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Essay One, Rough Draft

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The Stain of Bleeding

Imagine a painting, una obra. The frames está cubierto en oro. La pictura es de una familia en México. There are montanas shaded in morado y rosada with el cielo reflected upon it in rays of luces oscuridades. The clouds that look over the family are cast among the estrellas millones. Even though the painting captures the family in Mexico at night, es la obra más de hermosa. Con la familia y las montanas y las estrellas y la oscuridad, la obra captura el colores de Mexico. Now, tear it from your mind; shred by shred, reveal the color behind the canvas. This terrifying experience which destroys los colores hermosos de la obra is the experience of the Latinos. The gray effect: that is the only color left to the canvas they once identify as home. In the United States, Latinos try to absorb the red, white, and blue, while they also try to absorb el rojo, el blanco, y el verde de sus segundas banderas de Mexico. In the end, they are left with the ugly side of the canvas: a blurred mess of gray. Donde están sus casas ya? Left no place to call sus casas, Latino continue to let their colors bleed and stain the place left behind.

From someone who also has seen the gray, Gloria Anzaldua’s addresses the struggle for home in her piece *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Anzaldua is a Latino author who understands the struggle of balancing Hispanic and Latino descent with the native-born United Statesian culture. In fact, Anzaldua has coined the term “Mestizo” to refer to this experience of multiple descents (Augenbraum 445). As a Mestizo herself, Anzaldua sets to avoid the innate response to bleed into culture, extracting all colors to assume the gray; specifically, Anzaldua wants to expose the diverse palate of her heritage and pose as a representative of the Mestizos to reveal the diversity of such a culture. From feminism and lesbianism to intense ethnic identity and highly personal emphasis, Anzaldua targets and exploits the misconceptions of the Mestizo culture throughout her piece (Augenbraum 445); she invites the audience to recognize her Mestizo culture and embrace it. Consider her discussion of the Pachuco language (Anzaldua 449). From the very beginning, Anzaldúa establishes that she does not have a language to which she belongs; she emphasize Pachuco as the language which she can identify as her own – she is the language. Yet even though she identifies it as a “secret code” between her and the Chicanas, she still shares the translated code to the reader. It is such a clever invitation to the world which she builds for herself – the personal approach. In fact, it seems as though she is not only inviting the reader to a world of the Pachuco language, but it also seems as if she is inviting the reader to the rebellion that the Pachuco language signifies: the sense that Chicanas cannot be muted and should speak as they are. Immediately, the personal approach mixes with the sudden call for strength and support. Anzaldua pieces la obra back together; she allows the audience to see the color and embrace it for that color – oscuridad o familia o lengua – is her identity. Along with Gloria Anzaldua and her *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Latino author Ana Castillo effectively captures the impact of balancing the multiple identities. Rather than communicating with just her own culture, Ana Castillo of “The Countryless Woman” directly approaches those diverse yet apathetic authors –who ignore or even deny their heritage – so as to reveal the true plight of passive assimilation.

As the self-assigned representative of her culture, Castillo reveals the necessity to define one’s own culture. Just like the discussion of la obra de oro, Castillo realizes that Latinos should not fade to gray. In fact, she identifies multiple features of her culture that should be identified by the individual (Castillo 29). One of the most prominent features of identity that Castillo addresses is color. She often connects to the audience’s understanding of the “white” and “black” struggle of the United States in order exemplify the struggle of the Mestizos: the diversity that shines even through the identity of color. For example, Castillo explains that there are two colors that a Mestizo can identify with: light-skinned “white” and dark-skinned “black” (Castillo 29). Castillo explains that this diversity of color for the Mestizo exerts significance because it has the same implications of the “black” and “white” struggle of the United States. In fact, the dark-skinned Mestizos “relate more to African Americans than non-black Hispanics” and “black Hispanics are far more segregated from the United States’ whites than are white Hispanics” (Castillo 29). Even to the identification of color, Castillo exemplifies the implications of such a feature. Castillo calls for a sense of “conscientizacion” as she suggests that it “determine[s] one’s identity and predicts one’s fate” (Castillo 29). Therefore, apathetics cannot afford to passively assimilate to the United States culture. If they fade to grey, the apathetics will be at the fate of the segregators, and they will not be able to assert their identity any longer. To be bold and assert the color – light-skinned or dark-skinned, purpled-pink or golden yellow – is the call for the Mestizos.

Along with color Castillo addresses the identity of gender and sexual orientation. Another prominent feature of identity, gender and sexual orientation appear in discussion throughout Castillo’s piece. As a feminist woman and lesbian, Castillo has much to say about these features of identity. In fact, Castillo addresses these features along with the identity of color. In her discussion of which she identifies more with, she claims: “While I have more in common with a Mexican man than a white woman, I have much more in common with an Algerian woman than I do with a Mexican man” (Castillo 23). As startling as she intends to make this claim – as she suggests in the proceeding lines – she underlines one prominent detail: the struggle of the white female. Again, with the intent to connect to her audience by applying common-ground interpretation like the discrimination of white woman, Castillo suggests that Mestizo woman has to face their identity with much more difficulty. In her discussion of the offers woman have made for the world, Castillo explains that much has not been accounted for; instead, women of color are “considered opinionless and the invariable targets of every kind of abusive manipulation and experimentation” (Castillo 24). Castillo dwells in the same sense as she did in the identification of color; if the apathetics do not identify their role, then they will not be offered a role. In this case, the women do not assert their identity and authority, so they have lost it. This passive assimilation to the limitations of the United States culture has ruined la obra, la oportunidad.