

FROM DOUBLE TO MESTIZA CONSCIOUSNESS:
IDENTITY POLITICS IN DU BOIS, ANZALDÚA, LARSEN AND CISNEROS

A Thesis

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Introduction

Identity politics require the presence of a marginalized Other. Marginalization occurs when a group of people is disadvantaged based on single or multiple constructed inequalities in a social context. This study is concentrated on the African-American and Mexican-American experience of marginal identities in the United States. Even though American national identity is a construct, members of each group face the hardship of not being included in the dominant white majority. They struggle to identify themselves through becoming conscious of their place in the community. Their experience of being discriminated against is the subject of my investigation through diverse approaches to race, gender, sexual orientation and class. W. E. B. Du Bois conceptualized “double consciousness” in 1903, to define the psychological conflict caused by being both black and American in the United States. Parallel to that, though much later, in 1987, Gloria Anzaldúa formulated the notion of “mestiza consciousness” as a means of resistance against prejudice regarding race, gender, sexual orientation and class. This became an important concept for Chicana feminists. I will discuss these two forms of self-consciousness about marginalized identity in relation to their effects on selective works of the Harlem Renaissance and Chicana feminist literature respectively. I will investigate possible relations between double and mestiza consciousness through interdisciplinary research into the specific historical contexts and intellectual backgrounds of the social and artistic movements of which Du Bois and Anzaldúa were part. I will also relate the two types of consciousness to psychological, postcolonial and feminist theories. This thesis is a comparative study of double and mestiza consciousness in Du Bois and Anzaldúa, and a study of how Nella Larsen and Sandra Cisneros mobilized these concepts in their fiction.

From the several definitions of consciousness in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), I chose the ones that are associated with philosophy and psychology because double and mestiza consciousness are concepts related to the subject’s thought about identity and self-definition. The OED defines consciousness as “[t]he faculty or capacity from which awareness of thought, feeling, and volition and of the external world

arises; the exercise of this.” It is “[a]ttributed as a collective faculty to an aggregate of people, a period of time, etc.; a set of shared defining ideas and beliefs” (OED). In the field of consciousness studies, however, double and mestiza consciousness can be positioned as forms of phenomenal consciousness. According to Christopher Hill, a professor of philosophy, phenomenal consciousness presents the subject with qualitative characteristics. These can be the experiences of sensations, emotions and thoughts in a diversity of space and time that make up the identity of the self (19). The concepts of double and mestiza consciousness are ways for the marginalized subject to perceive him/herself in the world and relate to it.

In this thesis, I will argue that, though complex, double consciousness has mainly a pathological nature whereas mestiza consciousness is a means of creative resistance. The link between the two types of consciousness is that each represents a perception of a marginalized self, but their distinct historical contexts separate double consciousness from mestiza consciousness. This comparative study of two types of consciousness aims to explain and make a connection between the two modes of seeing and experiencing the self within different timeframes. Double consciousness as a form of racial self-perception emerged after the abolition of slavery, towards the end of the nineteenth century, when laws of racial segregation and disfranchisement were in effect in the U.S. South. This mode of perceiving the self continued until the mid-twentieth century. Anzaldúa, on the other hand, developed mestiza consciousness in the 1980s, after the African-American Civil Rights Movement and the feminist movement in the United States. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that these two kinds of consciousness do not belong to the same historical periods. Nevertheless, there is an obvious connection between double and mestiza consciousness because both emerged in response to the racial, ethnic and economic discrimination that the two minority groups have historically faced. This does not mean that all African Americans had a psychological conflict or all Mexican American women could recreate themselves through becoming a mestiza. These concepts are used to make clear the acts and thoughts of psychologically and socially aware members of the minorities. Therefore, the generalizations about people with double or mestiza consciousness are

meant to describe specifically those who perceive themselves from these conceptual points of view.

This thesis consists of four chapters. The concept of double consciousness is approached through psychological analysis in Chapter 1. It opens with a brief discussion of the historical context of the institutionalization of slavery and racial segregation. Du Bois's book *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) is used to relate to the aftermath of the abolition of slavery in 1865. I will also discuss European Romanticism and American Transcendentalism as the psychological, literary and philosophical contexts for double consciousness, but Frantz Fanon's psychopathological approach to analyzing double consciousness will be the core of this chapter. Comparing Du Bois's and Fanon's studies on Africa-originated selves, I will show that both Du Bois and Fanon diagnose what Du Bois calls double consciousness as a mental disorder because it involves a dual identity. Holding a negative self-image is connected to perceiving the self as the Other. Because he sees social marginalization as the cause of this neurosis, Du Bois sees intellectual enlightenment and economic improvement as the solution to the problem.

Chapter 2 discusses double consciousness in relation to the New Negro Movement of the Harlem Renaissance, focusing specifically on Harlem Renaissance writer Nella Larsen. The Harlem Renaissance is briefly introduced as a movement connected by social, intellectual and artistic developments centered in the Harlem district of New York City in the 1920s. The main concern of the era is the African-Americans' racial self-assertion and self-definition in a society regulated by and for white supremacy. The construction of the notion of a "New Negro" identity that emerged when large numbers of African-American migrants settled in Harlem will be discussed. Examples of increased numbers of publications by black artists in the post-World War I period and the contests organized by black magazines are given as proof of the progress African-American writers made in the literary scene. Du Bois's role in the Harlem Renaissance is evaluated; he became a leading figure as the editor of the literary magazine *The Crisis* and as the co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). His expectations from the "Talented Tenth" of the African-American population will also be discussed. The significance of the

Harlem Renaissance in the African-American artistic production within Western parameters will be discussed. I chose to analyze Nella Larsen's novel *Passing* because it is specifically about the racial conflict of black women passing as whites. I will connect the theme of an African-American woman's passing as white to double consciousness. A gender perspective will be employed in assessing why Larsen chose a female protagonist to explore the psychological and social aspects of passing. The chapter ends by demonstrating Larsen's view of double consciousness as pathology.

The second major topic of this thesis, mestiza consciousness, takes the foreground in Chapter 3. A postcolonial approach is taken towards analyzing mestiza consciousness. The historical background of the border conflict between Mexico and the United States is briefly introduced to explain the migration of Mexicans to the United States. Racial and class-related consequences of illegal border crossings are evaluated through the cultural background of hybridity formed in the colonial era and the nineteenth century, which paves the path towards mestiza identity. Gloria Anzaldúa's construction of mestiza consciousness is discussed as a reconceptualization of double consciousness. The border culture Anzaldúa refers to is explained in relation to race, gender, class and sexual orientation. The oppositional standpoint of mestiza identity is articulated as a means of self-empowerment. Later, Homi Bhabha's postcolonial framework of the "Third Space" is connected to the borderland identity of mestiza consciousness. In explaining the Third Space, Bhabha refers to hybridity, difference and multiple forms of identification. The function of a hybrid identity in the American social context is elaborated. The borderland is a land, a space, and a mental state; it is not just a border or a single line. Anzaldúa makes it a space to be occupied. Pushing the limits of figurative language, she makes the mestiza stand there as a person being discriminated against because of her race, gender, sexual orientation and class. The borderland is a space, according to Bhabha's understanding of hybridity, which enables new forms of reconciliation between historically conflicting identities. I will explain how Anzaldúa developed the idea of mestiza consciousness by drawing on pre-Columbian mythology, particularly the figure of Coatlicue. The reactionary position of the newly created mestiza identity is contrasted to the negotiation-based double consciousness. While African-Americans see themselves through the eyes of the white

majority and consequently submit to the negative white view of the black self, Chicana feminists respond to the whites' perception of Mexican Americans by transforming it into something positive. The dynamism of mestiza consciousness as resistance against patriarchy and white supremacy is analyzed through Gayatri Spivak's conceptualization of the subaltern subject. The feminist perspective is given as a form of postcolonial discourse since the layer of race still causes women of color to be subaltern in comparison with their white counterparts. Anzaldúa constructs mestiza consciousness for women seen as inferior by the dominant society. Spivak assigns a subaltern status to third-world feminists but Mexican-American women in a first-world environment face similar unequal treatment concerning their gender. The need for a voice consciousness in Spivak's account of the subaltern subject's deprivation of communication is related to mestiza consciousness.

Chapter 4 is about Chicana feminism. The historical background of the nationalist Chicano Movement is portrayed as a continuation of the conflict between Mexico and the United States introduced in the previous chapter. The major issues leading to the breaking up of the movement into Chicanos and Chicanas will be discussed, focusing on the feminist perspective and especially on Anzaldúa's role in shaping and fostering Chicana feminism. She separates Chicanas from the larger Chicano Movement because she constructs her own and her fellow mestizas as having a specific identity related to being mestiza feminists. Anzaldúa's application of diverse narrative forms, such as essays, stories, anecdotes and poems in her book in addition to constructing the mestiza as an identity of a subject in process is connected to postmodernism in the 1980s. I will end the chapter with an analysis of Sandra Cisneros' *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* through the lens of mestiza consciousness. I will concentrate on three of her stories in the collection because these provide criticism of assimilation of Chicanas in the form of identity fragmentation. The conflict each protagonist faces is linked to her self-definition.

Chapter 1

A psychoanalytical approach to double consciousness

1.1 Historical context: Slavery and racial segregation

The notion of race and racial slavery are thoroughly modern European constructs of ideologically linking skin color to means of production, and to political, social, and philosophical issues (Eze 885). Racialization was originally set up through geography, genes, history, and culture. Thus race refers to a category apart from nation; it is a construct that connects communities (Monteiro 228).

While previous historians studied slavery as an economic institution or a moral issue, historian Stanley Elkins focuses on the psychological consequences. He argues that since American slavery functioned as a “closed” system, a unique sociology and a social psychology emerged (23) as a consequence of this institution. According to Elkins, this social psychology caused the enslaved to develop a dependent personality distortion which Elkins calls the “Sambo” mentality in his influential historical study *Slavery* (1959). This “Sambo” mentality of the African-American people as “the perpetual child incapable of maturity” (84) is a stereotype, which according to Elkins has historical validity. Although his historical and psychological assumptions have been criticized, he is praised for having recognized the “possibility ... of a ‘broad belt of indeterminacy’ between playing a role and becoming the role you always play” (Genovese 69). As Genovese argues, “Elkins’ assumption [of] the existence of a stereotype [as a proof of] the reality behind it will not stand critical examination either as psychological theory or as historical fact” (45). By saying so, he demands a critical deconstruction of the social background that produced the “Sambo” personality. Miles, who finds Elkins’ explanation of personality distortion of blacks’ self-Othering also insufficient, makes a connection with “the ideology of racism [which] constructed the Other as a specific and inferior category of being” (Miles 20). In other words, he draws attention to the social background of racism as the cultural code that Genovese found missing in Elkins’ assumption of the stereotype.

The episode of African American people’s role in the history of American plantation slavery begins with the transatlantic slave trade. African natives were

violently taken from their native lands and shipped to the European colonies in the New World to serve white masters. Neither their adjustment to tropical climates nor the nature of their tribal cultures made them suitable to be exposed to slavery. It was rather a matter of institutional arrangements (Elkins 37). The American version of enslavement was shaped immediately by Englishmen although Englishmen were customarily not acquainted with this kind of institution. What makes American slavery unique, according to Elkins, with regards to former varieties, is that it was based on the color line, which divided the society into two: free and enslaved people. Africans were the first people to be subject to shock and detachment in the Atlantic Slave Trade: the shock of capture, the long march to the sea, sale to the European slavers and the horror of the Middle Passage with diseases, death and malice through the awful travel of two months (99-100). These were only the primary stages of slavery since the shock and detachment they went through were reflected in the collective experience of trauma by the next generations. Although this collective trauma is not the central idea of Elkins' study, a reference to the post-trauma stress at this point is in good order. Derek Summerfield, a renowned psychiatrist, argues that the social context determines the positive or negative factors for the suffering of post-trauma stress and it is "a label that not only pathologises but may dehumanise survivors by stripping them of the complexity of their living realities and associations" (31). Therefore the institution of slavery caused black slaves and their descendants to develop a pathological mental state as an outcome of the collective trauma of shock and detachment. The status of Africans' term of servitude in the colonies was established about forty years after the arrival of the first twenty Africans in Virginia in 1619 (38). As stated by a Maryland law of 1663, "All negroes or other slaves within the province, and all negroes and other slaves to be hereafter imported into the province, shall serve *durante vita*; and all their children born of any negro or other slave, shall be slaves as their fathers were for the term of their lives" (Elkins 40). The color line was officially established to differentiate free citizens from life-long serving slaves, who were not citizens of the American colonies and later States. Blacks' non-citizen status was made official with the U.S. Supreme Court case of *Dred Scott v. Sanford* in 1857,

by which a slave from Missouri was denied the right to sue his owner in a court for his freedom.

In the culture argument, Ashcroft et al. explain the psychology of being disrespected by “cultural denigration”, that is “the conscious or unconscious oppression of indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model” (9). Their “inferiority” was correlated to the “low and savage state” of the African tribal cultures (89). Here race was socially constructed in reference to the level of civilization. As slavery was intertwined with “the means of production, the basic social arrangements, and the very tone of Southern culture” (34), the institutionalization of prejudice against people of African descent grew stronger. As a result of this institutionalized prejudice, racism became an established cultural code in the United States. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was a pioneer who boldly opposed discrimination against black people.

Du Bois, a graduate of Fisk and Harvard Universities with a doctorate in history, was a co-founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and founded and directed *The Crisis*, the organization’s magazine. He aimed at studying the aftermath of the Reconstruction Era (1867-1877) in *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903). According to Du Bois the era after the revolution of the Civil War and Emancipation (126) was a time of “bewilderment” because of the confusing drawbacks of the reconstructive courses of action that caused disorientation. Racial segregation was based on the Jim Crow Laws’ “separate but equal” doctrine, shaped in the 1890s, which aimed at black people’s separation in the Southern public sphere. Keeping this in mind, he observed that whites undervalued industrial and common school training of the blacks. Du Bois argued that only after training could blacks achieve better occupations to serve their communities (32). Inferior educational opportunities caused blacks to be intellectually backward in the eyes of the whites. Another view of Du Bois was that the “elevation” of blacks should be accomplished through the influence of a better-educated and wiser group in the black community: the so-called Talented Tenth. Only with such leaders the struggling blacks could dream of success. This was how he formulated the answer to the question of what should be done for progress in relation to civilization, culture and righteousness in his 1897 essay “Strivings of the

Negro People” (197). In order to reach equal status in American society, he continued in the *Souls*, black people should not only emancipate themselves through educational, legal and economic development, but they should also establish good relationships with the dominant white society (51). Improvements were made during the Reconstruction Era: the Freedman’s Bureau institutionalized education, legal, economic and proprietorship rights of the blacks after the Civil War. Free schools were established (32) in spite of the Southern fear that assumed an educated black person to be a threat to the white supremacy (184). Courts were established to protect blacks from whites since regular civil courts perpetuated slavery (34). On the peasant proprietorship matter, settlement into public lands was opened to freedmen with tools and capital (31). Finally, the system of free labor was established which meant the freedom to choose employers with no fixed rate of wages and no forced labor (30). On the other hand, the Freedmen’s Bureau had failed to change the mindset of people living together in the country. It could not establish “good-will between ex-slave masters and the freedmen” (35). They were against each other because there was a lack of empathy towards the troubles of the other. Blacks put the burden of all their poverty, ignorance and misfortune onto the shoulders of the whites. According to Du Bois, racial segregation was rooted in the absence of any common ground for the two races to communicate intellectually in daily life (183). Both groups needed to change their perspectives towards each other. Union of intelligence and sympathy across the color line would bring justice and right to society. From a psychological perspective, an imprisoned group may respond in three different ways: revolt and revenge, attempt to adjust all thought and action to the will of the greater group, or a determined effort at self-realization and self-development despite an oppressive environment (46). Obviously Du Bois prioritizes self-development as the healthiest way to transform the mutual prejudices and ameliorate the failings of the Reconstruction. In order to understand these transformations that happened after this era, I will contextualize Du Bois’s conceptualization of double consciousness.

1.2 Psychological, literary and philosophical contexts

According to Dickson D. Bruce, the configuration of the concept of double consciousness is a synthesis of the psychological, literary and philosophical backgrounds of European Romanticism and American Transcendentalism. The term double consciousness had existed before Du Bois brought a new dimension to it by adding the psychological approach to race in his essay “Strivings of the Negro People,” published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1897. His consistent use of the term implies that he was familiar with both its literary and medical connotations (307). He chose this expression to make sense to the educated readership of the magazine but gave a different meaning to it by adding the issue of race. Thus he attempted to make the readers “understand the tragedy of racism, especially for the self-conscious individual, and also to appreciate his own program for a new definition of what it meant to be black in America” (307).

Bruce cites Arnold Rampersad who analyzed the psychological aspect of the concept of double consciousness. He referred to cases of split personality in evaluating Du Bois’s linking of the term to the African Americans’ psychological experience. According to these cases, “dual personalities were not just different from each other but were inevitably in opposition” (Rampersad, qtd. in Bruce 304). The first case of double consciousness being recorded in 1817, until the 1890s when Du Bois became aware of the phrase, patients with such symptoms were diagnosed to have the condition of “a double consciousness, or a duality of person in the same individual” (304). Du Bois decided to relate the cultural conflict within the African American self to a psychological one.

As Bruce points out, Du Bois also employs spiritual ideas and imagery related to Romanticism and sentimentalism, which were widespread throughout Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century. He made use of Romantic racialist allusions to create an aesthetic for the black soul to have a sublime outlook (301). This outlook is the spiritual aspect of double consciousness; however, is not effective in making the black psyche stronger. His discourse was built on imagery closely related to Goethean expression (Sollors, cited in Bruce 301): “One ever feels his twoness, – a[n] American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one

dark body” (Du Bois 3). For black Americans being characterized as having a human soul with such allusions, Du Bois must have thought, would bring recognition to the problem of African American selfhood and provide a better understanding of the meaning of skin color because it did not only connote a surface matter but a deeper meaning. In this respect, he indirectly criticized “romantic racist discourses of sympathy to use white norms and perspectives as the measure of all peoples” (Luis-Brown 73). As David Luis-Brown, who writes about the discourse of race from the perspective of decolonization, points out, Du Bois transforms the sentimentalist discourse of “pity” towards African American people into a discourse of “agency” by African Americans when he writes about “this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (Du Bois 3). His style of sentimental universalism “is a tool of activism, not substitute for it” (Luis-Brown 85). I do not agree with Luis-Brown’s argument on Du Bois’s transformation of double consciousness into agency because the sentimentalist aspect of double consciousness does not have a rehabilitative effect on the black individual. Rather, I would argue, “[w]hen a person’s capacity to act is severely restricted, say, by a massive lack of resources, that person becomes a ‘patient’ rather than an agent” (Liebkind 38). According to this general assessment of the human psyche, African American people develop double consciousness because they lack agency and it is this lack of agency, in my opinion, that structures the pathological feature of the concept.

Although he relates it to different concerns, Du Bois, as Bruce points out, draws on Ralph Waldo Emerson’s Transcendentalism in his reconstruction of the term double consciousness. Emerson had used this term in an 1843 essay titled “The Transcendentalist” to focus on the conflict between spiritual needs and worldly requirements. To question and define the set of oppositions of spirit and the world, Transcendentalism tried to understand the position of the self in the downward pull of worldly life (Bruce 300). Du Bois associated this inner conflict with the black person’s “gift” of “second sight” to look at him/herself in the white-dominated society. By gaining double consciousness, s/he could break away from the downward pull of society that restrains true self-realization. The Transcendentalist view of the self is

about pulling the person up towards a spiritual union with the divine. It guides him/her out of “the apparent chaos of things-as-they-are and the unity of Nature comprehended by universal law; and the demanding, cold rationality of commercial society and the search for Truth, Beauty, and Goodness – especially Beauty” (Bruce 300-1). This is the sublimation of the soul. Such a reference to uplifting of the soul by developing the skill of self-identification is a positive aspect of double consciousness. However, this positive spiritual aspect of double consciousness does not help the individual to gain equal treatment in society. It does not matter if the soul has become sublime, because the individual is still discriminated against on the basis of skin color. In this respect, identity politics is not about spiritual well-being. It is about prejudice against an Other who is superficially seen from outside. The black gift of “second sight” is an attempt to liberate their soul from whites’ racial prejudice but it is not sufficient to change the oppressive ideology. I appreciate Du Bois’s effort to relate double consciousness to philosophical and spiritual sublimation; however, the Transcendentalist construct of double consciousness, does not link race with the spiritual union of the person with the divine. It is more about truth, beauty and goodness. It is not related to spiritual empowerment through resisting and claiming rights for racial equality. Rights of blacks will not get recognized simply because they have sublime souls. Therefore the Romantic, or Transcendentalist, view of double consciousness as a positive state of mind is does not help the black individual to feel powerful in society.

1.3 Du Bois’s concept of double consciousness

Du Bois’s utilization of the concept double consciousness in *The Souls of Black Folk* is a sociological method to approach the issue of the color line and its psychological effects on racially discriminated members of society. As Anthony Monteiro points out, Du Bois reconsiders the “language, methods, historical references, and civilizational assumptions of the social sciences” when he organizes the epistemology of double consciousness (Monteiro 221). Because Du Bois asked interdisciplinary questions about the problem of race and his ideas have been influential in a number of fields, including anthropology and cultural studies (226). Du Bois begins his inquiry by asking

how it feels to be a problem in the United States (*Souls* 1). Because they are both black (“negro”) and American in the mainstream white society, Americans of African descent develop an internal conflict which Du Bois called double consciousness. This new terminology for black identity denotes the internalization of two-ness of the self, of thoughts and of ideals (3). Double consciousness disables blacks to achieve a self-conscious manhood; as Du Bois argues, “[s]uch a double life, with double thoughts, double duties, and double social classes, must give rise to double worlds and double ideals, and tempt the mind to pretence or revolt, to hypocrisy or radicalism” (202). However, I think double consciousness leads to hypocrisy because of having an uncertain self-definition.

There are three major issues in Du Bois’s concept of double consciousness: power, racism and spirituality. White oppressors formed black stereotypes, blacks’ role in society and their worldview. This is related to the power exercised on the black individuals. Being discounted in the mainstream white social life is a sign of racism and Du Bois is concerned with the internal conflict this causes in blacks; he asks what it means to be black – or as he puts it, “negro” – and American in this racist scene. The Transcendentalist view of double consciousness as spirituality characterizes the black individual as different from the white majority, as a special person (Bruce 301). This is a way of glorifying the potential of the minority group. Being positive aspects, spirituality and second sight go hand in hand in Du Bois’s explanation of double consciousness, even though these do not change the fact that they are discriminated against by mainstream society. The historical mission of the African American self, according to Du Bois, is “to discover and make explicit the gift to the world that only the second-sighted could bring – the gift itself being fruits of wisdom from suffering, survival, and hope” (Eze 888). This gift of second sight adds to the exploration of individual’s unity of his/her own self as well as the universal union of races with “the spiritual and ethnic material of a quest for a historical racial authenticity and social justice” (Eze 889). As another positive sign, the soul Du Bois champions is racially and morally “heroic” and is the critical means to achieve universal civilization. This heroic and spiritually sublime self, on the other hand, does not suffice to liberate the self from racial prejudice and oppression.

Monteiro argues that the Du Boisian project is a reconceptualization of the social, cultural and civil world from an African viewpoint (221). Du Bois ascribes a developmental course of action to the black individual from childhood to youth with his explanation of double consciousness: “the journey at least gave leisure for reflection and self-examination; it changed the child of Emancipation to the youth with dawning self-consciousness, self-realization, self-respect” (8). His aim is to lead the progressing black self into adulthood in the near future. There are three critical intellectual moves in this developmental course of action. First, Du Bois connects the European logocentric idea of progress to the African American experience. Secondly, by looking back at the nineteenth century, he predicts that the problem of the twentieth century would be race and the modern white society would have to deal with the consequences of its hegemonic history of oppressing the blacks. Last but not least, he aims at changing the global relations by taking Africa as the strategic intellectual center. He dares to break the European thought of progress by attempting to reconceptualize Africa for the world. To Du Bois, Africa corresponded to what the Renaissance, the Enlightenment and modern science meant for European thought (Monteiro 221). He attributes a new self to being from Africa, and in line with this new self, he points towards the intellectual enlightenment of the blacks because this is the most important means to “transform and improve both themselves and the conditions of the society they are living in” (*Souls* 8).

Du Bois focused on three major issues with double consciousness: power, racism and spirituality. His aim was to reconceptualize Africa as the strategic intellectual center of progress in contrast to racial discrimination in the United States. Even though these positive qualities of Du Bois’s concept of double consciousness may have a positive psychological effect on the black individual, they do not help him or her to change the discrimination s/he is subjected to. The spiritual well-being of an Othered individual does not affect how the dominant culture views him/her. S/he is still a black-skinned individual in their eyes. Internalizing the two-ness of the self, thoughts and ideals of the black- and white-worlds has a confusing effect for the black individual’s self-definition. Adopting sentimentalism to achieve a civilized level as a future “hero” is not a realistic approach to deal with the race problem. Double

consciousness obviously does not solve the race problem. Even the unrealistic view of the self causes the development of pathology. Therefore Du Bois's double consciousness can be interpreted as a pathological type of self-awareness within the psychoanalytical approach.

1.4 Fanonian framework of psychopathology

Frantz Fanon was a black psychiatrist who shared similar intellectual concerns with Du Bois though his investigation includes a wider range of African-originated selves due to his French colonial experience in Martinique. In his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) he elaborates on his perspective on the psychopathology of the black self. This approach is critical when analyzing double consciousness. Even though the date of Fanon's study coincides with the publication of the first *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual: Mental Disorders (DSM-I)*, his understanding of psychopathology is in line with the description of personality pattern disturbance in DSM-I: "The depth of the psychopathology here allows these individuals little room to maneuver under conditions of stress, except into actual psychosis" (DSM-I 35). I think Fanon's view on psychopathology frames double consciousness as a personality pattern disturbance because the conflicting identity of black individuals is a form of disturbed personality due to social constructs they have a very limited control of. Therefore they have a pathological self-image.

Du Bois and Fanon are linked as scholars and activists who tried to deconstruct the power the idea of white supremacy exerts on the self-definition of black people. Although there is more than half a century's gap between their life experiences, there is a possible overlap between the two scholars' professional views of blackness. As a soldier in the French army and fighting for the former oppressor in World War II, Fanon developed his ideas about black self-consciousness through his encounter with the Négritude movement and especially Aimé Césaire's teachings. This movement can be taken as "the French version of the Black Consciousness movement in the United States" (Moore 754-5). Négritude poets influenced Fanon when shaping his outrage against the assimilation plan of the racist mindset. According to Arnold, there are three layers of communication in the Négritude movement:

"Personal expression, sense of personal catharsis,

Expression of black experience (racial memory), reflecting a sense of collective Négritude,
 Expression of universal experience (archetypes), reflecting a sense of humanity.” (Arnold 62)

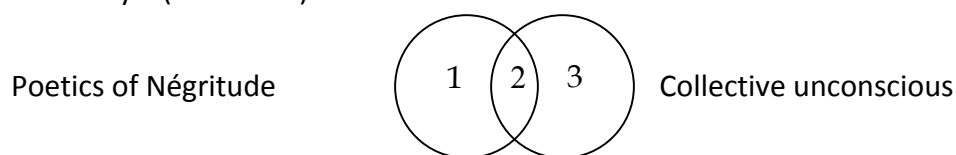


Figure 1¹

The first two layers correspond to the poetics of Négritude whereas the last two, the second one positioned in the intersection area (see fig. 1), produce the collective unconscious associated with being black. The personal expression of each artist combined with the expression of the black experience lived by the whole black community constitute the poetics of Négritude. This is to show the connection between personal life experience and the experience of being black. When being black is combined with the overall experience of being human in the world, Arnold calls it the collective unconscious. This general title corresponds to blacks’ unconscious sense of connection to each other in the world. In the intersection area of the schema, the expression of black experience is the most important layer of communication in the Négritude movement. These levels are helpful to understand how Fanon built up his view of the black self in terms of psychopathology. He describes his own search for identity as a pathological condition: “I wanted to be typically Negro – it was no longer possible. I wanted to be white – that was a joke. And, when I tried, on the level of ideas and intellectual activity, to reclaim my negritude, it was snatched away from me” (101).

In order to critically analyze Du Bois’s concept of double consciousness through Fanon’s evaluation of psychopathology, *Black Skin, White Masks* is a useful focus. Elkins sums up Fanon’s view of the is black self: “Negroes *are*, after all, only white men with black skins, nothing more, nothing less” (Elkins 23). Just like Du Bois’s opening line of how it feels to be a problem in a society segregated by the color line, Fanon takes colonial racism to be the basic problem (Fanon 65). In the Foreword to *Black Skin*, Homi Bhabha comments on how Fanon contributes to the psychological aspect of racism with the question of “what does the black man *want*?” (Bhabha xxv). Fanon

¹ Following Arnold’s description, I made this schema to demonstrate the idea better.

changes “the very means by which we recognize and identify *human agency*” (xxv). This human agency is related to the search for unconditional self-definition (Fanon 169), yet each characterization depends on the social and cultural context in which the black individual lives. The only reference to the condition of the American counterpart of black selfhood in Fanon’s study is when he distinguishes the “French Negro” from the “American Negro” and asserts that,

In the United States the Negro battles and is battled. There are laws that, little by little, are invalidated under the Constitution. There are other laws that forbid certain forms of discrimination. And we can be sure that nothing is going to be given free. There is war, there are defeats, truces, victories. (172)

Fanon calls for a new humanism built on understanding and love and against racial bias. He argues that, from a white perspective, “the black is not a man” (1) because he is a stereotype of the Other, not a human being at all. Therefore, “Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness” (83). Fanon’s brief statement on what the black man wants clarifies the reasoning behind double consciousness: “The black man wants to be white. The white man slaves to reach a human level. The white man is sealed in his whiteness. The black man in his blackness” (3). He calls this dual narcissism a vicious circle; black people desire to prove “the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect” (3), but white supremacy continues to exert its power on them. He suggests a psychoanalytical approach to solve the narcissistic problem of blackness (3).

In his psychological analysis, Fanon determines that the roots of the black inferiority complex are economic underdevelopment and internalization of the idea of black inferiority. He adds the idea of being seen as the Other since the black man acts differently when he encounters a white or a black man (8) because the white man presupposes him to have “no culture, no civilization, no ‘long historical past’” (21). He relates the black man’s feeling inferior to the European’s sense of superiority. Fanon courageously proclaims, “It is the racist who creates his inferior” (69) and by doing so, aims to relieve the blacks who blame themselves for having an inferiority complex because it was not their fault to feel this way. He gives the example of the “So-called Dependency Complex of Colonized Peoples,” which he describes as “latent forms of

psychosis that become overt as the result of a traumatic experience” (62). The African-American’s double consciousness is the result of the collective trauma of slavery and the events taking place in this system. The inferiority complex of the black man is not related to “the affective amnesia characteristic of the typical neurotic” (116) because he never forgets the experience of collective trauma of shock and detachment described in Section 1.1. Fanon criticizes narcissistic withdrawal – the child rejecting authoritarian figures – as an ineffective coping mechanism with white supremacy because the black man always needs the approval of the white former masters (36). In relation with the black man’s alienation in society, he refers to Freud in explaining the ontogenetic perspective and adds sociogeny that is the study of origin and development of a society (4). I think Fanon sees the alienation of black people also as sociogenic. When Ralph Ellison, a well-known black novelist, writes about the importance of the Lafargue Psychiatric Clinic in his essay “Harlem is Nowhere” (1967), he refers to the need of blacks to receive treatment for their mental disorder of what he, like Fanon, sees as social alienation. Self-estrangement is the effect of lacking autonomy and this lack is a “failure of [their] way of life” (Ellison 301). Without the autonomy of self-determination, they are alienated from the society they live in. He explains that frustrated blacks have this mental disturbance because they are “in desperate search for an identity. Rejecting the second-class status assigned them, they feel alienated and their whole lives have become a search for answers to the question: Who am I, What am I, Why am I, and Where?” (297). Because whites deny the humanity of blacks, he argues, blacks cannot reach a “stable, recognized place in society” and become the “displaced person” in democracy (Ellison 300). This is a form of insecure ontogeny in Freudian terms. Also for Fanon, social psychology is an important field to search for answers to the problematic maturing of the black self “in a society that derives its stability from the perpetuation of [the inferiority] complex, in a society that proclaims the superiority of one race; to the identical degree to which that society creates difficulties for him, he will find himself thrust into a neurotic situation” (Fanon 83). To prevent this psychopathology, he advocates a transformation of both the individual psyche and the behavior of the wider group. At an individual level, the patient suffering from an inferiority complex should be made conscious of

his unconscious desire to become white while the social structure should be transformed in order to eliminate the unequal treatment of each member (74).

Double consciousness causes the individual to have a dual identity and this is a sign of mental conflict, which both Fanon and Du Bois see as pathological. The maladaptive feature of the concept comes to the foreground as the denial of full expression of black identity in a minority position and this harms the psyche of the individual. This mental conflict is caused by oppression, which calls black intellect into question (Moore 753) because having their expressive abilities denied is both a conflict for the blacks themselves and the dominant group who fail to recognize blacks' self-assertion. Owens Moore, a psychologist specialized in Black Studies, recommends a departure from double consciousness because it is not a healthy condition of being (761) if an individual "mentally fixate[s him/herself] into someone else's reality" (759). It is noteworthy that he takes double consciousness as a coping mechanism in response to white supremacy but, instead of this survival tool, he suggests the development of a single-minded consciousness, the aim of which is to achieve mental liberation. He argues that the fact that the Emancipation Proclamation *granted* African-Americans freedom prevented them from learning what true independence was (757-8). Fanon's commentary on the issue supports Moore's argument: "The Negro knows nothing of the cost of freedom, for he has not fought for it. From time to time he has fought for Liberty and Justice, but these were always white liberty and white justice" (Fanon, qtd. in Moore 757). Because he has fought for white ideals, the false self-consciousness of the black individual is related to the plantation culture, which, according to the African philosopher Emmanuel Eze, is in disagreement with "the moral processes of formation of a historical self" (887). Here one asks the question of how a historical self is formed. This is probably related to the historical events shaping the lives and worldviews of groups of people. However, Eze refers not only to the enslaved self but also to the self of the master because these two are reciprocal elements of the same slavery system.

Fanon later uses Carl Jung's notion of the collective unconscious to explain the conflict of being a black man in a predominantly white society. The collective unconsciousness is "the sum of prejudices, myths, collective attitudes of a given

group” (145) and the unrevealed reproduction of these assumed prejudices in a culture (147), that is, the idea that “black = ugliness, sin, darkness, immorality. In other words, he is Negro who is immoral” (149). Another way in which the black self is associated with immorality is sexuality, which is central to Negrophobia. The black body is the center of attention in this linkage (124). Being conscious of the self and the body as the Other causes the formation of a negative self-image. Consequently, Fanon argues, “a Negro is forever in combat with his own image” (150). To begin with, the cause of this pathology of perceiving the self as Other is that the white man taught the black man so. Moreover, the black man accepted the white as his intellectual ancestor. This is why a paradox occurs when identifying the black self with the white majority. The black self is an error in the white racial definition (Fanon 148) and this error causes a vague self-recognition. Fanon refers to the Adlerian scheme of ego and the Other in which the former is greater than the latter in people who do not face discrimination. However, in black people’s case, the ego polarizes the Other and the White self, and this shows the governing of social instead of personal phenomena in the make up of the black self (Fanon 168).

Peter Weinreich, a social psychologist, suggests that such a conflicted situation of identification reflects an attempt to solve the conflict by stimulating re-evaluations of the self according to “one’s currently existing value system” with regards to other members of the society (53). In the case of the individual with double consciousness, being black builds up the “conflict identification with another” while being white corresponds to the “idealistic-identification with another” (219). The African self is what the black individual empathically identifies with at the same time s/he desires to wholly dissociate from this self. This inner conflict may lead to self-hatred (225). Blacks who are afflicted with double consciousness cannot “resolve existential problems that may arise from identifications with initially ‘alien’ characteristics” (45). Cultural citizenship is described as “shaping political communities rather than being defined by them and creating new forms of identity and affiliation” (Rosaldo, qtd. in Luis-Brown 22), whereas regular citizenship constitutes “membership in a political community, active engagement in the life of a polity, [and] an experience of identity and solidarity” (Bosniak, qtd. in Luis-Brown 20). Only the last component of the definition of

citizenship is in effect for black people; otherwise they are Othered consistent with “the rule of aliens” in which there is a distinction between the citizen and the alien. Blacks can be classified as the alien in this context. Stereotyping black individuals is an outcome of prejudice linked to categorization (Liebkind 30). Due to this prejudice against themselves, black individuals often have negative self-images and thus low self-esteem. There are two “we”s in their split mentality into perceiving themselves as subjects and objects: when they emphasize their feeling as whites, they associate themselves with the dominant group and call themselves “we” to define a group of people (they are subjects) and when they perceive themselves to be blacks, they are a part of the minority group and the “we” they use is “a collective ‘object’, an impersonal plurality” (Liebkind 37). Black individuals perceive themselves as objects rather than subjects and this is another dimension of double consciousness. Belonging to two opposing collective bodies shapes the mental split in the black individual’s identification of him/herself.

Du Bois advances the discourse of freedom, or emancipation in his terms, within the pathology of double consciousness in order to construct and upgrade racial equality (Luis-Brown 2). He criticizes the emancipation of the blacks because social and economic rights were not equalized properly for all citizens of the United States. The unjust conditions blacks struggled with were a result of what Du Bois calls the “Veil” of race between opportunity and the blacks. The metaphor of the Veil implies “a barrier of American racial segregation that keeps Afro-Americans always behind a color line – disoriented – prey to divided aims, dire economic circumstances, haphazard educational opportunities, and frustrated intellectual ambitions” (Baker 1987b 57). Opportunity here meant America’s promise of wealth and prosperity only to white people (Du Bois 4). Elkins sees the institution of slavery as a cause of the blacks’ identity confusion (83). In terms of pulling the veil up a bit, Luis-Brown praises Du Bois for “transforming the veil of race, ordinarily a ‘prisonhouse,’ into a ‘unifying ideal’ by paradoxically emphasizing the unlimited potential for ‘human perfectibility’ within previously limiting bounds of racial identity” (100). In order to realize this potential, Du Bois asks what is needed for black emancipation to fulfill itself and what sets the emancipation back. Freedom for all will eradicate social unrest and a better

community will be achieved when all citizens are to be treated as equals. His argument is not about whom to blame for the social degradation. Du Bois suggests that black intellectuals were responsible to the struggling black community and parallel to that, they were responsible to the American nation as a whole (55). The underlying cause of the lack of equal opportunities for blacks in America is the slavery system, which kept the blacks ill-informed about the world around them: modern economic organization, the function of government, individual worth and possibilities. This is why Du Bois emphasizes the role of the black intellectual: he has to lead the way towards freedom. The education of the black people is underlined in his freedom discourse. The function of a university is not to teach how to earn money or educate teachers for public schools, but rather it is needed in adjusting to life and this leads the way towards civilization. This is at least how Du Bois sees the purpose of higher education.

Chapter 2

The Harlem Renaissance and Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929)

2.1 Historical context: The Harlem Renaissance

In relation to social, literary and artistic developments, the Harlem Renaissance marks a crucial moment of black freedom in African-American cultural and intellectual history. It is a breakthrough of black artistic production within Western parameters. The main concern of the black intellectuals of this era between World War I and Great Depression is African-Americans' racial self-assertion and self-definition in a society regulated by and for the white majority. In this identity crisis, or struggle for "cultural maturity" (Locke and Brooks, qtd. in Huggins 60), Harlem intellectuals were the mediating figures between the black and white worlds. From the cultural and artistic perspective, the "Negro" deserved the "Sleeping Giant" metaphor instead of America being defined as the "Sleeping Giant" for its economic and political advancement in the postwar era (Grey, qtd. in Douglas 345). The Harlem Renaissance also signifies a literary movement dedicated to bringing down racism, bigotry, and Ku Klux Klan activities such as lynch mobs (Zafar 287). Through the use of mass media and by becoming producers of popular culture, intellectual Harlemites, according to Mar Gallego, aimed first to reclaim their lost African roots as cultural heritage, and secondly, to break away from the European influence in the arts (154).

To start with the naming of the era as the "Harlem Renaissance," it is important to point out the fact that it was coined in a later period. According to Nathan Huggins, a prominent African-American Studies scholar, the Harlem Renaissance as a "reawakened" culture is nothing but "a historical fiction" (3). It was taken for granted that marked "a sudden awakening ... an instantaneous change" (Johnson, qtd. in Douglas 345) since it could not be taken as a historical development given that the black cultural past was misrecognized and overlooked for a long time. In fact, the name "Harlem Renaissance" was not used prior to 1940 and its widespread acceptance occurred only in the 1960s (Mitchell 641). Huggins argues that they saw themselves as instruments of history-making when creating a "self-conscious self-concept" (3). In relation to the black artists' populist approach to the black self-

concept, the short lifespan of the movement connoting a “renaissance” may prove it being a misnomer (Brown, cited in Holmes 60). The shortness of the period causes me not to see them as leading figures but as a group of artists interested in popularity. But from another perspective, the movement can be taken as a true “renaissance” because blacks sought to revive the “lost” African antiquity in order “to rediscover their racial souls ... at least mentally” (Holmes 65). Although this rediscovery may justify the naming of the era as a “renaissance”, the established name of the Harlem Renaissance is open to further discussion.

Harlem was the cultural capital of black intellectuals; furthermore it functioned as a psychological and political fortress (Zafar 287). Hence the celebrated novelist Ralph Ellison described Harlem as a city that offered black artists their “home-grown version of Paris” (Ellison, qtd. in Douglas 312). Looking back at an earlier period in Harlem history, Ann Douglas points out that in the beginning of twentieth century, the community in this area of New York was composed of British, German, Jewish, and Irish people, whose habits were formed around the “special combination of small-town pastoral atmosphere, leisurely European-provincial ways, and big-city cultural facilities” such as elegant restaurants and newly established theaters (309). At that time, the arrival of blacks from the rural South to the Northern cities as part of the Great Migration was seen as an “invasion of black hordes” (314). New York became the cultural capital of the new West because it lacked industry such as auto manufacturing, meatpacking, iron and steel. Rather than these, “publishing and printing [then] comprised New York’s second largest industry after the making of women’s garments” (14-15). Consequently, instead of semi-skilled workers, New York attracted more artistic and educated blacks from the South. The driving forces of “an identity quest, a desire for intellectual challenge, and a compelling urge to do something important” pushed these talented people to come to New York (Huggins 22-23). According to the Harlem Renaissance writer Alain Locke, Harlem promised to be the “race capital” of African-Americans: “What was needed to make a race ... was a common consciousness and a life in common” (Locke, qtd. in Huggins 58). Douglas argues that the “invasion” of Southern blacks was a “reclaiming [of] a strategic portion of the country that had enslaved them” (312). Conversely, Huggins highlights that the

“Negro renaissance” was blacks’ “claiming their *patria*, their nativity” (309). According to Baker, on the other hand, renaissance is related to their claim of American citizenship rather than the space of Harlem (Baker 1987a 89). In my opinion, the chain of events beginning from the Great Migration to sophisticated artistic production follows this order: population shift, economic prosperity, accumulation of capital, cultural production, popularity through mass media, recognition in the artistic scene, and finally improved craftsmanship in the arts. This development can be captured in the formula “[c]ulture follows money” (Fitzgerald, qtd. in Douglas 4). This is a simple way to point out the dependence of black artists on the patronage system. Wealthy New Yorkers provided a substantial economic source for artistic production but, on the other hand, this source limited the black artists’ freedom to create their culture anew because of the patronage system. Even though Harlem being the cultural capital of black intellectuals was not a coincidence, blacks’ claiming their African nativity through art could happen in any place with suitable conditions. Being African-American is the source of Harlem Renaissance.

Another aspect of Harlem Renaissance is the definition of civilization. It was under scrutiny in the postwar Western countries. Non-Europeans began to realize that their own cultures were equally valuable as the Europeans’. Americans were also seen as provincial people, therefore they were dissimilar to Europeans. This situation led them to question their self-consciousness and uncertainties about their rank in the civilized world. Around the time of Great War, culture in the form of literature, visual arts, music and so on was used as the determining factor of civilization. The emphasis on high culture was a continuation of the appreciation of idealistic Greco-Roman civilization. As a demonstration of the equality of central and peripheral cultures, Harlem intellectuals took their chance to prove their success in artistic production by reviving African culture (Huggins 7-9). Blacks were not included in the political sphere, had limited job opportunities and were deprived of economic opportunities (Baker 1987a 90). But the color line was not strict in the fields of art and literature. Therefore these fields appeared to be promising domains for racial achievement for the black intellectuals.

Because the Harlem Renaissance was a brief historical era, not a continuous affair, critics have claimed that the renaissance had “failed” (Mitchell 641). However, taking the momentary decline of popularity of the black artistic production as a failure is equal to viewing blacks’ social and artistic developments in the 1920s as being hopeless and unproductive (Baker 1987a 91). Huggins is one of the critics who see the movement as a failure due to the shock of Great Depression in 1929. He points out that the African-Americans were not to blame since all Americans failed to cope with the economic difficulties that caused the depression (303). Still, he criticizes Harlemites for relying on the patronage system and for their “naïve assumptions about the centrality of culture, unrelated to economic and social realities” (303). Historian Levering Lewis argues that the black intellectuals’ aspirations were “tragically wide, ambitious, and delusional” (Lewis, qtd. in Baker 1987a 90); their white sponsors had great expectations from them but the black artists failed to affect race relations in the social sphere (Lewis, cited in Corbould 881). Huggins harshly criticizes black intellectuals for fancying themselves to be the avant-garde although they were only shadow boxing; black magazines “gave a sense of importance to blacks who read them” (30) and this is why the intellectuals felt like leaders. Nevertheless, the Harlem Renaissance should not be seen as a failure. Although it is true that economic restrictions caused it to lose strength, this does not mean that it did not affect future generations.

Harlem Renaissance is an outstanding introduction to the black arts. Although the naming of the period is open to discussion, New York particularly provided the structure of a complex urban pluralism that encouraged blacks to build up their new identity. Harlem became the cultural capital in which they developed their identity in relation to civilization and their African descent. While transforming into the new urban character, blacks began to question and differentiate between their old and new selves. Huggins analyzes the new black identity as follows: “the so-called Old Negro was merely carried within the bosom of the New as a kind of self-doubt, perhaps self-hate” (65). African-Americans’ migration from the South to New York stimulated the development of the mental conflict of double consciousness.

2.2 The role of Du Bois

Du Bois, the leading thinker about African-American selfhood in the Harlem Renaissance, contributed with his concept of double consciousness to the construction of black identity. Furthermore, he is responsible for creating the necessary environment for “the vocal and verbal expression of Negro political and artistic” developments through protest and self-assertion (Holmes 62). As the source of cultural encouragement, inspiration and motivation in New York, he was respected by the younger generation and his presence is another factor that made New York attractive to African-American migrants. Huggins celebrates him as the representative of hope and the new spirit of political activism (21). He was seen as the “leading literateur” of his race and “the major force behind the radical pride just prior to the Harlem Renaissance” (Walden, qtd. in Gallego 153).

Du Bois’s ultimate goal was to achieve social justice, in a color-blind society (Huggins 35). He was “concerned with the problems of injustice, poverty, lack of education, resources, freedom, and the need for democratic inclusion” (Sloan 93). The lack of political rights was the most important obstacle for the African-Americans (Huggins 29). On the other hand, he was not recognized as a transformational leader (Sloan 89) and was criticized as a “handkerchief head ... hat-in-hand Negro” (Randolph and Owen, qtd. in Douglas 313) because he did not pay attention to the socialist view of class-consciousness. Rather, he was concerned with racial consciousness, which as we have seen, he defined as a form of double consciousness (discussed in Chapter 1.3). Gallego argues that Du Bois’s cultural and critical work contributed to the cultural dualism experienced by black intellectuals and to their reliance on the patronage system (155). He criticizes Du Bois for having inspired – in fact he uses the phrase “misguided encouragement” – the Harlem artists “to mimic the white [American] self” while their white patrons demanded that they preserve their “archaic” African selves (155). In connection to Fanon’s argument, Du Bois’s “misguidance” caused African-Americans to develop a bipolar identity that I have argued as pathological (see Chapter 1.4). Art and literature also function as a restriction to the representation of racial and ethnic identity (155). Harlem Renaissance writer Zora Neale Hurston called white patrons “Negrotarians” because of their demands and expectations from black artists.

Their approval was needed to produce art, which meant their intellectual freedom was restricted by economic dependence. This was “refined racism” (Thompson, qtd. in Gallego 155) because it was happening in the classy realm of art. For example, Langston Hughes had complained about his patron’s wish for Hughes to focus on his Africanness in his autobiography: “I was only an American Negro ... *but I was not Africa*. I was Chicago and Kansas City and Broadway and Harlem” (Hughes, qtd. in Gallego 155, my emphasis). Hughes succeeded in breaking away from the pressure of the white patronage system that restricted his ability to express himself. The patronage system did not allow black artists creative freedom despite Du Bois’s efforts to make African-Americans become socially and politically equal to the rest of the society. Though not slaves, they were treated as puppets. At the same time, white patrons’ demands that the black artists reproduce the black image as whites wanted to see them (not how blacks saw themselves in reality) also contributed to the pathology of double consciousness by creating a mental conflict in the artist.

In addition to Du Bois’s ideas on democratic participation, the Talented Tenth can be seen as an integrationist theory (Sloan 93). The Talented Tenth of the African-American population referred to the talented and college-educated minority, representing *high* culture, whom Du Bois gave the responsibility of providing cultural and political leadership to the black community while asking them to sacrifice their personal interests. In Du Bois’s model, the Talented Tenth were to become transformational leaders, generated by life experience, training, and intellectual stimulation (Sloan 87). Douglas argues that black intellectuals belonging to this minor group presumed that any kind of media, “from commercial entertainment to militant race journalism, *was* [a] political strategy” (303) in the struggle for social justice. The contradiction of the Talented Tenth theory is that there is “imparity” between the black masses, who are neglected, and the intellectual minority (Gallego 163). Du Bois’s civilization project was considered to be cultural elitism but Huggins claims this consideration is an anachronistic approach (5). To interpret race pride and honor as bourgeois assumptions is to look at this particular historical era from the perspective of a later period (6). Rather than exemplifying elitism, the original Talented Tenth theory was founded on the idea of self-sacrifice and leadership (Battle and Wright

657). In fact, racial representation of African-Americans in the artistic productions of the Harlem Renaissance worked as a means of drawing a positive self-image or making racial propaganda when the artists depicted “good Negroes, clean and cultured and not-funny Negroes, beautiful and nice and upper class [Negroes]” (Hughes, qtd. in Gallego 162). However, creative freedom becomes a problem. Hughes criticizes this dilemma of black artists when representing their communities because it involves the manipulation of reality. Gallego argues that popular culture is a counter culture that “challenges and destabilizes the elitist paradigm Du Bois proposes” (163). On the other hand, Huggins emphasizes the naïvete of the black intellectuals who saw art and letters as a link between the black and white cultures. Regardless of the conflict-ridden history of the U.S., he argues, they believed that art and culture would work as a recreation of brotherhood (5). I agree with Huggins’ idea on black artists’ perception of art as an interracial bridge but I think that black intellectuals in Harlem did not idealistically aim for the development of the black masses. Their main concern was their own popularity in the artistic scene that was supported by whites.

2.3 Modernist approach to the Harlem Renaissance

The Harlem Renaissance has modernist qualities. Richard Pells, a cultural critic, defines modernism as the challenge “to invent a new language to describe the scientific, political, and social upheavals of the modern world” (x). Harlem artists are in line with the modernist approach because they refer to themselves and their identity in their artistic productions. Houston Baker, on the other hand, links modernism to change, that is, “a profound shift in what could be taken as unquestionable assumptions about the meaning of human life” (1987b 5). By defining what change is, he positions every artist who acknowledges this “radical uncertainty” (1987b 3) in the modernist movement. In relation to Pells’s emphasis on creating a new language, Baker argues that the African-American artists’ emphasis on self-expression is the modernist element in black literature. The Harlem Renaissance is modern because the movement signifies a breakthrough in the black arts.

In relation to the modern definition of the movement, Gallego provides the most effective criticism of the naming of the period as “renaissance”. He argues that

while the Harlem Renaissance connotes an “avant-garde and modern character as the defining feature,” attempting to name the era as a “renaissance” fails to notice the preceding intellectual tradition that goes back to the end of nineteenth century (153). This tradition is composed of Du Bois’s and Booker T. Washington’s works as influential national leaders. Baker identifies the beginning of African-American modernism as September 18, 1895, when Washington delivered a speech at the “Negro Exhibition of the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition” (1987b 15). Baker recognizes Washington’s speech as evincing the modernist concern “of employing audible extant forms in ways that move clearly *up*, masterfully and resoundingly away from slavery” (1987b 101) in black intellectual history. After this moment, blacks started to advance in the modernist tradition with what Baker calls a “discursive constellation” that has the components of the “mastery of forms” and the “deformation of mastery” (1987b 15). Whereas the former component is the purposeful imitation of everyday practices to be accepted in the dominant social setting, the latter is about a “radical marronage” that is the “banding together [of runaway slaves] to create independent communities of their own” (1987b 75-6). As an example of the “mastery of form” he mentions Washington’s autobiography *Up from Slavery* (1901), which he argues masters the minstrel show by being a “*how-to* manual ... designed for Afro-American empowerment” (1987b 31). Another example of the mastery of form is Charles Chesnutt’s short stories because he masters the dialect by recapturing “the *sound* of the African ancestors” (1987b 45) at the turn of the century. The “deformation of mastery” is exemplified by Du Bois’s works, because he revisits the common sense present in African tribal culture, and by Alain Locke’s works, whom Baker credits for investigating the New Negro movement. In the era before Washington’s speech as the triggering event of African-American modernism, black culture was misrepresented in the nineteenth century minstrel shows. These were the “narratives or stories of ignorant and pathetically comic brutes who speak nonsense syllables” (1987b 22). This distortion of the black individual as the “Sambo” stereotype caused the white audience to take blacks as “*mis-speakers* bereft of humanity” (1987b 21). The psychodrama of the entertainers with the minstrel mask as a product of white American popular imagination was nothing but “nonsense, misappropriation, [and]

mis-hearing” (1987b 18). Modernism of African-American art was built up through expression. To speak about themselves made them modern since it is a mode of self-referentiality.

Many conventional literary histories take Alain Locke’s *The New Negro* (1925) as “the biblical text” of the Harlem Renaissance (Rampersad, qtd. in Pochmara 59) because he is the first to use the “new” concept to name his anthology. This is why the Harlem Renaissance is sometimes termed the New Negro Movement. Black intellectuals were under the influence of idealism present in the pre-war understanding of civilization. They still believed in the promise of liberation because the United States had not experienced the disillusionment of the Great War. Innovation was the driving force for them to construct an identity anew. In Locke’s introduction, the New Negro is presented as a new spirit (ix). The New Negro’s aim was to make “America safe for himself,” as he, as a soldier, had aimed to make the world “safe for democracy” during the war (Huggins 53). In the New Negro’s case, self-determination was a major step towards democratic participation in society. The New Negro identity generated hope for the African-Americans because they could look at themselves afresh with an increased self-respect which was being shaped by rejecting “the stereotypes and clichés, and insist[ing] on integrity of race and personality” (Huggins 57). Instead of these, they could define themselves anew. This was a relatively modern element in African-American cultural history. Jeffrey Stewart argues that Locke and his followers “invented a cultural citizenship that promised a new kind of American identity defined by culture instead of politics” (17). With the autonomy they created for themselves, black individuals could transfer themselves “from the Old Negro as racialized subject to the New Negro as a global citizen” (22). This change demonstrates that the movement was a modern one. On the other hand, modernist aspect of the Harlem Renaissance is not a critique of double consciousness. The mental conflict is a subject of the novels written in this period.

2.4 Analysis of Nella Larsen’s *Passing* (1929)

Nella Larsen, a member of the Harlem Renaissance, introduces the theme of racial transgression in her novella *Passing* (1929), at a time when passing was an established

form of being. She uses the strategy of visual indeterminacy to indicate racial conflict. The relationships between Irene Redfield, Clare Kendry and John Bellew demonstrate this conflict in the setting of Harlem. The aim of the passing subject is to trick the on-lookers. The women characters that pass as white suffer from a psychological conflict. Therefore women's passing is a version of the concept of double consciousness linking feminism, race conflict and psychoanalysis. Larsen criticizes the disturbance felt by the subject who defines herself as black when she meets a subject who identifies herself as a passing white. According to this plot, passing is pathological and has fatal consequences in the mainstream view of American society.

Urban experience is a relevant feature of *Passing*. Maria Balshaw argues that Harlem as a space of watching other people and being watched is consistent with the passing subjects' desire to accomplish their trick of identity by performance (308). Harlem, being an intersection of migrant cultures of New York, is where Du Bois's Talented Tenth was settled and Larsen's story takes place among this class of people. Balshaw argues that Harlem did not fully satisfy the inhabitants' need for a free expressive space (310). However, I do not agree with Balshaw because black intellectuals had sufficient agency to express themselves. Irene and Clare's passing in fiction Harlem exemplifies the agency of black women. However, their passing is related to double consciousness.

Larsen introduces Irene's complex psychology of passing. Her mental unrest is attributed to her "fluid unstable identity" (Schwarz 144) when she recognizes she is being watched. She is aware of the continuous inspection of her appearance and wonders about "the reason of such persistent attention ... Perhaps there was a streak of powder somewhere on her face" (17-18). Powder, as a contrast to her light skin color, can betray her passing to the white inspector. It is not clear if she uses powder to lighten her skin or not. If it were clear, it would be an evidence of her extra effort to pass as white. In Irene's view, everybody in the street is a judge representing white dominance, checking the skin color of each *passer-by*. Therefore she fears to be recognized as black because she is fully aware of the fact that, as Samira Kawash puts it, passing is "a site of disruption in the racial order" (134). Kawash, author of *Dislocating the Color Line* (1997), focuses on the interrelationship between vision and

knowledge of racial transgression in African-American literature. There has to be a “knowing spectator” who can “read the text” (Jenkins 138) of the passing body. The poststructuralist philosopher Judith Butler differentiates between “marked” and “unmarked” bodies in her essay on Larsen’s *Passing*, in which the mark is blackness and the norm is whiteness (125). Therefore race structurally becomes a text to be read and the marker of this text is the skin color.

The two women characters, Irene and Clare, make up a pair of binary opposites. Even in Irene’s fictional view, they were “[s]trangers in their ways and means of living. Strangers in their desires and ambitions. Strangers even in their racial consciousness” (110). Charles Scruggs identifies their lifestyles with contrasting figures from Greek mythology: Irene with the Apollonian order and Clare with Dionysian energy (160). Both are fair-skinned enough to pass for white, but whereas Irene rarely passes and only “for the sake of convenience,” Clare takes whiteness as her public identity (Conn 74). While Irene is a strict bourgeois mother who dutifully works for racial uplift and thus symbolizes the super-ego (77), the space of the id is principally left to Clare, who enjoys the pleasant aspects of life. The conflict between these two opposites can also be analyzed through Larsen’s choice of names. Irene’s name comes from “irenic” (adj. and n.), “εἰρήνη” in Greek, meaning “peace” (Oxford English Dictionary). She embodies this peace because she has accepted her racial identity and does not seek to change her life by always passing for white. Kawash argues that before meeting Clare, Irene has a “self completely adequate to itself, neither needing nor wanting supplement of an Other: transparent, autonomous identity” (157). She does not want to change her racial identity; she seldom passes and when she does it is only for convenience sake. However, Clare always calls her ‘Rene, which is a form of “renascent” (adj. and n.), meaning “to be born again” (OED). Clare interrupts Irene’s perception of herself in public, causing her to question her racial identity. Thus, Irene is regenerated to become “‘Rene,” to be born again. Clare’s name, on the other hand, comes from “clar,” or “clear” meaning, among other things, “finely powdered” (OED). Her skin is genetically so white and clear that she is confident of her whiteness and identifies herself with it. The interruption of Irene’s life causes her to wish to reject Clare’s presence around herself because “in Irene’s mind, Clare symbolizes whiteness

and whiteness symbolizes forbidden desire” (Conn 77), yet she unconsciously associates herself with Clare’s whiteness (76). Accordingly, Butler argues that Irene wants to be Clare (124). It means that Irene’s occasional passing “for the sake of convenience” to uphold her social status is different from Clare’s passing for economic reasons, for upward mobility. Whereas Irene’s domain of passing is race, Clare’s is class. For Irene, therefore, passing signifies “the possibility of escaping from the confines of the family” (Conn 108), and from the black bourgeois duty of serving her race. If only she could be Clare, she would not have to care for racial consciousness but could enjoy life. This is Irene’s dilemma in her relationship with Clare and being transformed into ‘Rene.

Larsen questions black women’s place in the community. In his dissertation, Bryan Conn argues that the novel “criticizes the imposition of black bourgeois womanhood’s subjugation to its own image of a proper black identity” (77). According to Anne Stavney, black women submit to this image because of black male leaders’ incorporation of the characteristics of the “white cult of True Womanhood” (538). Larsen criticizes the representation of black women, their adornment and the choice of displaying (or not) their womanhood (556). The formulation of true black womanhood in the cultural definition aimed “to reclaim and desexualize the black female body while also rebutting the corresponding racist iconography of the sexless, nurturing black mother, the black mammy” (538). To reverse the imagery of the black woman as a sexual object, black middle class women adopted the ideology of domesticity. This is why Irene is depicted as an “unconditionally dutiful, devoted mother” (552) and wife, obviously not a sexual figure. To her husband Brian, she was “only the mother of his sons. That was all” (Larsen 171). Consistent with this perception, Irene perpetuates the image of the true black woman while Clare is seen as a “cultural traitor” for passing (Jenkins 148). Most importantly, it is only Irene who sees her in this way (because she is the “knowing spectator”) and probably she is the one who pushes Clare out of the window, causing her social, biological, cultural (racial) and “psychological death” since “passing” also connotes “to pass away” (Tate, qtd. in Butler 136). Accordingly, Conn argues that the passing woman is the victim of “psychical violence” (123). Clare pays the price for rejecting the symbolic order of true

black womanhood (Stavney 557). This is Larsen's social critique of the image of true black womanhood.

The choice of displaying the image of black womanhood suggests the agency of the passing figures in the novel. Kawash argues that "racial difference [is] a mode of subjectification and a representation of the subject" (21). If the representation is a "false, forged identity" (160), then it is impossible for the outsider to distinguish it from the "'true' representation of heterogeneity, hybridity, creolity, or cultural diversity" (21). Therefore, Candice Jenkins points out that, "in the absence of physical markers, the recognizability" of the passer depends on the "will" of the passer and that of the "knowing spectator" (148). Kawash refers to Michel Foucault's analysis of the relationship between the "production of knowledge and the operations of power" (128). In Foucault's view, visibility and truth are central to the modern epistemology of race. Race is the production of identity and regulation of difference (157). The power that produces the meaning of either black or white in racial hierarchy generates itself through the knowledge created by the visible surface information of skin color. This is why the trained eye observes race as a cultural fiction instead of a biological fact (129). In this "cultural production of visibility" (130), the identity of the black individual is performed misguidedly and lacks authenticity (Williams 20). However there is a possibility of freedom in the gap between the self and the image even though this is not real freedom because it is role playing or self-fictionalizing. While Kawash admits that Clare's representation "support[s] the traditional deception model of passing," she claims that Clare disrupts the order of racial knowledge (155-6). She argues that there is a "shift from the subject's knowledge of the self to [that of] ... the other" in the space of passing (155). It is such a space that allows the difference that causes the recognition of race to disappear. The difference between being black or white can no longer "be described, located, seen, or distinguished" (155). This is because the passing subject is mobile between the spaces of black and white, proving that there is no "origin or arrival" in the racial order (Ahmed, qtd. in Yazdiha 33). The racial order is broken in Clare's ambiguous passing. The boundaries between racial identities are deconstructed through passing (Yazdiha 33). Kawash claims that the passing body creates a space of freedom that is a threat to the "ordered security" and certainty of

race that non-passers identify themselves with (166). Being able to enjoy the freedom the ambiguous space produces shows the power of the passing subject who no longer is obliged to obey the segregation law. Yet Kawash admits that it is a dangerous zone (166). It is both existentially and psychologically dangerous because when playing with the truth and order of race, the subject's comprehension of reality also suffers due to double consciousness. She constructs her identity as a white person but is at the same time always aware of her passing. When Clare is instructing Irene about passing, she says, "all that's needed is a little nerve" (Larsen 37). Nerve is a key element in dealing with the stress of hiding behind a forged identity. Without a doubt, passing is a psychologically disturbing act. On the other hand, Larsen is criticized for her "insist[ence] on the exteriority of identity" (Favor, qtd. in Williams 22). The reason for that is that the representation of racial identity is related to the surface whereas the "expression of the subtler, more interior aspects of her subjectivity" (Williams 24) is recognized less. Though Favor's disapproval is the superficial comment here, unquestioned reliance upon the performance of identity as a matter of exteriority causes a loss of meaning for the white spectators. This is because they cannot "read accurately the messages inscribed on [the passing body]" (Chinn, qtd. in Jenkins 143). They expect the performance of blackness to be transparently available to them. As an implication of this anticipation, Larsen dramatizes Irene's doubt as follows:

Did that woman, could that woman, somehow know that here before her very eyes on the roof of the Drayton sat a Negro?
Absurd! Impossible! White people were SO stupid about such things for all that they usually asserted that they were able to tell ... They always took her for an Italian, a Spaniard, a Mexican, or a gipsy. Never, when she was alone, had they even remotely seemed to suspect that she was a Negro. (18)

In this respect, the spectator is left alone without any tools to interpret the unreliable cultural fiction of race while the production of truth and knowledge is being turned upside down by the passing subject (Kawash 165). Being able to do so, passing women resist the image of true black womanhood and transgress. However, this resistance to create a space of freedom is not effective because the basic lie of passing remains unaltered. The passer and the knowing spectator are still fully aware of the situation. Keeping silence about a lie does not bring freedom because it is even destructive for

the psyche of the passing black individual.

Another dimension of the passing subject is that she reproduces the image of the black woman as a fetish. John Bellew calls Clare “Nig”²; hence, Butler argues, she herself symbolizes the impossible object of desire (126). John secures “the fragile boundaries of his own racial identity” (126), of his whiteness, through exoticizing black women’s sexuality “as an icon of primitivism” (128). On the other hand, Clare gives her consent to his racist behavior by letting him eroticize her body by contrasting it with whiteness – “Nigger woman”. This play of words in the couple’s private life shows the success of Clare’s passing because by making John believe that “Nig” is “the most impossible appellation for her,” she guarantees the “denial of her blackness altogether” (126). He gets erotic satisfaction from being with Clare and doing so, he dissociates himself and his wife from blacks, because he makes Clare imitate black womanhood while she is ironically actually “black”. It is also interesting that John has the function of a “policeman” or a “detective” (Oxford English Dictionary). His white gaze works as a race-detector while Kawash exposes the absurdity of John’s position as a victim of deceit (156). Larsen characterizes John as a detective who is deceived by eroticism, love and care, meaning that he is blind to the illusion that his family line is purely white.

Irene’s interest in Clare’s adoption of passing as an identity proves her own psychological unease about her race. She is curious and wants to learn how a passer sets up his/her background and communicates with other blacks. Clare’s answer to her is that it is “a frightfully easy thing to do. If one’s the type, all that’s needed is a little nerve” (Larsen 37). Later Irene continues asking,

“Why?” and Brian simply replies,
“If I knew that, I’d know what race is.”

...

Irene: “It’s funny about ‘passing.’ We disapprove of it and at the same time condone it. It excites our contempt and yet we rather admire it. We shy away from it with an odd kind of revulsion, but we protect it.” (96-98)

This last quote shows Irene’s double bind, or double consciousness, about unwillingly accepting Clare’s passing and protecting her from John Bellow’s detection. She also

² *Nig* was the working title of *Passing* (Conn 79).

wants to pass for white and therefore appreciates Clare, but at the same time dislikes the idea of it because it implies disloyalty to her race. Butler argues that Irene's double bind is about setting herself free of blackness and being obliged to perpetuate the "violations of white racism" (132). This illustrates Larsen's interest in the conflictual concept of double consciousness as pathology. By protecting Clare, Irene submits to the white oppression and helps Clare to continue living in disguise. Clare's disguised black identity is an example of the black subject's eradication from society. She does not exist when no one is acknowledged about the truth. At the same time, she is conscious of her wrong doing to her black community by denying her real self. Clare's situation is another dimension of double consciousness in which the subject experiences seeing his or her black image from outside while feeling white. Clare, on the other hand, makes the white spectator see her as white while she continues to be black under disguise.

Fiction is a way to address the problem of racial identity in the Harlem Renaissance period. Larsen's representation and view of passing demonstrates the complex psychological structure of the black subjects. Although Irene and Clare are instruments to question the black selfhood and black womanhood, I think Larsen's positioning of two characters on the opposite ends of a racial dilemma of passing does not convey the real attitude of black intellectuals of Harlem. This brings up Du Bois's concept of double consciousness. However, Larsen's representation of passing is an attempt to approach double consciousness in a new light.

Chapter 3

A postcolonial approach to mestiza consciousness

3.1 Historical context: Border crossing

Distribution of resources, mainly water, and deciding on which country possesses which land make up the conflicts between Mexico and the United States. Nicolás Kanellos, a scholar in Hispanic studies, connects this conflict to the history of colonization in Central America. The organization of settlement caused tension in this area where Spaniards, Hispanicized Africans and Amerindians, mestizos and mulattoes lived (135). The border history started in the nineteenth century with the Mexicans' struggle for independence from Spain between 1810 and 1820. When Mexico achieved independence in 1821, California, southern Arizona, south Texas, southern Colorado, and most of New Mexico were included in its territory. Later, Anglo-American settlers began moving to Texas. The Texas revolution took place in 1835-36 when the U.S. settlers sought independence from Mexico. In 1836, the Texans lost the Battle of the Alamo but soon declared the independent Republic of Texas and defeated Mexicans at San Jacinto. It is not until 1845 that Texas became a part of United States by the invitation of Congress. Between 1846 and 1848, the Mexican War broke out due to the imperialist interests of the U.S. and eventually its boundaries were extended with the added states of California, Nevada, Utah, most of New Mexico and Arizona, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo (Kardux 2011). Susan D. Sawtelle, the Associate General Counsel of United States General Accounting Office, explains the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in a report to the congressional requesters. This Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits, and Settlement changed the political landscape and identity of the North American settlers. Mexicans' ownership of property in the ceded territory was recognized and protected. In addition, Mexicans were given the option of admission "as U.S. citizens if they wished" (14). The fifth Article of the Treaty demarcated the boundary line to be Rio Grande between Mexico and U.S. (Trist et al.).

The abolition of slavery in 1865 caused the southern agribusiness investors to search for "low-cost replacement for the free labor" from principally Mexico, Puerto

Rico, Cuba, and Central America (Kanellos 139). If blacks were no more available as slaves, then Hispanics were the second choice. Their cultural identity was shaped around being native, immigrant and working-class (139). On the other hand, not all indigenous ethnolinguistic groups of Mexico migrated to the U.S. as workers. The Nahua and the Maya were the majority of Mexican natives who “did not tend to cross the border in large numbers” (Fox and Rivera-Salgado 5). A distinction should be made here: minor ethnolinguistic groups in Mexico crossed the border and being minorities in both territories, they were excluded wherever they went, causing lack of cultural belonging.

Hispanic peoples’ uncontrolled border-crossing continued until the Great Depression in 1929. According to historian David Roediger, the border patrol was founded to prevent “illegal entry” (154), which caused the Mexican Americans to be perceived as criminals who cross borders even though they were citizens born in the U.S. territory. This is why “‘Illegal’ became constitutive of ‘Mexican’ ... a wholly negative racial category” (Ngai, qtd. in Roediger 155). The Deportation Act of 1929 affected almost 400,000 Mexican Americans to be expelled, especially those “who had long possessed the right to be naturalized” (Roediger 155). The Deportation Act not only marginalized indigenous migrants but it also caused them to face problems in ethnically segmented labor markets. Being border-crossers, they experienced racist discrimination in the social sphere. What is more, they were being “excluded from full citizenship rights in either country” (Fox and Rivera-Salgado 4). On the other hand, it is the same people with the problematic citizenship status, seen as the Other, “who have the ability to understand other cultures, to see the United States from the double perspective of insider as well as outsider” (Kanellos 149). This multiplicity of cultures leads the path towards hybridity.

3.2 Cultural hybridity

The definition of hybridity is uncertain in terms of ethnicity and culture. It is the multiplicity of identities analyzed through “diverse linguistic, discursive and cultural intermixtures” (Zapf, qtd. in Raab and Butler 1). This connection of different fragments can be termed as “*collage, sampling, or bricolage*” (Bronfen and Marius, qtd. in Raab

and Butler 1), but hybridity is not synonymous with fusion. Related to these descriptions, the concept of hybridity is about deconstructing the essentialist view of purity, authenticity and homogeneity in cultural identity. In the epistemological discussion of hybridization, Néstor Canclini, a cultural anthropologist, defines it as the sum of “socio-cultural processes in which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices” (xxv). He draws on theories by Stuart Hall and Nikos Papastergiadis about the social construction of hybridization, and on Mikhail Bakhtin’s and Homi Bhabha’s theories of the linguistic construction of hybridization (xxvii). With these constructs, new social structures and practices are created as the “unforeseen result of processes of migration” (xxvii). Canclini sees hybridization and migration as identical. The postcolonial scholar John McLeod similarly calls migration the “process of hybridization.” The subject is the outcome of a combination of “variable sources, different materials, many locations” (253). By contrast, an essentialist view defines subjectivity as stability or pureness. In the essentialist view, the hybrid subject’s existence destroys the “exclusionary, fixed, binary notions of identity based on ideas of rootedness and cultural, racial and national purity” (253-4) because s/he is in the area of “intersection” (Canclini xxxi).

As a specific form of hybridity, *mestizaje* is the focus of this chapter. According to Yazdiha, the concept is defined as a mixture of “two symbolic poles, a bodily representation of colonizer and colonized ... [called] *mestizo*, *mulatto*, *muwallad*, [who] were stigmatized as a physical representation of impure blood” (32). Canclini sums up the condition of the people in Mexico to be “mestizo-ed,” meaning that they were a mixture of indigenous Americans and Spanish and Portuguese colonizers, whereas in the United States mestizos were “chicano-ized” with the addition of cultural elements of English and French settlers and African-Americans to their cultural identity (Canclini xxviii). He continues with describing the sources of hybridizing as the “*decollection* of ethnic and national patrimonies” and “the *detritorialization* and reconversion of knowledges and customs” (xxxv). The hybrid subject destabilizes the inherited ethnic and national assemblage that forms the identity constructed through his or her relation to the different cultures. By destabilizing this assemblage, s/he

removes the boundaries of the territory assigned specifically to one culture only and reorganizes his/her own subjectivity accordingly. Zalfa Feghali, a scholar in border studies, criticizes the negative connotation of the names that express *mestizaje*, such as “half-breed”, “mixed-blood” and “mixed-race” (71). The process of becoming *mestizaje* is linguistically under-represented while it connotes the reduction of “human reproduction to the level of animal breeding” (Lionnet, qtd. in Feghali 71). The social sciences and democratic politics position *mestizaje* “in the cultural dimension of identitarian combinations” (xxxiii) to avoid racism in the discourse of nation and nationalism. Ilan Stavans metaphorically describes this cultural category of Latinos in the United States as “living on the hyphen” and as occupying “a universe of cultural contradictions and fragmentary realities” (Stavans, qtd. in Raab and Butler 15). A hyphen is located in the middle and connotes “in-betweenness”, but it is also a line that can be associated with a border. Having a hybrid ethnicity is related to having a borderline identity, which is an established personality disorder according to the 1980 version of *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-III). The symptoms of this psychiatric disorder are:

instability in a variety of areas, including interpersonal behavior, mood, and self-image A profound identity disturbance may be manifested by uncertainty about several issues relating to identity, such as self-image, gender identity, or long-term goals or values. (321)

As borderline identity connotes emotional instability, it is a negative term to describe the self of an individual. It is also pointed out in DSM-III that some critics tend to conceptualize borderline personality not as a disorder but “as a level of organization” (322) and I think Gloria Anzaldúa is one of them because she changed borderline identity disorder into the re-creative space of “borderland” for the mestiza to claim as her own and to construct her own identity in this land.

3.3 Anzaldúa’s concept of mestiza consciousness

As a form of cultural hybridity, mestiza consciousness is a characterization of plural identities, emphasizing inclusivity. It operates in the political domains of race and gender. This border culture is also related to class and sexual orientation. Anzaldúa

describes the inclusive qualification of the mestiza in her claim to the borderland, as a marginal space, as follows:

What I want is an accounting with all three cultures – white, Mexican, Indian. I want the freedom to carve and chisel my own face, ... if 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. (44)

This new identity Anzaldúa had shaped for herself also urges other fellow Chicanas to take on the identity of mestiza. Renato Rosaldo, a cultural anthropologist, claims that it is a complex persona with a strong identity that is not diffused; it is an identity created through improvisation and recombination (215-6). Since the borderland is the intersection area for white, Mexican and Indian cultures, the mestiza is an example of transculturation (215). Since the mestiza is on the border, Rosaldo defines her as the “rear guard”, but admires her ambition to “become the vanguard” of Chicana culture (216). In line with Rosaldo’s idea of the “vanguard”, Feghali claims that the multiplicity of mestiza consciousness is “beyond the binary relationships and dichotomies that characterize traditional modes of thought, and seeks to build bridges between all minority communities in order to achieve social and political change” (61). Theresa Martinez, a sociologist, also points out the innovation of mestiza consciousness in its construction of a space for hybrid cultures through “multiple tongues, paradigms, and ways of knowing” by breaking down rigid, static or dichotomous thinking (172). Feghali puts forward that the mestiza is a “figure of hope” for political change in terms of the oppression of marginalized racial and gender identities (62). She claims that by constructing mestiza consciousness, Anzaldúa focuses on two oppressions affecting the Chicana/o subject. These are “the oppression perpetrated by Anglos, or whites on non-whites” and “the oppression of women by men in Chicano/a society” (62). Race is the first level of oppression next but gender has a greater impact on Chicanas. In relation to the inclusive character of the mestiza, Feghali argues that Anzaldúa hopes that this new identity construct “will bring an end to rape, violence, and war” (63).

On the other hand, Anzaldúa is criticized for dualistic thinking in essentially presenting the minorities as “us” and U.S. whites as “them” (Tabuenca, qtd. Davis-Undiano 123), thus reproducing the white practices she protests. As Ian Haney Lopez

points out, “being White is not a monolithic or homogenous experience, either in terms of race, other social identities, space, or time. Instead, Whiteness is contingent, changeable, partial, inconstant, and ultimately, social” (Lopez, qtd. in Feghali 64-5). Even though Anzaldúa strives to create a new consciousness, her view of the white race is an example of categorization. Feghali expects a theory combining both race and culture, which she claims Anzaldúa fails to provide (65). She mentions Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shi when she refers Anzaldúa’s project as “a practice that challenges Eurocentric theories” because Anzaldúa turns the binary mode of thought upside down (Shi, qtd. in Feghali 68). Shi argues that mestiza consciousness is a problematic conceptual tool because of challenging Eurocentric theories. Even though I slightly agree with their criticisms of Anzaldúa’s binary approach in constructing two cultures as opposites, I see her mestiza consciousness still as a practical tool for creating a new identity through categorization of Anglo and Mexican cultures. I prefer focusing on the creative aspect of mestiza consciousness in claiming the borderland that helps the mestiza to construct a new identity. This new identity is something different than Anglo and Mexican cultures. Anzaldúa tries to blend the binary opposites.

In the argument on borders and its relations to identity, the geographical position of the border functions as a point of convergence in Anzaldúa’s theorization. She describes this point of convergence as “a shock culture, a border culture, a third country, a closed country” (33). In the Introduction to *Borderlands*, Julia Alvarez describes mapping as a metaphor for creativity. Alvarez asserts that “a map was charted – the old divisive no man’s land became a borderland, a place where a new kind of self was being created” (iii). Anzaldúa shifts the borderline to the borderland. Inge Boer, a cultural studies scholar, calls the border a “flexible space of negotiation and site of contestation” (23). Boer discusses the shift in the meaning of boundaries and cross-cultural relations. To conceptualize this space, Boer uses Rosi Braidotti’s theory of feminist nomadism, which delimits the nomad figure (34). Braidotti’s theory is inspired by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s “romanticized portrait of the nomad as a role model for deterritorialized subjectivity, a subjectivity freed from the being of identity into the becoming of possibility” (Alcoff 256-7). In fact, Anzaldúa’s mestiza

consciousness (1987) precedes what Braidotti conceptualizes as nomadic subject (1994) but it is possible to make a comparison between the two. In Braidotti's description, the nomad is considered as a figure, a style of thought, implying a mode of being (26). The goal of this figure is to critique the unified subject (27). On the other hand, Anzaldúa does not assume the mestiza subject either as unified or as nomadic although she is not a stable being. The nomadic style Braidotti proposes is about transformations and transitions without predetermined destinations (34). However, Anzaldúa's theory on destination is fixed: the land on the border, or in other words, crossroads. There is no need to change the physical boundaries. But still, the meaning changes through shifts in the psychological and spiritual spheres. Braidotti calls the intellectual nomad a myth, a political fiction that allows her to think through and move across established categories and levels of existence, blurring boundaries (32). The myth is what Anzaldúa is actually trying to construct but she shapes it as a living consciousness rather than a nomad who wanders through different identities. According to Braidotti, the figure of the nomad opens up possibilities for women because it functions as a form of resisting assimilation (27). Anzaldúa's argument in claiming the borderland is similar to Braidotti's. The mestiza also resists being identified by the culture of a single country. Boer considers boundaries to be uncertain territories in need of negotiation. The trouble of negotiating boundaries, Boer concludes, offers insights into and glimpses of how definitions of differences and shared goals can and need to be a multisided process in which hierarchies and inequalities of power relations continue to be problematized (42). In relation to Boer's argument, Anzaldúa defines herself as a mestiza in the following lines:

As a *mestiza* I have no country, my homeland cast me out; 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 of Indo-Hispanics and Anglos; yet I am cultured because I am participating in the creation of yet another culture, a new story to explain the world and our participation in it, a new value system with images and symbols that connect us to each other and to the planet. (102-3)

She describes the new mestiza consciousness in a space that Lionnet refers to as “not a territory staked out by exclusionary practices” (Lionnet, qtd. in Feghali 61). Yazdiha claims that, in Anzaldúa’s boundary-shifting process, the inclusive character of mestiza is reached by breaking down boundaries and reconstruction of the self (37). Rosaldo suggests that the borderland is not an “empty transitional zone but ... [a] site of creative cultural production” (208). It is not a national or cultural border to outline inequality, power and domination because the mestiza in the borderland is in “motion, [she is] not frozen for inspection” (217). Her being in motion connects her to Braidotti’s nomadic subject.

In locating the border, Anzaldúa makes use of a diversity of domains. Feghali claims that she adds emotional and spiritual experiences to physical ones and conceptualizes the border as an abstraction (65). With this abstract idea, the mestiza transgresses “both physical and psychic border” (66). She discovers that identity cannot be limited with rigid boundaries because a limited identity is associated with motionlessness and death.

Only by remaining flexible is she able to stretch the psyche horizontally and vertically ... The new mestiza copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity ... She learns to juggle cultures ... She has a plural personality, she operates in a pluralistic mode – nothing is thrust out, the good the bad and the ugly, nothing rejected, nothing abandoned. (Anzaldúa, cited in Martinez 172)

Mestiza consciousness being an inclusive identity construct is a useful definition for the border crossing Chicanas. Robert Con Davis-Undiano, a Chicano studies scholar, refers to the border as “the ambiguous zone where cultural and legal authority are frequently open to very broad and paradoxical interpretations” (123). The mestiza engages in cultural transgression in this ambiguous zone because she fits into the culture of borderland. She identifies her ethnic self according to the changing cultural and legal authorities. Walter Mignolo, a semiotician, claims that “border thinking” is thinking beyond the dichotomies (208). Therefore the meaning of identity in the borderland cannot be separated into two; it is something else, something new and ambiguous.

In relation to ethnic identity Davis-Undiano defines the mestiza as an “alien consciousness” because it is “the mixture and violation of already existing identities”

(123). This is another way of saying that the mestiza is a mixed race as a part of “la raza cósmica” (the cosmic race) that José Vasconcelos had defined in 1925 to emphasize the blurring of the races, particularly in Latin America. La raza cósmica was the fifth utopian race after the four major races of black (African), red (Indian/American native), yellow (Mongol) and white (European) in the history of the world. Chicano nationalists were attracted to Vasconcelos’ theorization and identified themselves with his concept of “La Raza”. Feghali criticizes Anzaldúa for using “a narrow interpretation of Vasconcelos’ essay in the hope of finding a solid theoretical grounding for her own project” (63). I think Anzaldúa’s strategically essentialist view of ethnic identity is related to her protest against Othering people. In an essay in *Making Face, Making Soul* she explains that Othering people is “isolating them, pushing them out of the herd, ostracizing them. The internalization of negative images of ourselves, our self-hatred, poor self-esteem, makes our own people the *Other*” (143). In *Borderlands*, she uses language as a defining character of her ethnicity. Language is very important for her because her use of English was repeatedly attacked in childhood for being “wrong” (80). Rejecting this lingual criticism she claims that “Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity – I am my language” (81). She also defines the borderland she occupies as having an Indian identity:

*This land was Mexican once,
 was Indian always
 and is.
 And will be again. (25)*

However, language and land are not the only forms with which to express ethnic identity. The process of constructing and reconstructing the ethnic identity is another personal experience for the individual. Weinreich defines ethnic identity as “a complex process by means of which people construct and reconstruct their ethnicity” (45). Mestiza consciousness is an example of the reconstructive function of ethnic identity because the new identity is shaped through a process of creatively learning what the mestiza self really is. On the other hand, Jean Phinney, also a psychologist, calls ethnic identity the “achievement” of a “mature sense of self” (4822). She claims that it is formed after a process aimed at achieving “a secure and confident sense of one’s ethnicity” (Phinney 4822) by internalizing “positive feelings about one’s group

and ... be[ing] a source of personal strength and positive self-evaluation” (Tajfel and Turner, cited in Phinney 4822). From this there emerge two opposite arguments about ethnic identity in relation to mestiza consciousness. Firstly, Weinreich calls mestiza consciousness a “reconstructive approach” and, secondly, Phinney sees it as a mature and stable identity. Weinreich’s definition is more appropriate to mestiza consciousness because it is about the experience of the immigrant, whereas Phinney seems to concentrate on the ethnic identity.

Besides the psychological implications of the concept of mestiza consciousness, a comparison needs to be made with Du Bois’s double consciousness, which was discussed in Chapter 1.3. Double consciousness is the intellectual background of mestiza consciousness. Anzaldúa introduces her concept of mestiza consciousness as an improved and gendered version of double consciousness. Sonia Saldivar-Hull, a scholar in Chicana/o literature, claims that mestiza consciousness pushes Du Bois’s concept much further (61). Even though Du Bois only criticizes race and class issues, Anzaldúa includes the themes of gender and sexuality in the definition of her concept. Martinez argues that there are three aspects that double consciousness and mestiza consciousness have in common: “recognition of a historical legacy of oppression, ... personal experience of overt discrimination, recognition of a ‘gift’” (162).

The personal experience of each intellectual is different. Martinez points out that Du Bois learned discrimination at school while Anzaldúa learned it at home (166-7). Du Bois relates his first experience of discrimination in his 1897 essay:

I was a little thing In a wee wooden schoolhouse, something put it into the boys' and girls' heads to buy gorgeous visiting-cards – ten cents a package – and exchange. The exchange was merry, till one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card, – refused it peremptorily, with a glance. Then it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others. (*Strivings of the Negro People* 194)

His personal experience of being different continued with the “rites of discrimination”, such as racism, bigotry, and Ku Klux Klan activities such as lynch mobs (Zafar 287). On the other hand, Anzaldúa discovered a “rebel” self, when she resisted patriarchal and homophobic tradition as well as the racial oppression experienced by her family (Martinez 167). She remembers Anglos discriminating against her family but also remembers that “Chicano/a culture has rigid gender roles where ‘males make the

rules and laws' and 'women transmit them'" (Anzaldúa, qtd. in Martinez 167). Her rebel self comes from opposing this cultural code. She rejects transmitting the rules and laws made by men.

What Martinez refers as the "gift" is what Du Bois calls "second-sight" and Anzaldúa "la facultad". The "second-sight" is the double consciousness itself. It is about gaining an insight that the mainstream culture may lack, which empowers and gives strength to the individual in this way. When the person is "pushed out of the tribe for being different" (Anzaldúa, qtd. in Martinez 168), the insight is gained to build "la facultad". She emphasizes that "la facultad" signifies "a loss of 'innocence' because 'we are forced to develop this faculty so that we'll know when the next person is going to slap us or lock us away. We'll sense the rapist when he is five blocks down the street'" (Anzaldúa 38-9, qtd. in Martinez 168). "La facultad" denotes an increased awareness of everyday life. Her experience of having a multiple personality stimulates her to broaden her analysis of Chicanas with psychological conflicts that are the results of racial and gender discrimination. Anzaldúa puts it,

La facultad is the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface ... Those who do not feel psychologically or physically safe in the world are more apt to develop this sense. Those who are pounced on the most have it the strongest – the females, the homosexuals of all races, the darkskinned, the outcasts, the persecuted, the marginalized, the foreign. (Anzaldúa 60)

Alejandra Elenes, a Chicana/o studies scholar, claims that an individual cannot achieve *la facultad* only through conscious reasoning. There has to be lived experience to think about the condition of the self and develop the sense of *la facultad*. She gives credit to Anzaldúa for interpreting the experiences of marginalization and oppression when constructing the final mestiza subject, which, in fact, is not final but open to change (Elenes 110). Different experiences may lead to the construction of diverse identities and characters. The important aspect of coming across different realities is that the subject thinks and decides how s/he will develop his or her personality. The subject should remain free so that the space of transformation and alternative identities gets larger.

In relation to the second-sight and *la facultad*, Du Bois's double consciousness is a "peculiar sensation" (Martinez 170) while Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness is "a psychic birthing and synthesis" of "multiple voices and paradigms" (171). Mestiza consciousness is a deliberate break from all oppressive traditions because it "adopts new perspectives toward the darkskinned, women and queers" (Anzaldúa, qtd. in Martinez 172). This is another way of saying that mestiza consciousness is a tool of empowerment while double consciousness is a psychological weakness. Mestiza consciousness opens up new spaces for life and seeing the world by giving the subject the growing capacity to develop the self. Double consciousness, on the other hand, limits the personality to only two choices: either black or white. Being in between the two causes psychological trouble for the subject. Developing the self to become a mestiza is a better condition for an individual or a minority group than finding himself or herself having already developed a double consciousness. The new perspectives of which the mestiza can gain consciousness can be metaphorically explained through the spatial framework developed by Homi Bhabha.

3.4 Homi Bhabha's spatial framework

In Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity, the "Third Space", is an important concept to situate the individual with a transcultured identity. Pramod Nayar, a scholar in postcolonial studies, describes Bhabha's hybridity as the natives' "dual state of mimicry" in resisting the dominant culture (28). This duality is a position of "*in-betweenness*: between 'adopted' Englishness and the 'original' native condition or identity, between obedience and resistance" (Nayar 28). The Englishness becomes Americanness in the case of the mestiza. The individuals with this hybrid identity produce a "Third Space" where "colonial identity and native identity meet and often contest; colonial discourse is both asserted and subverted; there is deference and difference; there is a split and a negotiation (within colonial discourse) where mimicry and mockery occur" (28-9). Accordingly, the mestiza claims the borderland as a space of hybridity and reconciliation of conflicting identities. Anzaldúa's borderland is a Third Space because the mestiza resists the politics of domination in this space. She makes it a space for herself to express her own identity against the dominant cultural

representations of the Chicana subject. Antony Easthope, a scholar in cultural studies, claims that hybridity should not be defined as *hybridic* but rather as being *against* (342). Easthope defines Bhabha's hybridity to be essentially a Derridean *différance* because the Third Space is about the "interstices" in the culture (343). It is a spatial differentiation that "cultural differences [are] defined as 'in-between' spaces, 'interstices' in which 'domains of difference' may 'overlap' an 'interstitial passage between fixed identifications'" (Bhabha, qtd. in Easthope 343). But by changing "difference" into "hybridity," Bhabha includes the themes of race, ethnicity and identity into the system of distinct signs and claims that hybrid identity is against "the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority" (Bhabha, qtd. in Raab and Butler 3). This space of resistance between the dominant and the minor cultures "enables other positions to emerge [and] displaces the histories that constitute it" (Bhabha, qtd. in Raab and Butler 3). Linda Alcoff, a philosopher, claims that mestiza consciousness is a celebration of hybridity because it enhances the "capacity for cultural translation and flexibility" (256). It is a figuration of the Third Space in the context of American immigrant groups. The mestiza is a form of active resistance constructed through changing the perception of the self to become strong. Even though it is a tool of self-empowerment when compared to double consciousness, Easthope criticizes the mestiza's inhabitation of an intervening space as being a state of psychosis (345). However, achieving mestiza consciousness is a deliberate act for the individual; it is not a psychological disorder as I perceive double consciousness to be. However, Saldivar-Hull, claims that being in the borderlands is a "*pathological, psychological state of uncertainty and insecurity*" (62, emphasis mine). This is a negative psychological approach to mestiza consciousness, with which I disagree because, unlike double consciousness, mestiza consciousness does not reproduce oppressive ideologies. It is necessary here to make the distinction between what I understand from oppressive ideologies and Eurocentric theory of binary opposites. Binary opposites are used by oppressive ideologies to separate people from each other to form a hierarchy, but the way Anzaldúa makes use of it is to construct a new identity in the Third Space by blending the binary opposites of Anglo and Mexican

cultures. She reproduces the tool of oppressive ideologies in order to deconstruct and transform them.

In the borderland, inspection of territories is hard. Maps and borders are constructed to control the people living in a country. Nayar suggests that the “conquest of non-European space by the European meant: discovery, exploration, study (cartography), construction” (136). If the land is a tool for the Europeans to exert power, Anzaldúa’s identity construction through the borderland can be interpreted as a form of agency aimed at disrupting the hegemony of Europeans. Her claim to belong culturally to the borderland is a metaphoric declaration of independence because she constructs this space to be her identity (162). Nayar puts forward that the “loss of the land is also the loss of tribal memory, history, cultural practices and way of life” (154). However, Anzaldúa does not take the borderland as a lost land because it was, is and will be Indian again (Anzaldúa 25). She claims that “the original homeland of Chicana/os is the American southwest, therefore, Mexicans who reside in the United States are living in their original homeland” (Anzaldúa, cited in Martinez 547). Her construction of this space is a protest against the Euro-American desire to control the borders.

The new mestiza identity takes an oppositional standpoint in the intercultural relationship between the Indian and/or Mexican people and the whites. By claiming the borderland, she initiates the generation of an oppositional culture. She uses her reflective and creative agency to become an autonomous mestiza subject instead of being, what Latin American studies scholar Sylvanna Falcón calls, “undertheorized, marginalized, and invalidated” (663). The mestiza identity essentially empowers the “subjugated collectivities to reclaim a part of the cultural space” (Yazdiha 36), to resist the culture of the majority. Theresa Martinez cites Collins in claiming that there are four domains of power: structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal (539). By structurally blurring the boundaries, Anzaldúa takes “an oppositional stance and challenge[s] popular mythology concerning Mexicans and Chicanas/os within the hegemonic domain of power” (546). Her hybrid identity is beyond disciplines because it includes concepts of geography, culture and history. This interdisciplinary deconstruction of the domains of power is also about interpersonal relationships.

Mestiza consciousness is an effective tool for her fellow Chicanas to create new power relationships. Another interpersonal standpoint that Anzaldúa takes is that she “disidentifies herself with those women who perpetuate male hegemony over women” (Muñoz, cited in Feghali 72). Here disidentification is a “strategy of resistance against dominant paradigms of identity” (72). Mestiza consciousness is then a “positive action” in creating an oppositional culture in the Third Space.

Anzaldúa develops her theory of mestiza consciousness through the use of the pre-Columbian deity called Coatlicue, an Aztec fertility goddess of life, death and rebirth. It symbolizes both male and female genders. As Anzaldúa explains in *Borderlands*, Coatlicue has the head of a twin rattlesnake and this is a reference to the earth-bound character of human life in opposition to the sky-bound eagle that symbolizes the male force. The claws on the necklace are symbols of both digging graves into the earth and the hands symbolize the act of giving life (68). Hearts represent the taking of life through sacrifice to the gods in exchange for their preservation of the world. The skulls symbolize life and death together as parts of one process (68). Anzaldúa focuses on the synthesis, or hybridity, reached through duality present in what she calls the Coatlicue state. She claims that the “*Coatlicue* depicts the contradictory. In her figure, all the symbols important to religion and philosophy of the Aztecs are integrated” (69). The contradiction can be seen through the references to life and death together. The dialectical thesis-antithesis-synthesis form is apparent in the Coatlicue state because the synthesis is rebirth of the new mestiza identity. Erika Aigner-Varoz, claims that the “Coatlicue achieved the balance that Anzaldúa would like to reconstruct from the collision of forces in her own consciousness” (56). Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, on the other hand, referring to criticism of “Anzaldúa’s free handling of pre-Columbian history” argues that “the text’s investment is less in historical accuracy than in the imaginative appropriation and redefinition of Coatlicue in the service of creating a new mythos” (15). This sums up Anzaldúa’s aim in creating a new identity for herself through fictionalizing the pre-Columbian deity in the borderland that Bhabha calls a Third Space for a new identity to flourish. Like Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak sees identity as a discursive product (McLeod 252). Their common claim

that identity is discursive makes it possible to argue that mestiza consciousness is a discursive product of hybridity in a postcolonial approach.

3.5 Gayatri Spivak's feminist framework

Anzaldúa's mestiza is similar to Gayatri Spivak's conceptualization of the subaltern subject. Anzaldúa outlines the possibilities for a Chicana woman as follows:

For a woman of my culture there used to be only three directions she could turn: to the Church as a nun, to the streets as a prostitute, or to home as a mother. Today some of us have a fourth choice: entering the world by way of education and career and becoming self-autonomous persons. (39)

Anzaldúa briefly reflects on women's place in Chicano culture by explaining how things had been before and were changing at the time when she constructed mestiza consciousness. The new mestiza identity is a dynamic tool of self-empowerment and resistance against patriarchy and white dominance. As Rosi Braidotti puts it, "[w]oman is connected to the patriarchy by negation" (235). Her existence is negated by the "cultural tyranny" in which "males make the rules and laws; women transmit them" (Anzaldúa 38). Women have a negative value because they are "defined by others [so] that women end up being defined as others; they are represented as different-from Man" which marks them as inferior beings (Braidotti 235). Accordingly, Anzaldúa claims, "the struggle of the mestiza is above all a feminist one" (106). She criticizes the manmade cultural code of "difference as pejoration" (Braidotti 239) and brings in alternative values to the culture. Anzaldúa recognizes that "rules are manmade and can be unmade with feminist logic" (Saldívar-Hull qtd. in Feghali 67). In Spivak's terminology there are two registers for the female individual: childrearing and soul-making (116). Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness is an example of soul-making. Individualist soul-making is to change the self to the "native subaltern female" (116-7). The new mestiza, then, constitutes her subject as the feminist individualist in Spivak's terms.

Subaltern consciousness is Spivak's primary subject in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1985). Nayar defines the "subaltern" as "subjects [that] are constitute[d] *through* discourse. An individual develops an identity because she/he is

the subject of a discourse over which she/he may have little or no control” (25). The term is borrowed from the Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci’s vocabulary. Subaltern means “subordinate” or “dependent” (Nayar 93). Spivak rejects the possibility of a “pure” subaltern consciousness because the subaltern cannot speak but s/he is spoken *for*. She defines the characteristics of the subaltern subject as follows:

1. Simply by being postcolonial or the member of an ethnic minority, we are not “subaltern”. That word is reserved for the sheer heterogeneity of decolonized space.
2. When a line of communication is established between a member of subaltern groups and the circuits of citizenship or institutionality, the subaltern has been inserted into the long road to hegemony. (310)

It is hard to categorize the mestiza as the subaltern according to the first description because the space she lives in belongs to the homogenized American culture, while she has a hybrid identity. Moreover, McLeod claims that the “subaltern consciousness” is a fiction (219). He suggests that,

The subaltern cannot speak because their words cannot be properly interpreted. Hence, the silence of the female as subaltern is the result of a failure of *interpretation* and not a failure of articulation. ... It is not the act of “speaking” that is at issue, but the *system* of representation in which such speaking is (not properly) “heard”. (223)

McLeod’s suggestion supports the idea of the subaltern’s speech being “a distanced decipherment by another, which is, at best, an interception” (Spivak 310). The direction of communication does not start from the subaltern but from the interpreter, who is not subaltern. Nayar points out Spivak’s emphasis on “*the practices of representation*, the ethics of narration, image-making and meaning-generation” (126). Anzaldúa creates the identity of mestiza for herself; her new self-representation helps her to generate meanings and narrate her story of identity to her surroundings. The need for a voice-consciousness in Spivak’s theory of the subaltern subject’s communication abilities is related to mestiza consciousness. The mestiza’s place in-between different cultural identifications cause her to speak even though she is not fully understood by the interpreters. But she speaks. Thus, Anzaldúa’s mestiza is a speaking subaltern. However, according to Easthope, the “speaking subject cannot live in the gaps between identities” (347). But the mestiza does and her voice is heard. Therefore Anzaldúa’s mestiza can be called a speaking subaltern.

The questions of body, agency and autonomy are very important for subaltern consciousness and mestiza consciousness. Braidotti claims that the body is an unnatural, “culturally coded socialized entity” (238). She cites Spivak: “the embodied subject is neither an essence nor a biological destiny, but rather one’s primary location in the world, one’s situation in reality” (238). Feminists can subvert the cultural codes, using strategies to change the meaning of embodiment. As Nayar suggests one way in which a woman can change the meaning of embodiment is escaping “both her gender and her racial identities – to assert her individual identity/agency in the process.” However, Anzaldúa does not escape; “she recreates her own self/identity” (102). Spivak explains the subaltern’s lack of communication by giving the example of Bhubaneswari Bhaduri’s “muting by heterogeneous circumstances” and her attempt “to ‘speak’ by turning her body into a text of woman/writing” (308). Her body was an instrument for her to claim her autonomy although she was not alive anymore. But still, it was her body; at least she owned her body to speak. Nayar defines agency as “the capacity of an individual to determine [the] course of her/his life, and to make the choice to determine this course” (123). The agency of women in the postcolonial countries depends on the patriarchal social conditions. These conditions predetermine their “roles, functions and futures” (123). While these women cannot claim a voice, Anzaldúa’s mestiza can speak. Anzaldúa’s “queer writing is a political project that seeks more than literary expression: it seeks a common platform with larger, global gay/queer movements” (129). She includes her sexuality as well as her body to claim the borderland in an autonomous manner. Her agency is deliberate in making this choice and it shows she can find a gap in the social conditions to develop her mestiza consciousness.

Gender in connection to agency, woman is metaphorically the “boundary marker” in Chicano culture (McClintock, qtd. in Nayar 107). She draws a line between the inner and public domains as well as between cultures. Nayar claims that the “home, community and tradition become sites of identity” while “stereotypes of masculinity, femininity and national identity are all equally flawed and mythic” (107). Based on this myth, it was the woman’s responsibility to protect the “national culture” as a boundary. However, being queer, Anzaldúa is beyond the boundary of normative

culture and thus the mestiza identity deconstructs the dichotomy of cultures. Nayar claims that the “state power, citizenship, nationalism, militarism, revolution, political violence, dictatorship, and democracy are essentially ‘masculinist projects, involving masculine institutions, masculine processes and masculine activities’” (Nagel, qtd. in Nayar 107-8). Then Anzaldúa’s queer mestiza consciousness is an autonomous protest against this male oriented show of agency. Her lesbian identity puts her in the position of “sub-human, inhuman, non-human” (Anzaldúa, qtd. in Martinez 556). Her subalternity, then, is not only based on her being a woman, but on her being a lesbian woman. As the sub-human Other she cannot be empathized with and thus she is unacceptable by the dominant heterogeneous culture. She strongly states that “I will not glorify those aspects of my culture which have injured me” (Anzaldúa, qtd. in Martinez 556). This operates to “preserve the dignity and autonomy” of her own experience as a Chicana lesbian (Mitchell and Feagin, qtd. in Martinez 541). Nayar cites Nira Yuval-Davis, a sociologist, who argues that “women somehow are retained for their reproductive functions: they reproduce not only families but also ethnicities and identities” (Yuval-Davis, cited in Nayar 109). From this point of view, Anzaldúa reacts against the reproduction of an identity conflict based on tradition by regenerating the mestiza as a new identity and means of self-assertion. Another perspective of gender is about claiming the land. Nayar argues that the “terra nullius” state of the land, meaning that it is empty land, gave it a feminine characteristic for the “masculine desire – it was a female body meant to be desired, conquered and controlled by the heroic male explorer” (137). The Coatlicue aspect of the mestiza involves both feminine and masculine characteristics. Therefore when Anzaldúa metaphorically claims the border as her homeland, she fulfills her masculine desire. She owns the land and makes it a space for herself to create the new mestiza. By interpreting the mestiza claiming the land because of her masculine desire is partly reproducing the male and female binary. However, I think Anzaldúa uses the Coatlicue state in order to balance the male and female opposites. The masculine side claims the land, and the feminine creates a new identity in the same space. The new identity is beyond the binary. That is the mestiza.

The historical conflict between Mexico and the United States on the distribution of resources caused a multiplicity of hybrid identities and cultures. Hybrid or borderline identity is the point of origin for Gloria Anzaldúa to construct her culturally hybrid mestiza identity and to claim the land between the borders as a metaphorical space. Her concept of mestiza consciousness is characterized by plural identities, emphasizing inclusivity. In comparison with double consciousness, to become a mestiza is a means of self-empowerment. Far from being pathological, the mestiza deconstructs and transforms the oppressive ideologies to create a new transcultural identity in the Third Space. Spatially claiming the borderland for the use of identity construction is an example of Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity. Even though the mestiza's inhabitation of a marginal space is criticized for being a state of psychosis, it is a deliberate personal choice and it shows the agency of the mestiza. Unlike double consciousness, it is not a psychological disorder that is shaped by the gaze of white dominant society. I have also compared mestiza consciousness to Gayatri Spivak's subaltern subject within the feminist perspective. However, the mestiza is different from the subaltern because she can speak as a hybrid subject including both male and female, dominant and minor characteristics. Her voice is heard as a marginal subject with a college degree in the dominant white society but at the same time she faces gender discrimination in her patriarchal minority culture.

Chapter 4

Chicana feminism in works by Anzaldúa and Cisneros

4.1 Historical context: The Chicano Movement

The bridge between double consciousness and mestiza consciousness is the Black Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. The New Negro movement in the 1920s paved the path towards this stronger movement. The spirit to resist oppression also spread to many other disadvantaged groups: women, LGBT individuals and other ethnic minorities such as Native Americans and Mexican Americans. The Chicano Civil Rights Movement, or El Movimiento, aimed at gaining Mexican American empowerment. Like the Civil Rights activists, Chicano/as struggled for “self-determination, social justice, human rights, and democracy” (Gonzales, qtd. in Ana Patricia Rodríguez 130). Historian Ramón Gutiérrez points out that the origins of El Movimiento are in the post-World War II era. Mexican Americans had fought against fascism and oppression in other parts of the world as assimilated immigrants (44) because they believed in the “national promise” of democracy offered by the United States and hoped to find “the American Dream of social mobility and middle-class status” themselves too (44). However, time showed that it was not likely to be so. In the mid-1960s, in addition to their will to spiritually repossess Aztlán in “El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán”, Chicanos gathered to build a “moral community” (Acuña, qtd. in Gutiérrez 46) in the ancestral homeland of Aztecs, called Aztlán, in the southwest of the U.S. The ethics of this community was “the belief in collectivism and an explicit rejection of individualism” (46). La Raza in Chicanismo movement was defined through common language, culture, religion and Aztec heritage in the collective memory (Gutiérrez 46). They shared “a spirit of resistance toward Anglo-American oppression and domination” (46), because, like that of African Americans, their American Dream was deferred, as Langston Hughes put in his poem “Harlem”. In 1965, La Raza Unida party was founded in Texas. Chicano resistance was a force of college and university students as well as workers and peasants united against educational inequality and improvement of conditions for the working class and farmers. The important themes of Chicanismo were “a heroic past of worker struggles and strikes, resistance to Anglo oppression,

and indigenous cultural pride” (Gutiérrez 47). As Yarbrow-Bejarano points out, linking Chicanismo with *indigenismo* was a tool of engineering a romanticized Chicano cultural identity (12). While the Chicano student movement was turning into a national force by 1969, radical Chicanas saw their rights rejected in the movement which only perpetuated patriarchal gender constructions. Chicana women were, in fact, thrice oppressed because of their race, gender and class. The conflict between the Chicanos and Chicanas caused a split in El Movimiento, giving birth to Chicana activism in 1971.

There were several ideological issues that the Chicana feminists faced. Sociologist Alma Garcia identifies these as feminist conflict with the Chicano movement and Chicana feminism’s relation with the ideology of Chicano cultural nationalism (217). Influenced by Virginia Woolf’s 1929 essay called “A Room of One’s Own”, Chicana feminists began to develop their own gender consciousness. They questioned their equality with men in the movement and re-evaluated the position of the family as a unity to resist predominantly white cultural and political oppression (219). Traditionally, the Chicano family signified loyalty to cultural values. Since the movement linked cultural values with the political sphere, the family became a strategic tool to organize activism (219). Questioning the family union encouraged the Chicanas to break away from their traditional female roles. In relation to the Chicanas’ feminist conflict with the Chicano Movement, Elvira Saragoza, an early Chicana feminist, complained about the Chicana woman’s place in the movement. In her 1969 short essay, “La mujer in the Chicano Movement”, she emphasizes the intellectual resources and potential of Chicanas which they lacked the opportunity to develop. She passionately calls for Chicanos to help their women and not to “abandon them because when [they] do [they] are throwing away a great deal of [themselves]” (Saragoza 70). Solidarity among men and women was very important for Saragoza. According to Carolina Fernández Rodríguez, Chicana feminists criticized the nationalist El Movimiento for two problems. The first one was about control of leadership within the movement. Women were not given an equal opportunity in participating in the decision-making processes. This problem was rooted in the patriarchal system of Chicano culture. Secondly, women were discriminated against within the movement as much as Chicanos were discriminated within the American social system. The

hierarchy of oppression followed this pattern: white people oppressed Chicanos and Chicanos oppressed Chicanas.

About Chicana feminism's relation with the ideology of cultural nationalism, Elena García, another Chicana feminist, in a 1971 essay advises the Chicanas to utilize their college degrees in order to "continue the cycle of enlightenment" (40). She criticizes the Chicanos for their machismo because they "saw their women as losing respect, becoming independent, forgetting home" although this was not the case (40). Chicanas helped and worked with Chicanos while from the traditional macho point of view their efforts were unappreciated because men believed them to be the women's duty. Elena García encourages Chicanas to become aware of and actualize their potentials and Chicanos to "[r]ecognize and respect this potential for the betterment of [them] all" (40). Anna NietoGomez, yet another Chicana feminist, also criticizes the view of Chicanos about Chicanas who chose to be feminists in her 1976 essay. She claims that it is "a contradictory statement, a '*Malinche*' statement ... if you're a Chicana you're on one side, if you're a feminist, you must be on the other side. They say you can't stand on both sides" (52). She argues that being a feminist does not mean opposing cultural codes. Chicanas fight for social equality for both men and women in Chicano/a culture as well as in the dominant culture. Carolina Fernández Rodríguez argues that although the movement defined itself as revolutionary, the liberation of women was postponed after the Chicano revolution took place. This shows that male participants in the movement gave priority to the cultural "nation" and did not want to include women's right to equal treatment within their own culture. However, women in the movement were aiming to create an entirely new cultural system. In addition, El Movimiento did not focus on what to women were the main issues, gender and economy. This is why Chicana feminists complained about not having a voice of their own in the movement. Moreover, women's lack of economic independence blocked the way to a non-patriarchal social system. Last of all, Chicanos refused to take responsibility for creating factions in the movement through ideological opposition and accusing Chicana feminists of disloyalty (Carolina Fernández Rodríguez 25-6). Thus both male and female participants blamed each other for the divisions in the movement. Lisa Flores, an ethnic studies scholar, argues that Chicana

feminists refused to differentiate racism from sexism when they linked race to gender, class and sexual orientation (695). Indeed, Chicana feminists wanted to bring diverse groups together to have a stronger voice and acting body in the Chicano cultural “nation”. As one of the leading Chicana feminists, Gloria Anzaldúa combines race and gender under the umbrella of mestiza consciousness. Her aim is to construct the mestiza identity through writing and retelling the ways in which her people live. She does not only protest racial discrimination towards Chicanos/as in the U.S., but also leads the internal struggle of women for gender equality and respect for homosexuality in the Chicano Movement.

4.2 The role of Anzaldúa

Gloria Anzaldúa, as a lesbian Chicana and an activist writer, was a pioneer figure in Chicana literature in the 1980s and her *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) is a founding text for Chicana feminism (Kaup 84). It consists of essays and poems on the issue of constructing an inclusive identity specific to Chicana women. *Borderlands* has a political agenda because Anzaldúa, like the Chicana feminists I mentioned earlier, actively engages in protesting the patriarchal systems in the Chicano movement and the dominant white culture. Anzaldúa’s creation of the New Mestiza and her effort to come up with a new mode of self-expression shows her attempt to remap boundaries and politically claim the space of borderland by filling it in by herself. This is how she relates the borderland to identity politics. She constructs her identity based on her personal experience in her essays and poetry.

Anzaldúa culturally and psychologically constructs mestiza consciousness for queer feminist working class Chicanas. By making possible cross-identification between these specific identities, Anzaldúa aims at gathering queer, feminist and working class Chicana groups under the umbrella of mestiza identity. Mestiza consciousness is an identity construct right in the intersection area of these groups; as Flores points out, intersectionality is central to Chicanisma (687). While Chicana feminism emerged “at the margins of Chicano nationalism and white Western feminism” (695), Anzaldúa adds queer politics to its agenda. By adding queer politics, she aims to expand the appeal of Chicana feminism.

As Barnard points out, Anzaldúa differentiates the meanings of “lesbian” and “queer” in her essay “To(o) Queer the Writer—Loca, escritora y chicana”. While “lesbian” (derived from Greek “ἄσβος”) is a term coined by the dominant white middle class, “queer” is associated with white queer theory, and “queer” opens up more space for defining the self (Anzaldúa, cited in Barnard 38). As Ian Barnard argues by centralizing queers of color “in a context that explicitly politicizes queerness as an anti-imperialist and anti-racist (anti-)identity,” Anzaldúa “models a politicized, empowering, and non-idealistic elaboration of queer race” (38). Anzaldúa’s construction of such an “(anti-)identity” is an act of resistance because a queer Chicana is marginalized four times, through race, gender, class and sexual orientation. Anzaldúa uses “queer” to denote oppositionality and “to establish analogies with other marginal identities” (Barnard 42-3). Mainstream LGBT activist groups had influenced her by standing up for their rights. Because white lesbians and gays know what it feels like to be discriminated against and oppressed (Barnard 43), Anzaldúa trusts them to recognize, understand and accept the mestiza’s position. In this way, she creates a new space for Chicanas to claim in the global struggle for queer rights.

4.3 Postmodernist approach to mestiza consciousness

Anzaldúa’s interpretation of Chicana feminism is positioned in the postmodern literary tradition of the 1980s. She utilizes postmodernist strategies such as fragmentation and deterritorialization to construct the mestiza identity. She argues that the mestiza has a culturally hybrid character with plural identities. Anzaldúa’s self-representation of her identity and memories through past experiences makes the *Borderlands* an *autohistoria*. Yarbrow-Bejarano argues that Anzaldúa’s description of the fragmented mestiza is a postmodern mixture of “deterritorializations, the displacement of identities, persons, and meanings” (9). These deterritorializations and displacements are linked to Anzaldúa’s subjectivity and her ontological desire. Braidotti calls this a “subject as process”. Accordingly, the mestiza, being a subject as process is “a complex and multiple identity, as the site of the dynamic interaction of desire with the will, of subjectivity with the unconscious” (Braidotti 196). To understand the complexity of the mestiza subject, one has to look at her hybrid cultural background. Canclini

suggests a postmodern approach to analyzing hybrid cultures. There are two processes she puts forward: “the breakup and mixing of the collections that used to organize cultural systems, [and] the deterritorialization of symbolic processes” (Canclini, qtd. in Raab and Butler 5). The first one is about the identity formation of the mestiza. There has to be a fragmentation and combination of different cultural systems to build a new self. The second one is to erase the stereotypical categories to define a new identity. The mestiza resists stereotyping.

4.4 Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987)

Anzaldúa’s borderland metaphor has a mosaic pattern with a strong tolerance for contradictions (*Borderlands* 88). The mestiza is a subject who recreates herself through shapeshifting and this is an important element of Anzaldúa’s construction of mestiza consciousness. To begin with, the mestiza subject is a self under construction. The end result is not definite because it changes through time. Elenes and Yarbrow-Bejarano have parallel approaches to the non-unitariness of the mestiza subject. Elenes argues, “Anzaldúa’s conceptualization of the subject ... is non-unitary” (110). This means the mestiza subject cannot be categorized as singular or unified. Similarly, Yarbrow-Bejarano argues that the inclusive, hybrid, character of Anzaldúa’s mestiza is a function of pluralizing the unitary subject and dealing with difference in a nonhierarchical fashion (15). Paula Moya, however, uses another terminology, which is similar to Braidotti’s “subject as process”. Moya calls the mestiza a “subject-in-process” in her essay about the transformation of the Chicana self. She claims that “identities provide people with frameworks for interpreting their experiences. In other words, a person's interpretation of an event will be at least partially dependent for its meaning on her self-conception – her understanding of her particular relation to the people and happenings surrounding that event” (468). Lived experience of reality, or memories, build the present self. Life itself is the process through which the mestiza subject always changes.

The recreation of the transforming self is a means of resisting oppression. Aida Hurtado, a Chicano/a studies scholar, claims that it creates a “social, psychological, and philosophical space to conceive of alternatives to oppression” (Hurtado, qtd. in

Martinez 558). The mestiza resists the forces of white middle class homophobic socio-cultural norms to achieve freedom and to make space for her own existence. The resistance opens up a psychologically alternative space because gaining mestiza consciousness gives strength to the subject to determine her own self-concept. Having the spirit of individual freedom to create is what best describes Anzaldúa's experience and herself. The alternative philosophical space is also related to the psychological one because it is about the ontology of the subject and her desire to define her own being. As a "conceptual tool to resist oppression" (Collins, qtd. in Martinez 559), mestiza consciousness paves the way towards understanding and creating the present and future self of the mestiza subject. It helps the mestiza to deconstruct hegemonic ideologies and oppressive knowledges that stereotype and marginalize characteristics related to race, gender, class and sexual orientation. As Martinez suggests, the coming-into-existence of the mestiza is a "psychic birthing and synthesis" (559). This synthesis Anzaldúa attempted to build is explained through the borderlands metaphor because the mestiza is determined to occupy the land in-between defined territories of categorized selves. Martinez's view on mestiza consciousness being a synthesis is in line with Bhabha's theory of hybridity (see Chapter 3.1). The borders are drawn to limit each group: "alien," "subhuman," "wetback," "mixed blood," "vieja," "queer," "white," "straight," "gabacha," "Eurocentric masculinist," and "the good the bad and the ugly" (Anzaldúa, qtd. in Martinez 562). With the very last words of *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa wants to bring an end to these separate identities:

To survive the Borderlands
 you must live *sin fronteras*³
 be a crossroads (*Borderlands* 217)

For the mestiza, the crossroads is a space of resistance because borders do not exist there. By resisting oppression the mestiza can survive in this land. Anzaldúa compares the borderland to a battlefield in which there is a "fight between the inner image and the words trying to recreate it" (Anzaldúa, qtd. in Martinez 562). This recreation in words at the time of resisting oppression is an important aspect of the mestiza identity in Chicana feminism.

³ Without borders.

Identity is a matter of creation for Anzaldúa. She creates her identity through writing and interpreting what she and her fellow Chicanas experienced in life. Therefore shapeshifting and creativity are matters of survival for the mestiza subject. In an interview, Anzaldúa puts forward nahualism as a form of shamanism and shapeshifting (Ikas 239). In her case, the shapeshifter both heals herself and the people around her. It is not only herself who is in need of recreating a new self but other Chicanas who are oppressed by the culture also seek a space of freedom for self-definition. What the mestiza as a shapeshifter has to do is “active mental and moral self-production” (Hall, qtd. in Yarbrow-Bejarano 14). Writing is a ritualistic and refreshing mode of existence for Anzaldúa. To emphasize the power of writing, she argues,

Living in a state of psychic unrest, in a Borderland, is what makes poets write and artists create ... When I write it feels like I’m carving bone. It feels like I’m creating my own face, my own heart – a Nahuatl concept. My soul makes itself through the creative act. It is constantly remaking and giving birth to itself through my body. It is this learning to live with *la Coatlicue* that transforms living in the Borderlands from a nightmare into a numinous experience. It is always a path/state to something else. (*Borderlands* 95)

Creating is producing something new and in the Chicana feminist approach, Anzaldúa’s aim is to “make face” through writing. The face is the unique self-representation of a subject. She wants to develop her face to better understand herself and transform not only herself, but also her readers who can reflect the change in themselves after reading what she has written. Moreover, Fitts argues that the unease, insecurity and ambivalence increase the artistic fertility of the borderlands (Fitts [no pagination]). The shapeshifter is a very influential figure who possesses the skill to change herself and her surroundings. This proves the self-empowering aspect of mestiza consciousness.

Survival in the borderland has the utmost importance In *Making Face, Making Soul* (1990), where Anzaldúa claims creativity to be a coping strategy. Since art is a means to create identity, she sees “[c]reative acts [as] forms of political activism” (xxiv). The Nahuatl concept of shapeshifter resists the dominant cultural codes through artistic creativity through writing, painting, performing and filming and these acts do not show simply aesthetic concerns but are about creating a new form of

reality (xxiv). She tries to shift identity politics towards a zone with more freedom in which creativity is the keyword to survival and resistance.

4.5 Sandra Cisneros' *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* (1991)

Following Anzaldúa's emphasis on creativity, Sandra Cisneros became a prominent representative of Chicana literature in the beginning of the 1990s. Upon Anzaldúa's death, Cisneros thanked Anzaldúa for what she had written to encourage her to freely reinvent herself if she had to (xx). Cisneros remembers her decision to develop a voice of her own when she had to write about the theme of the house in a workshop. As a Chicana woman, she had just grasped the idea that she did not have a concept of "home" in her life experience; she was essentially homeless, and therefore she had decided to write "about something [her] classmates couldn't write about" (Cisneros, qtd. in Fellner 61). Her autobiographical voice in writing is closely related to her female body and feminism. She was the only daughter, of nine children, of a working class family and she felt "marginalized and dismissed by her family and culture because of her gender" (Cisneros, cited in Rojas 135). This is why she addresses gender and female sexuality in her work and deconstructs the patriarchal inscriptions on the female body. Against the male gaze shaping the female body, Cisneros declares, "I defy you. I'm going to tell my own story" (Cisneros, qtd. in Rojas 136). *Women Hollering Creek and Other Stories* (1991) is a postmodern collection of short stories in which Cisneros deals with the contradictions of creating a self-in-process.

Cisneros' writing is autobiographical, but she uses this genre to create something new. She changes her experience because she is constructing her identity and subjectivity through rewriting. Astrid Fellner argues that postmodernism and poststructuralism assist the genre of autobiography to become a challenging site of identity construction in relation to history (29). Cisneros protests the cultural codes through writing her autobiographical fiction in which she situates herself as a subject that is socially and historically shaped (Betty Bergland, cited in Fellner 33). Her creative activity "breaks down the unity of restrictive paradigms" (Fellner 29) that are defined and imposed by the male-dominated Chicano culture. She criticizes this cultural heritage in her writing and *by* writing she, like Anzaldúa, claims the authority that has

been denied to women of color. As Sidonie Smith suggests, when the Chicana author writes or speaks, she does so “from the margin of autobiographical discourse as an ‘unauthorized subject’” (Smith, qtd. in Fellner 43). Smith’s “unauthorized subject” is similar to Spivak’s definition of the subaltern (see Chapter 3.5). Cisneros shows that she has agency and autonomy through writing and shaping her own self-representation instead of being subject to the representation made by the dominant culture. She helps the Chicanas to create “a space for movement, migration, and ultimately, transformation” (Fellner 113). This space is very similar to Anzaldúa’s borderland. *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* takes a feminist point of view. I will concentrate on the themes of assimilation of Chicanos/as leading to identity fragmentation, gender identity as self-empowerment and the use of ancient female cult figures to construct the mestiza identity.

The sixth story in the collection, “Mericans”, depicts how assimilation and machismo cause the fragmentation of Chicanas’ identities. The young female protagonist witnesses her brothers resisting an American tourist in a Latin church. The brother uses sexist language when he says “*Girl*. We can’t play with a *girl*”(18). The protagonist criticizes her brother’s favorite insult. She feels sorry for herself, since she is a “*girl*”, and she is about to cry but resists the impulse because “Crying is what *girls* do” (19). This shows her resistance to the cultural code. Although she wants to cry, she stays strong as a “*girl*.” Being exposed to gender discrimination, the protagonist develops a powerful Chicana self who does not get upset when she is insulted because of her gender.

Cisneros uses the grandmother to relate to the theme of assimilation. She takes the kids to the church. It is significant that she speaks Spanish, not English, as a representative of the conservative religious Mexican culture. However, the children are raised in the U.S. and being the new generation, they easily adopt the new culture. When the American tourist asks to take a picture of one the brothers, the following dialogue takes place:

“Hey, Michele, Keeks. You guys want gum?”
 “But you speak English!”
 “Yeah,” my brother says, “we’re Mericans.” (20)

The tourist misjudges the children to be Mexicans and is surprised to hear them speak English. One of the brothers confirms their assimilation by pronouncing the identity definition of citizenship without the “A” at the beginning. “Mericans” is how a native English speaker in America would pronounce his/her identity. On the other hand “Merican” reminds the reader of the word “Mexican” and therefore the identity of the children is a hybrid one in between American and Mexican. The grandmother does not hear this self-definition because she is busy praying to la Virgen de Guadalupe. This is a reference to the hybrid culture of the Latin Americans who were converted into Christianity after the conquest but retained the ancient female cult figures that were being worshipped in the indigenous religions. The new generation who assert themselves as Americans neither pray to la Virgen de Guadalupe nor do they like the conservative grandmother. Experiencing gender discrimination and assimilation into the American society, the protagonist grows up as a “Merican”.

In the story “Barbie-Q”, Cisneros criticizes women’s gender roles. The title of this story is a play on “Barbie” and “barbecue”. Florencia Cortés-Conde and Diana Boxer argue that it evokes the feminist objections to the perception of women as meat (142). The story begins with the young protagonist girl’s building up of a story about two Barbies who fight with each other to possess the love of “invisible” Ken. He is absent because the young girls don’t have enough money to buy one. They prefer to spend their money on Barbie’s fine clothing rather than a “stupid-looking boy” (14). However, one might argue that Cisneros deliberately keeps Ken absent because if he were to be represented in the story, the girls would make him speak in a way that reflects the girls’ perception of a man. The idea of a man is imagined who does not have anything to say and who does not interrupt the girls’ decisions. When he is absent, the girls playing with the dolls keep being creative, even though it’s always the same story that they play, and declare their agency when “stealing” Ken and fighting over this objectified male body. Barbie here is a metaphor for a real Chicana. Cisneros criticizes the stereotypical gender role represented by Barbie who is labeled as “Career Gal” or “Sweet Dream”. This kind of stereotyping young girls’ aspirations in life restricts their creativity because it shows that they don’t have the power of self-definition. The story continues with the sale of smoke-damaged dolls. The burned

Barbies refer to the brown skin-color of Chicanas because no matter how much the girls wash the Barbies, the smell stays, as if it is an inherited part of their identity. Cisneros describes a smoke-damaged doll named Francie, as the prettiest doll of all:

Barbie’s MOD’ern cousin Francie with real eyelashes, eyelash brush included, has a left foot that’s melted a little-so? If you dress her in her new “Prom Pinks” outfit, satin splendor with matching coat, gold belt, clutch, and hair bow included, so long as you don’t lift her dress, right? – who’s to know. (16)

Here Cisneros criticizes the culture covering of women’s “assumed faults,” as Jeff Thomson argues (417). He points out that male theory sees women as flawed for lacking the penis, as is suggested by Cisneros’s hint of “linguistic raising of the dress.” However, the consumers of the dolls perpetuate the myth of woman as a flawed being (417). With “Barbie-Q”, Cisneros emphasizes the cultural construction of women’s gender roles beginning with the games little girls play.

There are several stories in *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* about gender identity as self-empowerment. However, the most important one is the story that gave the book its title, “Woman Hollering Creek,” in which Cleófilas, the female protagonist, faces the limitations of the mother role in Chicano culture: “solitude, alienation, ostracism and domestic abuse” (Joysmith [no pagination]). Cisneros criticizes this suffering mother figure and aims to change it. Jean Wyatt argues, “the Chicana’s bicultural- and cross-gender-flexibility opens a new range of female possibilities” (259). In her imagination Cleófilas identifies herself with the heroines of telenovelas, for whom love is the focus of life and, although painful, it is sweet. This is how the Chicano culture defines women.

There are three central female icons in Mexican culture. These are la Virgen de Guadalupe, la Malinche and la Lloronas. Wyatt argues that these icons “impose on them a limited and even negative definition of their own identities as women” (243). Jacqueline Doyle quotes Octavio Paz to explain the meaning of each myth:

“Mexican representations of Maternity” [are] essentially “passive figures”: the Blessed Virgin signifying “pure receptivity”; Cortes’s Indian mistress la Malinche/la Chingada signifying the raped mother “who has suffered – metaphorically or actually – the corrosive and defaming accusation implicit in the verb [chingar] that gives her

name”; and la Lloronas signifying “the ‘long-suffering Mexican mother’.” (Paz, qtd. in Doyle 57)

La Llorona is further described in detail by Paredes as:

the wailing woman in white [seeking] her children who died in childbirth. Originally an Aztec goddess who sacrificed babies and disappeared shrieking into lakes or rivers, La Llorona usually appears near a well, stream, or washing place. The Hispanicized form has La Llorona murdering her own children born out of wedlock when her lover married a woman of his own station. (Paredes, qtd. in Fitts [no pagination])

Essentially, none of the female icons of this culture lives a happy life; they are all passive and lack autonomy. In “Woman Hollering Creek” the mythic la Llorona, the long-suffering Mexican mother, calls Cleófilas when the latter has no place to go. She does not want to stay with her husband and cannot go back to her father’s house because it would be a disgrace to the family. “What would the neighbors say? Coming home like that with one baby on her hip and one in the oven. Where’s your husband? The town gossips”(50). These cultural constructs oppress Cleófilas to become the long-suffering woman. Claire Joysmith argues that domestic abuse haunts Cleófilas, as it had la Llorona, who “is related to the silence of death, the specificity of suicide, abuse and femicide” ([no pagination]). On the other hand, being related to these non-domestic traits, the figure of la Llorona contradicts the traditional notions of motherhood (Fitts [no pagination]). This contradiction influences Cisneros to make a new interpretation of la Llorona, the hollering woman.

Cleófilas meets Felice at the doctor’s office and they plan her escape to Mexico through the Woman Hollering Creek in Texas near San Antonio. Their passage through the creek is rich in meaning. There are three similar interpretations of this act on the borderland that I find convincing. Joysmith sees it as a rite of passage in which cultures, territories, legal systems, histories and languages gain fluid meanings ([no pagination]). She emphasizes the cultural history of the creek-as-border in relation to the different accounts of the Battle of Alamo on each side of the border. Doyle argues that Cisneros is not only shifting geographical, national, political and historical borders but also gendered, biological, psychological, spiritual and linguistic borders (65). These borders are “social divisions between men and women ... [the] newborn's passage

from its mother's body ... Cleófilas's 'step forward' into a new mestiza consciousness and voice ... crossing of languages, the recovery of lost tongues, and of new etymologies and definitions for the river and the legendary mother who haunts its banks" (65). About the social divisions between men and women, Cisneros uses the binary opposites of public and private. Cleófilas and her husband, Juan Pedro, symbolize specific roles in society in which the man belongs to the public sphere and the woman belongs to the private sphere. Juan Pedro works and is usually away from home while Cleófilas looks after her son at home. Cleófilas "steps forward" into a new mestiza consciousness and voice when she decides to leave Juan Pedro to go back to her welcoming father's house in Mexico, where she does not need her husband to live. When she tells her passage back to San Antonio with Felice, she is aware of the fact that she has her own story about liberation from the abusive male dominance. The crossing of languages is demonstrated by the usage of Spanish words when Cleófilas's thoughts are narrated mainly in English. James Phelan, on the other hand, points out the mythic aspect that Cisneros transforms by "adding the stories of 'La Felice' and 'La Cleófilas' to the narratives surrounding 'La Malinche' and 'La Llorona'" (234). He argues that la Llorona as the hollering woman myth gained new manifestations.

Cisneros introduces Felice's character as a role model for Cleófilas. She is a Chicana feminist activist and has a pickup truck of her own. Her ownership of the truck is an adoption of what Chicano culture defines as masculinity because it enhances her mobility (Wyatt 261). At first, Cleófilas is puzzled to see such a self-confident Chicana. She wonders, "What kind of talk was that coming from a woman?" (55). Later Felice observes that "nothing around here is named for a woman ... Unless she's the Virgin. I guess you're only famous if you're a virgin. She laughed again" (55). Her wit and happiness is symbolized by her name Felice, which means "happy" in Spanish. She adds that the name of the creek "Makes you want to holler like Tarzan" (56). Her happy shouting suggests that Cisneros wishes the new Chicana to holler like a brave person and to break the silence with her voice. Tarzan symbolizes masculinity – muscular, mobile and masterful – but when she yells like him, she does it as a woman who uses male codes to construct a new female subject. Wyatt argues that her holler "may also be read as a call to arms, to the cause of female solidarity, which now

rescues Cleófilas from domestic abuse” (258). Felice’s hollering is an example for Cleófilas and she internalizes this act because it is a celebration of woman’s “independence, freedom of choice, and mobility” (258). Doyle argues that it helps Cleófilas to “recollect and claim her own life, history, identity, and voice” (63). When she tells the story of her transformation story to her father and brothers in Mexico, she becomes Felice herself: “Then Felice began laughing again, but it wasn't Felice laughing. It was gurgling out of her own throat, a long ribbon of laughter, like water” (56). As Phelan suggests, by turning Cleófilas into Felice, Cisneros changes *la Llorona* into the new iconic figure “*la Felice*”. By escaping from the abusive husband with her children, Cleófilas joyfully continues her life with the help of Chicanas around her. The figure of suffering mother is transformed into the liberated happy Chicana who can determine her future on her own.

Autonomous self-definition is a sign of self-determination. This is historically one of the most important outcomes of the Chicano Movement. Even though there is a conflict between Chicana feminists and the male participants of the movement about cultural nationalism, Chicana literature emerged as a branch of the larger movement and gained a lot of attention throughout the years. Besides Anzaldúa’s political activism to include queer rights into Chicana feminism by theorizing *mestiza consciousness* as a form of self-empowerment, Cisneros integrates the Chicana struggle into creative arts and produces postmodern stories to raise *mestiza consciousness*. As both Anzaldúa and Cisneros make clear, creativity is a survival strategy for Chicanas. Both Anzaldúa and Cisneros deploy postmodern strategies like fragmentation and deterritorialization to construct a *mestiza identity*. The *mestiza*, being a subject-in-process, is an autonomous figure who determines her own identity and life.

Conclusion

In this comparative research project, I have attempted to analyze one aspect of the identity politics of marginalized racial and ethnic minority groups in the United States. According to Du Bois and Anzaldúa, African American and Mexican American individuals have each developed a kind of consciousness as a coping mechanism in the normatively white social structure. W. E. B. Du Bois' concept of double consciousness in the first half of the twentieth century and Anzaldúa's construct of mestiza consciousness in the second half have socially, politically, historically and culturally different backgrounds. These diverse backgrounds had a psychological influence on the minority subjects. Women fiction authors of color also reflect on these two modes of consciousness in their works about their people's challenged lives. I have tried to make a connection between historical developments and fictional interpretations of the two concepts of minority self-consciousness. The contribution of this research to the field of literary criticism is to demonstrate that these authors, who are conscious of how the hegemonic society perceives their ethnic group's identity, emphasize double and mestiza consciousness in their creative reflections. Nella Larsen's black woman characters who suffer from the psychological pathology of double consciousness deny their blackness and pass as white, marginalizing their own people and thus causing racial discrimination to continue and reproducing social injustice. Gloria Anzaldúa's construct of the mestiza and Sandra Cisneros' mestiza characters, on the other hand, criticize Chicanas' predetermined role in society and define themselves in the re-creative third space to resist racial discrimination and patriarchy. Their significance is that they are able to claim agency to become autonomous subjects. This distinction sets double consciousness and mestiza consciousness apart. While the former reproduces destructive notions of racial marginalization, the latter is a liberating tool of self-empowerment.

Historically both African American and Mexican American ethnic groups experienced institutionalized racism: slavery and racial segregation and laws against border crossing, respectively. Both ethnic groups were perceived as the Other by the

dominant culture. Both minorities were associated with a negative racial category in the United States. Especially after the Reconstruction era, which ended in 1877, improvement of economic conditions and education for black Americans were needed to transform the prejudices of whites and ex-slave owners. The “cultural denigration” of blacks was still in effect, leading to blacks’ self-Othering even though they were freed. This pathological condition continued until the mid-twentieth century when grassroots social uprisings took place. In the Mexican Americans’ historical context, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 triggered identity problems for people of Mexican or indigenous descent who lived in territory that was conquered by the United States. The act of some Mexicans’ border crossing caused all Mexicans to be associated with this illegal entry method and therefore being the Other especially after the 1929 Deportation Act. Mexican Americans protested discrimination they faced because of their problematic citizenship status in the second half of the twentieth century.

Each type of consciousness is related to a social and artistic movement. Double consciousness is associated with the Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s. This contemporary artistic movement tried to reach racial self-assertion and self-definition through art and literature in New York. As a center of art and literature, Harlem attracted African American artists and intellectuals from the South, who joined the Great Migration. This particular artistic environment, supported by a white patronage system, was promising for newcomers because the color line was not strict, though only in art and literature. The freedom of expression experienced in this era caused black individuals to critically analyze their idiosyncratic place in society as a result of racial politics. After the Renaissance ended abruptly due to the Crash of 1929, blacks continued to resist social oppression in the following decades and began to discard the pathology of double consciousness, particularly during the Black Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 60s. The Chicano Movement was strongly influenced by the blacks’ struggle for self-determination, social justice, human rights and democracy. Chicanos made use of *indigenismo* as a tool of engineering a romanticized Chicano cultural identity for the working class Chicanos. However, the Chicano Movement was not egalitarian as the radical Chicanas discovered for they were discriminated within

the movement because of their gender. Chicano culture was a patriarchal construct. Therefore Chicana activism emerged in 1971. Chicana feminists refused to follow the cultural nationalism of the movement and decided to include gender and sexual orientation in their separate movement called Chicana feminism. Through the Chicana feminist perspective, Gloria Anzaldúa developed the idea of mestiza consciousness in 1987.

Du Bois's and Anzaldúa's roles in the emancipation movements are also important to look at. Du Bois aimed for a socially just environment for African Americans. He diagnosed this psychological conflict and called it double consciousness. Du Bois was criticized for encouraging young black intellectuals in a misguided manner because, by being advised to imitate white intellectuals, black intellectuals could not engage with their black selfhood. His Talented Tenth theory was also found flawed due to the discontinuation between the intellectual minority and the neglected masses of the blacks. As a lesbian Chicana activist intellectual, Anzaldúa was also an inspirational figure like Du Bois. Her pioneering character, however, is shown by her addition of queer politics to the agenda of Chicano and the feminist movement. Anzaldúa's aim is to bring together people who seek liberation from racial and gender prejudice. With this collaborative power, they can make their voices better heard. The inclusive character of mestiza consciousness strengthens the international appeal of Chicana feminism.

The conceptual backgrounds of double consciousness and mestiza consciousness are also very different from each other. Related to the psychological, literary and philosophical backgrounds of double consciousness, African Americans developed a sense of two-ness and this structures the pathological feature of the concept. The spiritual awakening achieved by double consciousness is not enough to solve the problem of racial discrimination. Without acting against racial prejudice in the dominant culture, the Othered individual remains passive and no change is achieved to improve the conditions of the blacks. Du Bois's founding of the NAACP shows his activism but this does not prove that the members of the association felt spiritually stronger as a result of the insight gained by double consciousness. Rather it was caused by their will to act together as being black American citizens and

supporting each other to fight against racism. On the other hand, the experience of solidarity in NAACP activism may have enabled them to counter their double consciousness and to go beyond it. Mestiza consciousness, however, is about becoming an activist who learns to cope with different kinds of ambiguities. Cultural hybridity, the combination of a diversity of forms, makes it possible to generate new structures. Therefore, the notion of a hybrid identity provides the mestiza with the means of practicing an inclusive subjectivity. The mestiza can adapt to difficult situations through shapeshifting, which is a kind of spiritual advancement. Therefore the mestiza as an individual is spiritually stronger than the black individual who is afflicted by double consciousness. Anzaldúa's choice of conceptualizing the home of the mestiza as the "borderland" is a reaction against relating hybrid ethnicity to borderline identity as a psychological personality disorder. The mestiza, according to Anzaldúa, is emotionally strong because she is positioned in the borderland; there is still space to be claimed and a home to be made in the borderland.

Double consciousness relates identity politics to power and racism while mestiza consciousness expands this connection by adding gender and sexuality. Du Bois attempts to reconceptualize the social, cultural and civil world from the African American perspective and claims that this is possible by means of the intellectual enlightenment of black Americans. He wants African Americans to gain consciousness to change and improve their black communities and the dominant white society. This is an idealistic and heavy demand for individuals to serve collective goals when the very same consciousness causes them to have a conflict between their real and ideal self-images. This is because blacks define themselves as whites see them. Although double consciousness is part of the intellectual context for Anzaldúa's concept, mestiza consciousness has an individualist approach to the identity formation of a complex persona. The Chicana becomes a mestiza by improvisation and recombination of a diversity of characteristics that depend on the individual's own life experience. Even though Anzaldúa is criticized for reproducing the dualistic thinking of "us" versus "them" – Chicanas versus white male oppressors in her essays – the mestiza consciousness is a way of coping with racial prejudice that can blur boundaries of American, indigenous, women, lesbian and working class identity definitions. This

border-crossing feature of the mestiza is a critique of the unified subject and enables her to engage in the process of reconstructing her own creative ethnic identity.

Double and mestiza consciousness reflect contemporary literary movements. Du Bois coined the concept of double consciousness in the same decade that modernism emerged. Modernism is characterized by formal experimentation and as a modernist movement Harlem Renaissance movement signified a breakthrough in black arts. Therefore the transformative potential of the movement is meaningful. Anzaldúa constructed mestiza consciousness in the heyday of postmodernism. Postmodern art highlights fragmentation and deterritorialization. Anzaldúa combines different genres in her *autohistoria*: autobiography, poetry, essays on identity politics and academic footnotes. In this hybrid genre of self-representation she displaces identities, persons and meanings as aspects related to postmodernism.

Through Fanon's framing of psychopathology, I found double consciousness to be more pathological than liberating or enriching the black people and culture in the first half of the twentieth century when Du Bois conceptualized it and his ideas were influential. Within this psychological perspective of racial identity politics, I think double consciousness could be categorized as a personality pattern disturbance for the black individuals since their ability to have an unconditionally positive self-definition was limited by social constructs. As the stereotyped Other, African American individuals afflicted with double consciousness suffered from an inferiority complex based on economic underdevelopment and the internalization of the idea of being inferior even though people with racial bias had created this hierarchy. In their search for identity, blacks experienced self-estrangement due to lack of autonomy. The insecure ontological situation caused neurosis and Fanon argues that the patient suffering from an inferiority complex should be made conscious of his/her unconscious desire to become white in order to be set free from double consciousness. Double consciousness had to be overcome to achieve mental liberation. During the Black Civil Rights Movement black intellectuals emphasized agency and empowerment for the black masses to become self-autonomous and define themselves in a positive manner. Black Power in the 1960s and 1970s, for example, stressed being proud of having black values and common interests to resist racial oppression through political participation

and economic opportunities, which many blacks lacked. Black feminism was another movement focusing on equality of all people regardless of race, sex and class. Black empowerment was also a central theme in black literature and art. However, it was not until the government bill of apology for the enslavement and racial segregation of African Americans had passed in the United States Congress on July 29, 2008, that unjust discrimination of black Americans was publicly acknowledged.

Drawing on Bhabha's spatial framework of hybridity, I concluded that the borderland Anzaldúa claims for her mestiza subject is a space of reconciliation of conflicting identities. She metaphorically declares her independence in this Third Space by resisting the pre-defined categories of race, gender and sexual orientation. Her choice of taking an oppositional stand empowers her to synthesize the new mestiza identity. However, I cited Easthope and Saldivar-Hull who argue that mestiza's inhabitation of the uncertain and insecure space of borderland is psychotic and pathological. Even though Anzaldúa herself calls living in the borderland "a state of psychic unrest" (95), I do not agree with these critics because reaching the mestiza consciousness is a deliberate choice to resist hegemonic ideologies and oppressive knowledges of the dominant culture instead of reproducing marginalized and stereotyped racial, gender and sexual hierarchies. The shapeshifting characteristic of the mestiza consciousness provides the Chicana feminist with the freedom to create something new by writing and, thus enables her to engage in artistic production. I agree with Anzaldúa's claim that creativity is a coping strategy. In relation to coping with pre-defined hierarchies, through Spivak's feminist framework I have argued that Anzaldúa constructs the mestiza subject as a speaking subaltern in the oppressive patriarchal Chicano culture. Her status as a subaltern subject is based on her homosexuality, but she is not fully subaltern because she has a hybrid Chicana identity. I claim that the mestiza subject is an inbetween subaltern because even though she speaks her queerness, she is not fully understood by her interpreters. Her voice is heard but her feminist individualism of queer soul-making is not fully registered in the dominant heterosexual Chicano culture. But still, the mestiza resists patriarchy by re-creating her self-image through plural identities emphasizing inclusivity instead of reproducing traditionally oppressed identities. Therefore, I find

Anzaldúa's creative mestiza still effective in coping with oppression. Her emphasis on creativity in resistance is echoed in contemporary social movements. Stéphane Hessel, a former diplomat, ambassador, human rights advocate and a concentration camp survivor but most importantly a resistance fighter in France, closes his 2010 pamphlet called *Time for Outrage!* with this line: "To create is to resist. To resist is to create" (40). He argues that people need to become outraged about any kind of oppression, be it economic, legal arrangements for migrants, or restrictions on freedom of press. He advises people to rise against these forms of social injustice non-violently and his method of outrage brings creativity forth in protests such as symbolically occupying a certain area. Unlike Hessel's worldwide influence, I don't think that Anzaldúa's mestiza consciousness was a precursor of the occupy movements in Spain, New York, Greece, Brazil and other places. However, both authors' ideas about making creativity a peaceful tool to resist oppression, no matter what kind, have a common ground.

In my analysis of *Passing* (1929), I have shown that Nella Larsen establishes a link between double consciousness and the psychology of the black female subject passing as a white individual. I argue that passing has a pathological nature with fatal consequences because, even though some critics argue that passing creates a space of freedom in which the subject can interrupt the racial order, the trick performed by identity change does not free the passing subject. Although the passing protagonist creates a fictional white identity for herself, she and the knowing spectator are always aware that this is a false identity. This causes her to be on pins and needles all the time. In my view such a production of self-image is neither creative nor liberating. The illusion of knowledge production and the vision that serves the unacknowledged gazer is an important feature of Larsen's novel, but it is still a reproduction of double consciousness, leading to psychological turmoil.

In Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987), the mestiza is an impersonation of Anzaldúa herself because her autohistoria is not a fiction but a collection of different genres. She represents herself as the embodiment of the mestiza consciousness. Braidotti, Elenes, Yarbrow-Bejarano and Moya have argued that the mestiza subject is non-unitary, plural and in-process in the uncertain territories of the borderland. Indeed the mestiza consciousness is a tool of resistance against

homophobic socio-cultural norms that limit the Chicana's freedom of being who she is. The mestiza consciousness gives her strength in claiming self-determination.

Similar to Anzaldúa's autohistoria, Sandra Cisneros recreates her personal experience and history of the cultural self in her collection of short stories, *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* (1991). She relates her female sexual body and feminism to her autobiographical voice in writing, through which she claims authorship and deconstructs patriarchal inscriptions on the female body, identity and subjectivity. Cisneros refers to the dichotomy between sexuality and motherhood in Chicano culture. She criticizes the stereotyping of women's way of seeing life because the male-dominated female identity inscriptions restrict women's creativity and ability to define themselves. She relates her stories to Chicana feminism when the characters deal with a multiplicity of oppressions. These critiques are in line with mestiza consciousness. Therefore I conclude that Cisneros creates Chicana characters that can break the silence with their questioning the male-dominated culture in order to achieve autonomous self-definition as a sign of self-determination.

As a possible area of research, a comprehensive comparative study can be made of Harlem Renaissance women writers' and Chicana feminist writers' works. Another area of future research can be the comparative analysis of contemporary art and literary works of the same ethnic groups in relation to the changing politics of identity, gender and sexual orientation. The effects of these particular identity consciousness types on the recent artworks can be seen as the artistic responses to social and political movements in an interdisciplinary research project.

This thesis was an attempt to analyze the relationship between double consciousness and mestiza consciousness. In order to accomplish, I examined the different historical backgrounds of these social and psychological concepts of identity. The comparative analysis of double consciousness and mestiza consciousness shows a strong connection between these social and psychological concepts and their uses in the formation of literary works by W. E. B. Du Bois, Nella Larsen, Gloria Anzaldúa and Sandra Cisneros. African American and Mexican American women writers demonstrate double and mestiza consciousness in their fiction by pushing the concepts to extremes in their characters' conflicts. Therefore while double

consciousness remains a psychologically destructive perception to define the discriminated minority self, mestiza consciousness aids the marginalized self to claim autonomy and power.

Through this research a space is established to understand the dynamics of subcultures in the global context through the interdisciplinary research of historical, social, psychological and literary fields. The identity politics of people of African and Native American descent in the United States has been a social problem because of marginalization of these groups by the dominant culture. One of the ways to solve it is to engage in reconciliatory work, or research in the academic environment in this case. To understand and better make use of the identity concepts in the African American and Mexican American contexts through fiction helps the global readership to improve the peaceful coexistence of diverse cultures and minority groups in the world. Literature, with this social aim, can be a tool to get in touch with the creative reflections of sociological and psychological realities of lived experience.

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