished by the moral order along gender lines. Concurrently, aspects of hierarchy and gender are repeatedly represented in binary oppositions. Besides speaking and writing as Derrida argued (Derrida in Morris 2000: 131), such a binary opposition is for example represented by the contrast of active utterance versus passive translation and, more specifically, the contrast of a creative act followed by a reacting, i.e. derived act of reproduction and translation (Simon 1996: 9, 11, 59). The oppositions of authorship/translation or original/copy form an analogy to the men/woman binary not only because binary oppositions are hierarchical and always-already gendered, but also because in Western mythology authorship is ascribed to masculinity, whereas reproduction is associated with femininity (Simon 1996: 9-11, Gilbert, Gubar 2000: 3-14). Thus, La Malinche’s speaking, interpreting and acting is inherently performed within a discourse of pre-existent inferiority or subjugation that is implied by the structure and organization of the language and hierarchical Western thought that both arrive in the New World with Cortés as free-riding stowaways.

An interpretative turn of such determinist *cul-de-sac* position for La Malinche’s translating activity is offered by a feminist treatment of translation studies. Informed by gender as an analytical category and poststructuralist theory, feminist translation studies does not view the original as active and the subsequent acts of translation and transmission as passive. It posits these acts as interdependent, mutually constitutive and performative, “each bound to the other in the recognition that representation is always an active process that the original is also at a distance from its originating intention” (Simon 1996: 10). As Simon further suggests, this view allows us to grasp translation as a fluid, processual production of meaning, similar to other kinds of writing or speaking. The hierarchy of writing or speaking roles, like gender identities needs to be conceived of as mobile, performative and as placed on a continuum where they are placed in relative terms one to another (Simon 1996: 11-12).

Such perception allows us, once again, to analyze Malinche's role as productive and not derivative, while bearing in mind both the ambiguity and potential for palimpsestuous rewritings of her historical presence as I have already implied in the discussed examples.
Finally, the interpretation of Martha Cutter, who perceives Malinche as a paradigmatic figure who brings a promise of uncovering an "interlingual language," i.e. certain discursive perspectives arising from Chicana/o bilingualism, that combines the languages of two colonizing superpowers and their worldviews and that may give rise to a third hybrid language full of liminal tensions. The notion of a hybrid language that can undermine the extant lexicons and grammar which construct binary oppositions and that better correspond to the situation of postcolonial subjects (Cutter 2010: 2), resonates with Chicana postcolonial and feminist revision. Todorov's interpretation of Malinche, as a woman who has agency, also relates to the active use of two languages that allow her to grasp the mentality of the conquistador and thus better understand her own world. Therefore, in addition to racial *mestizaje*, Malinche represents particularly a cultural and epistemological *mestizaje* (Todorov 1999: 100), which implicitly correlates with Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness as well as the predominant interpretations of Chicana/o identity. Her epistemological hybridity is what I consider the most powerful and potent aspect of this paradigmatic feminine figure. In this respect, Malinche is knowingly transformed by Chicanas into an empowering hybrid symbol.

5.4 Both a Saint with Bronze Skin and a Sexual Icon: La Virgen de Guadalupe

The abject features of Malinche within the nationalist and patriarchal discourse are underscored by the parallel presence of her foil, and no less significant archetype of Mexican and Chicana femininity, i.e., the sexually pure and culturally highly hybridized representation of Christ's mother – the Virgin of Guadalupe. Hybridity, as Bhabha's negation of transparency (Bhabha 1994: 112) characterizes La Virgen from the moment of her first appearance.

Ten years after Cortés' conquest of Tenochtitlan, the capital city of the Aztec Empire, La Virgen appeared four times to poor Cuauhtlatoatzin, an Aztec convert baptized as Juan Diego. She wore attire typical of local inhabitants and invited him, in the Nahuatl language, to deliver his testimony of her appearance to the local Bishop, and presented him with roses that she made bloom in the desert to provide him with proof. Her image was also imprinted

into Diego's cloak (Woolf 1958: 34-35 Trujillo 1998: 214, Yeh, Olaguibel 2011: 170). She introduced herself as "Mary, the Mother of God" and as "Te Coatlaxopeuh,"[42] which is a homophonous word to the Spanish "Guadalupe" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 51). And since her appearance took place in an area where the indigenous goddess Tonantzin had been worshipped before the conquest, the revelation of María was considered as her embodiment by the colonized inhabitants (Woolf 1958: 37, Yeh, Olaguibel 2011: 171). Thus, a hybrid saint, who is sometimes strategically referred to as Tonantzin-Guadalupe by Chicanas, was born. It is probable that this precise moment of religious syncretism resulted in the fact that the Virgin of Guadalupe is a Madonna with bronze-colored skin.[43] The syncretic meaning and the religious and revolutionary effectiveness of La Virgen thus comprises both the content and the form of her representation. Chicana re-interpretations, as I will argue below, reflect both of these levels.

On the one hand, the racialized version of La Virgen can be read critically as another ideological instrument of European colonization, since the culturally/racially hybrid essence accommodated the indigenous inhabitants, and thus contributed towards successful spreading of Christianity in the Americas. On the other hand, what the colonized people find in La Virgen's role as an intermediary in their relationship to God is the legitimization of their faith as well as their culture that was being othered by colonialism. The white Christ is perceived as an imported icon whereas the "brown" Virgin Mary is seen as one of the locals (Yeh, Olaguibel 2011: 171). As simultaneously pointed out by Wolf (1958), the appropriation of a hybrid Lady of Guadalupe and the identification with a new faith via this figure provided the indigenous inhabitants with a possibility to achieve Christian salvation while retaining their faith in their original gods. Therefore, the Christian faith – and more specifically the Catholic religion – themselves are hybridized along with Guadalupe. By accepting the cult of the Virgin Mary, the colonized people were established in the eyes of the Spanish as members of the Christian, Catholic community who cannot be (as easily)

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[42] Transcriptions of the Aztec name "Coatlaxopeuh" or "Coatlalopeux" and such like vary; the same applies to their translations: "She who has dominion over serpents," "She who crushed the serpent," etc. Similar is the case with the name and translation of the name of the goddess "Tonantzin," "Tonantsi," respectively, which stands for "Mother Earth" or "Our Lady Mother" (Wolf 1958, Trujillo 1998, Yeh, Olaguibel 2011, Anzaldúa [1987]1999). However, from the semantic perspective, the translations do not differ significantly.

[43] It is not completely clear when and how the Virgin of Guadalupe became racially hybridized in this manner – which is, after all, typical of the process of hybridization – it is clear, however, that it happened on the American continent and not in Europe, i.e., Spain; although depictions of the Virgin Mary with a different color of skin than the "traditional" white are known both in Europe and within the context of the spreading of Christianity e.g., in Africa (Yeh, Olaguibel 2011: 171, 177).

exploited and should be attributed the right to due legal actions or citizenship (Wolf 1958: 37). By revealing herself to a member of the lowest social class, completely within the intentions of Christian solidarity, La Virgen subverts the class hierarchy; her appearance is the validation of *mestizaje*. She is characterized by hybrid racial and spiritual emancipation; in a sense, she is also characterized by gender emancipation since in addition to the male Holy Trinity she personifies the legitimacy of femininity in transcendence and symbolically makes Christianity accessible to women, which can be seen as a revolutionary act within the context of Catholicism. Blake (2008), Trujillo (1998), Anzaldúa ([1987] 1999) and others prove that the space for free experience of mestiza spirituality that was made accessible to women by La Virgen is continuing to grow, and it became a part of everyday lived experience of Mexican women and Chicanas. Guadalupe has become their spiritual mother.

Nevertheless, not even Virgin Mary of Guadalupe is free of noticeable ambivalences that relate predominantly to the Catholic tradition, where the mother of Christ is the maternal figure overflowing with mercy, love, tenderness, and care on the one hand; yet she is the embodiment of obedience, devotion, suffering, physical purity, and passivity on the other hand. Such symbols are often turned against women in androcentric societies because they can be used to legitimize violence and stigmatization of female sexuality. La Virgen is thus instrumentalized in various contexts simultaneously as the symbol of liberation as well as the symbol complaisance and dominance (Peterson 1992: 39). It is precisely the Catholic image of femininity, which dictates that women are to be subordinate to men and enforces Chicano machismo that complicates the relationship of Chicana writers to La Virgen. To become a cultural heroine, she had to go through a transformation, as Malinche did (Rebolledo, Rivero 1993: 191).

Her transformation unfolds on two levels. The first one has already been implied above: the goddess Tonatzin is incorporated into the iconography of the Virgin Mary, and thus she appreciates the indigenous roots. She is instrumental in providing the original inhabitants their dignity, which had been taken by colonialism, and she becomes the form of female access to deity. The second level is more radical and, when viewed through the traditional patriarchal and/or catholic optics, it may even seem blasphemous: the Virgin of Guadalupe, in reaction to the asexuality of immaculate conception and the Spanish desexualization of the goddess Coatlaxopeuh – which is in direct genealogical line of the goddess Tonantzin –, is represented as the object of female sexual desire and as the mediator for discovery of the

silenced and taboo female sexuality (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 53-54, Cisneros 1996: 51, Blake 2008: 100). In a controversially titled essay/confession *"Guadalupe the Sex Goddess"* Sandra Cisneros recapitulates not only her sexual awakening painfully affected by Catholic stigmatization of the female body but also the incremental recognition of the indigenous essence of La Virgen, to whom she must yet find her way through the sediments of white, Christian, and desexualized Catechism. In the moment when she uncovers the indigenous roots and the hybrid identity of the spiritual icon, whom she now addresses as Tonantzin-Guadalupe, she is not afraid to uncover the appearance of her own vulva, i.e., breach a sexual taboo. She speculates whether she should look under the skirts of Virgin of Guadalupe, yet she is certain that she would find the same things and in the same color as on her own body: a vulva, through which children are born, and dark brown nipples. This discovery is appeasing because "Lupe", who was transformed by Chicanas into her corporeality and her indigenous deity, extols the female body as well as female spirituality.

Equally effective, and no less explicit, the re-interpretation of La Virgen as an empowering lesbian icon can be found on the title of the first edition of the book *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About* (Trujillo 1991). The reproduction of the painting of *La Ofrenda*[44] (1990) by Chicana painter Ester Hernández features a woman with a punk hairstyle who is looking back at a hand that is placing a red rose as a sacrificial gift on her naked back, which is covered by an extensive tattoo depicting the Virgin of Guadalupe. The whole figure of La Virgen is surrounded by a traditional mandorla, whose shape reminds us of female labia; and the bloom of the rose may be interpreted as the symbol of the clitoris. The image is transgressive not only due to its above mentioned content, but also due to the fact that it depicts a naked female body that is (in relation to the title of the book) the body of a lesbian, and also due to the fact that a tattoo of the Virgin Mary adorns almost exclusively Mexican and/or Chicano male bodies. "Lesbian body-as-altar" (Yarbro-Bejarano in Trujillo 1998: 219) is thus in addition to the context of male tattoo art used as a subversion of heteronormative, patriarchal, and Christian religious representations of the mother of Christ, and it serves to break the duality of the body and spirit that is the basis of traditional Catholic morals. Nevertheless, the most radical subversion related to the imagery of La Virgen can be seen in the Chicana re-interpretation of the mandorla – Maria's gloriole

[44] The painting can be seen on the official website of the painter. After its publication, Hernández became the target of attacks; that is why she did not give her consent for the painting to be used on the title of the later editions of the book (Trujillo 1998: 217-218): http://www.esterhernandez.com/images/ester-art/1348158304_10-LaOfrenda-72dpi.jpg.

or halo. Although the parallel between the mandorla and a vulva is a relatively frequent construct present in medieval iconography, the desexualization of Mary, a mother and a virgin at the same time, usually disguises such associations (Pearson 2002). That is why the inherent performative act, which cannot be undone once it has taken place, is crucial in the Chicana rewriting of the image of the "brown" Madonna. By making this parallel visible, this subversive insight becomes instilled into all who encounter/encountered such an interpretation of the gloriole. This texts inevitably does the same.[45]

La Virgen is usually treated as the perfect opposite of Malinche. Whereas Malinche is the raped traitor and La Chingada who sold her people out to the conquistador, Virgin Mary is pure innocence. In Mexican/Chicana patriarchal ideology, this pair, which is referred to by the hybrid name of "ChingadaLupe" by Mexican sociologist Roger Bartra (Bartra in Riebová 2013: 139), merges into one model of femininity that combines three disparate attributes: mother, virgin, and whore (Gaspar de Alba 2005a: 51, Riebová 2013:137-141, Paz 1985). It is precisely these mutually dependent, and thus inseparable, representations that establish the above mentioned character of the ambivalent gender relationship relating both to machismo and misogyny directed against rebelling femininity and/or motherhood. On the contrary, the type of womanhood and maternity associated with the features of La Virgen are worshipped. Therefore, the purpose the employment of such femininity and motherhood should serve in a patriarchal culture is crucial. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that Mexican/Chicana archetypal motherhood, whether it complies with the patriarchal imperatives (La Virgen) or subverts them (Malinche), is always connected to a loss and ambivalence and, as I point out below, its representations are not limited to the mentioned contradictory duality.

The entire Latin America acknowledges Guadalupe as its spiritual mother and protector; and due to the immigrant waves that came to the USA in the past, and still do today, her presence is becoming increasingly prominent even in the (North)American society. Here, we are facing one of the moments that complicates the relationship of Chicanas – in spite of the interpretations mentioned above – with La Virgen not in her capacity as a spiritual entity but

[45] Popular examples of appropriation and revaluation of traditional representations of the Virgin of Guadalupe also include the paintings of Yolanda Lopez. With the use of the iconography of the Virgin Mary, the author portrays common Mexican/Chicana women – for instance, her own grandmother who is sitting by the sewing machine and sewing a cape for La Virgen. Such images deconstruct the binary opposition between the immanent and the transcendent in the life of women. For more on this topic, see Březinová 2014.

as a socio-cultural phenomenon. The maternal union of Guadalupe and Malinche is represented by the loss of offspring. The Virgin Mary plays the utmost maternal role in her relationship to Christ; however, she loses her son due to Jesus' sacrifice. Martín Cortés, the symbolic first mestizo, is sent to Spain by his white father-colonizer soon after he is born (Leal 2005: 137, Díaz del Castillo in Rebolledo 1995: 62). Malinche loses her son, and "El Mestizo" is displaced from his native country. Symbolically, *mestizaje* is also displaced and Latin American migrants thus have no other option than to pray to their spiritual mother Guadalupe to protect them from the authority of the white men. However, Chicanas sometimes perceive La Virgen as a failing mother with respect to the migrants, similarly as her unusual juxtaposition – the Statue of Liberty. Their pleading with the Virgin Mary seems to be little effective since the promise of justice and equality represented by the statue in New York City remains unfulfilled when it comes to racial and cultural discrimination of Latin American arrivers to the USA. Such an interpretation thus imprints the more traditional notion of La Virgen as an insufficiently proactive figure that is unable to prevent the suffering of both herself and others; that is why she passively endures it (Rebolledo, Rivero 1993: 191).

Nevertheless, the surprisingly seldom-mentioned fact that La Virgen is always portrayed as being pregnant, to which testifies the symbolism of the black sash around her waist (Gonzalez-Crussi 1996:11), opens up new possibilities of interpretation. If Our Lady of Guadalupe is associated with historical narratives of colonization and religious narratives of redemption and motherly suffering in the public awareness, her pregnancy draws attention to another narrative that precedes both narratives. It is the narrative that has not been told yet: Jesus had not yet been born (and he hadn't died yet), therefore salvation has not yet been achieved and the story of Mary and Jesus – mother and son – still has an open ending. Mary's pregnancy is thus potent within the context of postcolonial reinterpretations in the sense that it does not impede our imagination and allows us to recreate the story of colonization and Latin American migration as a historical era that is not conquering but solidary or free of violence, while allowing us to consider the relationship between mother and child to be a bond that is not subject to patriarchal control. Unlike the suggested traditional and passivizing interpretation of Guadalupe in the paragraph above, the subversive reading of La Virgen via her pregnancy is empowering and emancipating from the historical, spiritual, and mainly gender perspective.

5.5 Maternal Ir/Responsibility: La Llorona

La Virgen and Malinche are complemented by a third female figure, La Llorona – the Weeping Woman. Like her companions, this hybrid representative of Chicana femininity is deprived of her offspring. She is a mythological character who appears at night in the vicinity of rivers and creeks in the form of a ghost and loudly laments the loss of her children, whom she had drowned; and now she is aimlessly looking for them (Rebolledo 1995: 62-63, Esquibel 2006: 29-40, Blake 2008: 45-55). The contradictory features of Llorona are drawn from various pre-Hispanic goddesses; most often, she is affiliated with the goddess of birth and death, Cihuacoatl. The legend of La Llorona demonstrates unusual dynamics that allow for the parallel existence of conventional narratives as well as cultural representations and re-interpretations that epitomize the changes in the Chicana community and identity (Perez 2008: 13).[46] The Weeping Woman is typically depicted as a wife whose husband abandoned her for another woman and leaves her by herself with the children. Llorona then kills her offspring either because she is desperate (she becomes virtually a mad victim of the man's actions that she is unable to face) or as an expression of revenge (in this case, by killing her children she makes it obvious that she does not recognize the authority of the man as a representative of patriarchy) and her character embodies the stereotype of a rejected and dangerous woman. Therefore, one should be careful around La Llorona under any circumstances because she is a threat not only to herself and her children but also to the representatives of patriarchal authority and the order itself.

There are, however, versions of the legend that explicitly address the issue of class inequality where Llorona is a poor woman whereas her husband is a member of higher social circles who finds a mistress of equal social standing (Perez 2008: 29). The class and gender intersection is supplemented by a version with a racial and colonial subtext in which La Llorona is explicitly described as an indigenous mistress of a white and powerful Spanish man. Thus the abandoned Indian is led to the murder of her children – and subsequent suicide – by their illegitimate status. That is just a short remove from combining Llorona

[46] In addition to running waters that can represent the danger of drowning, La Llorona is also connected to urban agglomerations and their dangerous places, such as garbage dumps, gutters, and railway crossings in newer versions of the myth. And "scaring" children with La Llorona is considered to be an educational warning about such places (Candelaria in Blake 2008: 45, Perez 2008: 28). By the same token, the myth may be instrumentalized within the context of globalization, which significantly changed the industrial landscape of the Mexican-American borderlands, as a warning for owners of factories and employers who profit from immigrant employees (Perez 2008).

and Malinche. Although the latter does not kill her children – Cortés' son Martín leaves Mexico and the daughter María (whose father was Juan Jaramillo to whom Cortés gave Malinche after the conquest of the Aztec Empire (!)) is made invisible by historical records, – she still loses her children due to European assimilation (Martín) and historical vacuum (María) (Perez 2008: 31). Therefore, the lament of La Llorona over her lost offspring is, figuratively speaking, also the lament of Malinche who, in addition to Martín and María also weeps for her symbolic child, i.e., the cultural *mestizaje* that faces discrimination and assimilation. And finally, the iconic representations of pieta – i.e., the scene of a mother weeping for her child (let's recollect Michelangelo's sculpting works) – once again link La Llorona and Malinche with the Virgin Mary of Guadalupe. The representations of Chicana femininity thus transform one into another, they share points of intersection and, in fact, can be a single highly hybrid woman that challenges the boundaries of myths. Simultaneously, however, female lament, as noted by Anzaldúa, can be the only refuge that the society affected by patriarchy and colonialism allows for women with hybrid identity (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 55). This interpretation of weeping, which could be compared to Spivak's subaltern silence, nevertheless, testifies much more to the social circumstances that cause it rather than to the weeping women themselves.

That is why it is gender-specific that the legend of La Llorona completely conceals the actions of the woman's male partner; it transfers the responsibility for the tragedy on the female protagonist while implicitly justifying double sexual standards. In other words, in the myth, the life of the husband, after he had left Llorona, continued peacefully without any consequences. The legend thus enforces the men's belief that patriarchy provides them with security (Candelaria in Perez 2008: 73). Furthermore, the narrative focuses exclusively on the actions of La Llorona after she had been abandoned and started killing her children; it provides zero space for her maternal features or her care of her children prior to the fatal act. Could La Llorona love her children and kill them nonetheless? Her identity is oversimplified as a mother-murderess and an image of feared maternity that not only brings life but also tramples upon it. In the Mexican and Chicana/o culture, such a model is used to legitimize patriarchal control over women.

It is precisely the general context of androcentrism and, as the case may be, colonialism and particularly some of their relevant gender manifestations, such as sexual violence, homophobia, discrimination, or social exclusion, that comprise the thematization and re-

interpretation of La Llorona by Chicana authors (Perez 2008: 73). Such a politically motivated and gender sensitive perspective can interpret the suicide/murder of La Llorona as an act of her own will, through which she prefers the death of both herself and her children to subjugation and life in a tyrannical system that cannot be escaped. Rather than living in slavery, she chooses death (Candelaria in Perez 2008: 74). In this regard, the killing is a controversial manifestation of love and respect toward the value of human being itself. Llorona's action is thus retold as an act of resistance to misogyny and patriarchy; by the same token, it does not exculpate her from killing her offspring. At this point, the hybrid nature of the legend unfolds once again because the motif of a mother killing her own children in opposition to the social system is also present in the African-American literary tradition, specifically in Morrison's novel *Beloved* (2004 [1987]) or Euripides' dramatic rendering of the Greek myth of Medea. While Morrison's heroine murders her daughter in protest against the system of slavery and the white, patriarchal property rules, Medea's infanticidal revenge is to target her adulterous husband and his manly reputation (cf. Esquibel 2006: 29, Blake 2008: 48).[47]

Furthermore, Rebolledo links Llorona to the whole Chicana/o culture that is aware of its vulnerability (Rebolledo 1995: 77) with regard to its hybridity within the context of androcentric, heteronormative society controlled by white men. Due to similar reasons, Cisneros transcribes the lament of La Llorona in her short story *Woman Hollering Creek* (1991) to hollering because only a raised voice commands attention (Perez 2008: 82). In

[47] Blake provides a more detailed discussion of the Greek myth of Medea. She notes it is vital to differentiate among the existing versions of the mythos as it is concretely Euripides' drama that lets the goddess/sorceress murder her children. Numerous variants of the Corinthian story predate Euripides' 431 B.C. play and these do not convey Medea as an offspring killer (cf. Blake 2008: 230-231).

The fact that La Llorona's resemblance to Medea represents a stimulating topic that bears interpretative significance for Chicanas is exemplified by Cherríe Moraga's play *Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea* (Moraga 2001). As Euripides' drama, Moraga, too, exploits the motif of a woman killing her child in the play, although the drama may be performed in such a way that makes it unclear whether the Mexican Medea's son Chac-Mool dies indeed (cf. Blake 2008: 183). Set in the future when the U.S. society dissolves into a number of smaller nations, the piece questions nationalist ideologies in general and Chicana/o nationalism in particular. The nation of Aztlán, an object of the heroine's political dedication she helped establish in the play's fictional reality, is portrayed as a utopia gradually going awry; it progressively takes on colonial(ist), racist, and sexist features despite the fact it was founded on thoroughly opposite values promulgated in *El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán*. In this regard, Mexican Medea's attempt at murder of her son Chac-Mool is conveyed as an evasion of his paternalistic and patriarchal indoctrination by the state ideology that Medea initially cautioned against. Also, the play's Medea subverts nationalist heteronormative standards by being a lesbian. To sum up, the variability inherent both in the myth of Medea and the myth of La Llorona (cf. Blake 2008: 230, Perez 2008, Jacobs 2006: 136-139) allows Moraga to fashion the play's protagonist in ways that directly address the Chicana condition and critique the gender bias and homophobia of *El Movimiento* while at the same time challenging the basis on nationalist ideologies.

this particular case, the raised voice removes the taboo of sexual violence, while the hollering or screaming is a manifestation of strength, freedom, and agency when the violence (and the patriarchal dictate) are defeated (Cisneros 1991: 43-56).

5.6 Three Against A Single Dualism in Postcolonial Territory

The addressed examples of paradigmatic archetypal models of Mexican and Chicana femininity with the use of gender, race, and hybridity, as the fundamental analytic categories demonstrate the ways in which androcentrism and colonialism imprint into the constructs of un/desired femininity. Alarcón summarizes the situation as follows:

> Insofar as [Chicana] feminine symbolic figures are concerned, much of the Mexican/Chicano oral tradition as well as the intellectual are dominated by La Malinche/Llorona and the Virgin of Guadalupe. The former is a subversive feminine symbol which often is identified with La Llorona, the latter a feminine symbol of transcendence and salvation. The Mexican/Chicano cultural tradition has tended to polarize the lives of women through these national (and nationalistic) symbols thereby exercising almost sole authority over the control, interpretation and visualization of women (Alarcón in Perez 2008: 31).

Thus, the discord between the established representations of femininity and the notion of oneself as a woman with hybrid identity leads Chicanas to complex reinterpretations of the mentioned symbols with the use of various – often antagonistic or hybrid – narrative strategies that are a manifestation of resistance and opposition to manifestations of androcentrism and colonialism while criticizing racism, sexism, homophobia, or social inequality. With respect to the objectives that such norms willingly and openly follow, the identities of La Malinche, La Virgen, and La Llorona are distinctively hybridized, fluid, and mutable.

As mentioned above, with respect to the synergy of power structures relating to colonialism, eurocentrism, and patriarchal social order, the stories of such identity changes and Deleuzian becoming are often either the subject of unreflected ideological misrepresentations or they remain outside the field of representation (Braidotti 2006: 133, Spivak 1988: 308-309). Postcolonial studies are interested particularly in such concealed and ambiguous representations the history of which, in case it was actually written and/or recorded –

Greenblatt explicitly refers to “vast silences” (Greenblatt 1991: 145) with respect to indigenous nations’ not having been heard – has never been regarded. It used to be perceived in a binary oppositional relation to the colonial center as irrelevant, insignificant, even subversive and false. Revisions of existing historical and cultural othering narratives with the use of critical tools of postcolonial studies make space for extending the notions of the subject as a fluid, unenclosed, and processual entity as well as notions of community where the subject becomes a part of community as constituted in its cultural space.

CONCLUSION

The analyses provided in this doctoral thesis render Chicana literature as a productive and effective means of communicating Chicana identity politics and feminism. Indeed, Chicana writing, feminism, and identity politics are co-constitutive phenomena that form a paradigmatically consistent and cohesive representational universe while maintaining genre and content heterogeneity and honing theories and methods of addressing culturally constructed difference as a concept. Chicana literature in general, and writings by its most prominent persona Gloria Anzaldúa in particular, exemplify a political instrumentalization of literary production that is reflexive, strategic and explicit about its purpose. Through the situatedness of Chicanas' lived experience and by its connecting with the reality of the multilayered milieu of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, Chicana authors produce counterhegemonic discourses that resist intersectional discrimination and work not only towards their personal empowerment, but also towards social change and justice for all.

More specifically, through literature, Chicanas critically reflect on and work with the fact that they are targets of multiple oppressions by virtue of being members of a gender-based minority within an ethnic group already marginalized by the dominant U.S. society given the cultural, linguistic, class, and racial differences. In other words, Chicanas are exposed to racial and cultural stereotypes on the part of the dominant society as Chicanas. At the same time, as women, they face gender-based prejudice both on the part of the dominant society and on the part of Chicanos. The struggle of Chicana feminism is summarized by Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano thus: "Perhaps the most important principle of Chicana feminist criticism is the realization that the Chicana's experience as a woman is inextricable from her experience as a member of an oppressed working-class racial minority and a culture which is not the dominant culture. Her task is to show how in works by Chicanas, elements of gender, race, culture and class coalesce" (Yarbro-Bejarano 1996: 214).

This coalescing is then most markedly addressed, as I have shown, by the critically situated epistemology of mestiza consciousness pioneered by Anzaldúa originally in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (Anzaldúa 1999 [1987]). The history and the cultural diversity of the Mexican-U.S. borderlands that gave rise to this epistemology challenge not only the dualism characteristic of Western thought, but also the notion of the ethnically and culturally inclusive American Dream of immigration, a myth that is demystified by the intersectional

analysis I supply. The expansive westward frontier that historically exemplified the dominant culture of European settlement on the American continent is now becoming concentrated in the contemporary Chicana understandings of the Mexican-U.S. border region, informed by Anzaldúa's conceptualization of hybridity or *mestizaje*, which is capable of transcending the original binarist idea of the border as a concept. Concurrently, Anzaldúa exposes the gender bias of the Chicana/o community and the Chicana/o Movement, while also debunking the racial and class ignorance of American mainstream feminism. Anzaldúa's insights thus point out the various permeating power structures that inhibit both individual as well as collective subjectivities and inform Chicanas' reclaiming of identity politics.

Perhaps the most eloquent example of Chicanas' notion of literary collectivity and identity politics performance is the anthology *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Anzaldúa and Moraga [1981] 1983) that outlined a trajectory towards the redefinition of feminism in order to expand its scope by accommodating the issues pertaining to women of color on the one hand. On the other, by furthering their critique to cover also differences between genders, the editors advanced the ongoing process of deconstruction of the theoretical subject of feminism per se (Jacobs 2006: 36). Hand in hand with such redefinitions, *This Bridge* – besides providing a scheme for reading the mutual interconnectedness of gender, class, race, ethnicity, culture, and language, which directly influence women's of color lives – speaks volumes about the need to invent tailored theories and genres that accommodate Chicanas' specificity. In other words, Chicanas' as well as Anzaldúa's multi-genre works reflect the multiple categories, impact of which on the authors' lived experience warrants scrutiny and literary representation. In Anzaldúa's writing form and content complement one another thereby emphasizing meaning.

Having exposed the mutual dependence of nationalism and gender difference – a nation arises from its nationalist discourse that ascribes femininity and masculinity significantly distinct roles, performance of which then re/produces the nation (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989; Yuval-Davis 2005) – I point to Anzaldúa's palimpsestuous reworking of the Chicana/o nation and the mythical home of Aztlán propagated by *El Movimiento.* Her reconceptualizations herald not only a deconstruction of the concept of nation, but undermine the importance of the nationalist discourse per se. In addition, they also subvert the effects of gender difference. While Anzaldúa deconstructs the nation and gender difference by employing queerness as her analytical tool, I use gender perspective to

elucidate Chicanas' subversion of the Movement's malestreaming as communicated through their writings and theory. I argue that Chicanas' criticism of the nationalist rhetoric undermines *also* the androcentrism of both American and Chicana/o societies, but is misunderstood by Chicanos as an assault solely on the Chicana/o nation. Because Chicanas envision the nation as a community where gender equality is feasible, they undermine both the gendered characteristics of the nationalist discourse *and* androcentrism. Chicanos' unacknowledged masculine privilege that arises from their failure to think of themselves as gendered beings, makes them misconstrue the fact that Chicanas' reform is not a threat to the Chicana/o nation, since its social and cultural structures can actually withstand a straightening of gender relations. Paradoxically, Chicanas go further as they aim to deconstruct the systemic patriarchal underpinnings thereby deconstructing the hierarchies that marginalize Chicano men as well; unlike the nation, patriarchy cannot exist without gender difference as it is predicated on inequality. This nationalist predicament thus generates perceived difference between Chicano and Chicana literatures. Chicanas' literary representations therefore contribute to expanding our understanding of androcentric and nationalist ideologies and their interpellations we face as subjects.

The region surrounding the U.S.-Mexico border has proven itself to be an extraordinarily productive entity in the works of Chicana literature. Its contrasts, traumatic history, and tense intercultural relations have paved the way for the emergence of a rich world of women's transformative visions. Through writing, Chicana authors break the symbolic boundary of silence and actively participate in the process of negotiating the hybrid identity of Chicanos and Chicanas. As outlined by one of the theorists and authors representative of this group, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, the Chicana writer's role lies in her being a historian, journalist, sociologist, teacher, and an activist, or in the author's very words:

> The Chicana writer, like the *curandera* (the medicine woman) or the *bruja* (witch) is the keeper of the culture, keeper of the memories, the rituals, the stories, the superstitions, the language, imagery of her Mexican heritage. She is also the one who changes the culture, the one who breeds a new language and a new lifestyle, new values, new images and rhythms, new dreams and conflict into that heritage, making of all of this brouhaha and cultural schizophrenia a new legacy for those who have still to squeeze in into legitimacy as human beings and American citizens (Gaspar de Alba 1993: 291).

Chicana literature can therefore be read as a conscious, collective feminist project, the product of infinite variety as well as profound pain, both of which have made the U.S.-Mexico borderlands their home. The foundations of this literature are written into the mental and emotional map that represents this unique and overwhelmingly culturally diverse geographical location. The concrete walls, metal barriers and fences monitored by sensors cropping up along this inherently arbitrary line today are only a hurtful reminder of the fact that the symbolic and physical violence continuously explored by Chicana writers is ubiquitous and continues making its presence. What is more, with the arrival of President Trump to the Oval Office, the border region is very likely to be – perhaps in an unprecedented manner – subjected to yet another series of increasingly rigorous scrutinizing, which will adversely affect all borderland subjects most of whom are, actually, American citizens. As much as I hope I have been paradigmatically and analytically consistent and academically sound in communicating my arguments throughout this doctoral thesis, I wish, in all my honesty, I were absolutely wrong in judging the presidential administration's approach. Sandra Cisneros, after Anzaldúa probably the best known and highly acclaimed Chicana writer, must have known why she named the most prominent of all her female protagonists Esperanza – Hope.

RESUMÉ

Předkládaná disertační práce vychází z kritického čtení pramenů diskutujících komplexní realitu příhraničního regionu mexicko-americké hranice, tak jak je reprezentována v literární produkci chicanských spisovatelek, primárně pak v díle přední chicanské feministické myslitelky Glorie Anzaldúy. Teoreticko-metodologická východiska disertační práce spočívají na reflexi historického faktu, že předmětná oblast je z hlediska pohraničních subjektů místem dvojí historické kolonizace (Acuña 1981: 29), a dále nalézají argumentační oporu ve feministických teoriích a postupech představených postkoloniálními, genderovými a kulturními studii, jakož i koncepty z oblasti sociologie a politologie, a to především ve vztahu ke kapitole druhé a třetí, kde diskutuji rozměry chicanského nacionálního hnutí coby stěžejního bodu chicanské politiky identity. Tématem disertační práce pak je rekonceptualizace této politiky identity Glorií Anzaldúou v reflexi mnohonásobné, intersekcionalizované oprese za použití genderu jako analytického nástroje. Toto resumé shrnuje kontext vzniku analyzovaných literárních reprezentací, vysvětluje důvody jejich politické angažovanosti a samozřejmě shrnuje stěžejní témata a argumenty disertační práce. Nečiní tak ale v chronologickém pořadí, nýbrž sdružuje provedené literární a genderové analýzy v jeden koherentní celek se stručným poukazem na obsah jednotlivých kapitol.

Na příkladu pojmu mestického vědomí, jež Anzaldúa představuje v knize *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (Anzaldúa 1999 [1987]) jako novou, kulturně situovanou epistemologii, dokládám, že mexicko-americká hranice, pro svou historii a kulturní diverzitu představuje ztělesněnou výzvu nejen pro západní dualistické myšlení, ale rovněž pro představu o americkém, údajně etnicky a kulturně inkluzívním imigračním snu. Ve čtvrté kapitole disertace zkoumá epistemologickou proměnu fenoménu hranice v kontextu kultury Spojených států amerických. Expanzívní, západním směrem postupující hranice (frontier) zakládající dominantní kulturu evropského osadnictví na americkém, tzv. „neobydleném" kontinentu se nyní soustředí do současného chápání americko-mexického pomezí (border), které právě Anzaldúa traktuje jako prostor hybridizace, arbitrárnosti a ustavičné procesuálnosti vyjednávaní identity, která s ohledem na svou lokaci odolává původnímu binárnímu vymezení konceptu hranice a současně představuje zásadní přehodnocení převládajících představ o americké identitě. Ta je mimo jiné založena na imigračním a ve svém důsledku homogenizujícím mýtu, v němž evropští přistěhovalci a přistěhovalkyně v naději na budování nového vlastního života vystavějí nový, americký národ. Tradiční

přistěhovalecký „sen o Ellis Islandu“ (Tinnemeyer 1999: 475) ale důsledně nabourávají právě pohraniční subjekty, tedy mestičtí Chicanové a Chicanky a taktéž členové a členky původních kolonizovaných kmenů, poněvadž reprezentují přistěhovalectví, které se nikdy nezavrší (například legálním získáním občanství a kulturní integrací, v některých případech i asimilací). Tito lidé z definice žádné destinace nedosáhnou, nikdy v Americe nepřistanou, nikdy nepřijedou. Už tu totiž jsou. Vědomě se staví mimo národní představu Americtví smíšeného v pověstném tavícím kotli. Chicanové a Chicanky nejsou a nikdy nebyli (i)migranty a (i)migrantkami, jelikož hranici Spojených států nikdy nepřekročili. Hranice totiž překročila je.

Jak tedy patrno, přítomnost státní hranice, jež odděluje prosperující Spojené státy od chudšího Mexika, nevyhnutelně zcitlivěla chicanské spisovatelky tak, že hlavním bodem jejich tvorby je literární i teoretické zkoumání rozdílu, a to jak rozdílu podmíněného rasovými, lingvistickými, náboženskými, genderovými, třídními i kulturními podmínkami, tak i rozdílu jakožto epistemologického a filozofického konceptu. Způsoby, jimiž binární uchopení hranice produkuje odlišnost a potencionálně též násilí a zjinačující, stereotypizující praktiky, přibližuje Anzaldúa vypjatým, figurativním jazykem:

> Hranice slouží k tomu, aby určily místa, která jsou bezpečná, a která nebezpečná; aby odlišily „nás“ a „je“. Hranice je rozdělující mez, úzký pruh vedoucí podél příkrého srázu. Pohraničí je nejasný a neurčitý prostor vytvořený emoční sedlinou z nepřirozené dělicí čáry. Nachází se v trvalém stavu přeměny. Jeho obyvateli jsou ti, kteří byli vykázáni ven, ti, kterým se mnohé zapovídá. Žijí tu *los atravesados*: šilhaví, perverzní, queer, otravní, zparchantělí, mulatové a míšenci, polomrtví; jednoduše ti, kteří zmírají a vybočují, nebo ti, kteří zakoušejí meze „normality“. Gringové na americkém Jihozápadě mají obyvatele pohraničí za hříšníky, vetřelce – ať už mají papíry nebo ne, ať už jsou to Chicanové, Indiáni nebo černoši. Zákaz vstupu, nepovolaní budou znásilněni, zmrzačeni, uškrceni, zplynováni, zastřeleni. […] Napětí se drží obyvatel pohraničí jako virus (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25-26).

Mexicko-americká hranice tedy zvýznamňuje společensky konstruované odlišnosti společně s mocenskými hierarchiemi, jež dohromady typizují ambivalentnost vztahů většinové americké kultury vůči realitě chicanské a potažmo i realitě mexicko-americké komunity.

Onu dělicí čáru, onu hranici mezi oběma zeměmi a přeneseně řečeno mezi Americtvím a Mexičanstvím, mezi maskulinitou a femininitou a mezi dalšími binárními opozicemi, jež jsou vlastní západnímu myšlení, Gloria Anzaldúa označuje v *Borderlands/La Frontera* za svůj domov. Ten je figurativním jazykem bolestivě zpodobňován nejen jako „ostnatý drát dlouhý 1950 mil" a hranice na Rio Grande jako „zející rána, kde se Třetí svět rozdírá o První a krvácí," ale i jako prostor, v němž vzniká potenciál pro zrod dosud nepoznané a nové kvality (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25). Anzaldúinými slovy metaforicky řečeno, životní šťáva obou sousedících světů „vytvoří další zemi – hraniční kulturu" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 25).

Borderlands/La Frontera, autorčino nejzásadnější dílo, nelíčí historické zvraty, jež formovaly chicanské uvědomění, kauzálně v lineárním čase, nýbrž ve spirálovitém, cyklickém pojetí událostí, které mají reálný i symbolický dopad na život jedince a jeho žitou zkušenost. Anzaldúa reinterpretuje dějiny mexicko-amerického pomezí a redefinuje mexickou, respektive chicanskou, mytologii z hlediska mocenských vztahů a kategorií genderu, rasy a třídy. Zároveň však představuje možnosti vnitřní emancipace a budování osobní spirituality, která v jejím případě vyrůstá jak z vědomé a poctivé analýzy vlastních předsudků, tak ze způsobů, jimiž prožíváme své fyzické bytí ve světě. Cílem autorčina psaní i teoretického myšlení je pak vedle osobní introspekce především budování koalic mezi lidmi (new tribalism), kteří jsou arbitrárně rozděleni do táborů na základě jejich příslušnosti k rasové, genderové a kulturní skupině, či „jiné" skupině vydělené například tělesným hendikepem či změněnou tělesnou zdatností.

Posun *od* individuálního ke kolektivnímu Anzaldúe umožňuje do promýšlení emancipačního projektu mestického vědomí zahrnout vedle Chicanů a Chicanek též další skupiny osob odolávajíc*ích* útlaku a uvažovat o tom, že i s těmi, jež disponují mocí, by bylo možné „setkat se na širší společně sdílené půdě" (Anzaldúa [1987] 1999: 109). S tímto momentem tedy původní osobní dimenze všezahrnující identity přejímá universální hledisko a mestické vědomí se transformuje v jistý horizontální manifest globální diversity respektující a promýšlející vědomou práci s rozdíly. Anazaldúiným cílem není simplicistní překonávání diferencí a přetvoření mestického vědomí v nivelizující, odlišnosti zmizíkující instrument, jehož důsledkem bude obecná stejnost, což je způsob, jakým bývá nezřídka dílo misinterpretováno (Naples 2009: 509-511). Anzaldúina argumentace stojí v opozici proti strategiím dominantní kultury, jež zneužívají/využívají rozdíl k legitimizaci a ospravedlnění politického a sociálního nátlaku uplatňovaného (nejen) vůči americkým marginalizovaným

minoritám. Tyto strategie vedou k symbolické stereotypizaci, ke stavění kulturních a ekonomických bariér a kapitalistické exploataci podrobených (subaltern). Mestické vědomí je reprezentací rozdílu. Anzaldúina reflexe společenských dichotomií vedle žité osobní zkušenosti vyrostla též z kritického uchopení myšlenek Chicanského hnutí.

Hnutí za občanská práva v šedesátých letech minulého století v USA probudilo afirmativní tendence nejen u afro-amerického obyvatelstva, nýbrž i u dalších etnických menšin žijících na území Spojených států. V souvislosti s tzv. konceptem *browning of America* upozorňujícím na skutečnost, že hispánské obyvatelstvo tvoří největší a nejrychleji se rozrůstající menšinu v USA (Overview of Race and Hispanic Origin 2010), obrací americká akademická půda svou pozornost na hnutí, jež v 60. letech nebyla prominentní na federální úrovni, nicméně reagovala na kulturní realitu v konkrétních státech či regionech unie.

Jedním z takových hnutí bylo *El Movimiento*, hnutí za občanská práva chicanského, resp. mexicko-amerického obyvatelstva, jež bylo aktivní převážně v Koloradu a dále v Kalifornii, Texasu a také v dalších státech ležících u hranic s Mexikem v oblasti *tzv.* chicanské mýtické domoviny Aztlánu. Chicanské hnutí – zvolivší si původně pejorativní označení Chicano/Chicana jako strategickou a vědomě konstruovanou a přijatou opoziční identitu – vykazovalo silné nacionalistické a machistické tendence. V jejich důsledku se chicanské ženy-spisovatelky výrazně distancovaly od hluboce patriarchální a hierarchické struktury hnutí, třebaže v prostoru jim vyhrazeném jejich mužskými kolegy na hnutí participovaly. Poskytovalo totiž kritickou platformu, v jejímž rámci bylo možné vystupovat proti formám kulturního, rasového, náboženského a lingvistického útlaku nejen chicanských žen, ale celé chicanské komunity.

Vedle rasové a třídní diskriminace ze strany majoritní americké společnosti a potažmo mírnější stereotypizaci ze strany společnosti mexické, kterou tematizovala hlavní, rozuměj androcentrická, politická linie hnutí, však Chicanky konstruovaly výrazně komplexnější politiku identity. Vystupovaly nejen proti rasové a třídní opresi zaštiťované sociální politikou USA a eurocentrickými národními americkými mýty, nýbrž i proti opresi genderové, a to jak ze strany majority, tak současně ze strany vlastního národa. Zároveň se pak vymezovaly proti rasové a třídní slepotě tehdejšího hlavního proudu amerického feminismu a ženského emancipačního hnutí. Feministické perspektivy, konkrétněji perspektivy feminismu žen jiné barvy pleti než bílé (women of color feminism) a genderová

sensitivita jsou tedy hlavními teoretickými a paradigmatickými východisky, v nichž se to, co označujeme jako chicanskou ženskou literaturu (Chicana literature) výrazně liší od chicanské literatury mužské, kterou typizuje především korelace jejího obsahu s cíli nacionálního hnutí.

Dva stěžejní texty Chicanského hnutí z genderového hlediska rozebírá druhá kapitola předkládané disertační práce. Vedle politického manifestu "El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán" *národnostní* a rasovou soudržnost chicanského národa důrazně propagovala v genderovaném maskulinním žánru *corrido* báseň Rodolfa Corkyho Gonzálese "Yo Soy Joaquín" (1967). Toto dílo se stalo hlavním milníkem v historii chicanské literatury. Jak uvádí George Hartley „před rokem 1967 chicanská literatura neexistovala, ale po roce 1967 se náhle zpětně vynořily celé dějiny chicanské literatury od samého začátku 17. století až do 60. let 20. století" (Hartley 2003: 276). Hartley se však neomezuje jen na literaturu. Tvrdí, že před daným rokem „Chicanové a Chicanky ani neexistovali, teprve od tohoto okamžiku [zveřejnění Gonzálesovy básně] spatřujeme, že tu jsou už po staletí" (Hartley 2003: 276). Chicanská literatura je tak ve smyslu zviditelnění neviděného inherentně politická, neboť zcela vědomě poskytuje ideový prostor pro vynalézání, ustavování a obhajování nově vznikajícího národa s jedinečnou zkušeností a opozičně konstruovanou odlišností. S ohledem na diseminaci a cirkulaci své politiky identity se tak chicanský národ stává v andersonovském slova smyslu společenstvím představ (Anderson [1983] 2006).

V tomto ohledu nepředstavuje nacionální étos chicanských děl vznikajících v souvislosti s Chicanským hnutím specifikum – literatura je nezřídka instrumentalizována v bojích za národní sebeurčení. Navzdory sdílené zkušenosti s diskriminačním zjinačováním a marginalizací, je však chicanská literatura vnitřně nebývale heterogenní jak tematicky, tak ideově. Její političnost se výrazně umocňuje v 80. letech 20. století. Dosavadní koncepci chicanské literární tvorby, fungující jako ustavující prostředek národně-emancipačních cílů, najednou rozrušuje nejen výrazný nárůst děl z pera hnutím dříve marginalizovaných žen, ale zároveň skutečnost, že chicanské spisovatelky, jakožto feministky radikálně redefinují, přepisují, ba dokonce odvrhují etablovanou chicanskou literární kritiku, zacílení stávající chicanské mužské literární produkce, jakož i vlastní nacionální hnutí, neboť ve všech jejich aspektech demaskují patriarchální předpojatost a neschopnost spatřovat vnitřní heterogenitu.

Chicanští spisovatelé a kritici dle jejich názoru za seriózní díla hodná chicanského kánonu považují jen ta, jež korelují se zájmy a androcentrickými hodnotami Chicanského hnutí, v jehož rámci u chicanských mužů nedochází k rozpoznání privilegií odvislých od jejich maskulinity, ani ke zpochybnění hierarchičnosti a mocenského zatížení genderových vztahů a tradičního rozvržení genderových rolí jak v domácí, tak veřejné sféře. Sjednocuje-li chicanské autory a autorky jejich kulturní a rasová identita, dochází mezi nimi k zásadnímu rozporu v tom, jakými způsoby je tato společná kulturní a národní identita nahlížena a artikulována a jak je za ni třeba bojovat s ohledem na politiku identity. Chicanky se svorně distancují od androcentrického uspořádání chicanské komunity a vědomě hledají umělecké i politické formy způsobilé k subverzi patriarchálního a statu quo, a to jak ve vztahu k organizačním principům společnosti chicanské, tak společnosti americké.

Genderovanost Chicanského hnutí a jím propagovaných literárních reprezentací autorky spatřují ve faktu, že „chicanskou identitu [prezentovalo] primárně jako identitu mužskou“ a machismus se vedle nacionalistické ideologie stal průvodní charakteristikou celého politického protestu (Jacobs 2006: 64). Jak však upozorňují feministicky orientovaná díla Chicanek, linie tematizace chicanského mužství koreluje s faktem, že maskulinita a femininita jsou relační kategorie, ale tyto vztahy mohou zasahovat i do vnitřního obsahu těchto *kategorií*. Chicanské spisovatelky totiž při konceptualizaci postkoloniální chicanské patriarchální kultury a inferiorního, do soukromé sféry relegovaného chicanského ženství zároveň dekonstruují chicanskou maskulinitu, jakožto ambivalentní a kulturně hybridní entitu vzniklou v důsledku evropské kolonizace, a odvislou jak od reálných, tak symbolických mocenských vztahů mezi „bílými“ příslušníky dominantní, ekonomicky zajištěné euro-americké kultury a „hnědými“ mestici obdělávajícími aridní půdu mexicko-amerického pohraničí. V kontextu mexické a chicanské rasové identity, jež (doslova) ztělesňuje tabuizované míšení ras, je v rámci této genderové konceptualizace třeba poukázat na historické spojení indigenní ženy a bílého kolonizátora. Zde se konkrétně jedná o Hernána Cortése a jeho tlumočnici La Malinche, jejíž významové dimenze společně s Pannou Marií Guadalupskou a archetypální vražedkyní La Lloronou, které jsou všechny zásadními reprezentacemi chicanského ženství, detailněji rozebírá kapitola pátá. Historička Emma Pérez genderové dilema mestické, respektive chicanské maskulinity shrnuje následovně:

> V [americké] rasistické společnosti je ve vztahu k bílému otci-kolonizátorovi mestic kastrován. Jeho úzkost nepramení jen ze strachu, že

> přijde o falus, ale také z obavy, že se nikdy nevyrovná svrchované moci bílého muže. Zatímco bílého syna [uklidňuje] příslib, že se stane otcem, mestic, i kdyby se otcem stal, se stále bude odlišovat barvou pleti a absencí jazyka, tedy dominantního jazyka kolonizátora (Pérez 1991: 167).

Jinými slovy, v intersekcionální perspektivě se mestický muž v kontextu postkoloniální chicanské společnosti vyjevuje jako ten, jenž straní spíše svému patriarchálnímu privilegiu než svým rasovým kořenům. Přimyká se ke svému bílému otci, který přišel kolonizovat původní kultury a jejich území a který funguje jako představitel hegemonní maskulinity (Connell, Messerschmidt 2005). Poněvadž kolonizované kultury jsou symbolicky emaskulovány a podmaňovaná území bývají asociována s femininitou (Said 1978, Loomba 2005: 128, 130), je mesticův příklon k otci-kolonizátorovi zoufalou snahou o potvrzení vlastního mužství.

Chicanské autorky tedy s ohledem na svou pozicionalitu eklekticky pracují s feministickými, *postkoloniálními,* indigenními, ale též západními teoriemi, nicméně především akcentují nezbytnost vlastního, původního a „autentického" – a nevyhnutelně hybridního – teoretického myšlení, jež bývá stále častěji označováno jako chicanský feminismus, někdy též jako chicanská ženská teorie (Chicanisma/Xicanisma). V tomto procesu jde o rozvinutí takové teorie, jež bude s to udržet nepřetržitý kontakt s realitou životů chicanských žen, neodcizí se praxi a bude schopna konceptualizovat tzv. intersekcionalitu sociálních kategorií, v jejichž pavučině se Chicanky ocitají. Potřebu relevantních nástrojů pro zkoumání *žité zkušenosti a její následné* reprezentace v literárních dílech vysvětluje Anzaldúa následovně:

> To, co je považováno za teorii většinovou akademickou obcí nutně neodpovídá teorii, jak ji vidí ženy jiné barvy pleti než bílé. […] Potřebujeme teorie, které […] budou reflektovat to, co se odehrává […] mezi individuálními „Já" a kolektivními „My" v našich etnických komunitách. Necessitamos teorías, jež přepíší dějiny za použití rasy, třídy, genderu a etnicity jako analytických kategorií; teorie, které překračují hranice, rozmazávají dělicí čáry – nové druhy teorií společně s novými teoretickými metodami (Anzaldúa 1990a: xxv-xxvi).

Chicanský feminismus tak akcentuje vzájemnou provázanost genderové, třídní, rasové, kulturní a jazykové příslušnosti, které bezprostředně ovlivňují životy všech chicanských žen, a promlouvá ke čtenářům a čtenářkám právě skrze multižánrová literární díla snoubící teorii

i fikční světy dohromady, což jsou charakteristické rysy jak pro Anzaldúu, tak i další chicanské spisovatelky.

Jak již bylo naznačeno, Chicanky prostřednictvím literatury kriticky zpracovávají skutečnost, že jsou terčem mnohonásobného útlaku na základě příslušnosti k genderové minoritě v rámci etnické skupiny, jež je marginalizována americkou většinovou společností z důvodu kulturní, lingvistické i rasové jinakosti. Jinými slovy, chicanské ženy jsou vystaveny rasovým a kulturním stereotypům ze strany dominantní společnosti jakožto Chicanky. Zároveň však jakožto ženy čelí genderovým předsudkům jak ze strany americké společnosti, tak ze strany chicanských mužů. Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano snahy chicanského feminismu v kontextu chicanské ženské literární tradice, shrnuje následujícími slovy: „Patrně nejdůležitějším principem chicanské feministické literární kritiky je uvědomění si, že zkušenost Chicanky jakožto ženy nelze oddělit od její zkušenosti jakožto členky diskriminované, sociální a rasové menšiny a kultury, jež není většinová. Jejím úkolem je ukázat, jak v dílech chicanských žen prvky [útlaku] spojené s genderem, rasou, třídou a kulturou srůstají dohromady“ (Yarbro-Bejarano 1996: 213).

Tuto pozici reflektovaly Anzaldúa s dramatičkou Cherríe Moragou; společně v roce 1981 vydaly průlomovou antologii *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Anzaldúa and Moraga [1981] 1983) obsahující texty žen jiné barvy kůže než bílé, včetně Chicanek. Tato publikace poprvé významně nechala zaznít hlas amerických ne-bílých žen, které se kriticky vymez*ova*ly vůči americkému mainstreamovému bílému feminismu, který ignoroval vnitřní heterogenitu ženského hnutí a zůstával slepý jednak vůči homofobii ve svých řadách a jednak vůči rasové a třídní ostrakizaci příslušnic etnických a rasových menšin v USA. Kniha tak do značné míry shrnula sociální témata, která v chicanské ženské literatuře rezonují i dnes, ale hlavně zhmotnila představy Chicanek o tom, jak má být literární tvorba inherentně spjata s teoriemi a žitou zkušeností, a jak má tyto myšlenky zprostředkovávat čtenářkám a čtenářům. Podle přední teoretičky chicanské literatury AnaLouise Keating, tato kniha byla „naléhavým voláním po novém typu feministických uskupení a praxí, voláním, jež povzbudilo ne-bílé ženy k rozvinutí transformativního, koaličního vědomí vedoucího k novým spojenectvím“ (Keating 2002: 6) Literární tvorba je tedy pro Chicanky médiem s přesahem do bezprostřední reality.

Jak vysvětluji v kapitole první věnované výlučně psané tvorbě, literatura regionu ležícího podél mexicko-americké hranice je po žánrové stránce obtížně zařaditelná. Téměř se zdá, že forma svědčí ve prospěch otevřeně proklamovaného poslání chicanské ženské literatury, a sice snaze vyhnout se kategorizaci, jež je nevyhnutelně spjata s rýsováním hranic a stanovením limitů. Chicanská ženská literatura je dále bytostně spjata s aktivismem a feminismem, z něhož ostatně ve své moderní formě vyrostla. Je charakteristická – někdy utopickou – snahou o dosažení společnosti prosté útlaku. Má kolektivní terapeutický účinek a otevřeně deklarovaný, kriticky reflektovaný cíl: artikulaci mnohovrstevnaté, hybridní chicanské ženské subjektivity a oproštění nejen jednotlivce, nýbrž celé komunity od dějin kulturní marginalizace. Tuto základní charakteristiku ženského psaní v pohraničním regionu shrnuje výstižně literární teoretička a spisovatelka Tey Diana Rebolledo:

> Veškeré chicanské ženské psaní je politické, poněvadž politikou, ideologií a genderovými nerovnostmi jsme obklopeny. Je výjimečné, že chicanské spisovatelky, dokonce i ty nejranější, si toto intenzívně uvědomovaly a různými způsoby se s tím utkávaly: rozpoutávaly dialog, využívaly subverze, stavěly se na odpor, psaly [v anglicky mluvící zemi] španělsky, vynalézaly, přetvářely. A to vždy s jasným vědomím toho, co činí (Rebolledo 1995: 207-208).

Chicanské autorky současně s nedostatečnou reflexí kategorie rasy na straně bílých Američanek rozkrývaly genderovou nerovnost v rámci vlastního, muži ovládaného etnika. Jelikož rodina a domácí sféra jsou místy, v nichž jsou ženy po celý život vystaveny rigidním genderovým hierarchiím, jež tyto instituce (nejen) v chicanské kultuře reprodukují, autorky cíleně využily tento topos k subverzi jak tradičních pojetí chicanské rodiny, tak chicanské femininity. Ta je v chicanské kultuře výrazně ovlivněna katolickou morálkou, jež u Chicanek tabuizuje ženskou sexualitu, symbolicky podrobuje jejich těla striktní disciplíně a předepisuje jim sebeobětující se mateřství a trpnou, oddanou službu manželovi jako žádoucí modely naplnění životů. Do té doby přehlížené rodinné patologie, domácí násilí, absentující otcové a tabuizované projevy ženské sexuality se proto dostávají u chicanských autorek do popředí, neboť jsou „nejúčinnějšími prostředky vyjadřujícími protest proti omezením v rámci chicanského patriarchátu“ (Madsen 2000: 25).

Představy o chicanské patriarchální rodině obsahují imperativ heterosexuální orientace a není tudíž náhoda, že díla lesbických Chicanek a jejich vlastní existence nabourávají

základní představy o žádoucí chicanské identitě a morálce. Navzdory striktní marginalizaci píšící chicanské lesby využívají své sexuální identity a jejího zpodobňování v tvorbě nejen k vyslovení nesouhlasu s chicanskou i celoamerickou homofobií, nýbrž k problematizaci arbitrární dichotomie maskulinity a femininity a následně k promýšlení světa, který by se obešel bez hierarchického zjinačování. Jinak řečeno, neomezují se na protest a destrukci, ale usilují o přetvoření stávajícího statu quo v prostor skýtající sociální a kulturní spravedlnost, jíž se v regionu mexicko-amerického pohraničí tak palčivě nedostává. Anzaldúina konceptualizace Aztlánu jako inkluzívního prostoru je příkladem takových přepisů. Toto téma podrobně rozebírá kapitola třetí.

Dále, dvojí lingvistickou příslušnost reflektují chicanské spisovatelky ve svých dílech prokládáním anglicky psaného textu španělskými výrazy, případně celými pasážemi psanými ve španělštině. Autorky tak v první řadě zvýznamňují sílu vnitřních pout v rámci komunity, neboť tímto otevřeně demonstrují, kdo je jejich zamýšleným publikem. Zároveň lze tento krok interpretovat jako vědomou rezignaci na srozumitelnost jazykovou i obsahovou za hranicemi chicanského jazykového prostoru, kterému většinová americká společnost „nerozumí“ jak po stránce jazykové, tak kulturní. Kreativní práce s anglickými i španělskými jazykovými prostředky umožňuje spisovatelkám psát novým, funkčním jazykem a implicitně též tematizovat mocenské aspekty koncentrované ve vztazích mezi jednotlivými jazyky. Angličtina i španělština v sobě nesou dědictví kolonizace amerického kontinentu a marginalizaci jazyků původního obyvatelstva, k jehož utrpení se Chicanské nacionální hnutí vztahuje jako ke svým mýtickým kořenům, třebaže ony kolonizované vymřelé či vymírající jazyky zůstávají pro Chicany a Chicanky vpravdě nepřístupné a/nebo většinou nesrozumitelné.

Region mexicko-americké hranice se v chicanské literatuře psané ženami vyjevuje jako nebývale produktivní území, které svými kontrasty, traumatickými dějinami a vypjatými mezikulturními vztahy dalo vzniknout neobyčejně bohatému světu transformativních ženských vizí. Skrze psaní členky menšinového národa prolamují symbolickou hranici mlčení (Spivak 1988) a aktivně se účastní procesuálního vyjednávání chicanské hybridní identity. Jak argumentuje jedna z teoretiček a autorek Alicia Gaspar de Alba, chicanská spisovatelka je jako:

> [L]éčitelka nebo čarodějka, udržovatelka kultury, strážkyně pamětí, rituálů, příběhů, pověr, jazyka a obraznosti vlastního mexického dědictví. Je však

> také ta, která tuto kulturu proměňuje, která do tohoto dědictví vpravuje nový jazyk a nový životní styl, nové hodnoty, nové obrazy a rytmy, nové sny a střety, a která z tohoto zmatku a kulturní schizofrenie vytváří nový odkaz pro ty, kterým ještě zbývá vpravit se do legitimity jako lidská bytost a americká občanka (Gaspar de Alba 1993: 291).

Chicanskou ženskou literaturu lze tedy číst jako vědomý kolektivní projekt a důsledek nekonečné pestrosti i hluboké bolesti, jež se na hranici uhnízdily. Domov této literatury má základy vklíněny do mentální a emocionální mapy mexicko-americké hranice. Železobetonové zdi, plechové bariéry a senzory kontrolované ploty, které na oné z podstaty arbitrární čáře dnes vyrůstají, jsou jen drásající připomínkou skutečnosti, že fyzické i symbolické násilí, které Chicanky ve svých textech ustavičně zkoumají, je všudypřítomné.

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