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CAMPUS DE EXCELENCIA INTERNACIONAL

Doctoral Dissertation

Angels of America: women icons in the USA
and Latin America and their effect
on female identity

Pinar Aslan

Departamento de Filología Inglesa

2017



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and Latin America and their effect
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The work presented in this doctoral dissertation is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and my own work, except as acknowledged in the text. The work in this dissertation has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

PhD in Advanced English Studies: Languages and Cultures in Contact

To

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By

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This PhD thesis is a dream come true for me. I have always wanted to conduct a study on women and how famous women can affect us. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Ana María Manzanas Calvo for her words of encouragement and academic guidance.

Special thanks go to my mother who is an inspirational woman and my one-and-only icon. Without her wisdom and encouragement, this study would not be possible. I am also grateful for the support of my family.

Finally, I would like to thank my friends who are all aspiring academics: Tuğçe, Seniz, Vildan, Burcu, Beyza, and Amanda. I had so many desperate moments throughout this study and they were the ones that made me go on.

1. ICONS AND ICONOLOGY STUDIES

“The iconic age is upon us.”

Marshall McLuhan

(Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man, 167)

Marshall McLuhan, one of the most important names in mass media studies, argues that times are now iconic, that is the iconic age is literally upon us. Icons, a key term art history, have always been present in our lives since the early stages of history, but why does McLuhan think that our age is iconic? Is it possible to say that icons, which we would only see in paintings and churches in medieval times, are everywhere now, waiting to be noticed, perceived, and even acted upon? We are surrounded by meaningful images and icons which make the age of information a complicated period. We are to live and get on well with icons. In a nutshell, the iconic age is very present and upon, all-over, and beyond us. This study aims to find out how we have come to this point within the framework of cultural studies and women's studies.

In this iconic age, there are so many sources of knowledge from various disciplines that we may need to conduct a lot of research to be able to unify some of these under an umbrella-like study. Interdisciplinary studies may result in important theories that will probably shape all social sciences since they are all connected in some way. Actually, this becomes inevitable, as some of the social sciences have a lot in common. Lynn Spigel explains how different branches of social sciences can become united in today's world:

Varied disciplinary interests are beginning to form an interrelated project... Even if the fields still have different research protocols and different theoretical traditions, recent exchanges between disciplines in the humanities and social sciences have been extremely productive

because the transfer of ideas has resulted in greater knowledge of how different industries and social institutions (such as media or housing) interact with one another and collectively affect people. (11)

In the quote above, the fact that recent changes in the humanities and social sciences are critical is emphasized since this opens up new horizons and result in inspiring studies. This is the crossroads where I would like to situate iconology. Having derived from art history, it has become an essential concept to be able to explain a great deal in sociology: cultural and social changes in communication and society have a lot do with icons and iconology. Today, the word icon would make many people think about Madonna, the singer, although it is also directly related to the Virgin Mary since Madonna means a representation of Mary. This is probably one of the main reasons why the singer whose original name is Madonna Louise Ciccone was given this stage name in the first place. The question to ask here is, why do we not remember the artistic reference anymore and think about the cultural one directly? How has the word “icon” become more popular in culture than in art history, and how has it changed throughout the process?

In the following section, I will provide a brief history of iconology studies in the hope that it may help us understand the change the term has undergone. I will try to examine the term from different fields of study in order to address its complexity and how it has widened its meaning including many topics varying from fashion to art.

The word “iconology” is a compound term made up of *icon* (image, representation in Greek) and *logos* (speech, reason). In other words, iconology is the language of images, it is reasoning about representation. Despite the fact that this term has changed a great deal throughout history, there still remain some essential features. One of the primary meanings of the word icon is the artworks generally carved out of wood or a similar material and painted in very colourful styles. This is a tradition that derives from Greek Orthodox or Russian Orthodox religions. From then on, the meaning of the term icon has changed a great deal:

Hans Belting explains the meaning of today's iconology and gives a brief explanation of why the art theory side of the term is rather ignored today: "In a kind of visual practice of iconology, artists abolish the received distinction between image theory and art theory, the latter being a noble subcategory of the former. A critical iconology today is an urgent need, because our society is exposed to the power of the mass media in an unprecedented way" (303). The distinction is no longer taken into account because the term has become rather practical and widely used. However, a critical iconology could definitely help us understand icons, the endless messages they are sending, and the way we are receiving and processing these messages in this iconic age. Since the term has become widely used and has started to lose its roots, there is an urgent need to go to the source and trace the roots.

According to W.J.T. Mitchell, "images are not just a particular kind of sign, but something like an actor on the historical stage, a presence or character endowed with legendary status, a history that parallels and participates in the stories we tell ourselves about our own evolution from creatures 'made in the image' of a creator, to creatures who make themselves and their world in their own image" (9). In other words, images are essential to understand who we are, why we see the world in a particular way, and how we react to it. Images of today are not only producer generated, they are also consumer generated. Consumers also have a lot to say about images, and their comments are to be taken into account today. Likewise, Jeffrey C. Alexander defines icon in a social context: "They root generic, social meanings in a specific and 'material' form. They allow the abstraction of morality to be subsumed, to be made invisible, by aesthetic shape. Meaning is made iconically visible as something beautiful, sublime, ugly, even as the banal appearance of mundane 'material life'" (782). Icons do give meaning. They generate meaning and add different layers to an image. They make the world more meaningful for us in many areas. This process is

linked not only to morality, but also to aesthetics. Hence, it is possible to say that icons are everywhere together with daily practices, theories, and beliefs.

For a clear understanding of the term it is crucial to underline that icon is a term that derives from religious painting and art criticism. According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, the term can be defined in the context of four areas: Firstly, it is “a devotional painting of Christ or another holy figure, typically executed on wood and used ceremonially in the Byzantine and other Eastern Churches.” It can also be defined as “a person or thing regarded as a representative symbol or as worthy of veneration.” The third and fourth definitions of the term derive from computing and linguistics: in computing an icon is “a symbol or graphic representation on a screen of a program, option, or window” whereas in linguistics it is “a sign which has a characteristic in common with the thing it signifies, for example the word snarl pronounced in a snarling way.” In a rather cultural context, the most extensive definition of icon can be found in *A Glossary of Cultural Theory*:

An icon is a saint or sacred subject and this status is often transferred to the REPRESENTATION itself. In its secular usage, the term is used to refer to a 'star' of media, entertainment or sport, worshipped by fans and admirers for a combination of physical looks, talent and unobtainability (Marilyn Monroe, Prince, David Beckham). A culture's POPULAR icons are therefore a clue to its ideas of beauty and worthiness. (142)

Here, we see a very brief but useful definition of icon as well as the change it has undergone. This definition is crucial to be able to see that the term icon derives from art history despite the fact that it is much more widely used in popular culture today. Therefore, icons should be studied in the context of art history first. Then, it is equally important to have an understanding of icons in cultural theory. Although the definition of icon may seem quite different in these two contexts, it is significant to note that it also has many common features. To start with the most important one, the representation of an image is crucial according to

both definitions. The main function of icons is either creating, representing or maintaining an image. John W. Dixon explains the importance of image and the study of it:

Our scientific understanding of the nature of things would be cut in half if we did not have the artist's careful investigation in the appearance of the experienced world. Images and art have always clarified thought and presented concepts. From the origins of iconology in the sixteenth century, to iconography in the nineteenth century, to Panofsky's resuscitation of iconology, and to the latest developments in semiotics, the image has been explored as a major intellectual instrument of the most precise kind. (270)

As stated above, images are crucial; they are everywhere and studying them is undeniably important. Studying images to discover meaning may be called different names but the term mostly used in this study will be iconology to prevent confusion. Seymour Howard summarizes the evolution of iconology recalling all the names that have been influential in iconology studies:

This embracing sense of the term, inherited from Warburg, Saxl, Panofsky, Dvorak, Schlosser, Hoogewerff, Gombrich, Wind, Meiss, Stechow, Held, et al., as including all the meanings-explicit and implied, denotative and connotative in images, has, of course, a long history in studies of explanation and interpretation. Hermeneutics, philological exegesis, explication of texts (and of acts), and, ultimately, legendary divination based upon dreams, plants, animals, gestures, and the very landscape and heavens-all prefigure iconology as ways to discover meaning. (83)

To conclude, iconology can be summarized as an effective way to discover meaning. However, some crucial questions that should be answered have surfaced: Is the meaning of an icon inherent to the icon itself and we discover it, or do we create the meaning that is appropriate for us? Is the meaning visible to all or does it remain invisible for some? Fortunately, Panofsky gave some answers to these questions and these answers are still valid today helping us to pursue a better understanding of icons.

1.1.PANOFSKY'S ICONOLOGY STUDIES

German art historian Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968) is considered to be the father of iconology studies. He is not the first one to use the term “iconology”, but he is the one who added the term “studies” and initiated iconology studies as a field. The first art historian to use the term iconology was Aby Warburg, another German art historian and cultural theorist, in his doctoral dissertation in 1892. Warburg was interested in studying the works of art including their social, historical and cultural functions. He applied this kind of iconic analysis to Renaissance art and it worked. Following Aby Warburg, Erwin Panofsky refined Warburg's theories on icons. He created a rather more systematic way of analysing icons: stratas of meaning for each icon that would help us see an image from different angles. It was like reading between the lines and seeing more.

It is noteworthy that Panofsky's masterpiece, *Studies in Iconology: Humanist Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (1939), is still considered one of the most important works on iconology. Carl Landauer considers this book “a manifesto introducing iconology to the English-speaking art historical world” (257). He also states that it made the art historian “go beyond mere iconography and engage in a hermeneutical effort to understand ‘symbolical values’, essentially the cultural message of art” (257). No wonder the same applies to cultural theorists today. Under the light of Panofsky's theory, one can reach culturally significant conclusions, and this is particularly important for today's intercultural world. One can only reach meaning through various stratas and see the process we are going through every single day with every single image. Similarly, Keith Moxey explains why Panofsky was an important scholar: “Panofsky's most important contribution to art history as a discipline was undoubtedly his concern to incorporate a discussion of the content of the work of art within the parameters of art history” (271). In other words, what he tried to do was to develop strategies to interpret art. Thanks to him, art has become less mere observation and more

discussion. In today's world, this effort of interpretation can also be applied to pop culture and visual arts where discussion, perspective, and personal opinion matter even more.

To be able to understand what iconology studies mean to Panofsky, it is important to study the scheme he developed in *Studies in Iconology: Humanist Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (14-15). According to this chart, which is a summary of Panofsky's iconology studies, there are three layers of meaning for every icon. The first object of interpretation is the primary or natural subject matter. It is factual or expressional and it is constituting the world of artistic motifs. The act of interpretation for this object is a pre-iconographical description, a pseudo-formal analysis. The equipment used for interpretation is practical experience, that is, familiarity with objects and events. For this first layer, the controlling principle of interpretation is the history of style. Panofsky summarizes it as "insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, objects and events were expressed by forms" (14). The second object of interpretation is the secondary or conventional subject matter, constituting the world of images, stories and allegories. The aim here is iconographical analysis in the narrower sense of the word. Panofsky thinks that the equipment for interpretation here is the knowledge of literary sources, familiarity with specific themes and concepts. The controlling principle this time is the history of types: insight into the manner in which, under varying historical conditions, specific themes or concepts were expressed by objects and events. The third object of interpretation in iconological studies is the intrinsic meaning or content, constituting the world of symbolical values. For this third layer of interpretation, the act is iconographical interpretation in a deeper sense that can also be called iconographical synthesis. The equipment used for interpretation is synthetic intuition (familiarity with the essential tendencies of the human mind) conditioned by personal psychology and *Weltanschauung* (world view). The controlling principle of interpretation is the history of cultural symptoms or symbols in general (insight into the manner in which,

under varying historical conditions, essential tendencies of the human mind were expressed by specific themes and concepts).

As seen in this table of interpretation, Panofsky studies icons in three stages. The first stage is called the “pre-iconographical” one where there is practical experience involved. The question asked at this stage is simply “What?” The meaning is factual, hence, facts are given consideration. In the second stage or second layer of meaning, a secondary or conventional subject matter is examined through images, stories, and allegories. “Iconographical analysis” is done, and the subject of a representation is determined. Familiarity with specific themes and concepts is an important factor here since the question asked is “What does it represent? What does it stand for?” Finally, the third and rather most complicated stage is called “iconographical interpretation” where a deeper analysis is involved. This layer requires the discovery of a deeper meaning in works of art. The question to be asked is “What does it represent unintentionally? What does it stand for unconsciously?” Here comes the importance of worldview, seeing the world in diverse ways through different eyes. The controlling principle of interpretation is the history of cultural symptoms and symbols.

This later stage of interpretation is the main focus of iconology studies. Since it is called iconographical interpretation by Panofsky, it may lead to some misunderstanding which can only be clarified by distinguishing between the terms iconography and iconology since they mean different things. According to Panofsky, iconology is the third stage in his scheme:

[Iconology] is apprehended by ascertaining those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion—unconsciously qualified by one personality and condensed into one work. Needless to say, these principles are manifested by, and therefore throw light on, both ‘compositional methods’ and ‘iconographical significance’. (7)

One of the other scholars that support Panofsky's idea that iconology includes more commentary than mere description is Roelof Van Straten. Below she explains why iconography and iconology are different terms and where they derive from:

Consciously added values are usually given in the form of symbols, that can be analysed and interpreted (but a deeper meaning may also be found in a work of art as a whole). The unconsciously applied 'symbolical values' seem to account more for the work of art as a whole: the artefact seen as an object created by a certain person at a certain time (period) and in a certain place. Thus, where Iconography is part of Art History, Iconology in my view has its starting point in Cultural History. (170)

Van Straten also states that "Iconography is image-describing, and iconology is image-explaining" (174). This is probably one of the most understandable explanations to provide about the difference between iconography and iconology. Hence, it would not be wrong to say that iconology includes, or, rather, encloses iconography. Iconography is the first step to start iconology studies and it is the sine-qua-non introductory step to be able to continue iconology studies. Similarly, Christine Hasenmueller also writes about the difference between iconography and iconology:

Both iconography and iconology are integral parts of a form of history. Iconography is a 'philology' of images; the descriptive, factual aspect of the process of understanding the past. Relative closeness to documents and concrete observations meant that iconography was more easily defended in an empirical intellectual climate. Iconology sought to state the underlying principles that shape the expression of an age. As such it is a variant of the 'history of ideas'. (297)

To put it more simply, it is possible to claim that iconology is a detailed study that includes iconography. To be able to have an idea of the underlying principles of an era, one needs to carry out an in-depth study of the facts first. Iconology is an umbrella term that includes comments and interpretation. In conclusion, iconology is regarded as a wider concept

including iconography. Giulio Carlo Argan claims that the work of an iconologist is completely different from that of the iconographer. In his article “Ideology and Iconology”, he offers a clearer explanation of the two practices: “The latter (iconology) describes the connotations of the figure as an entomologist describes the characteristics of an insect; the former (iconography) synthesizes, not analyses, because he reconstructs the previous existence of the image and demonstrates the necessity of its rebirth in that present absolute which is the work of art” (300). Explaining iconography and iconology in detail is important in order to be able to see why cultural theory is much more interested in the iconology studies. Synthesis and analysis provide a more sophisticated analysis instead of very personal comments. Apart from art history, iconology studies could be very useful to be able to better understand social studies today. Especially, pop culture would be more understandable if icons, leading figures in pop culture, could be studied in the framework created by Panofsky.

In a world where icons need to be studied in-depth to make more sense of human identity and behaviour, the term *Kunswollen* also plays an essential role. *Kunswollen* is a term coined by the art historian Alois Riegl. “To move beyond the singularity of the artist’s production, Riegl identified what he famously called *Kunswollen*, a term for which there is really no satisfying English variant but which usually is translated as ‘will to form’ or ‘artistic volition’,” as Kimberley A. Smith states (18). This concept was first introduced by the art historian in *Problems of Style* (1893). Riegl explains *Kunswollen* later in another co-authored book of him, *The Vienna School Reader: Politics and Art Historical Method in the 1930s*:

All human will is directed toward a satisfactory shaping of man's relationship to the world, within and beyond the individual. The plastic *Kunswollen* regulates man's relationship to the sensibly perceptible appearance of things. Art expresses the way man wants to see things shaped or colored, just as the poetic *Kunswollen* expresses the way man wants to imagine them. Man is not only a passive, sensory recipient, but also a desiring, active being who wishes to interpret the world in such a way, varying from one people, region, or epoch to another) that it most clearly and obligingly meets

his desires. The character of this will is contained in what we call the worldview, again in the broadest sense): in religion, philosophy, science, even statecraft and law. (94-95)

Similarly, Michael Ann Holly explains why *Kunstswollen* is important to understand, analyze, and make an iconological interpretation of art: “‘The most representative’ according to Panofsky, ‘of the serious philosophy of art’ has been Alois Riegl. His notion of *Kunstswollen*, in fact, has been the most acute in modern art historical inquiry, for it attempts to free works of art from theories of dependence and gives in turn an untraditionally ‘recognized autonomy’ to their existence” (81). Holly draws attention to the fact that with this term the creative and artistic autonomy of the artist and art can be praised. Jas Elsner also explains the importance of this term: “Riegl’s invention of the concept, for all its apparent obscurity (an obscurity probably increased by the quantity of discussion and explication it has generated among some of the most distinguished art historians in the more than one hundred years since it was invented) is designed as a solution to the double impasse of generalizing from the specific empirical example and making the mute material object speak” (748-750). The reason it has caused so much discussion is probably because Riegl changed the definition of *Kunstswollen* over time. At first, he used the term just to refer to the artistic will of the artist. Then he also included the will of culture and then there was even an attribution like “dominant *Kunstswollen* of the time” probably meaning the artistic tendency shaped by culture and history.

Kimberley A. Smith relates *Kunstswollen* to collective perception: “In Riegl’s theory of *Kunstswollen*, the will of the artist and the will of a culture are coextensive. Individual cognition and its productive faculties become the local occurrence of a larger phenomenon: the collective apperception of a historically situated group” (19). Furthermore, in one of his “Letters to the Editor”, Ernest Mundt mentions *Kunstswollen* as a form of “artistic purpose” and he provides an interesting angle to the debates about this “confusing term”: “To creative

mind, subsumptive conceptualizations are necessary and welcome stepping stones toward a larger understanding. It is not their fault if such concepts are turned into cornerstones by lesser minds who crave finite structures of meaning” (63). Doubtlessly, *Kunstsollen* is an important concept since it is a key term for creativity: The will of the artist or artistic purpose was never considered or named until Riegl did it, that is why he is so important for Panofsky who also considered the importance of artistic interpretation in iconology studies.

Another important aspect that makes *Kunstsollen* an essential concept is that this rather neglected term can be applied to pop culture as well. While examining today’s icons and iconology studies, *Kunstsollen* can be a key term in explaining many features of culture. That is the productive side of its obscurity, and what makes it a useful term for interpretation is that it can also be discussed in a social context, especially for the third layer of Panofsky’s iconology interpretation. It would not be wrong to state that popular culture theories today study icons, people as works of art considering both consciously and unconsciously added values because these added symbols mean a great deal when it comes to explaining the effect of icons on culture and people. Jan Bialostocki explains how studying these symbols may affect us: “Needless to say, in practice iconology may stress one or the other idea (of conscious or unconscious symbolism). But in its ideal, postulated form it is both the most unified and the most general and all-embracing method for the historical interpretation of art; it aims at as complete an understanding as possible of the artistic achievement of mankind” (774). All in all, studying popular culture from the abovementioned angle could show us why some people are accepted as icons and treated as symbols over others and what their effect is on our identities.

1.2. ICONS IN SOCIAL STUDIES

With the many changes the world has witnessed, the term “icon” also had its share. Today, we use the word icon to refer to a famous figure who is followed and even taken as an example. S/he is an opinion leader whose word counts, who has many followers on social media; what s/he wears affects the fashion industry and even language. An icon is always there even if we think we do not care or pay no attention, subtly affecting the world around us. Albert Boime explains why the term icon is so important for social sciences: “Icons as both metaphor and image became the core of the study of art history. One of art history’s most potent contributors to the social sciences was the specialized examination and classification of the content of historically revered images known as iconography. According to its chief propounder, Erwin Panofsky, iconography furnished the necessary basis for all further interpretation” (2). So, iconography describes further research and the “decoding of images within a larger complex of cultural, social, and political values is called iconology” (2). There is no doubt that in cultural theory, this decoding process is essential. Some key philosophers and critics such as Bakhtin, Barthes, Foucault, Eco, and Derrida believe that social sciences should take the decoding of the images into account while theorizing about culture. Peter Wagner gives some remarkable examples: “Roland Barthes taught the world that everything from painting to objects, to practices, and to people, can be studied as ‘texts’. Barthes, Kristeva and in their wake, Umberto Eco made us see what semiology can do for the understanding of cultures and social practices and their expression in images” (2). With regard to these key scholars, one can say that decoding the world via iconology or semiology makes us realize that images are crucial for the understanding of our culture.

Taking into account the need to decode cultures or social practices, one of the significant terms that is worth mentioning here may be another key concept in iconology: ut picture poesis. This term refers to a paradoxical sisterhood of two arts: Painting and poetry. In

Latin, it literally means: “As is painting so is poetry.” “Ever since the beginning of the representational arts, poetry and painting have been related,” as Liliane Louvel states (31): “Poetry and painting were seen as two inseparable twins, two sisters who were trying to find their own identity independently of one another.” This is an attribution to the infinite dialogue between image and text. Scholars have long been arguing about the difference between image and text, and many of them are trying to make one of the arts superior to the other whereas W.J.T. Mitchell claims just the opposite: “There is no essential difference between poetry and painting, no difference, that is, that is given for all time by the inherent natures of the media, the objects they represent, or the laws of the human mind. There are always a number of differences in effect in a culture which allow it to sort out the distinctive qualities of its ensemble of signs and symbols” (49). So, the debate between poetry and painting is not a clash between two different arts, it is rather a struggle between body and soul, world and mind, nature and culture. To be able to make more sense out of this dilemma, we can apply Panofsky’s iconology interpretation for paintings to literature, sociology, and culture. Similarly, Mitchell states that this differentiation between the two sister arts is becoming harder to maintain: “Since the end of the eighteenth century, Western culture has witnessed a steady stream of innovations in the arts, media, and communication that make it hard to see exactly where the line ought to be drawn” (50). This innovative period could be much more easily analysed if the two sister arts are considered together. In this digital age we are living in, visual media is one of the most important areas for everyone. Celebrities are trying really hard to become and continue being icons. It would not be wrong to say that they are art forms themselves: the way they perform, get dressed, speak, and act are all considered in-detail. They are live versions of sister arts: they are painting and poetry, they are image and text. Today’s icons may be the best example of the infinite dialogue between painting and poetry.

In social sciences, the search for meaning has been quite challenging since the area that has been studied is gradually becoming more complex. Jonathan Culler questions semiotics and research for meaning in social sciences: “If everything which is meaningful within human cultures can be treated as a sign, then... semiotics embraces a vast domain: it moves in, imperialistically, on the territory of most disciplines of the humanities and social sciences” (98). The notion that society can be studied as a text was an illuminating idea that gave way to new approaches. That also meant that it contained some different layers of meaning waiting to be discovered and one of the methodologies to be used can be Panofsky’s scheme. The questions “What?”, “What does it represent?” and “What does it represent unconsciously?” can be raised and the answers would tell a lot about culture, society and social practices on both national and international basis. After examining how icons are studied, it is important to explore the characteristics of icons so as to see the transformation icons have undergone. Listing these characteristics would certainly make us see the differences and similarities of icons in art history and icons in culture.

To be able to provide a better understanding of today’s icons, it could be useful to list their common characteristics. To start with, the first characteristic we need to mention is the fact that they are representative. Icons have always represented something although they were the representatives of different concepts in different ages. Ingrid Zoetmulder explains the roots of icons:

The origins of this development lay in the worldview of the early Christian philosophers, which was influenced by Plato. They discerned various layers in the universe. At the top was God. Every layer beneath that was a reflection of the layer above. The lowest layers, where the temporal world existed, were more material than the layers above, which were more spiritual. An icon was a material image of a person or event, whose ‘actuality’ existed on a higher, spiritual and invisible level. When looking at an icon, the idea is that one looks through it to

see what lies behind it. Icons are sometimes called Gates to Eternity. The essence of a gate is that you open it, pass through it, and enter a new place. (10)

This spiritual feature of the icons makes them represent something ideal, and this theory finds its roots in Plato's teachings. Hence, it is possible to say that icons have long been admired from the early stages of usage. Looking through an icon, a person can learn and have a certain idea about something beyond the object itself. In Zoetmulder's words, it is also important to mention the different layers which easily makes us remember Panofsky's iconology table. It could be argued that icons need to be read in different steps because there are different layers inherent to them.

As stated earlier, the word icon derives from art history and refers not only to an image in general but also to religious works of art (mostly paintings) found in churches. What these religious icons represented was different aspects of Christianity and the power of the Church; they were used to show the power of the church. These icons were attractive works of art and they were surely admired, they made people go to church just to look at their beauty. Furthermore, they were also informative. Since few people could read in the Middle Ages, icons made it possible for people to know more about religion. They were like carved or painted versions of religious books. Looking at them, Christians could learn about the way Jesus, Virgin Mary, or the saints lived. They could understand how these blessed people were examples to follow and learn from. Since they did not have many sources of knowledge, these iconic paintings were the sources of information for them. It is possible to argue that icons made people communicate with God and even with each other, since they told each other these stories. Important icons at this stage could be found in Byzantium, Russia, and Greece. During the following historical periods, icons continued to be exemplary. However, they were not spiritual anymore; they were living legends which mostly used the power of mass media and visual communication. With these new technologies, they are now closer to people and they are representative of people and this change doubtlessly gives more power to icons. This

is one of the leading reasons why icons need to be studied in detail, as a change of icons would surely result in a change of society.

Another characteristic feature of icons is that they are ideological. In his revolutionary book titled as *Understanding Media: The Extensions of a Man* (1964) Marshall McLuhan claims that the media which turns our world into a global village also starts a new age of icons: “In fact, the war of the icons, or the eroding of the collective countenance of one's rivals, has long been under way. Ink and photo are supplanting soldiery and tanks. The pen daily becomes mightier than the sword” (339). Here he refers to the Cold War and wars in general. When the concept of communication changed thanks to mass media, so did the idea of wars. From then on, what mattered most was perception management. People had to be persuaded by the fact that wars were needed for peace. Then came the icons of war who started the “war of the icons”. There were more dictators in the world stage, dictators who became iconic: they could easily impose their ideologies on people.

All in all, whether images or people, icons have always been ideological. As Louis Althusser states, “there is no ideology except by the subject and for subjects” (115). This means ideologies are created by subjects and form a suitable space for subjects to exist. This space is possible through using icons and symbols as a basis. In a nutshell, all icons are meaningful in an ideology and all ideologies make sense thanks to icons. There is a dual and on-going relationship. Ideology has always been an influential term in world politics and current international affairs. As this internationality becomes a more complex issue with the rise of new technologies, so does the role of leaders in international affairs, who turn into icons. How icons such as Napoleon or Queen Elizabeth I changed the ideology of a whole country should be carefully studied and such a study would be surely fruitful if it is followed by a research on the effect of ideological icons on people.

Last but not the least, it is impossible to deny that icons are powerful. There is no doubt that icons have always had an effect on people. When they are viewed as images, they have to be powerful enough to draw people's attention. Otherwise, they will never be discovered and they will never become an icon. They will remain as details, as secondary figures forever. If we see icons as religious works of art, again they must be powerful because these icons are expected to have a striking effect on people. Furthermore, they are supposed to be as understandable as possible since they serve as a medium for people to acquire knowledge in the Middle Ages. This doubtlessly made icons even more striking and powerful. Likewise, in Renaissance art (Panofsky's main field of expertise) icons had to be powerful and clear enough to follow a tradition and to be commented on according to an iconographic context.

Icons of today, that is, icons of popular culture, need to be powerful, appealing, striking, attractive, and remarkable as well. In our world, we are exposed to millions of images every day. An image has to be potent to become an icon. Likewise, famous people who want to become icons surely need to be high-powered. That is to say, they need to affect people with their striking features. In the introduction to *Women Icons of Popular Music*, Carrie Havranek gives us the recipe of the icons: "Worshipped and cursed. Loved and loathed. What does it take to become an icon? Regardless of the subject, culture, or era, the requisite qualifications are the same: challenge the status quo, influence millions, and impact history" (ix). To sum up, becoming an icon is very much related to be challenging to the status quo. That also directly refers to being a representative of something new and influential. If we are to study icons throughout history, from the Virgin Mary to Madonna, we could easily see that they were all representatives of power although this power was exercised in many different ways. They either challenged the existing religion, culture, economy or ideology. No doubt these qualifications require being powerful and remaining so. If

somebody wants to succeed in becoming an icon and appeal to millions today, s/he has to be a high-powered image herself/himself, the result of a complex process which I aim to analyze in a comparative context.

1.2.1.A VERY BRIEF HISTORY OF ICONS

In this section, I intend to explain the history of icons briefly, and show the changes they have undergone. This will also serve as a road map for my research. In this historical diagram, I aim to find the traces of icons and the hints these traces provide us about today's iconology. Hence, I will analyze icons in the most important eras of history such as Classical Times, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment, Modernity, and today's contemporary times. This the same pattern I will use in the second part of my thesis where I focus on women's representation. It is no wonder that such a brief history of icons is quite limited since it should be a field of study by itself; however, my main aim is to draw a sketch which can serve as a timeline to follow in the following chapters. Furthermore, I feel the urgent need to draw the life cycle of iconology since it surely provides some valuable insight into the world of icons.

Firstly, in Classical Times, the icons were mostly Greek gods and their representations. According to Irene Bald Romano, an icon in ancient Greece can be defined "a sculptural image of a divinity which served as the major representation and focus of worship of that divinity at a particular shrine or sanctuary. These idols, in a sense, were earthly substitutes or symbolic manifestations of the presence of gods and goddesses" (3). These substitutes were statues that achieved perfection in terms of the attention paid to the details such as muscles or drapery. The smoothness of the materials used added to their perfection and the result was the masterpieces that are still admired even today. This is quite clear since nearly all we see from Classical Times is Greek gods when we enter the first hall of a well-

established museum. Apart from their artistic beauty that is still very appreciated today, Jan Elsner explains the function of the magnificent Greek statues that have achieved the limits of perfection: “The use of images in religious ritual is a key element in their incorporation into the imaginative and spiritual life of antiquity. It was precisely because of the existence of festivals in which images were periodically dressed, paraded, washed and worshipped, and because of the stories which such repeated sacred actions came to generate, that art could attain the epiphanic and emotional heights” (520). While the perfection of art served as a representation of Greek gods and created emotions, people’s religious beliefs grew stronger and satisfaction with what they believed in also increased. These statues that can be gazed at for hours today were centers of attention then as well and that is why they were placed in every corner, every shrine: they could make people admire their beauty and immaculacy; they were keys to religious rituals. Moreover, they were also descriptive of the religious stories that were spread by word-of-mouth.

When it comes to the Middle Ages, the style of the statues change, but the function remains nearly the same. Icons in the Middle Ages were also used to amaze and inform people. This time these icons did not center around Greek gods anymore. The center of attention was Jesus and the Virgin Mary. Glenn Bowman draws attention to the fact that “we must be aware of the ‘textuality’ of Christian imaginings of the places” (99). This textuality may probably come from the relationship between image (Christian icons) and the text (The Bible) since they were closely connected. In other words, since the images were solely based on the Biblical stories, Christianity could be seen everywhere in the Middle Ages presiding over people’s everyday lives. Doubtlessly, the most exemplary icons of Middle Ages were Jesus and the Virgin Mary, who were painted and sculpted millions of times. Actually, it is possible to see that nearly all Medieval artists painted a Jesus or Virgin Mary at some point of their career. Robin Jensen explains that there was no single depiction of Jesus in Middle

Ages: “Jesus is baby and lamb, shepherd and Messiah, friend, judge, ruler and victim. In our hymns, he is both ‘Beautiful Savior’ and ‘Judge Eternal, throned in splendor’. An enormous variety of representations have emerged from 2,000 years of Christian imagination, and we can find in these diverse images some element that identifies it as a portrait of Christ” (28). The fact that representations of Jesus are more representative than descriptive as an icon makes him one of the most popular icons of history. Even a painting whose story one has seen or read dozens of times may be interesting or worth attention due to the fact that it is not a single image Jesus is depicted. It is the different features Jesus has that make people feel a proximity or a familiarity and this feeling of closeness may count more than being informative at times, because it is exemplary when Jesus is depicted helping somebody or being tortured. All in all, it is possible to say that Biblical stories that reflect Jesus or the Virgin Mary were mostly used to inform, attract, and affect people regardless of the protagonists’ physical features.

Ellen M. Ross explains why Jesus was a divine icon of love and humanity although he was represented through different roles most of which concentrated on miracles or suffering:

Jesus Christ’s endurance of agony and death reveals a God of boundless love seeking to heal the breach between humanity and God. The Passion of the Christ who is willing to suffer on humanity’s behalf offers a vivid narrative of divine mercy, a startling portrayal of God’s love for humanity. To the medieval reader and viewer, the pathos of the first person and the willingness of the second person of Trinity to endure anguish, torture, and death testify to the immensity of divine love for humankind. (5)

No matter what today’s viewers see when they see the tortured, bleeding Jesus in churches, viewers then surely saw the reflection of God willing to do everything for the good of humankind. No matter what Jesus looked like, he had main roles such as performing miracles, helping people, or sacrificing himself: His physical appearance surely changed due to time and geographical matters, but the way he was admired and adored by people remained the same thanks to his iconic depictions.

With the arrival of the Renaissance, art gained another dimension: artistic sensibility. It is worth mentioning here that Erwin Panofsky found the inspiration for his iconology studies in Renaissance art. It was thanks to the paintings from the Renaissance that he felt a certain need to read art in stratas of meaning. This may also mean that artistic sensibility required adding more meaning into works of art through detail. Hence, it would not be wrong to say that during the Renaissance, icons were mostly depictive. Even the patterns of the cloths meant something: they might explain the family the icons belonged to. One of the dominant concepts then was patronage, which also was the main term that governed art. According to Lisa Pon, this was also the time when art was not directly about religion anymore. She supports the idea that art started to be considered as separated from religion in early modern Italy: “In early modern Italy, a painting or sculpture could be both a work of art and an object meant for religious devotion” (4). Once there was this very basic idea of “art for art’s sake”, there were inevitably new icons.

The Italian aristocracy had a key role in Renaissance art. They were the patrons of the artists many of whom survived through their distinguished artistic skills. Furthermore, they were also the heroes and heroines depicted in the works by these artists. Hence, the images that would be seen as the icons of the time mostly represented members of the aristocracy. One of these icons is Mona Lisa who happens to be one of the most important popular culture icons. She survived through the ages with her so-called “Mona Lisa smile”. Giorgio Vasari mentions the famous painting in his work (1550) proving that Mona Lisa, or La Gioconda, is not only a popular culture celebrity of the present, she was back then as well: “And in this work of Leonardo’s there was a smile so pleasing, that it was more divine than human to behold; and it was held to be something marvellous, since the reality was not more alive” (636). Similarly, Donald Sassoon draws attention to the unique smile of Mona Lisa in his book *Becoming Mona Lisa: The Making of a Global Icon* (2001) explaining that it is probably

one of the main reasons why this painting, among many others, is an icon: “Her serene smile places her in a position superior to that of the viewer. We look up to her. Her superiority is intensified by her position with regard to the landscape. Although the hills and mountains are much larger than she is, Mona Lisa seems to be in a commanding position” (4). This smile gives Mona Lisa a certain superiority. It turns a simple woman into an image that engages the viewer since it makes her stand for something: the feeling of eternal gaze and domination through that gaze. “Mona Lisa is dominant because she dominates the viewer. She gazes at us more than we gaze at her. We are more the subject of her attention than she is of ours” (4). This may also be the main reason why we choose to surround ourselves with some works of art or photographs over others. We still enjoy figures looking directly at us and we enjoy their company even in our private spaces.

Martin Kemp explains why Mona Lisa is a timeless image in a different sense. He considers the background in the painting which has been questioned repeatedly over time by many scholars regarding the issue as to whether it is inspired by Dante’s writings or it is actually the scenery of an existing place:

The real and the imagined are bridged just as surely as the arched bridge passes over the valley behind her left shoulder. Everything in the picture is passing through the space and time that Leonardo called ‘*quantita continua*’ (continuous quantity)—acknowledging that a moment in time has no more material existence than a mathematical point. The spectator needs not invade such recondite areas of Leonardo’s thought to feel that the moment of time is both specific and universal, like everything in the picture. (164- 165)

In a nutshell, as a Renaissance painting and as a contemporary icon which survived through the ages, Mona Lisa has succeeded in drawing the viewer’s attention with its mystery. What made her an icon and kept her so was the mystery side: Viewers always wondered whether she is really smiling, whether she is a real woman, whether she is in front of a real or imaginary landscape. There is no doubt that this feeling of mystery still works in today’s cultural iconology.

During the Enlightenment art acquires a totally different form. David Roberts explains that the dialectic of the Enlightenment in relation to art can be formulated in different ways such as “the emancipation of subjectivity, which dissolves the sensuous appearance of the idea realized in classical art,” “the domination of musical nature through a progressive rationalization, which consumes itself by consuming its object,” or “the tendency to formalization” (2). Firstly, the emancipation of subjectivity is Hegel’s theory, according to him the main goal of chasing the ideal goes through a change as of the Enlightenment: The Age of Reason deals with the reasonable, the possible, and the real. The second claim, that is the rise of musical nature, is made by Theodor Adorno and it rather explains the popularity of music during the Enlightenment (30). As the Age of Reason aimed at progress through rationalization, the type of art it most dealt with was music. The main aim was to make the public enjoy classical music which was considered as a form of high art. Thirdly, there was a tendency for formalization and this eliminated content. The content in previous art forms started to be considered as excessive and it was to be reduced to make art more reasonable. Overall, the Enlightenment favoured what was reasonable over what was ideal, and it was also the main aim to create less complex forms of art one of which was classical music.

As the focus shifted to reason during the Enlightenment, so changed the center of attention for the arts. Besides the fact that the most popular art form was music in the Age of Reason, it is also worth mentioning that in painting the main aim was to inform the public just like it was in the Middle Ages. However, the information given was pure facts instead of Biblical stories. Some paintings, such as the famous Spanish painter Fransisco Goya’s “The Second of May 1808” or “The Third of May 1808,” show us that the paintings mostly aim to reflect reality as it was. In these paintings, the pictorial excellence makes it possible to reflect reality with all its brutality. When other paintings from this era are viewed, it is possible to see the descriptive quality. What is more interesting, the center of the painting may be a simple

man rather than a member of the church or aristocracy, the people the art mostly dealt with until then. Art was there to enjoy, inform, rationalize, and include the public. Although there were still religious references, they were not so dominant and obvious anymore. To sum up, as Keith Thomas puts it, “the supporters of the Enlightenment hail it was the source of everything that is progressive in the world. For them, it stands for freedom of thought, rational inquiry, critical thinking, religious tolerance, political liberty, scientific achievement, the pursuit of happiness, and hope for the future” (The New York Review of Books,2014). Doubtlessly, all these new forms made art also progressive and created a new iconology that dealt with the man in action.

It is possible to see that the term icon has started to symbolize people as well as paintings. Actually, it is not hard to see that important names are easier to recall during this era, and they are believed to better reflect the characteristics of those times. When we think about the people who represent the *Zeitgeist* of the Enlightenment, one of the first names that come to our minds would probably be German philosopher Immanuel Kant. It is not difficult to see that Kant symbolizes the Age of Reason in many different ways when compared to a single piece of painting or a statue. This way, he is the representative of Enlightenment all by himself. Katerina Deligiorgi also makes a direct connection between Kant and the culture of Enlightenment: “The term ‘culture of enlightenment’ serves to make explicit the substantive commitments that flow from Kant’s conception of public argument: the freedom to communicate one’s thoughts and the freedom to participate in public discussion” (10). In addition, Häfner claims that Immanuel Kant “who formulated the ideal of man lead by consciousness, had a peculiar personality and suffered from many somatic complaints. Nevertheless, his ritualized way of living determined by many rules and ritualized lunch seems to be a resource that enabled a great and epoch-making work despite his physical weakness” (655). It was quite surprising for me to read that Kant passed by certain places at

the exact same time every single day, for punctuality was a way of maximizing his life in a reasonable way. Häfner makes a similar explanation to that: “Kant's character was specified by his "constant pursuit for intellectually well-founded principles in every manner" - at least according to his persuasion. So his compulsive personality traits seem to be a necessary condition for his work” (657). After all, I do not think there could be a better icon of the Enlightenment than Kant, who himself wrote the essay "What Is Enlightenment?" (1784) and summed up the era's motto in the following terms: "Dare to know! Have the courage to use your own reason!"

Following the Enlightenment, the next era to study to see the change in iconology has undergone is Modernity. This is a rather complex era in comparison to the aforementioned eras since it includes a wide range of interrelated events and garbled cultural phenomena and it did not actually end, rather it continued as post-modernity. Anthony Giddens summarizes modernity in a few lines:

A shorthand term for modern society, or industrial civilization. Portrayed in more detail, it is associated with (1) a certain set of attitudes towards the world, the idea of the world as open to transformation, by human intervention; (2) a complex of economic institutions, especially industrial production and a market economy; (3) a certain range of political institutions, including the nation-state and mass democracy. Largely as a result of these characteristics, modernity is vastly more dynamic than any previous type of social order. It is a society—more technically, a complex of institutions—which, unlike any preceding culture, lives in the future, rather than the past. (94)

It is possible to see that this definition includes some key terms which were milestones of the Enlightenment as well. Similarly, Appadurai sees modernity as the natural outcome of the Enlightenment: “Whatever else the Project of Enlightenment may have created, it aspired to create persons who would, after the fact, have wished to have become modern” (1). Zygmunt Bauman explains that trying to reach the ideal continued in modernity as well: “The modern mind was after perfection- the state of perfection it hoped to reach meant in the last account an end to strain and hard work, as all further change could only be a change for the worse”

(x). Bauman supports the idea that what perfection meant for people also included bringing an end to wars. In this new and promising modern world people wished for a last war to end all wars: “the confusingly variegated world, continually thrown out of joint by clashes of difference and battles between apparently irreconcilable opposites, was to end up in peaceful, uniform, monotonous tranquility of classlessness thoroughly cleansed of conflicts and antagonisms – with the help of a (revolutionary) ‘war to end all wars’, or of (evolutionary) adaptation and assimilation” (xi).

To summarize, modernity dealt with transformation for the better through human intervention, and this meant taking many terms into consideration ranging from democracy and peace to economy and social order. However, Giddens’ term also contains a very important concept many people who supported modernity ignored until it was too late: the nation-state. In his book *Nationalist Exclusion and Ethnic Conflict: Shadows of Modernity*, Andreas Wimmer draws attention to nationalism and ethnic politics and how they are tied to modernity: “Nationalist and ethnic politics are not just a by-product of modern state formation or of industrialisation; rather, modernity itself rests on a basis of ethnic and nationalist principles” (1). Wimmer supports the idea that modern principles of inclusion are intimately tied to ethnic and national forms.

Many scholars agree on the fact that the rise of the nation-states was inevitable during the era of modernity. While politics tried to end inequality, this era will unfortunately be remembered as the era of the two world wars. And when we think about the world wars one of the first names we remember is Adolf Hitler who represented the end of this era with his character and his misleading leadership. He is also one of the first examples given while trying to explain why modernism failed. Actually, according to John Lukas “more books have been written about Hitler than any other political figures of the twentieth century” (2). Similarly, according to Robert G. L. Waite, Hitler is the second most written about historical

figure right after Jesus (xi). Besides the fact that the two previous references explain why I have chosen Hitler as an icon of modernity, I would also like to give another justification: Icons do not have to be timeless, neither do they have to do the right thing or perform miracles. What really matters for a simple man or woman to become an icon is the ability to reflect the era s/he lives in rather than being perfect or angelic.

Now that I have explained why I have chosen Hitler as an icon, I would like to describe why he is an icon of modernity. Mark Roseman summarizes how we think about Nazism and modernity as two interconnected terms even today: “A well-established narrative, in vogue in the 1960s and 1970s, of Nazism as the product of uneven development and of its exponents as searchers for a mythical past gave way to a recognition that in its roots and impulses Nazism drew on and expressed recognizable and widespread modern developments. Ever since then, the disturbing evidence of the Nazis’ contemporaneity has both reflected and influenced our thinking about modernity” (688). So, the fact that there is more myth than factual information regarding Nazism or Hitler lead people to create a rather mythical past according to some scholars and this is a matter that can be dealt with when it comes to analyze all the icons.

In fact, Peter Frizsche claims that “the Nazis were modernists because they made the acknowledgement of the radical instability of twentieth-century life the premise of relentless experimentation” (2). Hence, it is also possible to say that the Nazis represented the instability of the twentieth century and this may be one of the main reasons why historians are so interested in that era. José Brunner emphasizes the fact that besides historians psychologists and especially psychohistorians are also quite interested in the era of the Nazism: “By shedding light onto the shadows that appear as material facts, psychohistorians claim not only to be able to unmask them as such, but also to reveal the secret significance of the public deeds that Hitler committed on the stage of modern history” (167). It is interesting to

remember that his autobiographical book *Mein Kampf* is still read and it was even on the New York Times' Bestseller List in 2013: People are still curious about Hitler and this certainly makes him an icon. The fact that he is also one of the most hated historical figures signals to his despised negative iconicity. People's interest in knowing more about him may be due to their desire to understand how he could become an icon in that era and what really changed after experiencing one of the greatest disasters of humanity.

1.2.2. TODAY'S ICONS

In the following section, I intend to take a closer look into the icons of today, in other words, icons of popular culture. Having seen how the interpretation of icons has evolved, I aim to take a step further to analyze today's icons. Doubtlessly, today's icons have become much more complex, and it is challenging to study such a term since it has become rather cultural, sociological, and still remains artistic. When you use the word icon, you do not refer to an object of art anymore, and this transformation is now easier to see after surveying the brief history of icons. You may refer to many areas including sports, fashion, music, politics, religion, literature, and even video games. Today, there are icons who are famous for being rich and doing "nothing". They have millions of followers on social media, they are the most googled people, and they have the power to make millions out of this "nothing". In a world where the basic rules of communication have changed and the sender has become the receiver (and vice versa), it is not enough to solely take traditional ways of reading the process of communication into consideration anymore. We are expected to use the interdisciplinary features of social sciences and make more sense of this world which has already become too meaningful. Nadine Pence Frantz explains the necessity of instinctive reading in today's world: "Studies in perception and knowing argue that what a person 'knows' is based on what he/she has learned to see, feel, and experience in the material world. With the predominance

of the text in western culture, we learn not only to read texts but to ‘read’ the signs and symbols of the culture around us, as if they too were a text” (794). This need to read and make meaning out of every sign and symbol we are exposed to may result in chaos. Iconology may be quite useful in this context since it helps us in the process of seeing the layers of meaning. A practical usage of iconology is crucial to see interpretation, performance, and representation in culture and society.

In the introduction to *American Icons: An Encyclopaedia of the People, Places, and Things that Have Shaped Our Culture*, the usage of the term icon is said to have “mushroomed” with the growing interest in popular culture theory. In today’s world, when somebody uses the word icon s/he will probably refer to famous people who have had a groundbreaking success in differentiating themselves from others. Having asked the question “What is an icon?” to many scholars from different fields of studies, Dennis R. Hall and Susan Grove Hall reached some conclusions (xvii-xviii): Today, an icon generates strong responses; people identify with it, or against it, and the differences often reflect generational distinctions. Marilyn Monroe, for instance, carries different meanings for people who are in their teens and twenties than for people in their sixties and older. Furthermore, an icon stands for a group of related things and values. John Wayne, for example, embodies the cowboy and traditional masculinity, among many other associations, including conservative politics. An icon also has roots in historical sources, as various as folk culture, science, and commerce; it may supersede a prior icon; it reflects events or forces of its time. It is also crucial to emphasize that a contemporary icon can be reshaped within its own image, or extended in updated images by its adaptations or imitators. With the rise of mass media and social media, it has become easier to reshape, adapt, and imitate. Consequently, an icon moves or communicates widely, often showing the breakdown of former distinctions between popular culture, art, and American culture. Furthermore, an icon can be employed in a variety of

ways, and used in visual art, music, film, and other media. Representations of an icon today are much varied and easily accessed. Last but not the least, an icon is usually successful in commerce. Every advertising campaign, every corporation, hopes to become the next Mickey Mouse, the next Las Vegas, the next Golden Arches.

This list seems to include a full definition of what an icon is to people today. In this explanation, it is of great importance to emphasize some characteristics of today's icons such as the inevitable identification of people with them. We may not want to do so, or we may do it unconsciously but today nearly everybody identifies with somebody famous. It is possible to call this fandom, having an idol or taking somebody as an example; however, the meaning would be the same: You identify with a certain person for the things and values s/he stands for. S/he means something to you and this meaning may have a part that is unique to you due to the values, historical background, or even the physical features you have. What is even more interesting here, you may even be unaware of the reason why you identify with him and still see him as your idol.

In this section, after an analysis of the alteration of the term icon with a focus on Panofsky's iconology theory, I tried to link icons to contemporary culture after a brief study of icons throughout history. It is significant to see that icons have always been representative, ideological, and powerful: They represent the *Zeitgeist* of the era they belong to, they stand for a certain ideology, and can therefore be negative. They are always powerful since they reflect a feeling of strength, ability, and potency. In the list of the popular culture icons, mentioning historical sources is also worth emphasis. This also complies with Panofsky's first stage of interpretation. Furthermore, all these features mentioned in the list are connected to Panofsky's scheme despite the fact that art history and pop culture are two fields that are considered different branches of social sciences today. It would be quite interesting to see that pop culture icons can also be studied according to the characteristics of iconology studies

presented by Panofsky. They can be analyzed just like a painting that was once a source of information and admiration.

What is important at this stage is to underline that icons are alive and they are much more open to interpretation. That is why we need such a scheme as Panofsky's: there is a certain need to fit icons into a scheme, a table of analysis through which we can make "unforeseeable and inexplicable" icons rather more understandable. To conclude, some people have succeeded in becoming icons and they await to be analysed as in-depth as works of art. They did, they have and they will change the way we see the world and this study focuses on looking for ways to find out how they do that. In the next part, I aim to analyze female identity and female icons throughout history with a focus on iconic features of important female figures using the same timeline.

2.WOMEN AND IDENTITY

“One is not born a woman, but rather becomes a woman.”

Simone de Beauvoir

(The Second Sex, 1973)

Simone de Beauvoir introduces this statement in the second part of her masterpiece, *The Second Sex*. This quote summarizes the making of a woman in a very effective and incredibly brief way: Being a woman does not stem from biology, psychology, character or intellect. It is a socially and culturally constructed identity; it is rather the certain roles of gender roles attributed to females and imposed by (white) men. Fox-Genovese draws attention to this vicious cycle of a manly constructed world: “It is now at least acknowledged that while men were performing the feats, building the institutions, producing the goods and cultures, ruling the peoples, and generally busying themselves with those activities we are wont to call history, women were invariably doing something – if only bearing more men to make more history and more women to permit them to do so” (6). Fox-Genovese here criticizes both men and women since women seem to be helping men with the suppression of women. They may make, change, and dictate history but the very pacifistic role of women here is also to be discussed since going back to de Beauvoir’s quote, one is not born a woman, she is gradually turned into a woman by society. In this chapter, I intend to analyse female identity from different angles such as their representation and self-representation. Such an analysis is to help me to ask key questions in the research part of my study (third chapter). I would like to analyze how women have been represented throughout history. My main aim is not to make great discoveries regarding female identity and gender roles. I rather expect to come up with

additional iconistic features through female representations, and focus on important female figures that reflected the *Zeitgeist* of the era they lived in. Then, I will update the features icons are supposed to have since I intend to take a look at the icons I have selected for further analysis and compare them according to Panofsky's scheme later on.

Needless to say, being a woman means having a certain identity. How is this identity formed? Why do we talk about sex instead of gender today? According to Judith Butler, gender is an unnatural construct:

The distinction between sex and gender has been crucial to the long-standing feminist effort to debunk the claim that anatomy is destiny; sex is understood to be the invariant, anatomically distinct, and factic aspects of the female body, whereas gender is the cultural, meaning and form that that body acquires, the variable modes of that body's acculturation. With the distinction intact, it is no longer possible to attribute the values or social functions of women to biological necessity, and neither can we refer meaningfully to natural or unnatural gendered behaviour: all gender is, by definition, unnatural. (35)

As seen in the quote above, gender is totally unnatural. It is constructed. It has been gradually formulated throughout history which means that we have certain roles, ideas, values, and beliefs today because we have been loaded with them for centuries. Everything that is attributed to women should be under the term "gender" and not "sex"; gender is the issue we have been discussing in different fields of social sciences and it has become an interdisciplinary matter, analyzed within many different theories such as sociology, psychology, history, and linguistics. Sue Ellen-Case mentions the representation of women and defines what being a woman really is with an emphasis on the cultural side of female identity: "Woman – a cultural myth made to stand in for women's experiences, catalyses both the past and future – the beginning and the end of representation" (106). She also calls gender codes "time codes complicit with the structuring of the desire and the dream into partitioned, policed zones" (106). Hence, when we talk about the female identity, it is highly important to consider the past and the future. The present will decide the future of female identity just like

the past decided the present. We are expected to have a look at the time codes of female identity since they will provide us with the social and cultural angles we need in order to be able to understand the representation and finally iconology of women. In this study, I will have a very brief look at the female side of the history, that is what women were doing meanwhile men founded the world as Fox-Genovese put it. Since this is a totally different study that would require years of research, I have thought it would be better to follow the timeline I have used in the brief history of icons: Classical Antiquity, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment, Modernity and Post-modernity. This brief examination will definitely present the time codes that make women act in a certain way.

Starting with Classical Antiquity, it is noteworthy to see that some female roles were similar to contemporary ones. Sue Blundell claims that “Greek sources have something to tell us about the reality of women’s lives during a significant period in Europe’s past” (10). Since this civilization shaped every area of our lives, female identity is no exception. Blundell also emphasizes the fact that the women of Ancient Greece are to be encountered only in asides, inferences, or vague generalisations. She also makes a significant statement that we need to take into consideration throughout this study: “If we are to avoid the danger of seeing women as an undifferentiated group, we need constantly to remind ourselves that their lives were subject to considerable social and economic variation” (10). However, in the final parts of her book, Blundell refers to women in Ancient Greek as a “muted group”. Likewise, Fantham *et al.* mention that the lives and concerns of women have never been the central area of investigation in classical works. They also underline the great difference between the ideals of a man’s and woman’s life: “Ideally, every man in the Classical period spent his life aiming to establish a permanent honourable reputation for himself and his city. But his relatively secluded wife avoided a public reputation and turned her energies above all to familial concerns, to producing children and caring for her household” (7). Even a brief look into

Classical times could make us see how today's female identity bears similarities with old times' burdens. On the other hand, Cohen refers to "a considerable body of evidence [that] indicates that Athenian women participated in a wide range of activities which regularly took them out of their houses" (7-8). These included working in the fields, selling goods in the market, acting as nurses or midwives and many other economic practices. Similarly, Roger Brock refers to a passage by Demosthenes where a female character says that "they agree that they sell ribbons and that they do not live as they prefer" (336): "Let none of you interpret it unfavourably, men of Athens; for indeed, you will find that many citizen women work as nurses..." (Demosthenes, 51, 31-35). This passage may be considered as proof of the fact that women were not totally secluded in Ancient Greece as many scholars claim. It is also relevant that the female characters refer to women who work as nurses as "citizen women" since a citizen in Ancient Greek has certain rights. However, it still shows that women were not included in decision-making phases such as voting or in free democracy. In other words, women were not really citizens.

Consequently, the fact that women were socially regarded as inferior may have stemmed from the fact that women were also considered inferior legally. John Gould evaluates the legal status of women in Ancient Greece by directly referring to the laws: "The juridical status of women in Athens is beautifully indicated by the single entry under 'women' in the index to *Harrison's Law of Athens* I: it reads simply 'women, disabilities.' A woman, whatever her status as daughter, sister, wife or mother, and whatever her age or social class, is in law a perpetual minor: that is, like a male minor, but throughout her life she was in the legal control of a male *kyrios* who represented her in law" (43). Because women were not 'able' to do certain things apart from daily chores such as housework, she needed a male representative. The fact that women were in need of a male representative surely affected women's status as owners of goods, for they simply could not own anything. Marilyn Katz

draws attention to the fact that men were superior to women according to the laws accepted by men: “To the man belongs the right of rule, derived from the fact of his physical and intellectual superiority, and to the woman, on account of her sense for order and beauty, as well as her capacity for detail, belongs both the authority and duty to execute the laws set down by the man” (75).

To conclude, it is intriguing and at the same time disheartening to see that women have been expected to be muted and care for her family since antiquity. A woman does not need to have any interest in honourable reputation and in gaining this reputation by herself since her family, her husband actually, is the first (and probably the only) source of reputation for her. Ruth Padel links this consequence to the so-called questionable nature of woman: “Such patterns of male fantasies about women, and of male strategies for controlling women in social life and cult, can be attributed to fifth century BC Athenians” (3). According to Padel, behind these patterns there is a sense that women contain an inner space and inner darkness (a concept that is closely related to the term of *daemon* in Greek culture) and this “interacts with, provides a model for the traditional popular thinking about that inner space belonging to all normal, i.e. male, human beings in which the Greeks located the organs of what we call the mind” (3). It is again quite fascinating to see that women have been considered this way since the very early stages of history. They are supposed to harbor a certain darkness that makes them behave in a questionable way and that is the main reason why they are much better off in their inner circle, that is, their family. Women are supposed to stay within their limited environment due to the fact that they lack basic needs and, what is more, they cannot be trusted. Doubtlessly, the presence of this darkness will feed the theory of the existence of witches in the next era. Sarah Pomeroy explains why it is important to study women during Classical Antiquity: “The story of women of antiquity should be told now, not only because it is a legitimate aspect of social history, but because the past illuminates contemporary

problems in relationships between men and women” (xvii). Therefore, it is possible to see that some of the problems women encounter and consider as contemporary problems have their source in antiquity. Pomeroy also draws attention to the fact that throughout history women can only be studied from a certain point of view since the story told most of the time is the story of women that belong to the ruling class. However, while researching on women in antiquity, I was careful about finding more about women that came from different social classes and it all comes to the fact that women were expected to stay in and take care of their family ignoring the world and what was going on outside their homes or their inner circles. They were simply not to interfere with what was seen as “a man’s business.”

In order to provide a more complex picture of women and female identity in antiquity, I will look into women’s representation in popular arts, such as theatre and pottery. John Gould explains why women seemed to be present in artistic representations and why they were not that present at all:

...in the imaginative literature of classical Athens we have what seems to be a highly articulate and prominent, not marginal, presentation of women, and their role in society: in this world, it seems, women 'speak' and share the centre of attention with men. But this is a mirage: we can have no direct access to the model of Athenian society to which women subscribed, even as it might have been expressed in the dominant language of men. For the evidence available to us is almost without exception the product of men and addressed to men in a male dominated world. (38)

It is possible to say that considering the fact that many authors from Ancient Greece whose work survived today and whose plays are still staged all over the world are mainly males and their female characters are nothing but mere representations of the male mentality. It is no wonder that men have had a tendency to think that women were not in a position to suffer any problems from the early stages of history. Hence, it is not possible to see female characters who talk about how much they need freedom in these plays. Besides, Gould draws attention to the fact that even in these plays there were phrases that cherished men’s power on women. For

example, in Sophocles' *Electra* one of the main characters, Clytemnestra, mentions Electra's "wandering untethered" in public view and "bringing shame on her philoi-royal friend" by the absence of Aegisthus' male control. In another example, Aeschylus' Eteocles orders the women of the chorus in *Seven* to return home with the words: "It is the concern of men-no place for women's schemes what lies outside: you stay within and cause no hurt" (40- Gould, 117). David Cohen gives even more extreme examples from Ancient Greek masterpieces: "Euripides, in *Medea*, *Trojan Women*, *Bacchae*, and other plays, repeatedly juxtaposes these conflicting positions. In *Melanippe* one character exclaims, 'The worst plague is the hated race of women'; 'Except for my mother I hate the whole female sex' (Frag. 496,500). In the same play, a woman responds: 'Women manage homes and preserve the goods which are brought from abroad'" (4). The phrases that emphasize woman's place within the house are also analyzed by Arnold Wycombe Gomme: "There are numerous passages, numerous quoted, in Attic tragedies and comedies, expressive of the general sentiment, 'a woman's sphere is the home' or 'a good wife obeys her husband' (not a sentiment, by the way, very foreign to our own or any other time); others again of the type 'a wife is a necessary evil'" (8). In conclusion, it is possible to say that the way women were considered socially and legally was equally reflected in the plays of Ancient Greece. Women were one of the sources that gave men honour and that is why they were expected to act accordingly, they could do as much housework as they wanted, like fetching water, but they could not interfere with men's business like fighting during wars or governing. The roles women are attributed are also reflected on another artistic field that was quite important in Ancient Greek culture: vases. Many studies on Ancient Greece use the data collected by interpreting Greek vases since they contained a lot of information regarding the daily life of Ancient Greeks. Gould briefly summarizes women's daily life reflected on Attic vases: "On Attic vases, women are characteristically seen indoors and in the company of other women. Outside the house they

are shown fetching water and taking part in religious rituals, or in the doorway saying farewell to men leaving the house” (48). Apart from the daily chores, it is also important to mention the scenes where women cried or basically suffered. These scenes offer other reliable proofs showing that women were never included in issues that legally, religiously, or socially mattered.

Anybody who is interested in mythology would think of Greek gods and goddesses and their rather equal world, where goddesses were nearly as active and powerful as gods. I would like to draw attention to this matter since in the previous chapter I referred to the statues of Greek gods and goddesses as iconic. However, when it comes to the representation of a simple woman, we cannot say that Greek gods and goddesses reflected the reality of Greek men and women. Gould mentions that “the imagery of Greek religion shows that gods may be seen not as super-humans but as bestial; as ‘natural,’ not ‘cultural’ powers; wild, not tamed. Divinity too is, potentially at least, anomalous: the divine powers are and are not part of the structure of social relationships” (58). In spite of the fact that Greek god and goddesses are famous for being human-like both in appearance and behaviour, when it came to the structure of relationships they were quite different from the actual society. Social relations were not an extension of what happened among Greek gods and goddesses. The social order was unfortunately different. It was all regulated relying on the norms and categories created by the (male) social order. To conclude, it can be said that Ancient Greek is one of the ancient cultures which contributed to the history of the gendered individual. Besides the notion of democracy which is widely emphasized in political studies, humanity also owes another concept that has survived until today: the concept of gender and the expectation of woman to act “as a woman”.

During the Middle Ages, the situation of women in the social order was unfortunately no different. Kate Millett summarizes women in Medieval times in the following terms:

“Based on the needs and values of the dominant group and dictated by what its members cherish in themselves and find convenient in subordinates: aggression, intelligence, force, and efficacy in the male; passivity, ignorance, docility, ‘virtue’, and ineffectuality in the female” (26). As one can see, the words attributed to women are no different from the words we found in antiquity if not harsher. Women in the Middle Ages may have been more oppressed because religion was more dominant and even oppressive. To make it clear, Smith makes a comparison starting with what did not change in Medieval times in terms of women: “Four fundamental aspects of women’s lives remained unaltered: their relative historical invisibility in the sources; the constancy of marriage and motherhood as the central facts of almost all women’s lives; their place in a gender hierarchy predicated upon male superiority and the explicit weakness of the female sex; and their vulnerability to violence and/or exploitation” (566). On top of these matters that created an obvious inequality, religion served as an additional burden. According to Daniel Bornstein, religion affected the life of women in different ways: “It seems often to have been the women of the household who took the lead in domestic devotions and charitable activities, who read pious vernacular literature, cherished and adorned religious figurines, and raised their children with proper reverence for church and clergy” (4). As seen here, religion was at the center of a woman’s life affecting the female character heavily, as well as the construction of role models for women. Authors of spiritual tracts advised women on everything from how to pray to how to dress” (5). Similarly, Ulrike Wiethaus also agrees with the fact that role models presented for women oriented female identity towards religion: “Embodiment as a form of religious self-expression already existed as a stereotyped role model for religious women. As in the case of women mystics of the Middle Ages in general, gender and the resulting lack of access to theological training excluded women from the world of Latin-speaking literati and rational discourse” (172). Being religious was not an option for Medieval women, it was the only way of existing. They

could not choose to be religious and be devoted to the church, they simply had to do so because they were believed to have that devotion inherently. Apart from all the features, women were supposed to have in antiquity, now they were added a new one: the burdens of religion.

With the rise of the concept of woman as saint, there came the opposite concept to exclude some women: witchery. This may be related to the concept that women had an inner darkness inherent in themselves: In Medieval times, women were seen either as saints or witches. Behringer explains how some women started to be considered as witches: “The work of Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century was instrumental in developing the new theology which would give rise to the witch hunts” (36). However, the fact that women could have healing power could only be explained in a very practical way: women were excluded from having education which also meant that they could not serve as doctors. Minkowski explains how exclusion of women from education led to the rise of women healers: “

Because they were excluded from academic institutions, female healers of the Middle Ages had little opportunity to contribute to the science of medicine. Rather, they served as herbalists, midwives, surgeons, barber-surgeons, nurses, and empirics, the traditional healers. As women of lower or higher birth, as nuns in convents or members of secular orders, these healers were notable for their devotion to the sick under the most stressful circumstances. Untutored in medicine, they used therapies based on botanicals, traditional home remedies, purges, bloodletting, and native intelligence. (288)

In their medications they used many different ingredients such as plant materials, some superstition, and inevitably a dash of charlatanism as they did not have the chance to study the field academically. In the last four centuries of the Middle Ages, female healers became the target of witch-hunting, a program of ruthless persecution that was encouraged by the church and supported by both clerical and civil authorities. During the Middle Ages, there have been many changes in the way the Church categorized and presented so-called witches. Sometimes witch hunting was prohibited saying that witches simply did not exist; sometimes

it was allowed since witches were believed to be the main cause of many disasters. However, this does not change the fact that many women were victims of prejudice. “Thousands of predominantly peasant women – alleged to be in league with the Devil – were tortured and executed, many of them falsely charged and convicted on the basis of coerced confessions. So satanic were the instruments of torture used that arrested women, contemplating what lay ahead, often chose suicide” (Smith, 294). The European campaign of repression against witchery was quite active from 1230 to 1430. Furthermore, it reached its peak during the 15th to 17th centuries.

Just like in witch hunts, men were at the center in all the other areas of Medieval life. In his chapter called “Including Women” Klapisch-Zuber refers to male dominance: “Growth and decline, progression and regression, flourishing and decadence, are key terms in medieval social and economic history. In assessing such developments, historians generally have focused on the most prominent figures in the economic, political, and cultural arenas. These figures are of course male, because men enjoyed the legal autonomy and right to speak publicly that were either denied to women or granted only grudgingly” (5). When it comes to legal rights about inheritance, women were granted some rights although grudgingly. Jo Ann McNamara explains how women did not have to be represented by a male legally and could enjoy an inheritance of her own: “Relying on legal texts ornamented with anecdotal evidence, we were able to demonstrate a convergence of marriage settlements, inheritances, and gifts that enabled some women to accumulate wealth from both natal and conjugal families and enjoy it without legal hindrance... We saw an evolution in women’s ability to inherit and control property and the Powers of jurisdiction and patronage that went with it” (20). To be able to control property must have given women a sense of freedom they had not experienced before. Furthermore, the women who could own property gained some status in society. However, this position could never lead to our understanding of equality today. According to

Wemple, “a woman’s position was determined by her wealth, the status of her relatives, and the might of her sons. Childbearing was subordinated to being her husband’s helpmate. She was in charge of the household, the poor, and the Church. Her political power was to acquire enough property to make donations to the Church and establish religious houses to which she might retire in case of widowhood” (186). Hence, it is possible to say that no matter how much power women had, the areas in which she could use this power were still limited. She could not become an authority. Even as queens, very few exceptions would enjoy ruling.

Power and Postan believe that the burdens of the Middle Ages continue to affect contemporary women since the limitations imposed on women are maintained: This manifestation of women’s position “bequeathed as a legacy to future generations and enshrined alike in law and literature, was destined to have profound social effects for centuries to follow, long after the forces behind it had ceased to be important and when the conditions which had accounted for it no longer existed” (1). Hence, it would be accurate to say that even if religion has a rather vague effect on our lives today its effects continue to heavily determine the lives of women: religion has left its legacy to us either through collective memory or culture. The belief that women are inferior to men not in terms of physical power but in terms of God’s words is still persuasive for many people. Today, men still overrule women by showing them religious proof of their beliefs, since it seems to need less explanation this way.

Here, I would like to take a moment since it may be seen as pointless to try to mention an era that lasted for centuries in a few pages. It could be significant to underline the fact that when we talk about history, we usually refer to the dominant culture of time: in Medieval times it was mostly the European culture that we know about today. However, Bardsley draws attention to the understanding of social class and its effect on women in the Middle Ages from a more universal point of view: “Whether Jewish, Islamic, Christian, noble, peasant, single,

married, widowed, old, or young, women were regarded as inferior to men of the same category. A noble woman could trump a peasant man in terms of social power, but medieval society understood that she was almost certainly subject to a man who occupied the same social status as she did” (3). This shows us that women were always considered inferior, because even when they were noble they could be seen inferior compared to men of the same status just like they were in ancient Greek.

Having mentioned what it was like to be a woman in Medieval times, now I would like to take a look at the representation of women briefly. According to Chiara Furrogni, the representation of women was mostly inspired by religious texts. Women were either temptresses carried off by devils or they took Mary as model and became exemplary (346). This theory is in line with the Medieval conceptualization of women as saints or witches. There were many religious texts that mentioned women who suffered and in the end they became saints. Women were simply told to suffer or bear with the suffering since they would be rewarded in Heaven. In the meantime, they had to stay out of sexuality. Chastity was a concept that was emphasized in everyday life and in the artistic representations of women. Smith explains how it was used as a support for male authority: “Christian authors emphasised the ideal of virginity or, failing that, chastity within marriage, and also made a wife’s sexual conduct into a powerful metaphor for defining male secular and religious authority” (559). In a bigger picture, it is possible to see that chastity was connected to securing men’s superiority. It meant less contact with the males that were not from the family circle and it led to staying in, not interfering with men’s business, which gradually turned the world into a man’s world.

What also supported men’s authority and superiority was the belief that women were too unpredictable to be given responsibility: “Emotionally unstable, moody, subject to emotional outbursts, unpredictable, cause of social upheaval: this was a common view of

medieval woman. Medical, philosophical, and theological traditions conspired to create this portrait of the weaker, more emotional sex” (1). Lisa Perfetti draws attention to the accepted belief that women were the weaker ones because of their emotions was supported by science and religion. Both areas were traditionally dominated by men, since women did not have the chance to get educated or have any word in the governing part of the Church. Perfetti also emphasizes the fact that “this portrait of the weak and emotional sex is so familiar to us that we have come to take it for granted” (1). As women of the millennium, it is still acceptable for us to be seen as the weaker sex since we are considered to be ruled by emotions rather than reason. Terms such as emotions, sixth-sense, emotional intelligence are very crucial when it comes to talk about the key characteristics that make a good leader, but unfortunately, these are also the same features that make women less responsible and less worthy of authority.

Unfortunately, women artists are very hard to find in Medieval times. It is hard to believe that women never created any work of art, but the articles and records that mention women artists in Middle Ages are much fewer in comparison to male artists. One of the most popular arts of the Middle Ages was copying religious texts. Carolyne Larrington mentions two Gutas who paint a rather promising picture regarding women in Medieval art: “In the convents some nuns both copied and illuminated their work. The Codex Sintram-Guta, now kept in Strasbourg, is dated at 1154 and is the result of a collaboration between the priest Sintram and a nun Guta. The portrait of a quite different nun, also named Guta, appears in a manuscript from the later twelfth century, inside an initial D, with the motto ‘Guta peccatrix mulier scripsit et pinxit hoc librum (Guta, sinful woman, wrote and painted this book)’” (153). No surprise as to why Guta was sinful: She had simply gone out of the circle men had imprisoned women in.

Although a few, there were also other women who refused to stay within the limits men had decided, and they did it in a very elegant way. While mentioning the Medieval

masterpieces that successfully included female representations of the era, it would be impossible not to mention *The Book of the City of Ladies* by Christine De Pizan. Written in the 14th century, the book is an allegory which tells about a city of ladies: The ladies in the city are all worth mention, and as the author explains them one by one, she also defends her theory that women are not appreciated enough in the society. Actually, the main theme of the book can be summarized as follows: “The man or the woman in whom resides greater virtue is the higher; neither the loftiness nor the lowliness of a person lies in the body according to the sex, but in the perfection of conduct and virtues” (24). In a nutshell, Christine de Pizan creates an allegorical and rather utopian city full of ladies who are worth attention and who should be celebrated since they stand as examples for women. It is also surprising that de Pizan mentions many women ranging from pagans to Ancient Greeks, Jewish, and medieval Christian saints. In the meantime, many issues such as the education of women, the reasons why men look down on women, or women’s talent for ruling are brought up. The writing style of the book is also thought-provoking, since de Pizan interacts with three virtues throughout the book that are represented in the form of narrators as well: These virtues are Reason, Rectitude, and Justice. Each of these virtues narrates a section that mentions exemplary women. Doubtlessly, the book is a ground-breaking masterpiece since it is a perfect allegory to stand up against the male world: It is a city and a world of ladies (women who are worthy) and it is written with reason, rectitude, and justice. All in all, Christine de Pizan criticizes men for seeing women as inferior: “Judging from the treatises of all philosophers and poets and from all the orators – it would take too long to mention their names- it seems that they all speak from one and the same mouth. They all concur in one conclusion: that the behaviour of women is inclined to and full of every vice” (4). It is sad yet very wise of the author to use the idea of creating a brand new city for women which is devoid of male authority. In fact, it seems to be the only way to be able to explain why women need a better treatment. Christine

de Pizan seems to have understood that the only possible solution to defend women against men is turning men into mere readers and excluding men from becoming protagonists in this imaginary city of ladies.

After this survey of Classical and Medieval times, I would now like to take a look into the women of the Renaissance. It was an era that caused dramatic changes in many areas, and female identity was no exception. However, this change was especially present in the representation of women. When it came to the way women were considered and treated, there still continued to exist a lot of issues of concern. Margaret L. King mentions that different forms of power were imposed by men over women: “The moral power exercised by men over women was matched by real power, as has been seen: legal, social, sexual, physical. These powers in turn correlated to men’s power over women’s property” (48). This means women could own property but they still could not control it. That is why marriage was still an issue for women in Renaissance; who they would marry was still to be decided by males since women’s property was doubtlessly a male concern.

It is striking to see that compared to Medieval studies that mostly mention the relationship between women and religion, Renaissance studies emphasize the relationship between women and marriage. Additionally, the issue of property seems to have affected Renaissance society and, more importantly, men’s consideration of women as well. From then on, female identity was not only religious but also economic. Besides the high culture and cultural awareness Renaissance brought to society, women were still considered inferior and devoid of all political rights; they were subject to their husbands. Women were also excluded from inheritance, an issue Klapisch- Zuber brings up in her studies: “Shunted between two lineages – her father’s and her husband’s – a woman was not a full member of either. She had an excellent chance of spending her life under several roofs, as her successive marriages dictated, and of never seeing her identity fixed in a definitive name” (285). It is really sad for

women to be considered as an object which could be traded for better economic conditions. This especially happened among the wealthy. Even princesses were seen as possible opportunities to make new bonds between empires. Women were expected to marry and if they become widows it was again an issue. “Young widows were persuaded to remarry to form new dynastic alliances for the men controlling their natal families” (King 76). These young widows were surely a good symbol of female identity stuck among males: “They were either women who were so rich that their father or brothers wanted to inherit from them, or they were mothers of young male children who had been entrusted to bring them to maturity safely for their husband’s family” (76). On the other hand, a young widow who did not have any children would be sent to her father’s house and forced to live with her family. She would probably not be in control of her possessions. Elaine G. Rosenthal summarizes the Renaissance for women as “neither autonomy nor subjection” (370). This is quite an eloquent way to reflect the limbo women lived during the Renaissance. There was a wide-spread interest in education among women and it led to the rise of legal issues; now women were quite aware of the fact that although they were given so-called rights for property, they could never control it. Since women were considered lacking in reason, they could only have property to transfer it from her father’s hands to her husband’s hands. The education and knowledge a woman could acquire was only for her use and not the society’s. However, this did not stop women from having the awareness they needed to become more active in the next era. In other words, they had to wait in this limbo until they could have more freedom.

One of the main issues that made women more aware of their situation was certainly education. Tebeaux and Mary question women’s lives at the time of Renaissance and conclude that even the reason why women started to be educated was the fact that women represented the men they were attached to: “Because women were viewed as helpmates, they received education designed to prepare them for that role. Instruction in reading prepared women to

read the Bible, to interpret its message, and then to summarize major truths for children and servants. Other education prepared women for their domestic roles” (59). Hence, it would not be wrong to say that women received an education that included rules made mostly by men according to a male-ruled world so that they would be more useful to their husbands and families. Janet Levarie Smarr also mentions how women were expected to have an education: “Even in the fourteenth century Francesco da Barberino’s *Reggimento e costumi di donna*, acknowledging

the need of noblewomen for literacy, urged parents to hire a female teacher for their daughters in order to avoid suspicion or danger” (103). The main reason for such an education was to be able to engage in the honorable and useful pastime of intellectual conversation, whether in their own homes or at more public gatherings. A good woman who could hold conversations and show her high level of intellectuality was an honour to her family. Apart from that, nobody expected them to produce any knowledge or comment on the current situation trying to make it better. Actually, culture through education firstly aimed at charm. This major goal came before even self-development according to Joan Kelly-Gadol: “Culture is an accomplishment for noblewoman and man alike, used to charm others as much as to develop the self. But for the woman, charm had become the primary occupation and aim” (146). In an era when cultural developments led to a rebirth, a renaissance, women were expected to take their part in these improvements because they were to charm people as representatives of male authorities they were attached to. In her article titled “Did Woman Have a Renaissance?”, Kelly-Gadol questions how and why women were left aside during the Renaissance and claims that Renaissance was a male product. Furthermore, although some concepts such as love and manners seemed to be brand new, they remained the same in terms of putting male authority in the center:

Renaissance ideas on love and manners, more classical than medieval, and almost exclusively a male product, expressed this new subordination of women to the interests of husbands and

male-dominated kin groups and served to justify the removal of women from an "unladylike" position of power and erotic independence. All the advances of Renaissance Italy, its pro-capitalist economy, its states, and its humanistic culture, worked to mold the noblewoman into an aesthetic object decorous, chaste, and doubly dependent—on her husband as well as the prince. (162)

As seen in this quote, the key to Renaissance values was the subordination of women. Hence, the fact that education of women triggered their need to be free and more visible does not change the real reason why there were educated in the first place. Tebeaux and Mary second this opinion with reference to previous and current studies on Renaissance culture: “While previous studies of Renaissance culture and Renaissance women's reading have shown that women led active lives in business, government, and estate management and that English women enjoyed widespread freedom in their lifestyles, the diminished role assigned women was a powerful force that throttled much written expression until the English Civil wars in the middle years of the seventeenth century” (59). They claim that although some studies show that women were able to have rather more active lives, it is also possible to consider that their role diminished compared to previous eras, and this is one of the reasons why they tried to express themselves in written form. In brief, we could say that as women became more educated, they searched for different ways of self representation.

According to Constance Jordan, literature regarding women in the Renaissance is better to be considered as consisting of two different parts: “The first is motivated by the claims of society and the state against those of the church, and insists on the familial as against celibate life. The second – overtly feminist- is devoted to securing for women a status equal to men” (11). Some examples of the first category which can be considered as proofs to the insufficient or incorrect representation of women are provided by Kate Aughterson. Firstly, she draws attention to the fact that “both theological versions of woman’s creation (from the man) and of the Fall (Eve’s fault) and physiological accounts of her bodily weaknesses are used to justify her political impotence” (132). And here it is also important to

mention that iconic scenes that were depicted over and over in the Renaissance were also about these theological stories. From love poems to paintings, there can be found many implications of women's inferiority in Renaissance art. Furthermore, there is also the law. Although the law differed from country to country, the fact that it favoured men over women could be considered as global. For instance, according to the anonymous legal's clerk formulation in the *Law's Resolution of Women Rights* (pp.152-7), women had neither public access to political power nor rights in England:

Women have no voice in parliament. They make no laws, consent to none, and they abrogate none. All of them are understood either married or to be married, and their desires are subject to their husband: I know no remedy, though some women can shift it well enough. The common law here shaketh hand with divinity. (132-133)

Aughterson's quote regarding the law shows us that women were expected to accept being inferior and subject to male authority also in legal. That is to say, common law was in line with divine law and women could do nothing but accept reality, a male reality created by and for male authority. Aughterson also mentions another quote by Juan Luis Vives, the author of *The Education of a Christian Woman*. In the book he wrote for the education of the future Mary I of England, he tried to summarize what women and men represented in marriage saying "For in wedlock the man resembleth the reason, and the woman the body" (71). This quote doubtlessly reflects what male authority thinks of marriage at the time of Renaissance. Man is reason, he is expected to think and rule whereas woman is body and she is expected to obey. This may well be one of the male expectations that survived until today.

When it comes to the second category of female literature, it is important to underline that the writers who wrote in favour of women were mostly women authors. While studying the books written for women by women, Tebeaux and Mary have seen that these books had some common points (55). Firstly, the female authors were mostly coming from the privileged classes but these women could not help reflecting self-doubt and self-deprecation. They had a

sense of insecurity that could be caused by spiritual, social, and emotional reasons. Then, there was also reference to traditional values such as chastity and humility and mentioning these values was almost a calculated choice in content and phrasing which reflected these women authors' adherence to women's traditional roles and place. Apart from these references to traditional values, there was also a subtle and developing affirmation of the value of women's distinctive perspective and a natural tension in the handling of ideas resulting from their growing awareness of their lower status in relation to men. The importance of writing for Renaissance women is also emphasized by Garr: "Writing is a way to capture the kind of exchange and influence possible for women in live social situations within a private home and to offer such exchange and influence to a wider audience, whose members are expected to confirm the rightness of their case" (129). As of 1640, women could have more freedom of expression regarding their views on many issues ranging from church, state, or government to their own roles, status, and even religion. They did not have to embrace that subtle style of mentioning their liberal ideas while explaining their loyalty to traditional values. They could be more open and direct and this is a development which would give way to more women writers who could say what was on their mind more directly.

Following the Renaissance, the Age of Reason was also interested in improvement, intellectual development and making the world a better place through knowledge, reason, and science. Karen O'Brien explains this cultural shift and how it affected women: "The rediscovery of the progress of society entailed a re-evaluation of history, not simply as a series of political events and military conflicts but as a civilising process. This re-evaluation brought with it, for the first time, the idea that women, as well as men, have a history and that, far from being intelligible in terms of unchanging biological, scriptural or domestic roles, they too can change with changing times" (1). However, feminine change for the better was a new concept that concerned women only. Men may have given women a chance through giving

them rights and slightly more freedom in previous eras, but during the Age of Reason, they did not help women raise their voice. Actually, many scholars claim that the Enlightenment did not bring a lot of change to women's lives. Especially for rural women, life remained the same. And when it comes to women in the cities, that is, upper and middle-class women, they even lost some of their legal rights in certain countries simply because men were given more rights. Women were also left out when considering the rising star of the era: sciences. Women could get an education in areas that would make better women out of them but they were expected to stay away from sciences. In the meantime, women were busy trying to find a way to be accepted and included in social life. Suellen Diaconoff explains why the Enlightenment was so challenging for women: "The challenge for intellectual women in the eighteenth-century was to find a means of accommodating both the abstract Cartesian split between mind and body (the mind has no sex) together with the real fact of their exclusion from universalist discourse, and the Enlightenment ideal of equality" (5). In other words, what women tried to achieve was to promote a view of woman as emphasizing that it was crucial to consider both mind *and* body, both intellect *and* sexuality.

Wolf Werner emphasizes that the era of Enlightenment, especially eighteenth-century cultural history, can be characterized by a noteworthy feminization: "In most cases this fact has been established with regard to general trends in cultural and social history or with reference to the rise of a female reading and writing culture and 'feminocentric' novels by female authors" (126). This feminization may have led to the birth of feminism since this meant that women's position as producers of literature would eventually cause a change in consideration of authority and male power which would improve the position of women. Diaconoff mentions how women's reading had a deep impact in culture that changed the lives of people of the Enlightenment eventually: "For not only did the eighteenth century see a dramatic rise in female rates of literacy, and a radical change in the way women were

encouraged to regard their reading, but women's reading was also to carry emancipatory consequences and impact the social contract, both by enlarging the nation's literate class and posing a possibly unintended challenge to masculine hegemony in matters of cultural authority" (205). Hence, although the challenge may be considered as unintended as men encouraged women to read more probably thinking that women would be better women in terms of motherhood and subordination, women made the challenging discovery of their voices. It is crucial to consider that as of Enlightenment, women had more of a voice since they themselves became writers and editors, in other words, both producers and consumers of literature. Diaconoff summarizes what this meant for women: "Women's consumption of print culture would lead to the spectacular expansion and diversification of their own written production and, on the other, the extension of an increasingly sophisticated female reading public" (18). Women could also write about many topics varying from marriage, maternity, home life, sickness, and health (values that male authority directly attributed to ladies) to female desires, adultery, psychological oppression, sexual violence, rape (topics that male authority just ignored and preferred to keep silenced about). Even the themes of novels changed. One of the most striking female authors of the era was Mary Wollstonecraft who was also an advocate of women's rights. With her inspirational ideas that women could only be seen as inferior to men because of lack of education, she was one of the early feminists whose work is still valuable today. Porter Roy discusses how Wollstonecraft criticized traditional and widely accepted female values: "In her first book, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787), Mary Wollstonecraft gloried in woman as nurse of the rising generation, expressing her profound contempt for whimpering, simpering, flirtatious, babyish ladies - those who, in making love their vocation, 'always retain the pretty prattle of the nursery, and do not forget to lisp, when they have learnt to languish,' with them sex became the key to oppression" (30).

Apart from these encouraging developments on women's behalf, male authority still kept its ruling position. Jean Jacques Rousseau, who is one of the symbols of the Enlightenment, unfortunately failed to enlighten the issue of women's equality. His ideas regarding women were incredibly traditional: the attribution of motherhood to women as a sacred duty, the celebration of a private, domestic life, and so-called natural female dependence on male authority. The excerpt taken from his novel *Emile* perfectly summarizes his ideas regarding women:

Since dependence is a state natural to women, girls feel themselves made to obey; they have, or should have, little freedom... Destined to obey a being as imperfect as man, a woman should learn to suffer—even to suffer injustice—at an early age, and to bear the wrongs of her husband without complaint. You will never reduce boys to the same point; their inner sense of justice rises up and rebels against such injustice, which nature never intended them to tolerate. (Emile, IV: 710-11)

It is quite shocking to see that a man who supports freedom is disproportionately traditional when it comes to women. He thinks women are to be tolerant whereas men are to be rebellious, and these features he considers natural. Hence, these natural characteristics are to be supported with education, so that everybody will improve his skills. It is also worth mentioning that the “inner sense of justice” is peculiar to men only. In his groundbreaking masterpiece, *The Social Contract*, Rousseau also explains why women were not and should not be included in social life:

Among all the ancient civilized peoples [women] led very retired lives; they did not have the best places at the theatre; they did not put themselves on display; they were not even always permitted to go; and it is well known that there was a death penalty for those who dared to show themselves at the Olympic games. In the home, they had a private apartment where the men never entered. When their husbands entertained for dinner, they rarely presented themselves at the table; the decent women went out before the end of the meal, and the others never appeared at the beginning. There was no common place of assembly for the two sexes; they did not pass the day together. This effort not to become sated with one another made their meetings more pleasant. It is certain that

domestic peace was, in general, better established and that greater harmony prevailed between man and wife than is the case today. (88-89)

At an age when reason was celebrated and one of the leading figures of this age was widely acknowledged for his very reasonable ideas, it is worrying to see that women were completely left aside. While the world was changing, women were told to stay where they were: at home looking after their children and living for the simple joy of belonging to a man. And the reason for that was quite easy to understand: Such behaviour would lead to domestic peace and greater harmony between the two sexes. While men could think about politics and bringing peace to the world, women could only think about domestic peace. Another example of this is Kant's ideas regarding women. Kant thought that voting was not a right that could be granted to women because women were not included in the group of people who were their own masters. Again, in the era of reasonable thinking women were not considered good enough to vote since they were simply inadequate. Katerina Deligiorgi claims that this inadequacy is directly related to the confinement of women in their houses: "The social role of women as carers is turned to their disadvantage and is used to form a particular conception of women's agency as essentially passive, as a nonagency in fact" (192). Women were so much associated with topics such as inner peace, privacy, in-house chores that they were not expected to speak when it came to outdoor matters like politics. What men celebrated women for was turned into an obstacle again.

What was really promising about the era of the Enlightenment was the fact that women did not have to rely on the literature created by men anymore. The Enlightenment was also the time when women could work as journalists and this led to the birth of feminine periodical press, which eventually turned into a forum for females. From then on, women did not have to read books only they could participate in the worldly matters and read the feminine perspective. Diaconoff mentions the change feminine periodicals brought about in women's lives: "With the birth of a feminine periodical press that joined women's voices and

interests throughout the nation, the distinctions between private and public space began to be modified, becoming both more fluid and more complex... For the first time women had a vehicle that permitted, and indeed required, them to think in new ways about themselves” (180). This development in women’s lives is crucial since women could challenge the status quo from their own perspective. Female authors did not need to have a rather subtle style so that they could be more acceptable in a male world as they did in Renaissance literature. Instead, they discussed matters in their own way. Of course, they did not start to talk about the political situation or their legal complaints at once. Simply they demanded what they thought they deserved: More respect. They wanted men to see that they deserved more than the pleasures they experience through motherhood. They wanted to be visible in social life as well. Diaconoff summarizes the main issues of the female press: “The journals addressed with striking frequency five main woman’s issues: (1) problems of female self-image, (2) lack of public recognition and fair reception of women’s minds and works, (3) the necessity for better female education, (4) issues of marriage, and, to a lesser extent, (5) motherhood” (181). Motherhood and marriage, trend topics of the previous eras, did not matter that much to women anymore. They were more interested in self-image and self-promotion through the skills they gained thanks to education and participation in social life. That is why they supported female education and proposed that more females should get an education. To conclude, the Age of Enlightenment can be summarized as the era when women became aware of the fact that they had to stand up for their rights because no one else would do it in their name. This was the time when early feminists started to speak directly about the rights that they deserved for being both mothers and intellectuals, so-called saints and sinners.

After the Enlightenment, delving into the age of modernity could also help us understand today’s female identity since, with modernity, women’s situation came closer to what it is today. Modernity can be seen as the accumulation of history indeed. Since it is quite

difficult to draw the line when modernity ends and when post-modernity starts, it could be useful to take Marshall Berman's periodization into account. In his significant work *All That is Solid Melts into Air*, Berman claims that modernity can be handled in three main phases: Early Modernity (1500 or 1453- 1789), Classical Modernity (1789- 1900), and Late Modernity (1900 – 1990). In this study, I have mentioned early modernity within the framework of the Enlightenment considering it a different era. Similarly, I will also handle the period Berman names as Late Modernity as post-modernity since this period has different characteristics in terms of politics, economics, culture, cultural production and especially gender related issues. Here it is also important to underline that the timeline I will mention as post-modernity starts not in 1900 but in the mid-20th century. It may also be better to appropriate to consider Zygmunt Bauman's "liquid modernity" theory which emphasizes the rise of autonomy, identities, individuality, and different understandings of time and space. After studying modernity, it would not be wrong to say that World War II was a milestone and this is why I take this war as the start of liquid modernity, late modernity, or simply post-modernity as many scholars do: the era that led today's current situation. Rita Felski emphasizes that modernity brought a lot of novelties: "Modernity refers not simply to a substantive range of sociohistorical phenomena – capitalism, bureaucracy, technological development, and so on – but above all to particular (though often contradictory) experiences of temporality and historical consciousness" (9). All these changes resulted in new consequences that need to be considered within a wider historical framework since they were achieved with a historical consciousness. However, people of the modern era were also aware of the fact that the world was changing then. Mike Featherstone explains what modernity means regarding what came before and after:

Modernity is generally held to have come into being with the Renaissance and was defined in relation to Antiquity, as in the debate between the Ancients and the Moderns. From the point of view of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German sociological theory, from

which we derive much of our current sense of the term, modernity is contrasted to the traditional order and implies the progressive economic and administrative rationalization and differentiation of the social world. (3)

Hence, when we consider modern times we have to keep in mind that although modernity seems to be a totally different era, it is still quite related to the previous eras in terms of politics, economics, social structure, and, of course, gender issues. According to Rita Felski “gender of modernity is male” which means we should not expect much in terms of women’s rights in this era, either. All the exemplary heroes of modernity “are of course symbols not just of modernity but also of masculinity, historical markers of the emergence of new forms of bourgeois and working-class male subjectivity” (4). Felski here emphasizes that changes witnessed in modernity turned the era into a rather masculine one. However, this does not mean that women did not gain any awareness and freedom and participated less in society compared to the previous eras. This is an issue I would like to analyse in terms of women’s rights as well as women’s cultural production after summarizing the changes that came along with modernity and affected mostly men.

According to Kate Millett, following the Enlightenment, the West has undergone three crucial changes: industrial, economic, and political revolutions. All these changes were expected to have revolutionary changes in everybody’s lives whereas the visible changes were mostly in men’s lives:

It is rather disturbing how the great changes brought about by the extension of the franchise and by the development of democracy which the eighteenth and nineteenth century accomplished, the redistribution of wealth, which was the main aim of socialism (and which has even had its effects upon capitalist countries) and finally, the vast changes wrought by the industrial revolution and the emergence of technology- all, had one to some degree still have, a tangential and contingent effect upon the lives of that majority of the population who might be female. (65)

It is worth mentioning that such a promising era had so little to offer women. This shows us that even revolutions and the way they were realized were based on patriarchal values which

preferred to ignore women's choices. In spite of the fact that the majority of the population might be female as Millett mentioned, the ruling power was supposed to come from the males. Although women fought along with men for dethroning of some of the established forms of ideology throughout these industrial, economic, or political revolutions, they still needed to fight against men who were their so-called comrades in arms when it came to their well-deserved rights.

Nevertheless, here it is also crucial to underline the fact that modernity is the time when the cultural and social focus of attention shifted from Europe to America. A comparative study of industrialization, economics, and politics would show us that the United States of America started to become the emerging super power of the world which means that it started to affect the social and cultural structure of the whole world. This situation also affected women in terms of gaining their rights more easily. According to Simone de Beauvoir, the American woman has always been less restricted than her European sister: "At the beginning of the nineteenth century women had to share with men the hard work of pioneering; they fought at their side; they were far fewer than the men, and this put a high value on them" (145). The fact that women founded the New World side by side with men resulted in the situation that women succeeded more frequently in the USA compared to the women in Europe. They also had better jobs, which meant that females were not considered solely as workers: "In 1900, 5.000.000 women worked in the United States, including a large number in business and learned professions. They were lawyers, doctors, professors and as many as 3373 women pastors" (145). These numbers that Simone de Beauvoir gives in her masterpiece *The Second Sex* show that women in the USA had a higher status than women in Europe. World War I was also a significant period for women. According to Thomas Reeves, this was the time when women had an opportunity to leave their homes with a very valid reason. They would replace the manpower when men went into the military: "Some women

worked in jobs usually held by men, including streetcar conducting, police work, and factory work. Wages for women increased by 20 percent between 1914 and 1918” (72). Once women could earn money, they would be taken into more consideration since they had economic power and they became the new target group for the market.

As another example, Walter Lionel George in his memoirs titled *Hail Columbia!: Random Impressions of a Conservative English Radical* (1921), mentions that he was quite surprised to see that American women were successfully integrated in business: “It is rather a shock to a European to meet a pretty girl of twenty-seven, to hear that she is employed in a drug corporation, and then to discover that she is a director. A shock to find a woman running a lawyer’s office entailing annual expenses of seven or eight thousand dollars, and making a living. It is a surprise to find the American stenographer earning four times as much as her European sister” (162). On the other hand, the author also explains that the fact that women could work in acceptable positions did not simply mean that women were equal to men in the USA: “All those shocks, however, arise out of particular instances, and, though I agree that the American woman has made herself a good position, when I go through a business reference book I find that not one in a hundred of the leading names is the name of a woman. In America man still rules; all you can say is that he does not rule women so harshly as he does in Europe” (162).

The fact that women were more visible in business may also be due to the fact that women were positively regarded by the media, and were not looked down upon as much as they were in Europe. A certain support in the media could have had a considerable effect on the way women were considered. Some excerpts from the 1920’s prove that women were rather more respected in American society. For instance, in an article titled “Women Must Learn to Play the Game as Men Do” which was published in a magazine in 1928, Eleanor Roosevelt, famous American politician, diplomat, and activist who would become the First

Lady of the United States of America only a few years later, tries to encourage women to organize themselves if they want to be listened to:

To organize as women, but within the parties, in districts, counties and states just as men organize, and to pick efficient leaders—say two or three in each state—whom we will support and by whose decisions we will abide. With the power of unified women voters behind them, such women bosses would be in a position to talk in terms of “business” with the men leaders; their voices would be heard, because their authority and the elective power they could command would have to be recognized. Women are today ignored largely because they have no banded unity under representative leaders and spokesmen capable of dealing with the bosses controlling groups of men whose votes they can ‘deliver’. (78-79)

It is significant to see that women were called to unite and take action by an important name who would be ranked in *Gallup's List of People that Americans Most Widely Admired in the 20th Century*. According to Roosevelt, women were to organize professionally just like men did if they wanted to be heard. Kate Millett also mentions the importance of organization for women and how they became proficient at organizing thanks to the Abolitionist Movement: “It was the Abolitionist Movement which gave American women their first opportunity for political action and organization... It was around this issue that American women acquired their first political experience and developed the methods they were to use throughout most of their campaign and until the turn of the century: petition, and agitation carried on to educate the public” (80). Participating in the Abolitionist Movement along with African-Americans, fighting for their equality and succeeding in persuading people (and finally the government) made women believe in the possibility of successfully fighting for their own rights. From then on, they found the inner power to fight for gender equality. Susan Frank Parsons also agrees with the fact that the Abolitionist Movement encouraged and finally led women to speak out about gender issues: “In the mid-nineteenth century, calls for gender equality become an organised movement seeking women’s property rights, higher education, civil and political rights. In the United States, feminism arose in conjunction with the abolitionist movement against slavery. In this context, one finds some of the first systematic efforts to challenge the

sexist paradigms of Christian theology that upheld the ideology of male domination” (6). Therefore, we can say that women became aware of the fact that they could fight any type of domination including male domination over women. Such an awareness came along with seeing that “many of the key symbols of the modern in the nineteenth century— the public sphere, the man of the crowd, the stranger, the dandy, the flaneur— were indeed explicitly gendered” as Rita Felski states (16). Such an emphasis on male identification led women to the realization that they were being left aside while the world was going through significant changes in terms of politics, economics, and society. In a nutshell, it would not be wrong to say that the rise of the feminism came along mainly with inclusion of females in the work life and in the comprehension of female organizational power.

Another crucial point to consider about the rise of gender issues was the fact that mass culture started to be considered a very important factor in the American way of life. In addition to the fact that mass culture is one of the most important changes that came along with modernity, it was also directly related to gender issues. Andreas Huyssen explains how mass culture was attributed to femininity since it was seen as inferior compared to high culture:

In the age of nascent journalism and first major woman’s movement in Europe, the masses knocking at the gate were also women, knocking at the gate of a male dominated culture. It is indeed striking to observe how the political, psychological, and aesthetic discourse around the turn of the century consistently and obsessively genders mass culture and the masses as feminine, while high culture, whether traditional or modern, clearly remains the privileged realm of male activities. (46)

Huyssen also draws attention to the fact that this mass culture also helped women to organize and discover the power they could muster to be able “knock” at the gate of male domination. All the discussions going around about many concepts varying from politics to aesthetics turned mass culture into a feminine –or better – female culture. Although high culture remained male, mass culture helped women in a way they had never been helped before: they

had a reason to raise their voices. Furthermore, it is also important to emphasize that the new society emerging through modernity predominantly lived in the future rather than the past. Such an awareness, that consideration of the future, would not only affect women's ideas but also the way women were considered in society. Since women saw some potential in changing the social order and could discover the power they had, they could now start to revolt against patriarchal society, which would lead to the rise of feminism.

When it comes to modernity and women, it is impossible to leave aside the thinkers who affected the way modern society considered women. One of the most influential names that affected modernist notions of gender and sexuality was Sigmund Freud. His theories are still valid in today's world although his analysis include a very basic misperception, according to some female authors. According to Kate Millett, Freud's "entire psychology of women, from which all modern psychology and psychoanalysis derives heavily, is built upon an original tragic experience – born female" (180). While explaining most female psychological problems with being jealous of men, Freud seems to ignore the fact that women are dissatisfied with their lives not because they are envious of the male organ but because they cannot fight enough against male domination. Millett draws attention to the fact that Freud simply did not consider the harsh conditions of a male ruled society: "What forces in her experience, her society and socialization have led her to see herself as an inferior being? The answer would seem to lie in conditions of patriarchal society and the inferior position of women within this society. But Freud did not choose to pursue such a line of reasoning, preferring instead an etiology of childhood experience based upon the biological fact of anatomical differences" (180). Millett criticizes Freud for not considering the differences between "biology and culture, anatomy and status" and she also underlines the fact that the reason why his theories are widely respected is one of the main proofs of the male domination in present societies. Similarly, Suzanne Clark claims that Freud tries to justify male

independence with science: “Freud's theory enacts what it describes, repressing and denying its attachments to a maternal matrix— not only the influence of mothers, but also its origins in the nineteenth-century romantic literature's advocacy of feeling and desire. In order to assert male independence in the postures of a scientific attitude, the law of the father and the influence of science are fully acknowledged” (30).

Such a context where female dissatisfaction is considered as the natural and biological result of penis envy must have led female authors to achieve different self-representations. Modernist women writers had problems in explaining the female way of looking at the world; however, their work is significant since it led to many crucial changes that resulted in today's rather more equal society. Spiropoulou mentions that with modernist women writers, women also became central in fiction: “At least since the late nineteenth century, not only was women's and especially ‘new women's’ experience increasingly becoming central in fiction and drama, but also there emerged new women novelists, of which Woolf is unquestionably one of the most significant and prolific, who provided their own perspective on modern realities” (2). In other words, modernist female writers broke the male oriented tradition with their new ways of talking about society. Besides the fact that influential names in modernity such as Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill implied that women's cultural production simply meant less than men's, women succeeded in creating a new literary tradition that would give way to more feminine texts. Suzanne Clark explains how these key thinkers placed women in a subservient position in the world of writing:

Cultural reproduction, including the work of writing the domestic, is separated from production and occupies a diminished and secondary terrain, not the primary arena of political and philosophical issues. Mill assumes that women's cultural production is inferior. He says that their sentiments are compounded of a small element of individual observation and consciousness and a very large one of acquired associations— women are inferior in literature and art because they are not modern; they suffer from a “deficiency of originality”. (29)

Clark also summarizes why modernist female writers were important: “Modernist women writers called upon traditions established by women, the appeal to feeling, their loyalties to the ‘new woman,’ their desire for progress, their allegiance to maternal and comforting forms, but they also participated in the revolution of the word” (38). All in all, women writers told about the rise of the new woman and her point of view.

Following modernism and how women had a certain awakening regarding gender-related issues, I would now like to focus on the present. Scholars of post-modernity claim that the concept of post-modernity is quite different from modernity. Hence, it is to be handled with new methods of study and within new theoretical frameworks. For instance, the rise of globalisation and new media technologies, the fact that individuals have more freedom to construct their identity and cultural environment are all issues that should be considered when analyzing this concept. To put it more simply, we could say that ways of perception, information, and living have all undergone a significant change after modernity and that it is no longer possible to consider these times as a basic continuation of modernity. Key features of post-modernity are globalisation, mass media, fragmented world, the rise of consumer culture, and finally cultural diversity. Different scholars emphasize different sides of the era. For example, according to Baudrillard (1983), new forms developed around technology and information are the main issue that made the social order become reproductive rather than productive and this reproduction led to simulations which made us unable to perceive the distinction between reality and appearance at times. This is the main feature of a post-modern society. On the other hand, Lyotard claims that the most prominent feature of the post-modern world is “computerization,” which leads to influential effects on knowledge: “narrative knowledge changed to the plurality of language games, and universalism changed to locality” (362).

The main reason I would like to emphasize the rise of mass media, simulations, and the plurality of language through computerization of society is because they are directly related to the way women have been considered and represented in our era. But first, I would like to briefly summarize what women have experienced as of post-modernity. Paul and Kauffman draw attention to the fact that World War II led to women's empowerment since "During World War II, millions of women took up blue-collar work as cab drivers, dock workers, welders, machinists, and more. By 1943 women were more than 36 % of the labor force" (164). Since men were away for the war, women had to take care of all the jobs, including the blue-collar ones that were considered simply men's jobs. However, women were quite content with their lives even if they had to work hard and raise their children alone because they started to have economic independence in a way they had never experienced before. This led to their rise as a target group to be economically addressed. For instance, "woman's films were produced by Hollywood from the late 1930s to the early 1950s with a primarily female audience in mind. They achieved prominence during a time when women workers had become the backbone of U.S. wartime production" (164). Women were represented not only for the male gaze, but for women themselves. This surely led to a cultural change since it contributed to the current situation not only in terms of portraying women but also in constructing them. Could this cultural evolution go on for a longer time period, we would probably have a different world order, but the end of the World War II and men coming back home caused some regression in terms of women's empowerment. The postwar era resulted in a return to the earlier status quo. Although women wanted to keep their jobs, they started to lose their prior positions and therefore economic independence. Paul and Kauffman describe the transition of gender relations in this period: "The years 1945 to 1950 saw profound struggle over gender definitions and relationships... women who were no longer dependent appeared to have lost their femininity. Industry hummed along quite nicely

without the returning men. In the face of such disruption and loss, pressure on women to restore and reaffirm traditional roles was extraordinary. Political, religious, and industrial leaders who had so recently recruited women workers with appeals to their devotion to family and country, now shamelessly reversed themselves” (167). From then on, women were expected to go back to their feminine lives where they were solely supposed to realize their in-house roles. To succeed in this transition, women’s wages were dropped; women were expected to withdraw to their low paying pink collar jobs. In his report titled as “The political role of women”, published by UNESCO in 1955, Maurice Duverger observed that “the low level of female political participation was the reflection of the secondary role of women in society at large, and especially the widespread belief among men that political activity is a masculine prerogative” (127).

Besides the fact that women were expected to go back happily to their traditional roles within the house, now they had the awareness about the policies which favored men. They had had the taste of what it felt like to be economically independent and to be the only authority in the family in times of war. This awareness contributed to the creation of women’s studies. Maynard and Purvis explain how women’s studies was born as a field of study through a certain need: “The critical energy involved in the intellectual challenge to gender-blind and gender-biased scholarship, together with the close links between scholarly and political agendas for women, fed into the growth, diversification and effectiveness of what came to be known as Women’s Studies” (2). Women’s self-awareness doubtlessly led to serious conceptual and theoretical debates about significant themes such as the nature of patriarchy or male power; the relationship between gender, power, authority, inequality, domination and exploitation. For instance, women started to have discussions about widely accepted theories supporting the male-centered point of view. Freud’s psychoanalysis studies

was one of these theories. Myra Macdonald summarizes how this theory was reconsidered in the new context:

In suggesting that femininity is not a fixed identity acquired with maturity, but a constantly renegotiated set of alliances and identifications, it helps to make conceptual sense of our varying reactions to representations of women in media forms. On the other hand, psychoanalysis (and especially those varieties that take their cue from Freud) serves as a curious analytical prop for women because it tends to perceive the male as the norm, and by concentrating on unconscious rather than conscious processes, leaves little scope for change.

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When being a woman did not mean exactly what male-oriented theories define, in other words, when women's definition of a feminine character did not coincide with men's suggested and accepted definitions, this led to the questioning of all theories up to now. In such a skeptical world of so-called simulations, women could easily see that norms were to be questioned instead of having women judged according to these norms. That is why women's studies, or, in other words, feminist media scholarship, was an important milestone for women. McLaughlin and Carter summarize how women's studies has become a main field of interest for cultural and critical studies today: "Over the past few decades, feminist media scholarship has flourished, emerging from a barely perceptible public presence to become a profound influence on the field of communications and across a range of disciplines, and gaining particular authority in cultural and critical studies" (5). Women's studies helps women with questioning and analyzing the current situation as well as history with a less male-oriented point of view which is also more objective.

In addition to the positive changes women's studies and feminism created, the change in representation is also directly related to female identity. With the rise of mass media, the culture has also undergone a profound change: Women now have to consider the way they are represented and self-represented in mass media. The female stereotypes media creates cause a certain misconceptions about what women desire, and it has such a powerful effect that even

women themselves are affected by it which can be summed up as a vicious cycle of misperception. Macdonald claims that stereotypes support the ideology and “work by being plausible and masking its own value-system” (14). In other words, stereotypes created, represented, and appreciated by the established ideology are so powerful that it is nearly impossible not be affected by them in spite of the fact that all women are well aware of the history of female suffering:

Tracing dominant stereotypes historically is more helpful in revealing changing ideologies. Why the ‘vamp’ should have been popular in the early decades of the century, the ‘dumb bold’ in the middle, and the ‘superwoman’ in the last quarter, are issues worth exploring in the quest to understand how myths of femininity have changed. Equally revealing is the continuing imbalance in the both extent and quality of male and female stereotyping in media constructions. Stereotypes of men (e.g. ‘macho man’) may elicit negative emotions but they do little to dent male authority. Even the ‘new man’ stereotype, far from weakening male power, has been cynically viewed by some critics as an attempt to shore up masculinity’s defences against the erosion of feminism. (14-15)

Baudrillard’s simulacra and Barthes’ myths are two significant theories that can be mentioned in a direct relation to female stereotypes. The way myths of femininity have changed is to be studied in detail to argue that the actual changes women have witnessed throughout history are not exactly the changes the social order and cultural hegemony have presented to us. It is equally important to mention that one of the main reasons for that is the fact that although women were represented (and sometimes even over-represented) in the media, they could never become the actual producers of the programmes, movies, and certain media texts, and this surely led to a misrepresentation. More women producers or more women artists would be the cure to break the vicious cycle of women’s inaccurate reflection/representation. According to Minioudaki, the significance of women artists was unrecognized in terms of their contribution to feminine identity: “The feminist effects and strategies of the work of a number of these (female) artists revealed the important variety of transgressive articulations of female subjectivity that preceded feminist art” (60). These works highlighted the

undermined and unappreciated presence of female artists whose works highlighted the contradictions women faced in a changing yet still male-dominated world. Hence, it is crucial to underline that one of the significant actions that women's studies should take on at this point is to remind men and, more importantly, women that what they encounter every day thanks to the media is simply a set of misrepresentations or simulations created in the world of simulacra. A valuable antidote to this is to appreciate the works by female artists and conduct in-depth research, study, and analysis on them. Another step would be to support the policies that would lead to more female producers. When women can be seen as equally powerful and experienced as men in terms of producing cultural commodities, then it would be easier to fight for a more equal world.

These media misrepresentations could also be the main reason why women are less feminist, less concerned with feminist issues as studies show. Duncan's research on how feminists define themselves show that younger women's definition of feminism is much milder compared to the older generations. "Younger women's perceptions of feminism may differ from those of older women because the younger women came of age after the heyday of the second-wave women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s" (498). Duncan also mentions that research shows that young women might be committed to feminist principles but they are also more reluctant to take on the feminist label, and they have explored the consequences for attitudes and activism of labeling or nonlabeling. Likewise, Rosalind Coward supports the idea that women have less reasons to be strict feminists: "Feminism has, to a considerable degree, got what it wanted and most of it came to fruition in the 1980s. Jobs opened up to women; career expectations went up dramatically; most women, including many mothers, worked. Legal changes and changes in family patterns also made it possible for women to survive financially on their own should they so wish" (7-8). In her book which questions whether feminism is still relevant to the new millennium, Coward summarizes that

women still have a very long way to go before they reach real equality and that is exactly why feminism is not dead. Today's women may be thinking that there are much more serious problems than the glass ceiling, women's misrepresentation, or that subtle feeling of inequality in family life. However, we should not forget that gender issues and gender inequality is still very present in some parts of the world or in certain situations.

What should be done at this point is to comprehend the conditions that give way to female mis/under-representation. One of the main reasons is the cruel fact that women's role in media are relegated to consumers and critics, but they never serve as producers. The second reason is that, as Macdonald puts it, "we need to recognize the part we all play in keeping mythologies and ideologies alive" (11). Since we are mostly less feminist in terms of the fight for equality in all areas of life, we simply contribute to the acknowledged male authority in all the key areas. Similarly, Kate Millett reminds us why feminism should still matter: "The fact is evident at once if one recalls that the military, industry, technology, universities, science, political Office, and finance – in short, every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive power of the police, is entirely in male hands. And the essence of politics is power" (25). Yet it is confusing to see that a lot of contemporary women are in favour of staying at home and caring for the children after all the struggle women have been through: "A national survey sponsored by the *Washington Post* and published in 1998 revealed that large majorities of both men and women said it would be better if women could stay home and take care of the house and children. But at the same time, equally large majorities wanted equality for women in the work place, and men approved of women working outside the home" (282). Thomas Reeves draws attention to the dilemma of today's women. This is actually quite related to what Rosalind Coward says. After fighting for their rights and gaining most of them, women gave up the fight. Once they were no longer expected to stay in and act according to their traditional roles, women started to prefer staying in and taking care of the

children. Similarly, Jana Sawicki claims that “feminist praxis is continually caught between appeals to a free subject and an awareness of victimization” (355). This dilemma may be a result of many reasons, such as the possibility that misrepresentations in the media might have led to women’s confusion, the naked truth that women could never make it to the very top due to the glass ceiling, or the disheartening probability that women are simply tired of fighting for more. All in all, the literature shows us that the feeling of activism needs to be rekindled: Women should be encouraged to be proud feminists again because they still have many reasons to fight against inequality:

If we cast a general glance over this history, we see several conclusions that stand out from it. And this one first of all: the whole of feminine history has been man-made... the woman problem has always been a man’s problem. We have seen why men had moral prestige along with physical strength from the start; they created values, mores, religions; never have women disputed this empire with them. Men have always held the lot of woman in their hands; and they have determined what it should be, not according to her interest, but rather with regard to their own projects, their fears and their needs. (148-149)

In Simone de Beauvoir’s words, female identity has always been a man’s problem and in spite of the fact that *The Second Sex* was published half a century ago, we are still in need of more research in women’s studies. With the rise of new technologies, it is now easier to reach information from all over the world and accessing information quickly and easily is not the only advantage of the new technologies. They are also to be used in terms of more research that would lead to more theoretical studies. Nancy Hartstock mentions how theory can awaken the feminist side in women:

Activism needs to be informed by theory. Theory can help us understand which issues are shared by all women and which issues affect different women differently. In addition, theory can give us some perspective on the significance of any particular effort. One of the dangers of political activity in the absence of a more theoretical understanding of women's situation is that such activity can lead to a submersion in the day to day struggle, and to a consequent failure to address the hard questions of what real difference these struggles will make for women. (188-189)

All in all, it would not be wrong to say that women have long been fighting for their rights. Either it is the legal right of owning property or having the freedom to work outside the house, women have always had to stand up against the male authority since a right gained for women meant a right lost for men. Assessing how women have been considered and represented throughout history was a crucial part in order to be able to analyze today's female icons and their possible effect on female identity. This study has made me see that women were never inferior; women were expected to be inferior, to stay behind, and simply suffer this feeling of being left aside.

2.1.A BRIEF HISTORY OF FEMALE ICONS

In this section, I would like to provide a brief analysis of female icons using the same periodization I have used in previous parts. I intend to take a look at each period mentioning a famous woman from that era whom I think may be the icon of the period. Doubtlessly, there can be more than one icon in each period, but I will be able to mention only one female from each era since there is a limitation of space and my main aim is to find a definition of the female icons now that I have looked into the ways in which female identity has been shaped throughout history. In the first chapter, the literature review has shown that icons are representative, ideological, powerful, and informative. A brief history of icons and the way in which icons evolved will help us to realize that history is basically man made.

The first icon I would like to mention is Sappho whom I believe is the perfect symbol for women of Antiquity. Sappho was a Greek poetess from the island of Lesbos, Greece and she lived between 630-570 BC. Besides the fact that most of her poetry is lost and survived only in fragmentary form, her work is considered extraordinary even today. She continues to be a great mystery for poetry lovers and for people who are interested in antiquity. There is so

little known about Sappho's life that the blanks are mostly filled with imagination and creativity. Many researchers draw attention to the fact that the duality between imagination and reality led some scholars to believe that there were two different Sapphos at that time: "Most of the ancient scholars who tried to make sense of this mass of information... *duplicated* the person of Sappho, declaring that there were, in fact, two Sapphos, and assigning some features to the one and the others to the other, in such a way as to create two individuals, both named Sappho, each one internally consistent or at least plausible, but distinguishable by reference to a set of contradictory attributes" (17-18). This duality was mostly due to the fact that Sappho is believed to refer to her love for women in her work, and at the same time it is known that she also committed suicide because of the fact that she was hopelessly in love with a man. Other than that, there was also the obscurity of the language she used, which is the second main reason why Sappho's poetry survived until today and it is still studied and enjoyed in poetry classes. Parker mentions that one of the greatest reasons why Sappho is still mysterious and worth in-depth study is her cumulative identity, which has come along like a snowball collecting different features from different ages:

The text of Sappho is in fragments which we must shore against their ruin. The language is difficult, the society obscure. We turn to the handbooks and commentaries for aid. But this means that we come to Sappho already blinded by the largely unexamined assumptions of the previous generations of scholars; and in the case of Sappho the accumulation of assumptions is millennia deep and includes Greek comedies, Italian novels, and French pornography. The case is worse for Sappho than for any other author, including Homer. For here we are dealing not only with archaic literature but with sexuality; the commentaries are heavily endued with emotion and our own preconceptions. (312)

The fact that Sappho has embraced a rather vague style in expressing her feelings naturally led to multiple exegesis and because she was an inspirational poetess never losing her popularity, she ended up as a character of never ending mystery: She has become a real character that has gained different characteristics throughout the ages and that probably added to her mystery, which made her even more mysterious and attractive. This feeling of curiosity

Sappho has been awaking in many people is the main reason why she could be one of the leading icons of her age. Hallett argues that this is the main reason why Sappho should be analyzed within the social context of her time. According to her, Sappho is to be regarded as the first female poet who had an important social purpose, and a public function in the name of all women: “that of instilling sensual awareness and sexual self-esteem and of facilitating role adjustment in young females coming of age in a sexually segregated society. Furthermore, I believe that she should be regarded as an artist voicing sentiments which need not be her own” (450). That automatically turns her into a symbol giving voice to women of her time. Parker also agrees that Sappho is a perfect symbol for her age. What is more, she is the symbol for all ages since she has been recreated in every age: “Every age creates its own Sappho. Her position as *the* woman poet (as Homer is the male poet), the first female voice heard in the West, elevates her to a status where she is forced to be a metonym for all women. Sappho ceases to be an author and becomes a symbol. She is recreated in each age to serve the interests of all who appropriate her, whether friend or enemy” (312). This accumulation of features from different times and her vague style gradually turned her into an icon of Classical Antiquity and womanhood. At the same time, it has also become more challenging to understand her work. So many different definitions of Sappho resulted in a complex identity. Katz explains how Sappho has become impossible to see through as a poetess “lost in translation”:

Interpretation of Sappho's poetry thus necessarily involves a great deal of reading between and around the lines and inevitably invites speculative reconstruction of poetic context, sociocultural situation, and biographical detail. As the principal female voice to survive from Greek antiquity, Sappho is pressed into service to speak for all women, and the history of ancient, modern, and contemporary commentary on Sappho devolves easily into a study of critical stereotypes of the ancient Greek woman. Sappho's 'I' seems always to precipitate our own: there is little discussion of her work that does not, willy-nilly, fall into the category of personal voice criticism. (520)

To conclude, Sappho was a very intriguing woman whose extraordinary work and character are still sources of mystery even today. She is also regarded as a symbol not only for women of Antiquity but also for women of all ages. The fact that she needed interpretation led to more mystery and more interpretation, which contributed to her never-ending iconicity.

Another extraordinary woman who could be regarded as the icon of the Middle Ages is Christine de Pizan (or Pisan). Christine de Pizan was one of the most distinguished writers of Medieval times well known for her pioneering works about women. Although she wrote in French, she also had Italian roots which made her a good representation of Medieval Europe indeed. Born in 1364, she lost her husband at a very early age and tried to survive on writing to support herself economically and mentally. Her very first work was a collection of ballads of lost love written in memory of her deceased husband. However, what made her really famous was her prose on women. De Pizan is best known for her extraordinary and revolutionary works on women. In *Epistre au dieu d'amour*, written in 1399, she aimed to explain the status of women within the social context, criticizing their depiction in literature. Her most famous work was *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames (The Book of the City of Ladies)* written in 1405. This book is considered one of the first feminist texts in which de Pizan told about the leading female figures in history and advanced the idea of gender equality. According to Rigby, de Pizan's work is crucial not because it made people consider feminism as the total equality of the sexes but because it opened the way to such a formation as a milestone in history; she offered a new explanation against misogynistic critics: "Christine's purpose was not to alter the structure of society by demanding equal employment opportunities or legal and political rights for women. Rather, in a culture in which women as a sex were frequently attacked on moral grounds, Christine fought the battle for women at the site where they were being assailed by their critics and so had to mount a defence of her sisters in terms of their ability to use their intellect to make reasoned, moral choices" (137).

However, such a Medieval defence of women may not be regarded as revolutionary according to modern feminist standards. That is why it is significant to consider her work within the context of time. Even today, we are discussing whether it will ever be possible to achieve a total equality of the sexes in the near future. Jody Anders also argues that what made de Pizan relevant is her groundbreaking vision of male authority: “Christine intervenes in the great debate about tradition with a mnemonic matrix for future literary creations by women...Christine thus does far more than feminize the mnemonic foundations of the Augustinian or Boccaccian cities before her: she recontextualizes the forensic rhetorical memory as a Christian locus for women” (239-242). This intervention and recontextualization is the first step in making male-ruled and male-written history less male-ruled and, more importantly, less male-written. This reconfiguration of rhetoric is also a very moderate protest against male history as well as an ode to significant female figures. As Anders puts it, de Pizan’s “allegory of female authority is the mnemonic answer to the question of the rhetoric and the theology of gender” (244). Likewise, Kelly Joan draws attention to Christine de Pizan’s groundbreaking creation of a female space: “Christine created a space for women to oppose this onslaught of vilification and contempt, and the example of her defense was to serve them for centuries. Although men continued to write in defense of women, what is utterly novel about the *querelle des femmes* is that women seized on it to counter for themselves the misogynist voice of literate opinion on women's inferiority” (11). The greatest achievement to be appreciated here is Pizan’s success in setting a female dialectics in motion. This doubtlessly made her ideological and exemplary. As of de Pizan, the forthcoming feminist writers always looked up to her work either praising or criticizing it, but as Joan claims, “these gains were never lost” (28). Bennett Judith emphasizes the fact that de Pizan made use of history in her book, and in her hands history became rather feminine. The lives of women were to be looked at from a different angle where they simply enjoyed their

womanhood. For the first time, they were not there solely to support male existence: “In the hands of de Pizan, then, history became a feminist tool; she used history to celebrate women’s past accomplishments, she used history to rebut the accusations of misogynists, and she used history to urge her female contemporaries on to greater goals” (251). This is also one of the very first examples of feminist history, a field of research that proves that women’s history is also worth in-depth study. In a nutshell, using history as a means to promote research on women and women’s studies, or feminism, Christine de Pizan certainly contributes to the histories of rhetoric, theology, politics, and gender by building a female memory space that is supposed to lead to the theoretical construction of female subjectivity.

The city Christine de Pizan created in her famous work *The Book of the City of Ladies* is also significant since it is an exceptional metaphor also for the female space. Susan Groag Bell summarizes the three major achievements of the work: “The Cité des Dames uses hundreds of biographical sketches to illustrate Christine’s three-fold aim: to prove women’s capabilities, to educate other women by example, and to write women’s history. The book was inspired by her urgent need to defend and encourage women” (176). Apart from the major role of defending women, Christine de Pizan did something crucial which could surely make her name remembered along with other female icons: she encouraged women to follow other women as examples. This exemplary pattern of encouraging women would also include her name, since she encouraged so many women to become feminists and to write about feminism and history.

Moving on to the next era and the next exemplary female, I would now like to mention Mary Wollstonecraft as the female icon of modernity. As an Anglo-Irish feminist, thinker, intellectual and writer, Mary Wollstonecraft was born in London. She was the second of seven children and she saw the economic decline of her family. This situation caused Mary Wollstonecraft to be a self-made woman; what is more, her father abused her mother, which

may be another reason why she became a self-made feminist. As a result of this, Mary had to go out to make a living at the age of nineteen. The school she started with her sister is another example of her desire to fashion herself. Although the school was not successful, she never gave up. In 1792, she published her most notable work, *A Vindication on the Rights of Woman*. The fact that it is considered an exceptional work even today stems from its advocacy of the equality of the sexes.

Similar to the way Christine de Pizan made use of history, Mary Wollstonecraft made use of philosophy: “By extending the language of Enlightenment to women, Mary Wollstonecraft did not use philosophy as a mere descriptive tool, she made of it a transformative activity capable, not only of analyzing social relations but also of providing a means whereby those relations might be altered” (48). Cornut-Gentille d'Arcy explains that Wollstonecraft used philosophy to raise very direct questions about why social relations favored men over women. She also took a step further to explain how these social relations could be improved in terms of equality. In *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, she summarized the situation of women in her times: “Women have been allowed to remain in ignorance, and slavish dependence, many, very many years, and still we hear of nothing but their fondness of pleasure and sway, their preference of rakes and soldiers, their childish attachment to toys, and the vanity that makes them value accomplishments more than virtues” (184). According to her, the most effective solution to the problem of inequality was bringing an end to the misperception that women were not and could never be as rational as men. Corinne Field summarizes Wollstonecraft’s ideas that centered around the need to educate young girls: “Girls stood at the center of this project, since Wollstonecraft held that the only way to create ‘rational creatures’ and ‘free citizens’ was to begin to cultivate reason early in life... The central problem facing girls was that they grew old without ever achieving the adult capacity to think and act for themselves and thus continued to behave like children

throughout their lives” (202-203). Wollstonecraft criticized the idea that women did not have the same capacity to develop as men, and she supported the possibility that females and males should be given the same chance to reason together. This way they could equally develop their own capacities, which would lead to a phase of development that should naturally result in legal equality within marriage, equal representation in government affairs, and mutual respect for female/male judgement in civil society. Wollstonecraft emphasized the fact that without the aforementioned political, legal, and economic independence women could never exercise moral maturity nor reasoning. To sum up, Wollstonecraft defended the idea that the only way to create rational creatures out of women was to make them free citizens first. Cornut-Gentile d'Arcy also draws attention to the fact that Wollstonecraft also encouraged parliamentary representation of women, the ultimate sign of equality (which has not fully been achieved even today): “The most radical idea advanced by Mary Wollstonecraft was her discreet hint concerning the possibility of parliamentary representation for women (which she made extensive to the labouring classes). She concludes her point by angrily asserting that despotism will exist whenever the oppressed classes are arbitrarily governed without having any direct share allowed them in the deliberations of government” (50).

Apart from the fact that she was and still is a leading feminist and one of the first thinkers defending the equality of sexes, she was also a very emotional woman: a hopeless romantic who committed suicide after being left heartbroken by her lover. It is astonishing to see that a woman who could fight the established male-ruled system with her witty style could also be emotionally defeated by a man. Even the reason why her lover left her is worth attention: He thought she was too domestic-minded and maternal. So, a feminist thinker was too domestic and maternal for the man she was in love with. To conclude, Eileen Botting summarizes why Wollstonecraft should be considered as an icon:

The regular public appeal to Wollstonecraft as a general symbol — and particularly as an iconic philosopher — of women’s rights gave the cause an authority around which both its

supporters and critics could orient their debates. With a symbolic philosophical founder in place, the abstract cause of women's rights became more concretized and publicly recognized. With Wollstonecraft as an iconic marker of its origins, ideas, goals and effects, the women's rights cause had a political symbol around which it could organize itself into a formal movement. It was not only her elite reception by leading women's rights advocates, but also her mainstream reception in nineteenth-century journalistic media, which made Wollstonecraft an American feminist icon. (295)

Here it is indeed significant to underline the issue of reception. Apart from her exceptional writing and advocacy of women's rights, the way the public (especially women) received her work and ideas are also crucial. The positive reception of a new and promising idea means that the public is also ready for his idea. Hence, it could be said that the public welcomes the novelty as long as it is ready. Here, there is a thin red line between readiness and novelty and this might be the key fact what makes a person iconic.

Moving on from modernity and to the next era, I would like to talk about Marilyn Monroe, the female character many people would mention along with the word icon. Especially when one gives you the term "female icon," the name you directly give will probably be Marilyn Monroe. American actress Marilyn Monroe was born as Norma Jeane Mortenson on June 1, 1926 in Los Angeles, California. During her brief life, Marilyn Monroe went through a difficult childhood and ended up becoming one of the world's biggest and most enduring sex symbols ever. She never knew her father, and she once even admitted that she used to think of Clark Gable as her father. Her mother had psychiatric problems, which led her to be placed in a mental institution. That caused Marilyn's constant change of homes. Growing up, Monroe spent a lot of time in foster care and in an orphanage. To have a permanent house and stable life, Marilyn married at the age of 16. Soon after she started modelling she divorced her husband who was away on duty. As the time passed, Monroe became an international star. During her career, Monroe's films grossed more than \$200 million despite her chronic insecurities regarding her acting abilities. Throughout her acting

career, Monroe was signed and released from several contracts with film studios due to many different reasons. As seen in this brief summary of her life, she could be described as an icon that reflected many characteristics of female icons, such as self-creation, victimization, and contradiction. She doubtlessly was a self-made character. As the unfortunate child of a single mother who suffered from mental problems, she succeeded in becoming an internationally famous film star. Carl Rollyson also emphasizes that “Monroe had a self-dramatizing desire to exaggerate her traumatic childhood” (80). This dramatization is also closely related to the victimization and self-making process that come right after hard times. For instance, in her personal life, she had a series of unsuccessful marriages and relationships. Apart from her first marriage at the age of 16, Marilyn Monroe also married baseball player Joe DiMaggio and famous playwright Arthur Miller. These marriages both ended in divorce. She was also romantically involved with the Kennedy brothers. On May 19, 1962, Monroe made her now-famous performance at John F. Kennedy's birthday celebration, singing “Happy Birthday, Mr. President,” which is still regarded as a scandalous yet iconic scene in history. Rollyson summarizes her personal relationships in relation to her tendency to embrace contradictory concepts: “Like all legendary figures, she was a contradiction in terms... She was a victim, but she was also a healer. She was intensely ambitious, determined to be a great actress, and to marry herself to the public consciousness, to associate herself with Joe DiMaggio, Arthur Miller, and the Kennedys – personages who expressed enduring aspects of the culture” (14). Doubtlessly, a woman who could marry a very popular sportsman and a very popular playwright is already a sign of contradiction. All in all, her attitude toward herself, her career, and her relationships was ambivalent, contradictory, and confusing. This might be one of the main reasons why she is very much alive in our minds even today although Monroe died of a drug overdose on August 5, 1962 when she was only 36 years old. Baty discusses that Monroe lived and still lives right here and right now: “Marilyn Monroe lives *in medias res*. Here she is

the stuff of memory, yet she also expresses the dynamic possibilities of cultural presence as simulated immortality- even the dead can live forever *in medias res*. In process, in the middle, in the matrix, the media make a virtual world where the dead and living meet. In the warm matrix of the media Marilyn comes to life. The media make her live: she is the goddess in the machine, of the machine, as the machine” (29). The way she represented herself played a significant role in the way we perceive her even today. The main reason why Marilyn Monroe is still one of the most iconic and talked-about figures of the twentieth century is the fact that she was (and still is) the quintessential female sex symbol, a characteristic created by the active participation of media and cultural industry. Will Scheibel explains how a sex symbol was created out of Marilyn Monroe:

What I am calling Monroe’s ‘sex symbol text’ can be traced back to a range of well documented discursive threads: her cheesecake modelling; her typecast roles as the ‘dumb blonde’ and ‘blonde bombshell’; the exploitation of her body as an erotic object in film and popular culture; her famous hip-swinging walk, breathy voice, ecstatic laugh and quivering upper lip; her historical reception in chiefly sexualised terms; and her alternately deified and infantilised reputation, as a glamour goddess and vulnerable innocent respectively. (2)

It can be seen here that Monroe’s contradictory features did not only stem from her choices. The media also had a significant role in representing her in a certain duality which led to the result that Marilyn will always be remembered as an icon of extremes, a woman of dualities and contradictions. Baty also mentions Marilyn Monroe’s contradictory character and provides reasons why she is the perfect choice of icon in American culture: “Marilyn is a wonderful subject for American cultural memory. Her many contradictory qualities and histories allow for competing creations of the real ‘Marilyn Monroe’. And remembering is about creating what is real; it is finding stories to tell ourselves about the past and the present. These stories help us to think about where we have been, and in the process they help us to know who we are. For this reason, memory is crucial to the formation of a community” (31). Marilyn is still present in American cultural memory: Every time femininity, blond women,

stardom, sex symbols, or even a very general term such as beauty is mentioned, Marilyn Monroe is one the first names that would be given. This recreation of Monroe led to an accumulation of different concepts. The deconstruction of Marilyn Monroe as a female icon today would probably not be the equivalent of reconstruction of her: so many different topics and concepts are to be mentioned alongside Monroe and each mention is like another addition to her canonization as an icon. As the icon of all female icons, Marilyn Monroe means everything and nothing. Lesser agrees with the fact that the real Marilyn Monroe is hard to see today: “The closer you look at Marilyn Monroe, the harder it is to see her. As you peer through the structure and wreckage of all the news stories, biographies, gossip columns, and literary take-offs, not to mention the movies themselves, you begin to get the feeling that she’s not really there at all. At the centre of all this commotion, where there should be some tremendous motivating force, there is instead an empty hole” (193). Steven Shapiro agrees with this idea when he explains that even Marilyn Monroe herself was like a representation of the icon Marilyn Monroe. His ideas on Monroe’s tragic death at the age of 36 are also quite astonishing: “Even Marilyn Monroe you might say was never entirely successful in playing the role of ‘Marilyn Monroe’. She was never anything more than a drag queen, or yet another Marilyn Monroe impersonator. The beauty of Marilyn, media icon and superstar sex symbol, was always and forever beyond the woman who was born Norma Jean Baker... Monroe’s tragic death, no matter what the actual facts of the case. Marilyn’s flesh simply could not bear what she was supposed to be” (134). All in all, Marilyn Monroe was a contradictory yet amazing woman who is still seen as one of the greatest American actresses: She was very successful in creating new fashion waves and media coverage (either deliberately or not). She had an amazing skill at giving people reasons to talk about and that is the main reason why she is a real icon.

When we have a look at today's icons, it is possible to say that they are very good at drawing attraction and causing media coverage. Especially with the rise of new technologies, the power of media has become the only way to survive for an icon in the world of "a thousand icons." In the past, it could be easier to become an icon since it was easier to be heard. The struggle was real but easier to break through. Today, it is rather difficult to say something different since everybody is talking at the same time. That is why an icon has to push her/his limits and do the impossible. For example, wear a dress made of raw meat like Lady Gaga did in 2010. In my opinion, this was the one of most iconic moments of contemporary times since it summarized what it is to be an icon in the 21st century: She represented herself in the way the media, music industry, paparazzi, popular culture, ordinary people saw her: meat. A woman to look at and comment on, raw meat to process and turn into an issue of everyday talks. So she took the chance to give them what they really wanted in the first place. Instead of fancy dresses she chose to be covered in slices of raw meat and this way her performance became ironic and iconic. In another example, Britney Spears shaved her head in front of paparazzi cameras in 2007. Stephanie Marcus states that "Spears literally removed one of her most clearly feminine signifiers, one that was seen as 'desirable' on a pop starlet who had been sexualized from the get-go" (*Huffington Post*, 2017). By telling the world the truth and showing that life is not incredibly perfect for stars as the illusion the media tries to reflect, she gave up a piece of what made her a desirable female and created another iconic moment. Besides the fact that there are many more iconic moments people witness every day, it is possible to say that today an icon-to-be can distinguish her/himself and become a genuine icon by being herself and telling the truth in a creative way, which in fact equal to what icons throughout history have made in their own way and circumstances.

To conclude, it is possible to say that history and its representation has always been basically man-made. While men tried to establish an order where they ruled and enjoyed

coming up with a similar representation, women strove for their own alternative. To find female history, one has to read between the lines and try hard to hear the female voice. However, history also shows that women have never given up to establish an equal system in the world. They started with implications and went a step further each time, and it is encouraging to see that women today have the legal, economic, and political rights which doubtlessly could be improved in many areas to achieve equality in more realistic terms.

Studying the concept of icon in the historical context with a focus on Panofsky's iconology theory and relating iconicity to female identity has shown that icons have some common characteristics which can also be defined as iconistic features: Besides being powerful, representative, ideological, and informative, female icons are also mysterious, exemplary, self-made, victimized (by her own gift) and contradictory. These characteristics of the female icons mentioned in this section are indeed what made them unforgettable and survive until today. We may not pay attention to what they represent consciously and unconsciously as Panofsky states in his theory, we may not be aware of their iconographical analysis and interpretation. However, these are the key terms that make us choose a certain female celebrity over others as our mentor, leader, source of inspiration, or simply role model. Based on these common features, I intend to analyze six female icons in the next part. I will have an in-depth study of each female celebrity according to the literature study I have conducted in a comparative context that includes history, pop culture, and borders.

3.A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SELECTED FEMALE ICONS IN THE USA AND LATIN AMERICA

No soy yo la que pensáis,
sino es que allá me habéis dado
otro ser en vuestras plumas
otro aliento en vuestros labios,
y diversa de mi misma
entre vuestras plumas ando,
no como soy, sino como
quisisteis imaginarlo.

I am not who you think I am
but, over there, your pens
have given me a different nature
and your lips, another spirit,
and a stranger to myself
I roam among your pens,
not as I am, but as
you would imagine me to be.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz,
("Las inimitables plumas", translated by Melissa Wright)

This excerpt taken from Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's poem may be considered as the lyrical scream of a woman who thinks she is being misrepresented. She wants to tell about herself starting with the fact that what we know about her is totally wrong: It gives the reader a certain feeling of guilt since the poetess blames also the reader for the process she has undergone and become a stranger to her own self. What she is and what she sees of herself are not the same: She has changed along the way because she does not seem to be who she really is anymore, she is how we imagined her to be. This could be the speech of Sappho or Marilyn Monroe if they had the chance to talk to us today. They would probably be amazed at seeing how much they have been written about and analyzed. And then, they would probably say that all these versions are not who they are. The representation of women have always been complicated, and when it comes to the representation of female icons, this matter becomes even more challenging since there are many issues to consider: cultural context, mass communication, marketing, media, pop culture, entertainment, economics, politics among others. However, we still need to analyze the representation of female icons since they

are very powerful and they doubtlessly affect women: women dress, act, and even think like some famous women and this power is worth in-depth analysis.

In this chapter, I would like to make an analysis of female icons in the USA and Latin America comparatively. For this, I have selected three female icons from the USA and three from Latin America. From the USA, the selected female icons are Georgia O’Keeffe (1887-1986), Jacqueline Kennedy- Onassis (1929- 1994) and Madonna (1958 -). From Latin America, the selected icons are Frida Kahlo (1907- 1954), Eva Perón (1919- 1952), and Selena (1971- 1995). To be able to establish a clear comparison, I paired these icons as follows: Georgia O’Keeffe and Frida Kahlo, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and Eva Perón, Madonna and Selena. In the selection process, I was careful about choosing the female icons that could be compared in terms of their profession, their status in society, and the time they lived in: I paid special attention to the fact that each pair must have lived in the same period so that they can be compared in terms of cultural context or current world politics. In the research part, I try to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the main characteristics of the selected female celebrity? What makes her an icon?
2. Are her iconic features in line with the list I have come up with after literature review? Is she powerful, representative, ideological, informative, mysterious, exemplary, self-made, victimized (by her own gift), and contradictory? Does she have any other iconic features? What do other women think about her indeed?
3. How is she represented in the media?
4. How did she self-represent herself?
5. Are there any differences between the paired icons in terms of cultural representation? Is the cultural context a significant variable when it comes to female icons?

In the research part, I will try to answer these questions for each icon. I will analyse different types of media texts including newspaper articles, books, movies, documentaries, etc. Research questions 3 and 4 will seek answers to Panofskian questions of “What does the icon represent?” through an iconographical analysis whereas RQ 5 tries to clarify the matter of “What does the icon represent unintentionally? What does it stand for unconsciously?” through the stage of iconographical interpretation. Hence, after each pair, I intend to make a comparative analysis and reach some conclusions. Then, in conclusion, I will recapitulate all the conclusions with an emphasis on iconicity, representation, and female identity with reference to Panofsky.

3.1.GEORGIA O'KEEFFE and FRIDA KAHLO: ART AND TURBULENCE

3.1.1.GEORGIA O'KEEFFE

“Filling a space in a beautiful way, that’s what art means to me.”

Georgia O’Keeffe

(“Georgia O’Keeffe at 90” by Mary Lynn Kotz, 1977)

Georgia O’Keeffe (1887- 1986) is one of the most significant and innovative artists of the twentieth century. She is an internationally known artist whose art is still considered as pioneering for its many artistic contributions, such as distinct sensual flowers, dramatic city views, deserted landscapes, and lively bones. Her style is always considered feminine and according to many art critiques, even her brushstrokes were considered very womanly. She has always been important in art industry since she started her career. In 1939, she was chosen as one of the twelve most outstanding women of the previous fifty years. Nearly 80 years later, in 2014, she set a world record for “a work of art by a woman” after a bidder paid \$44.4m (£28m) for the Georgia O’Keeffe piece titled *Jimson Weed/White Flower No 1*. Her

art and her taste continue to be inspiring for many women today and in 2017 (March 3–July 23) there is an exhibition called “Georgia O’Keeffe: Living Modern” at the Brooklyn Museum because people, especially women, are still interested in the artist’s life and ideas. As the mother of modern American art, Georgia O’Keeffe is one of the leading icons of American culture.

One of the greatest characteristics of Georgia O’Keeffe was that she always preferred to paint instead of writing or speaking. That is why she always remained as a mysterious person. Her life had a lot of different angles to be considered, which made her an intriguing person. Her genius, wild soul, free spirit, love for the wild landscape, profound love for her husband, the famous photographer and art dealer Alfred Stieglitz, feminine brushstrokes, aura are some of the many issues to be considered while questioning her iconic character.

Born on November 15, 1887, on a farm in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, as the second child (and oldest girl) of seven children, O’Keeffe learnt to enjoy the limitless landscape and enjoyable feeling of being the queen at a very early age. These two things would mark her character throughout all her life: She would always feel a great attachment to the landscape where she could enjoy the feeling of liberation. The O’Keeffe grew up with great spaces, and the long sweep of the horizon was what she craved. As Roxana Robinson states, “The sense of limitlessness offered her liberation. It allowed her sense of self to expand infinitely, independent yet attached to something larger than the self” (361). This feeling of liberation could also be seen as the need to escape from it all and enjoy the nothingness of the open landscape whenever she had a serious problem in the city. Similarly, the feeling of the queen as the oldest and most liberated sister was perceived as natural by Georgia. She always referred to her situation as the distinct person among all the others: “I had a sense of power. I always had it” (Winsten, 1934, *New York Post*) This power would be the main stimulus that made her start all over when she had a breakdown or when she had to leave her beloved

husband. This was a driving force which could be directly related to the inner and natural power she always had even when she was a little girl. Apart from her freedom-oriented character, her role models also had a powerful impression on her character and her art. Tobi Zausner concludes that nearly all the women Georgia spent time with during her childhood signalled to power in a certain way: “Although O’Keeffe preferred her fun loving father to her stern mother, it was her mother, grandmothers, and unmarried aunts Lola, a school teacher, and Ollie, who worked for a newspaper, who became her role models as capable, assertive, and focused women. As she grew older, they formed the strengths necessary to maintain an artistic career, but in childhood they made her appear domineering to her siblings” (305-306). Similarly, Robinson also claims that all the women that surrounded Georgia during her childhood showed her that women could have interesting lives no matter what: “The women who surrounded Georgia in her early years were strong ones. She was taught, through example, that women were powerful and effective presences, that single or married, they could live interesting lives” (25). Hence, it could be said that Georgia’s childhood had a lifetime effect on her character, life, and art, since women around her and the place she grew up in led her to a life of responsibility, freedom, commitment and joy. The effect her childhood had on her art is quite clearly summarized by O’Keeffe herself: “I have things in my head that are not like what has anyone taught me – shapes and ideas so near to me – so natural to my way of being and thinking that it hasn’t occurred to me to put them down. I decided to start anew – to strip away what I had been taught – to accept as true my own thinking... I was alone and singularly free, working into my own, unknown – no one to satisfy but myself” (44). That feeling of liberation and her denial of unsatisfactory education can be considered a skill she gained thanks to the women around her. One of these women was her mother who always managed to do the right thing without letting discouragement bring her down. The feeling of being alone and coping for only herself are other

characteristics of her that she would rely on all her life, whenever she needed to make a decision between her stormy marriage and herself.

Regarding the relationship between O’Keeffe’s art and America, Lilian Cartwright claims that the painter, thanks to her attachment to the American landscape, was the one who could really see the essence of America:

Plain spoken and without verbal artifice, O’Keeffe’s power of perception and visual analysis were exceptional. Her major artistic quest to represent the patchworked, disparate, and diverse landscape we call America. She was a quintessential American product – and, in fact, did not visit Europe until her mid-60s. She was proud of that distinction. Her passion for visually coralling America ran deep, and she believed she knew America more intimately than the city man back East. She lived in the Midwest, the South, the cattle country of Amarillo, and the Southwest, as well as in New York city. She was excited about America and thought that if anyone could paint “the Great American thing”, it was she. (82)

Georgia O’Keeffe enjoyed knowing that she was the one who had the almost inner knowledge of the great America. She opposed the people who mentioned “Great American novel, Great American play, Great American authors, Great American everything...” when they had barely left the big city. That was when O’Keeffe painted the *Cow’s Skull: Red, White, and Blue* dated 1931; she wanted to create a real “Great American painting” for people who did not know anything about America.

Painting skulls could be read as a sign of her artistic and lively characters apart from her intention of reflecting the essence of America in an innovative way. O’Keeffe first painted a skull in 1930. According to her, bones did not signify death; in contrast, they symbolized life, and moreover, they were easier to paint since they could stand still forever. These delicate and complex figures “epitomized the desert, far more than any massive painting attempting to give the feeling of the vastness of space ever could. Most of all, she wanted to bring back to the east parts of the land that had also become part of her, so she could continue to keep it with her during the rest of the year. Throughout that summer she gathered the sections of carcasses, skulls, limbs, etc.” (91). Jane Souter discusses that bones are also a

symbol of O'Keeffe's attachment to vast landscapes. Besides the skulls, O'Keeffe's flowers also gained worldwide attention since they were interpreted in many ways, varying from representation of femininity to sexuality. O'Keeffe explained many times that she simply enjoyed flowers and tried to paint them as big as possible so that nobody could ignore their beauty. Bram Dijkstra in *Georgia O'Keeffe and the Eros of Place* claims that "O'Keeffe's paintings illuminate and celebrate the eerie beauty of the silences that fold themselves into nature's ability to overcome the closely guarded distances between our selfhood and what is Other" (6). This feeling of eerie beauty was quite visible in bones and not so visible in flowers. However, the feelings of distance and silence may be the leading characteristics of O'Keeffe's paintings. Robinson also agrees with the fact that "O'Keeffe's use of scale and distance was one of the certain elements that remained constant though O'Keeffe's art progresses through different stages" (459). Other elements were the matchlessly smooth textures and an essential simplicity.

When we think of O'Keeffe's art, it is also crucial to consider abstraction as another important feature of her paintings. The way O'Keeffe used abstraction and the way it has been interpreted has always been an issue of discussion throughout art history. According to Robinson, "O'Keeffe's abstraction seemed particularly arcane because her imagery was female, drawn from consciousness that was perfectly accessible to women but not always so to men. And though the female nature of her work was recognized at once, it was not perceived as the underlying element of the alienness that people found" (177). Since O'Keeffe never accepted to become a part of mainstream art or trends, her art and abstraction was always more open to interpretation than the works of mainstream artists. Robinson also draws attention to the fact that O'Keeffe's art was easier to be included in the category of "other" since it was always apart from the male mainstream. "This fact of alienness to the male tradition was responsible for a strand of hostility that would remain part of the complicated

skein of response to her work” (177). The response to her work was usually led by the disimnant interpretation that it simply symbolized sex in many different ways. O’Keeffe’s many attempts to explain that a flower was not directly related to a womb was most of the time in vain. People had a tendency to see everything she drew in a direct relation to sex due to two reasons: Firstly, they were not used to see feminine brushstrokes which probably stemmed from the fact she was the other in a man’s world. Secondly, and more importantly, the way her husband Alfred Stieglitz presented her in his photographs caused an infinite tie of Georgia O’Keeffe and sexualization: The display of Alfred Stieglitz's nude photographs of O’Keeffe in 1921 led many people and art critics to inaccurately think that her abstract work and flower images were representations of female anatomy and O’Keeffe’s own sexuality. “O’Keeffe consistently refuted claims of sexual content in her images. She insisted that she painted what she saw and this was true for her Ghost Ranch landscapes as well as her flower images. Many discussions of gender and O’Keeffe’s work are limited either to supporting or refuting these sexualized interpretations when in fact, gender is present in her work in far more subtle ways” (126). Cowley claims that such an association of O’Keeffe’s sexualization resulted in the fact that her work was overlooked in many ways. However, the fact that she was a perfect model for photography due to her aura and strange beauty should have been separately enjoyed from the fact that she was also a great artist.

Aura and charisma were dominant characteristics of Georgia O’Keeffe and they attracted many people including Stieglitz: Her hands, black hair and direct gaze were the physical features which added to her self-image, which was rather based on fundamental strengths such as a strong character, moral integrity, responsibility, ambition, honesty, determination, and talent. Moreover, smoothness and simplicity were elements that affected not only Georgia’s art but also her style. She never believed that women should be ornaments in a man’s world and she also supported freedom of movement and practicality even in her

clothing style. Thanks to her skills she made her own clothes, which were simple and severe, black or white, but always had a sense of style: Her clothes are even enjoyed today. In an exhibition in 2017, her style is still considered as inspiring and worth attention. Furthermore, in an article dated 2017, O'Keeffe is considered the "first art world fashionista": Georgia's various compositions in fabric "ranging from kimonos to tailored men's suits, and were captured by more photographers, ranging from Ansel Adams to Cecil Beaton (and even Andy Warhol). They remained central to her fame throughout her long life, and her style was carried over to the next generation by androgynous celebrities such as Patti Smith. A century after she established it, her signature look remains instantly identifiable, and, unlike Warhol's one-off hairstyle, it's still widely influential" (Keats, *Forbes*, 2017). According to Jane Souter, Georgia O'Keeffe's unique style should be taken as a sign of her feminism: "Another visible aspect of Georgia's feminism and breaking with convention was her choice of clothing. She continued to wear black with touches of white, even when she could easily afford to shop for the latest style outfits in colour. She sewed most of her simpler white garments, as a form of relaxation and to clear her mind so she could think. Yet the material she used was the finest: blouses were made of silk; her black coats and gloves were fashioned out of the best wool and leather" (73). Her style and the way it is studied today is one of the indicators that she is still regarded as an icon. Another iconic feature of Georgia O'Keeffe is the fact that she is regarded as an exemplary female by feminists. Cartwright draws attention to the fact that O'Keeffe was an active feminist for a long time: "O'Keeffe saw herself as an American artist who happened to be a woman rather than a 'woman artist'. She was active in the first wave of feminism and belonged to the National Woman's Party for 30 years. In one speech to the party, O'Keeffe encouraged women to develop their talents, become self-reliant through work, and take responsibility for their lives" (82). Besides the fact that she was not actively involved in

feminist propaganda later on, she was always considered as a significant symbol of feminism.

Roxana Robinson explains O’Keeffe’s effect on feminists:

For the feminists of the sixties and seventies, O’Keeffe’s life of independence served as an exemplar of feminist behaviour. The problems she faced were common to all women in the arts, though her solutions were pioneering and courageous. Her character seemed to embody those virtues – independence, strength, and dedication- that the movement extolled. It was hardly surprising that the women’s movement adopted O’Keeffe as a heroine; one group produced a feminist version of Leonardo’s *Last Supper*, with O’Keeffe in Christ’s place at the table. (509)

O’Keeffe as the Christ of the feminists is quite an iconic scene in which feminists summarize what O’Keeffe is to them. She is a true leader with her character and creativity. She embodied the ideal woman. Although there were many more active feminists fighting for equal rights at that time, O’Keeffe was appreciated simply for setting as an example of what a feminist should be like. Her influential work and character were enough to make her the Christ in the feminist version of *the Last Supper*. The letter she sent to Eleanor Roosevelt in 1944 is another proof of the fact that Georgia was a significant name for feminists according to Robinson: “It seems to me very important to the idea of true democracy – to my country- and to the world eventually – that all men and women stand equal under the sky- I wish that you could be with us in this fight” (508). According to her, the equality of men and women was something she had witnessed from the very early childhood since people working on the land had a sense of equality: everybody was working equally hard on the land and life should be the reflection of that. Then, why would men and women be considered differently even in the world of art?

The fact that Georgia O’Keeffe was seen as a feminist and a powerful character is also an indication of her contradictory character since she was also perceived as a very submissive woman when it came to men. Robinson, in her biography of Georgia O’Keeffe, mentions this submissiveness many times and with many different men. Starting from the time when she was an art student and she agreed to pose for a certain boy among others, O’Keeffe always

showed a certain amenability with the men she was in love with. Throughout her book, Robinson mentions many relations with many men (although some of them are nothing more than platonic relationships) and in many of these relationships, O’Keeffe “exchanged liberty for affection” (554). When Georgia was in love she was simply vulnerable just like everyone else and she gave up too much for both Alfred Stieglitz and Juan Hamilton, the young boy whom she hired as an assistant and to whom she left all her fortune just before she died. Robinson also brings up the issue of obedience when it comes to the fact that O’Keeffe wanted a child and never could have one because Stieglitz did not want a child arguing that she should devote her time to painting and she “would always be frail and physically at risk” due to her weak body (236). It is also worth attention that O’Keeffe could never leave her husband despite his infidelity with Dorothy Norman, a young investor for his famous gallery 291. I would like to take a look at the issue of submissiveness within the framework of another media text, a movie produced for television in 2009: *Georgia O’Keeffe*. Written by Michael Cristopher and directed by Bob Balaban, the movie focuses on the tormentous relationship between Georgia O’Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz. It starts with the scene Georgia O’Keeffe meets Stieglitz in his gallery and presents herself as the painter of the paintings hanging on the walls which turns out to be a true story mentioned also in Roxana Robinson’s book. Besides the fact that this movie quite briefly summarizes the relationship and does not analyze it as deeply as Robinson does in her book, it is possible to say that there are two different Georgias in these two media texts. The one in Robinson’s book is a submissive one; however, the one in the movie is a hesitant woman who seems like a more plausible representation of a powerful character like Georgia O’Keeffe. In the movie, O’Keeffe cannot divorce her husband due to the fact that she loves him and he is the person who contributed most to her art, in terms of emotions and also in terms of recognition. In such a strong bond between two people who are totally different characters yet alike, the main reason why a

strong woman cannot leave her husband is her love rather than conformity, in my opinion. The fact that Stieglitz contributed to her artistic career in terms of investment is a significant matter to consider within responsibility, morals, and dedication rather than submissiveness. The last main scene of the movie is a discussion between O’Keeffe and Stieglitz, where she tells him that he is not the one who made her become a real artist, “she is not nothing and will never be”: “She will still be an artist even when he is dead and buried”. In a nutshell, the movie reflects a rather more possible representation of Georgia O’Keeffe who could leave her husband and move to other cities enjoying her freedom and art although she could never divorce him because she simply loved him.

The reciprocal love of the couple can be considered one of the best-documented relationships of history. The compilation of letters was published as *My Faraway One: Selected Letters of Georgia O’Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz* in 2011. Sarah Greenough who worked as an editor summarizes the importance of these letters:

Passionate and poetic, vivid and compelling, the letters between Georgia O’Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz are a profoundly moving account of the lives of two of this country’s most celebrated artists and an exceptionally important source of information on twentieth-century American art and culture. Between 1915, when they first began to write to each other, and 1946, when Stieglitz died, they exchanged more than 25,000 pages of letters that describe in unimaginably rich detail their daily lives in New York, Texas, and New Mexico during the many months they were apart. ⁷

These letters are proofs to the love that derived from a real two-way bond rather than a relation that revolved around the issue of submissiveness. For instance, in a letter written on September 5, 1926, from Lake George, Alfred Stieglitz calls O’Keeffe “Sweetest-Heart-That-Ever-Beat”: “I have just read your letter. — It is a wonderful feeling that feeling which is all one’s own to know that you & I are truly one — Together I feel as never before — quite as one still much much more so” (402). Similarly, Georgia O’Keeffe talks of a kiss, which would be a simple thing for a married couple, in a very romantic way in a letter written in Portage, Wisconsin on July 27, 1928: “A very warm and quiet kiss goes to you — and

something much much more — something like a river running deep down under the surface of the earth — The word Wisconsin means Dark Rushing Waters or something like that — A kiss Dearest” (428). These letters are just two examples of the hundreds of letters which dealt with daily activities: Most of the time they just told each other what they did when they were not together. Deborah Solomon refers to these letters as a way “Stieglitz bared his injuries and wounds, O’Keeffe retained her armour of discretion” (2011, *the New York Times*). Hence, when considered within the framework of correspondence, the more vulnerable one can be seen as Stieglitz instead of O’Keeffe. Furthermore, regarding the relationship between Georgia O’Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz, I would like to raise the issue of turbulence which Roxana Robinson also mentions overlooking the fact that it was the driving force in Georgia’s life and art:

Turbulence had been the impetus of O’Keeffe’s greatest work. Her early passion for Arthur Macmahon had given rise to her first great series of abstractions. The rich, voluptuous flowers, the half-closed shells, the sensuous red hill, and the arching, ethereal skulls had all reflected the passion she shared with Stieglitz, its rapture and torment. But rapture and torment both diminished with the years, and as Stieglitz’s life moved toward its closing, and as O’Keeffe herself grew older, the turbulence between them lessened, the relationship quietened and deepened. When finally Stieglitz died and O’Keeffe moved to New Mexico, the turbulence ceased altogether, and its loss was evident in her painting. As she turned away from intimacy in her life, so she did in her work. 480

Turbulence may be a keyword for artistic inspiration. Alfred Stieglitz may have caused a deep sorrow in Georgia, and once he may have even caused a nervous breakdown, which made Georgia spend some time in a hospital, but he may also be the main source of inspiration for her art: He may have given her clairvoyance, he may have supported her with his artistic knowledge, he may have backed up for her in the art world, he may have helped her sell her art and live on it, he may even be the main reason why she left New York many times to be away and to enjoy her liberation. It is not possible to see a long time friend and husband

anything more or less than a source of inspiration, especially if this person had a relationship with an iconic character like Georgia O'Keeffe.

In a Panofskian analysis of Georgia O'Keeffe, it is easy to see the layers of her iconic representation. In the first layer, as an answer to the question "What?", we can say that she defines herself as an American female painter. When it comes to the second layer, that is, the secondary or conventional subject matter looking for an answer to the question "What does she represent?" it is possible to say that O'Keeffe was a woman who tried to survive in the male dominated artistic world with her feminine brushstrokes. She represents power. Among all the male painters trying to distinguish themselves in the highly competitive world of art, she could make it without imitating their trendy style, and this originality is what made her art survive until today. Furthermore, she is often referred to as the painter that reflects the real essence of America. In her self-representation, she also states that she knew America much better than many people who were stuck in New York as an arts center. Literary sources about her also show that she was a devoted wife. Thanks to her discreet nature, she did not mention her problems with her disloyal husband, Alfred Stieglitz. She simply went on with her life and art going away from him whenever they had problems. Her nervous breakdown is not often mentioned or referred to when studying her art. In the third layer of Panofsky's iconology, that is the iconographical interpretation, Georgia O'Keeffe unintentionally represents female sexuality. Besides the fact that she mentioned many times that she never intended to reflect female sexuality in her art, she could not put an end to the comments that even the flowers she painted looked like female genitalia. This could be due to the fact that she was presented as a woman who wanted to emphasize sexuality at the beginning of her career: When her husband held an exhibition of her photos which included many nudes as well, it served as a reference point for people. All Georgia O'Keeffe did from then on would always be perceived within the matter of female sexuality. It is possible to say that the way

O'Keeffe wanted to symbolize simplicity with her art, lifestyle, clothing, or speeches led her to be misunderstood. While she tried to make everything as simple as possible, she was misjudged for being a promoter of sexuality. However, it is also important to mention that this misunderstanding might have led to extra layers to her art and her character and may have created a process of her canonization as one of the best female painters in American art.

To conclude, the main characteristics of Georgia O'Keefe that make her an icon even today are her power, discreet nature, creativity, aura, charisma, style, feminist support, and contradictory character and all these characteristics are either consciously or unconsciously reflected by the artist. These are in line with the literature review of iconic characters since she was representative, exemplary, and contradictory. Her presentation in different media texts could be different, since representation is related to the receiver, the way s/he sees or chooses to see a certain character. In one media text, she is celebrated for being discreet whereas in another she is seen as submissive mainly because of her discreet nature. The ways she is interpreted may be diverse but the way she self-represented herself always emphasized her inner power. There are not many, in fact any, quotes where she declares that she suffers: she never complains, she just explains herself. In the photographs, she reflects beauty, power, and liberation. In her interviews, she is a very lively person talking about herself, her art and her world in a very sincere and natural way. She is encouraging and inspiring; anybody who dreams of taking action would certainly find the inspiration s/he needs reading a few quotes by O'Keeffe, looking at her art, or reading her letters. To sum up, she represents a powerful woman who encourages people to achieve their dreams: She is not very easy-going since she is discreet, she would not tell you all her secrets, but she means what she says. She is very much like an American woman who lived on the land, did everything herself and enjoyed every minute of it. This is exactly why she is seen as a good example for feminists.

3.1.2.FRIDA KAHLO

“I wish to be worthy, with my paintings, of the people to whom I belong
and to the ideas which strengthen me.”

Frida Kahlo

(in a letter to Antonio Rodriguez, 1952)

Considered as one of Mexico’s greatest artists, Frida Kahlo (1907 – 1954) was born as Magdalena Carmen Frieda Kahlo y Calderón on July 6, 1907, in Coyocoán, Mexico City, Mexico. Kahlo grew up in the family home which is later referred as the *Casa Azul* (Blue House). She was the third daughter of a middle-class Catholic mother of Mexican descent and a bourgeois Jewish father of German descent. Her father Wilhelm was a photographer who had migrated to Mexico where he met and married her mother, Matilde, a mestiza whose roots would probably affect Frida’s art. Frida had two older sisters, Matilde and Adriana, and her younger sister, Cristina, was born only one year after Frida. Around the age of 6, she contracted polio, which caused her to stay in bed for nine months. While she finally recovered from the illness, she limped when she walked because the disease had damaged her right leg and foot. Kahlo attended elite private schools and got a good education well until a serious bus accident at age 18 left her critically wounded. While she was trying to recover, she started to paint herself and her family members. Her unique style started to receive attention in her home country and worldwide. In the meantime, she married worldwide famous muralist Diego Rivera twice and had many surgeries in the aftermath of the accident. She died in 1954, at the age of 47. According to di Giovanni *et al*, “Kahlo's physical condition was so complicated by an addiction to painkillers and alcohol that, although her death certificate listed the cause of death as a Pulmonary Embolism, it was more likely a suicidal drug

overdose” (3). By the time she died, her work had been exhibited in New York, Paris, and Mexico. She had become an important figure in Mexico and worldwide.

Frida Kahlo’s life was marked by two serious incidents. She also refers to them two as the turning points in her life: “I suffered from two grave accidents in my life. One in which a streetcar knocked me down... The other accident is Diego” (Herrera, 1983a, 68). The streetcar accident was the one that left her with a broken spine because of which she had to undergo many surgeries for the rest of her life. Herrera writes that because of the accident “her spinal column was broken in three places in the lumbar region. Her collarbone was broken, and her third and fourth ribs. Her right leg had eleven fractures and her right foot was dislocated and crushed. Her left shoulder was out of joint, her pelvis broken in three places” (1983a, 51). However, this accident would also be the turning point of Frida’s life, since it made “pain and fortitude become the central themes of her life” (1983a, 51). Morrison draws attention to the fact that the accident may have shown Frida the centrality of death (which is a matter that Frida would mention a lot in her art as well in the forthcoming years): “Regardless, the accident had turned a high-spirited, happy schoolgirl, who loved to run and dance, to tease and joke, into a rigid, grim creature immobilized and enclosed in plaster casts and other devices and suffering constant pain. ‘In this hospital,’ she told Alejandro (her first lover), ‘death dances around my bed’” (9). Frida, unfortunately, would never totally recover from this accident. According to Lindauer, Frida’s medical history was such an important part of her life that it was directly connected to her art and marriage: “It is difficult to separate an analysis of the artist’s marital history from her medical history because interpretations of her paintings have converged these two aspects of her life into a single persona” (9). The accident and her marriage would always go hand-in-hand making her suffer and paint. Even the day she married the famous Diego Rivera, her father would remind the groom that “she would always be sick.” The couple married in 1928 against all the odds. Their tormentous marriage

would make Frida suffer even more. Herrera mentions that “Frida experienced a traumatic spontaneous abortion when she was 25 years old. Three years later, she felt betrayed and hurt when her mentor/husband Diego Rivera had an affair with her sister. Divorced from Diego at the age of 32 and remarried to him two years later, Frida submerged herself in a conflicted marriage” (1983a, 107). Although she really wanted, she could not have children since her body could not bear the weight of a baby. Furthermore, she always had to cope with the infidelities of Diego. Garber claims that the subjects of Frida’s paintings are mostly related to Diego Rivera and the effect he created on her with his actions: “The effects of her injury and infertility, combined with the emotional upheavals of her dramatic marital relationship with muralist Diego Rivera, are apparent subjects in many of her paintings. Her image occupies the central picture plane in most of her work, as both a physical and a psychological study of herself” (42). All in all, it is possible to say that Diego was a good friend and a bad husband with whom Frida was always in love with from the start until the end. Similarly, Diego thought Frida was his true partner and he died only three years after Frida’s death. Since Frida was quite a powerful character who seemed to have the inner power to say her thoughts out loud, the way she suffered for her love for Diego may be considered as an indicator of her contradictory character. Although she tried to leave Rivera as a result of her infidelities, she could never be apart from him. To her, “Diego was everything.”

Toyoda claims that Diego Rivera was the driving force behind Frida’s art: “Frida was no doubt distressed by her torturous life with Diego. Yet, without him, her works would never have been created. It is not clear whether she would have continued to paint, had her relationship with him not occurred” (67) Diego’s effect on Frida’s art can be considered in many ways starting from the fact that Frida first asked Rivera’s opinion about her art: whether she should keep on painting or not. Rivera encouraged her many times saying that what she did was different. Secondly, although Frida was always a very dedicated revolutionist, she

became a rather active “comrade” with Diego. Morrison mentions that Both Kahlo and Rivera were dedicated to the principles of the Mexican Revolution of 1910: “Both celebrated the revolutionary spirit in their art. Frida even tried to change the date of her birth from 1907 to 1910, when leaders like Emiliano Zapata, Pancho Villa, and Francisco Madero began the struggle that would end the repressive 35-year regime of Porfirio Díaz and transform the nation” (10). Similarly, Bakewell mentions that Frida became a figure not only in artistic but also in political circles: “With Kahlo’s marriage in 1929 to Diego Rivera, the most vocal and celebrated of all the Mexican muralists (almost none of them were women), she placed herself quite literally and intentionally in the center of this political avant-garde” (168). Thirdly, it was Diego Rivera who encouraged Frida to wear the colourful Mexican dresses which became her trademark in time. As one of her prominent features, her style would make Frida worth more attention: “After their marriage, Rivera encouraged Kahlo to adopt the colourful Mexican-Indian costumes worn by the women of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. For most of the rest of her life, Kahlo dressed in the Tehuana Indian manner, with flowing skirts and dramatic jewellery of silver and jade. She wore her hair swept up and decorated with ribbons, flowers, and combs” (39). This way, she made herself into a work of art and surely attracted worldwide attention. Alba Aragón summarizes the use of Tehuana dresses for Frida Kahlo:

For a woman forced to wear therapeutic corsets for much of her life, traditional loose-fitting garments might have represented a practical accommodation, since they were comfortably untailored and probably inexpensive to acquire and alter. (Perhaps they were also an endless source of ironic self-awareness, given the possibly difficult to ignore, constricting inner garments.) At the same time, their appropriation by Kahlo and her contemporaries was a move thoroughly informed by an understanding of fashion as a modern practice: indigenous garments offered a way to appear socially and politically *au courant* with Mexican post-revolutionary nationalism, but they also represented a characteristically hybrid, Latin American adaptation of hegemonic Western culture—in this case, the unconstrained silhouettes that became the norm in 1920s fashion. (532)

Hence, it is possible to say that the style Frida embraced was both practical and attractive. While she could comfortably draw attention because of her very colourful dresses, she also had the opportunity to tell about her ideas by the use of her own understanding of fashion. Baddeley also refers to Frida's dresses as a form of disguise and attraction: "For Kahlo, choosing to don the costume of Tehuana was to embody a powerful icon of cultural identity. Mexican Indian dress is extraordinarily diverse and by and large geographically specific, varying from region to region. The Tehuana dress is by no means the most decorative variant or the closest to pre-Hispanic forms of clothing" (13). All in all, Kahlo's adoption of Tehuana dress as a trademark of hers was an attractive disguise of what she saw as a less than perfect body and it doubtlessly asserted both a feminist and anti-colonialist position. In addition, according to Mulvey and Wollen, her style, especially her use of Tehuana dresses was a deliberate choice about her own sense of "rootedness" and "Mexicanness" to an extreme degree: "She was noted especially for her use of Tehuana costume- the long dresses of the women of Tehuantepec in Southern Mexico who enjoyed a mythic reputation for their personal and economic independence" (18). These interconnected reasons would surely transform her into an icon speaking for many people. Subsequently, the style that Rivera encouraged and Frida successfully adapted was also a very obvious representation of Frida's Mexican heritage. Frida was very proud of being a Mexican and she used many symbols from Mexican art in her paintings. According to Gerry Souter, "for all this progressive political dialectic and debate, Frida retained some of her mother's Catholic teachings and developed a passionate love of all things traditionally Mexican" (5). Apart from the effect of religious paintings on her art, Frida was mostly telling people about her Mexican roots in her pictures. In nearly each of her paintings, there are references to her Mexicanness, these symbols which are unknown to the international audience most of the times can be considered as codes waiting to be decoded. Helland summarizes the Mexicanness of Frida:

In Kahlo's particular form of *Mexicanidad*, a romantic nationalism that focused upon traditional art and artifacts uniting all indigenistas regardless of their political stances, she revered Aztec traditions above and beyond those of other pre-Spanish native cultures. She expressed her deeply felt nationalism by favoring in art the representation of the powerful and authoritarian pre-Columbian society that had united a large area of the Middle Americas through force and conquest. This emphasis upon the Aztecs, rather than the Mayan, Toltec, or other indigenous cultures, corresponds to Kahlo's demand for a unified, nationalistic, and independent Mexico. (398)

Many scholars agree on the fact that Frida's work can only be understood in relation to Mexican, especially Aztec iconography. The references to matters such as life, death, nature, and freedom are present in many different forms from masks to the symbols of oral stories, from the animals selected to the jewellery she wore. The use of Aztec symbols are existent in many Frida Kahlo paintings such as *Remembrance of an Open Wound (1938)*, *The Two Fridas (1939)*, and *The Love Embrace of the Universe, the Earth (Mexico), Diego, Me, and Señor Xolotl (1949)*. Udall explains the use of hummingbirds in Kahlo's paintings. According to the critic, Kahlo cherished the hummingbird's wider pre-Columbian associations: "Linked symbolically with the great god Huitzilopochtli, and with the rain god Tlaloc, the hummingbird is a multivalent image of courage, oracle, and magic. The Aztecs believed it to hang lifeless from a tree in winter, then to renew its youth as summer approached. Because Kahlo painted the hummingbird so insistently, with a wing shape that replicates her own dark brows, we must consider it as a metaphor of self" (12). The use of Mexican iconography emphasized Frida's cultural identity, but especially for the international audience, it created a stratum of hidden symbols which could be discovered only with a deeper interest in Mexican art. To interpret Kahlo's work without reference to her Mexican identity would surely result in an incomplete reading of her paintings. Similarly, to ignore the times she lived through, the traumas which led to a unique creativity, and her personal life would also cause an incomplete understanding of Kahlo.

In a nutshell, it is important to consider Frida Kahlo from different points of view: Frida in her marriage, Frida as a Mexican painter, Frida who experienced many traumatic incidents... Since all these are the elements that create her as an icon, it is important to keep in mind that the way Frida has been represented is as effective as the way she self-represented in her art. Despite her fame as a national figure and a striking surrealist (which she did not agree with) in art circles, many scholars agree on the fact that it was her biography, written by Hayden Herrera in 1983, that made people discover Frida Kahlo as an icon. Since this biography made people know about many milestones in Frida's life such as illnesses, affairs, miscarriages, abortions, love affairs, infidelities, and her passions, it also turned Frida into an international figure speaking for those who do not have a voice. Herrera herself believes that "Kahlo has become something of a heroine to U.S. feminists who admire the devastating frankness with which she recorded specifically female experiences-birth, miscarriage, unhappiness in love" (1983b, 4). Herrera's biography is a well-written and detailed story of Frida Kahlo. However, Herrera seems to overlook some important elements that created her iconic character. For instance, Kahlo is famous for using Mexican iconography, which is present in her paintings like a hidden treasure. Moreover, Herrera does not mention Kahlo's Mexicanness enough whereas she pays a lot of attention (more than enough, according to some scholars) to the incidents that turn Frida into a victim. In Herrera's representation, painting to Frida was a way of suffering and healing rather than showing her proud roots. Similarly, Garber also claims that there are some missing parts of Frida's jigsaw-like character in Herrera's biography: "Under Herrera's pen, the socio-political meanings of feminist art criticism are lost to a highly specific account of the biographical details of one woman's life. Her profile of Kahlo evolves into a morass of pain, psychological distress, drug and alcohol addictions" (46). For example, the pages where Herrera mentions *Henry Ford Hospital* by Frida which is a painting created at the time she had to have an abortion are

examples of the way she preferred to represent Frida Kahlo. Herrera emphasizes that *Henry Ford Hospital* is “the first of a series of bloody and terrifying self-portraits that were to make Frida Kahlo one of the most original painters of her time” (1983a, 143). Diego Rivera commented on her painting during this period that “Frida began work on a series of masterpieces which had no precedent in the history of art - paintings which exalted the feminine qualities of endurance of truth, reality, cruelty, and suffering. Never before had a woman put such agonized poetry on canvas as Frida did at this time in Detroit” (1983a, 144). As can be seen, Herrera does not mention the way Frida self-represented herself through mainly Mexican elements. Guzmán also draws attention to the fact that Herrera’s version of Frida “was a woman obsessed with a desire for children, with her husband and his artistic and political work” (2006, 239). Guzmán mentions that the way we could know more about Frida is thanks to the feminist and Chicano/a scholars who have shown us more about the Mexican painter with a clearer context:

Feminist and Chicana/o scholars have recuperated Kahlo from Herrera’s heteronormative terrain by highlighting her political work in support of land redistribution and the nationalization of private industries; privileged position in the Mexican Communist Party; activism in Mexico’s United Front for Women’s Rights group; ambivalent desire for children; and long-term romantic relationships with women. (2006, 239)

The movie based on Herrera’s biography which was released in 2002 was also another example of Kahlo’s representation: *Frida* was the title of the movie and Selma Hayek starred as Frida. It was after the release the release and worldwide acclaim (7.4/10 on *IMDB* as of 2017) of the movie directed by Julie Taymor that Frida became one of the leading figures in art, feminism, and Mexican culture. In this study, apart from this movie, I will also analyze another Frida movie, *Frida: Naturaleza Viva* which is a Mexican production. Starting with the Hollywood version, it is possible to say that it is much more colourful compared to the Mexican version. There is a certain representation of Mexico and Mexicanness that is based on the American point of view since the movie is a Hollywood production. One of the greatest

shortcomings of the movie was that the language chosen for Frida's life was English, actually, it was English with a heavy Spanish accent. According to Guzmán, Frida as a movie gives the audience what they expect from a Latina's life: "use of folkloric dress, vibrant primary colors, Spanish language folkloric music, and Hayek's body and performance of hypersexuality are all part of Hollywood's standard cinematic discourse for signifying Latina ethnic authenticity" (2006, 239). Guzmán also draws attention to the reason why the movie was rather contradictory:

Julie Taymor's film produced an interesting paradox. On the one hand, it provided unprecedented visibility to a woman and ethnic group generally erased within mainstream visual culture. However, the demands of global cinema shaped the movie's construction of authentic ethnic identity by locating Kahlo within socially acceptable and syncretic discourses of contemporary Latinidad. The use of accented English, tropical colors, indigenous cultural artifacts, folkloric Mexican music, and Hayek's eroticized Latina body evoked dominant panethnic constructions of Latina/o identity. 2006, 241

Thus, it is possible to emphasize that Frida was a "good" movie designed to be socially acceptable within the framework of a Hollywood production. The Frida we see in the movie is pre-evaluated by the American values and then presented to us. This surely caused the criticism by Mexican and U.S. Latina/o audiences since they thought of this as another form of exploiting Mexico. They also blamed Salma Hayek for selling their values to the Americans. Such a debate is still present in 2017 in online forums and comment sections of many websites. In these debates, the movie that is given as an alternative to the Hollywood version of Frida is the one titled as *Frida: Naturaleza Viva*. In this version, which was produced in 1983, Frida is portrayed by Ofelia Medina, a Mexican movie star who is not very well known to the international audience. This movie is rather fragmentary and it does not give the viewers enough context. Neither does it follow a certain timeline, and it causes a certain confusion for the audience who does not have enough information about Kahlo or Mexico. Compared to the Hollywood version, we see less of Frida's family. Frida is either alone or with her many lovers who may be both men or women. She also speaks less in the

Mexican version. The first time she says something as a full sentence is in the 48th minute of the movie when she defends Trotsky as “Trotsky también es un revolucionario (Trotsky is a revolutionary, too)”. This version depicts Frida as a genuine revolutionary paying great attention to the way she defends the necessity of freedom and peace in Mexico. This is a characteristic of hers which is less emphasized in the Hollywood version, probably due to the fact that it is an American production which talks to a more global audience who would rather hear less about Russia and communism. This Mexican version is also less colourful and less exotic since it is a real Mexican one which does not need to emphasize this identity. All in all, the Mexican version seems to be not for the people who are curious to know about Frida, but for the ones who already know her by heart.

When it comes to the self-representation, we can say that Frida Kahlo was very good at explaining herself: Her art, her unique style, her courage, or the way she explained herself always made her the center of attention. She was believed to have an aura which made her an extremely attractive person. In the documentary titled *The Life and Times of Frida Kahlo*, this aura of Frida is explained as a reason why she could attract many lovers, including some very beautiful women and even Leo Trotsky. Apart from that, her self-portraits and her diary which she kept at her death bed are to be analyzed in detail to better understand self-representation of Frida. According to Guzmán, “portraits and images of Kahlo emphasize her face, in particular her hyper-eyebrow as a signifier of ethnic – difference, feminine – strength, and intellectual rather than bodily work” (2004, 213). Herrera also refers to Frida’s self-portraits as forms of duality: “There is the tension created by Kahlo’s festive, becostumed exterior and her anguished interior. There is a split between her mask of control and the turmoil that thrashed inside her head. Even as she presented herself as a heroine, she insisted that we know her vulnerability. And while she was compelled to see herself and to be truly seen, she hid behind the mythic creature she invented to help her withstand life’s blows”

(1991, 4). This duality was the main reason why her art is so open to interpretation. This may also be the reason why Frida is embraced by so many different people all around the world. Edward Sullivan explains that Frida has become a role model for so many different groups since she symbolizes power and courage: Frida Kahlo is “a role model for many people—feminists, lesbians, gay men and others who were searching for a hero—someone to validate their struggle to find their own voice and their own public personalities. Frida, as a woman of personal and aesthetic strength and courage, met that need” (184). This is the feeling of struggle that different groups attribute to Frida and they take her as an example probably because she never gave up: she did not give up against her sickness or her disloyal husband. Marjorie Agosín summarizes Kahlo’s struggle as giving birth to blood: “As Frida Kahlo painted herself but she also unveiled the stories of women who give birth to pools of blood.... (Her painting) is the story of women between vigils and dreams, of those who, full of uncertainties, dare to know themselves, paint themselves and create themselves” (85). Hence, we can say that Frida gave voice to those who did not have a voice starting from women. By celebrating her pain and reflecting it as it is on the canvas, she becomes an international celebrity of pain and authenticity: “She offers a vision of reality and self that preserves all the pain and the wondrousness of non-coherence, of resistance to being subsumed to a single social or cultural category (such as female, human, adult, wife, Mexican), of being in process, of being bodied. So that Kahlo offers us a perspective through which a notion of the dividuality of personhood can come into view” (55) Latimer claims that Frida’s vision of reality and self has been so widely accepted that it has become the everyone’s reality: it cannot be diminished to a single self anymore because it has something to say in the name of everyone who wants to speak. It is appropriate for anyone and this surely lead to some consequences. As one of the main issues of iconicity, icons refer to so many different matters that this, unfortunately, leads to their loss of essential elements. Baddeley discusses that the

fact that Kahlo successfully reflected the *Zeitgeist* of her time caused her to be taken apart from her historical context which she cared a lot about:

This ‘appropriateness’ of Kahlo’s aesthetic to contemporary debate has tended to remove her work from its historical context, to stress the collective and the cross-cultural. Although this is not in itself to be dismissed as a tactic, it has diminished the complexity of Kahlo’s achievement as a specifically Mexican painter, operating within the particularities of her historical moment. More problematic is the way in which such a dislocation has led to the acceptance of her ‘Mexicanness’ as mere decoration of the essentially feminist themes of her work. (14)

Guzmán similarly refers to the fact that the “intellectual efforts by Kahlo to complicate both her identity and Latina body do not necessarily transfer into twenty-first century commodifying practices: Instead we get the reification of difference through the everyday commodification of her face in the form of earrings, shirts, and other mainstream products, and her intellectual labor is resignified as aberrant and exotic” (2004, 213). As Frida becomes a bigger part of popular culture, she loses from her ethnic identity which she proudly represented all her life. Every time she is reinterpreted in a media text, she is more international and, unfortunately, less national. The emphasis is on her dress rather than the Aztec iconography which she gladly used as the language of her paintings.

If we want to analyze Frida Kahlo in Panofsky’s scheme, the first object of interpretation would define Frida as woman, painter, Mexican. The question “What does she represent?” could be answered briefly as a wild spirit. According to her representations, this wild spirit seems to be the main source of energy that kept her struggling against her health and her love for her unfaithful husband. This wild spirit is also the main reason why she has turned into a phenomenon which has led to Fridamania. She became the voice of many groups that want to define themselves based on their distinctive spirits. When it comes to the third layer of Panofskian iconology, that is, the iconographical interpretation, a deeper analysis of Frida shows us that she stands for inner power. She also stands for love and suffering which

made her go into a never-ending battle throughout her life. Her life can be summarized as “her wild spirit versus her love and suffering”. She has mostly been represented as a proof of the motto “What does not kill you makes you stronger” and this led to ignoring her Mexicanness, a term she referred to in nearly every piece of her art and her other ways of self-representation including her house, physical appearance, and speeches. What is more, the possibility that she might have committed suicide is also overlooked. People simply do not want to accept the possibility that the female painter they admired for being free and creative despite suffering in different ways might indeed have chosen to end her own life. Frida unintentionally represents choosing life with its complications, struggling against problems and celebrating differences, being proud for being different.

To conclude, Mexican artist Frida Kahlo is an icon today for many different reasons: She is internationally famous for depicting pain, love, struggle and power in a unique way. She tells you about her pain in such a sincere way that you also see your own pain in the same painting. Anybody who has been long fighting against something or has been dreaming about standing up and fighting would feel better just by looking at a Frida painting. People see themselves looking at her. Secondly, her style is still worth attention. Her inspiring selection of cultural values and carefully created cultural identity led to her recognition as a fashion icon; today we enjoy wearing t-shirts with Frida prints because she means something to us even with the her flower crown, mono-brow, or monkey pet. She was an original woman from head to toe and she is celebrated for her originality even today. Thirdly, she is seen as a reflection of Mexico. The way she represents Mexico is very integrated into the way she represents herself. Any element somebody discovers in her paintings just adds up to this representation and self-representation interconnectedly and this surely brings along a certain feeling of mystery which leads to the desire of knowing more about her and her country.

3.1.3. GEORGIA AND FRIDA: ICONICITY AND ART

Now that I have analyzed both Georgia O’Keeffe and Frida Kahlo in terms of different elements such as their art, lives, cultural identities, and characters, I would now like to make a comparative analysis on their characteristics that made them icons using Panofsky’s theoretical schema. It is rather surprising to see that O’Keeffe and Kahlo met many times in their lifetimes. Some scholars even believe that they had some kind of chemistry and that Frida tried to flirt with Georgia. Another meeting of them that is worth mentioning is the time when O’Keeffe attended Frida’s exhibition in New York. Furthermore, in 1933, Frida Kahlo wrote to Georgia O’Keeffe who was hospitalized due to a nervous breakdown (brainpickings.org, 2015):

Georgia,

Was wonderful to hear your voice again. Every day since I called you and many times before months ago I wanted to write you a letter. I wrote you many, but every one seemed more stupid and empty and I torn them up. I can’t write in English all that I would like to tell, especially to you. I am sending this one because I promised it to you. I felt terrible when Sybil Brown told me that you were sick but I still don’t know what is the matter with you. Please Georgia dear if you can’t write, ask Stieglitz to do it for you and let me know how are you feeling will you? I’ll be in Detroit two more weeks. I would like to tell you every thing that happened to me since the last time we saw each other, but most of them are sad and you mustn’t know sad things now. After all I shouldn’t complain because I have been happy in many ways though. Diego is good to me, and you can’t imagine how happy he has been working on the frescoes here. I have been painting a little too and that helped. I thought of you a lot and never forget your wonderful hands and the color of your eyes. I will see you soon. I am sure that in New York I will be much happier. If you still in the hospital when I come back I will bring you flowers, but it is so difficult to find the ones I would like for you. I would be so happy if you could write me even two words. I like you very much Georgia.

Frieda

This letter shows that the two painters met several times and they had a bondage, a close friendship, and that they made promises to each other. They tell each other about their lives and even husbands. And most importantly “they think a lot about each other.” Popova makes

a point saying that “the simultaneous mirroring and reversing of circumstances pertaining to the relationship between art and mental health is really interesting” (brainpickings.org, 2015): Both Georgia and Frida had traumatic incidents in their lives and, all in all, these incidents seem to strengthen their places in art since the painters were even more creative thanks to these traumas.

Both painters are famous for their creativity and they are considered as role models not only for painters but also for women. Cartwright explains how Georgia O’Keeffe has become a role model for female artists: “The genius of Georgia O’Keeffe reflects her creativity (i.e. her authentic artistic vision) and her agency (i.e., her determination, ambition, resolve, and business acumen). She compelled us to enter the world as she saw it. Her status as an American modernist is secured. Another achievement is less visible but not less salient. She provided a role model for female artists, permitting them to pursue their visions with confidence” (80). It is possible to say that O’Keeffe has become an icon for not only female painters but all painters and women thanks to her genius and her character. Furthermore, she could make us see the world as she did. She also reflected America in such a creative and innovative way that she has become one of the best American painters who succeeded in reflecting its real essence. Similarly, Frida Kahlo could reflect the mirror image across the border. Even today, many people see that Latin America, or at least Mexico, cannot be reduced to tortillas, Latino music, or guns. Bakewell mentions that Frida Kahlo managed to show people all the faces of Mexico while explaining her own reality:

What was it to be Mexican – modern, yet pre-Columbian; young, yet old; anti-Catholic, yet Catholic; Western, yet New World; developing, yet underdeveloped; independent, yet colonized; mestizo, yet neither Spanish nor Indian? Frida in constructing for herself a subjectivity, identified with the contradictions of her *mestizaje* by combining together in her life and works of pre-Columbian and modern objects, Church and national icons, male with female, man with woman, Indian with European, art with craft, high with low, crossing from one strata to the other with little regard for such elite constructions of difference. 169

The fact that Frida reflected so many faces of Mexico has created the perception that Frida could speak for anybody; not only for Mexicans, not only for women who suffer, but also all the minorities who think they have not had the chance to speak their voice.

A comparative study of the works of these two artists show us that what they did can be considered as giving the audience an alternative of what they have been exposed to. For instance, in the United States of America, giving the viewers a hint of simplicity through vivid colours could be innovative and this was exactly what O'Keeffe did. In an era where art bombarded the viewers with abstract paintings, O'Keeffe gave people flowers or simple bones. On the other hand, for a Mexican painter, the innovation was to show people that Mexico was more than what they thought it was: It was an ancient culture, it was intensive colours, it was thousands of symbols they could never see if they do not know to read between the brushstrokes.

Apart from their innovative art, the two painters also had some similarities in terms of aura and style. Both painters were believed to be attractive although they were not very beautiful women; they could always draw attention. While Georgia O'Keeffe made her own clothes and had her own sense of fashion that is considered as groundbreaking even today, Frida also enjoyed having a unique style that became her trademark. Today even a small image of flower crowns or a mono-brow would make us remember Frida. Zarzycka mentions that Frida has become an international pop idol today: "She combines the status of an extremely well-marketed artist with that of an international pop idol, a fashion phenomenon inspiring Jean-Paul Gaultier or Moschino, a brand name used in a Volvo commercial, and, last but not the least, feminism's favourite role model" (73). Kahlo's international pop idol status causes obliterates her Mexican identity, which she gladly stood up for, as mentioned in the previous part of this study, but it is, unfortunately, an inevitable dilemma for icons. Another common point of these two female artists is the fact that both their marriages was a vicious

cycle of joy and suffering. They were both very much in love with their husbands who preferred to have lovers apart from their wives. According to Applebaum, both Georgia's and Frida's open marriages created a space of pain for the painters: "In the marriages of Kahlo and O'Keeffe, both women were in similarly intolerable positions; both were strong, independent, and brilliantly creative painters who found themselves in open marriages in which they seem to have been unwilling participants. While neither of the women was sexually monogamous, they appeared to be far more wounded by what was occurring. (It may even be that the sexual affairs of the women were in response to those of their husbands – but this is only conjecture)" (95). Their reactions to their disloyal husbands may be quite different: Georgia did not want to talk about it or ignored it, distanced herself from her husband by going to the countryside, whereas Frida confronted her pain and reflected it openly in her paintings. She also had many affairs, including Leo Trotsky, which can be a response to her husband. Although their reactions were different, there is no doubt that these marriages led to a creative space for both artists. They were able to learn how to speak in their own language. Applebaum claims that they had different languages in their art: "O'Keeffe projected herself through carefully, and probably unconsciously, designed symbols. She touched the archetype, and opened a door for the viewer to walk through, and also reach to touch, and be touched. Kahlo also spoke her own language. The difference is that her desire was for you to see her. She was the creature of the mirror; she must be in control both of what she projects and what the viewer absorbs" (98). As we can see here, Applebaum links their art directly to their characteristics: Georgia's discreet nature made her art discreet also whereas Frida was open in explaining her art since she was also an open person in explaining herself. However, we can also add that the symbols Frida placed in her paintings are the elements that brings her art a certain feeling of discreetness.

To conclude, we can say that both women were unique in their own ways with their innovative art and charisma. Their characteristics were in line with their creativity which just added up to their iconicity. Souter mentions that Georgia O’Keeffe did not even need to sign her paintings:

Today, when one mentions Georgia O’Keeffe, the reaction is usually, ‘Oh, I love her work.’ What comes to mind are the delicacy of a lily or the smoothness and simplicity of an animal skull. She had a way of seeing the beauty in a simple line; in her early days she struggled with the battle between what she wanted to paint, and what she was expected to paint. She never signed her paintings. She did not have to. When we see an O’Keeffe, we know it’s an O’Keeffe. (153)

That may be one of the best implications of iconicity. Georgia O’Keeffe was so unique, so different from others, that there was not even a need to distinguish herself from others: she would be seen not by her signature but by her brushstrokes, colours, and simplicity. Similarly, a Frida paintings without a signature would be guessed as a work of Frida’s. The way she created her own reality ended up not only as a form of self-knowledge but also an *anima mundi*. Carlos Fuentes in the introduction to *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-portrait* emphasizes that Frida simply identifies us: “Through her art, Kahlo seems to come to terms with her own reality. The horrible, the painful, can lead us to the truth of self-knowledge. It then becomes beautiful simply because it identifies our very being, our innermost qualities” (15). Frida was so talented at explaining the pain of a woman, an artist, a simple human being that in the end it is the pain of everybody who suffered and could not speak. This is one of the most significant elements that her makes her icon.

3.2.JACQUELINE KENNEDY-ONASSIS and EVA PERÓN: ICONICITY OF THE FIRST LADIES

3.2.1.JACQUELINE KENNEDY-ONASSIS

“And it will never be that way again. There’ll be great presidents again, but there’ll never be another *Camelot*.”

Jacqueline Kennedy

(“The Camelot Interview

- For President Kennedy: An Epilogue”, 1963)

Jacqueline Kennedy-Onassis (1929-1994) was born in South Hampton, New York as Jacqueline Lee Bouvier. She was the daughter of John Vernon Bouvier III (known as “Black Jack”) and Janet Lee. Always educated at the best private schools, she was a very successful student and she wrote poems and stories, drew illustrations for them, and studied ballet. Her parents divorced in 1940, her mother started a new life and married for the second time. John B. “Black Jack” Bouvier was a stockbroker whose finances were as erratic as the stock market. According to Adler, Jackie really admired her father: “Jacqueline adored him, and they maintained a close relationship, even after her parents separated and then divorced” (18). Similarly, Leaming emphasizes the importance of the fact that Jackie was really fond of her father: “Years later, Jackie’s first husband would laugh that she still suffered from a major father-crush. Since girlhood, she had worshipped Black Jack for the very things that her disciplined, driven, mercenary mother was not...Jackie savored the worst in him, especially the compulsive womanizing that had doomed her parents’ marriage from the outset” (9). What made Jackie like so father so much would probably be the reason why she was so attracted to John F. Kennedy years later.

When Jackie was a student at high school, she traveled extensively, and she spent her junior year in France. These experiences abroad made her feel a great empathy for people of

foreign countries, especially the French. In 1951, she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in French literature from George Washington University and started working for the Washington Times-Herald as an inquiring photographer. Soon she met Senator John F. Kennedy and although their romance progressed slowly and privately, their wedding at Newport in 1953 attracted nationwide publicity. When Kennedy was elected 35th President of the United States, Jackie became the First Lady and she also became one of the most important political figures for many reasons. When Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, Jackie was by his side. After his husband's sudden death, Jackie moved out of the White House with her two children and started a completely new life which included a second marriage to Aristotle Onassis in 1968. After a successful career as an editor, Jackie died in 1994 at the age of 64.

Jackie Kennedy can be considered as an icon for many reasons. In an article right after her death, Sarah Crichton briefly summarizes why she was an icon for many people all over the world: "No one woman can ever embody all our dreams. But we fell in love with Jackie in a simpler time. When we wanted to grow up to be princesses, she was our princess. And later, when we wanted to be independent, she was independent. And she was always one step ahead, and one step better. She made it all look so easy, when for the rest of women it always seemed so hard -- the mothering, the wifing, the beauty routine, the 'staying interesting' thing" (*Newsweek*, 1994). According to Crichton, the biggest reason why everybody, especially women, were so fond of Jackie was the fact that she could do everything with a great skill for adaptation. She was always an idol, a source of admiration and an exemplary character: Whatever she did, she excelled at it. Similarly, Schwalbe explains why Jackie was so loved around the globe: "When a 1962 Gallup poll asked what qualities Americans liked about the First Lady, these words and phrases occurred most often: 'attractive, pretty, good-looking'; 'good personality'; 'intelligent, educated'; 'makes a good impression abroad';

‘interested in culture’; ‘a good mother’; ‘friendly, warm’; ‘a good mixer’; ‘poised’; and ‘sweet, nice’” (112-123). I would like to analyze the characteristics that made her an icon who is still remembered and, more importantly, admired even today.

Firstly, Jacqueline Kennedy was a very stylish woman. She was always known for her fashion sense. Kaite mentions that “she was twice voted the world’s best-dressed woman” (176). She had a unique style that was copied by many women all over the world. According to Alam, one of the reasons why she was so careful and meticulous about what she wore was the fact that she was very well aware of her power as a representative of a nation and a generation: “Representing a new generation as she was only thirty-one and the third youngest First Lady to reside in the White House, Jackie at the very outset in her official role as First Lady of the United States insisted upon the latest designer fashions to satisfy her taste. She chose Oleg Cassini, a dress designer, to provide new wardrobes for her almost every week so that she could wear and showcase them at various state and other official functions” (30). Cassini created some styles that were in line with Jackie’s interest in art and history. Her clothes were “very much a revival of the 18th–19th century neoclassical; though Cassini frequently made reference to Egyptian fashion and the Nefertiti-style, the clothing that he, Valentino, and Halston designed for Jackie were clearly not pharonic, but rather inspired by the archaic, classical or ptolemaic, merged with eastern iconography” (54). The haute couture fashion created especially for Jacqueline Kennedy became one of the First Lady’s prominent features. She surely drew more attention thanks to the dresses designed especially for her in line with the events she attended. Sultan also mentions that the main reason for that was Jackie’s aim to become America’s muse: “Jackie imagined herself as America’s Greek muse, projecting the message of the simple beauty, youth, and vitality of the Kennedy Administration through visual metaphors drawn from neoclassical themes inspired by Old Master paintings and 18th–19th century literature, art and architecture” (49). Hence, it is

possible to say that Jackie believed it was her duty as the First Lady to represent the nation in the best possible way: She herself was a part of the cultural development that America as a nation was supposed to go under JFK's government and the best place to start this was her wardrobe. Once in the White House, Jackie always worked to turn the White House into a social and more importantly intellectual center. It was also during Jackie's time that people saw what was inside the White House. After the renovation, Jackie starred in a documentary that was produced to show people the latest renovations. *A Tour of the White House With Mrs. John F. Kennedy* was incredibly successful when it was broadcasted. Jackie was quite skilled in reflecting that her main aim was to communicate that "everything in the White House should be the best," as she said in the programme. She was radiant, very happy to show that she made a great effort to carry out the renovations and she could also give the message that she really cared. According to Schwalbe, "an estimated 46 million people—three out of every four television viewers that night—watched the tour, which aired simultaneously on CBS and NBC. It also turned into an international hit when the USIA, in coordination with the American networks, distributed 16-mm, English-language prints to 106 countries, including much of the developing world and 6 countries behind the Iron Curtain" (116). It is possible to say that Jackie was a very smart woman who knew the power of the media. That way, she helped her husband's career while making the White House a better place. In my opinion, this is one of the many examples that show that Jacqueline Kennedy was a very intelligent woman who knew well how to use her assets. For instance, Jackie also acted as an exemplary American in her travels. When she travelled to Paris with her husband, she drew so much attention that during this European tour President Kennedy introduced himself as "the man who accompanied Jacqueline Kennedy to Paris." The First Lady of the United States became everybody's sweetheart thanks to such travels. Schwalbe mentions that Jackie became such an icon that the American government started to consider her a source of soft power: "As First

Lady from January 1961 until November 1963, Jacqueline Kennedy dazzled the American public with her intelligence, charm, and traditional femininity. Millions of people around the world were captivated as well by this beautiful young mother, who spoke several languages and adored art, music, and history. They came to know Mrs. Kennedy not only through intense coverage in the popular media but also through propaganda efforts orchestrated by the U.S. government” (111). Jacqueline Kennedy as an intelligent, elegant, and beautiful woman charmed everyone and became influential on the global public opinion. She became an icon of soft power thanks to her beauty and charisma and during hard times of the Kennedy administration, she served as one of the most important elements of soft power.

Apart from the fact that Jackie was beautiful, stylish, and charismatic, she was also a very powerful woman. She showed this power during the hardest times when her husband John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas. Adler mentions that Jackie was powerful enough to be able to stand by the new president as he took the oath: “After the assassination, Jackie was asked by Kenneth O’Donnell if she wanted to watch Lyndon Johnson take the oath of office. She said: ‘I think I ought to. In the light of history, it will be better if I was there’” (135). Similarly, she refused to change her pink suit, which was covered in her husband’s blood. All day she was in that pink suit which made all the scenes even more iconic. Lubin explains that her pink suit has become an important landmark in American history: “Jackie’s Chanel suit has become a legendary piece of clothing in American history, for even after it was soaked in her husband’s blood she refused to change out of it for the long flight with his body back to Washington. When Lady Bird delicately suggested she might feel more comfortable in a fresh outfit, the newly made widow fiercely refused, explaining, ‘I want them to see what they have done to Jack’” (118). To be able to face the pain and rage in such a moment in such a powerful way is one of the biggest proofs of her power. She simply wanted to show people that she could take all this pain and accept it gracefully. Furthermore,

although she was devastated, she probably thought that being present at that moment of history would be better for the nation and it would also cause less rumour. Hence, she preferred to be there instead of crying in a corner. Alam also mentions that Jackie was incredibly powerful in the first few days after the assassination: “Through all these traumatic days, Jackie never for a moment lost her public composure. Jackie even instructed her aides, J.B. West and Pierre Salinger to have John, Jr.'s birthday celebrated in the usual way even though it coincided tragically with the day when President Kennedy was buried. Similarly, Jackie along with her close associates, also celebrated her daughter Caroline's birthday two days later” (49). These days are also depicted in the 2017 production *Jackie* starring Natalie Portman. Written by Noah Oppenheim and directed by Pablo Larrain, *Jackie* covers the short period Jacqueline Kennedy spent in the White House as the First Lady with a focus on the days after after the assassination. It can be considered as an ode to Jackie's power and thoughtfulness: she makes decisions not only on her feelings but also her rationale. She considers not only her good but also other people. Similarly, after the assassination she chose to spend the first few days not mourning for her late husband but restoring his image. Since she thought she needed to do something so that people would remember him in a certain way instead of “as a poor president who was killed”, she decided to create the legend of Camelot, which was a very successful attempt. Many of the articles or books written about John F. Kennedy have references to Camelot in the headline.

Right after Kennedy's assassination, Jackie, seeing that papers started to portray John F. Kennedy in a negative light, decided to have an interview with Theodore White about her husband. White explains the importance of this interview and how it affected the way we remember John F. Kennedy even today:

Even amidst the trauma and grief of the days following the assassination, she worried that historians – ‘bitter, old men’, as she described them – would judge her late husband uncharitably. Hence she resolved to shape how JFK was remembered by granting a *Life*

magazine interview to Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Theodore White. In the interview that took place only a week after the tragic events in Dallas, she told White that JFK was a fan of the Alan Jay Lerner– Frederick Loewe musical *Camelot* and that he liked to listen to a recording of it late at night. One line, in particular – she said – was meaningful to him: ‘Don’t let it be forgot, that once there was a spot, for one brief shining moment that was known as Camelot.’ At the end of the interview White quickly wrote the article, Jackie Kennedy edited it, and he phoned it in to his editors at *Life* magazine. When one of those editors suggested that the article made too much of the Camelot theme, Jackie Kennedy, who was in the room with White, shook her head to indicate that she wanted the Camelot theme to remain salient. (2013a, 239)

The way Jackie took control of the situation and created the Camelot theme is one of the examples of her smart and thoughtful behaviour. Since she very well knew the power of the written word, she wanted to create a myth that would keep her husband alive the way she wanted. This way, her husband (and maybe indirectly also her) would be remembered not by the scandals or extra-marital relationships but by the legendary atmosphere they created in the White House, the United States, and the world. White claims that this attempt was quite successful: “By early 1964, she had already shaped how JFK would be remembered in the popular imagination with her use of the Camelot legend. She would soon shape the initial scholarly assessments made of her husband’s presidency by editing the manuscripts” (2013b, 97). This process is also depicted in the movie *Jackie*: Jackie mentions that “characters we read about are much more real than the ones that stand by us” and this may be the main reason why she wants to talk to the press after the assassination. It is the first scene where she complains about the articles written about her husband. This may have caused her to think that she should write what needed to be said if everybody was going to speak ill of her late husband. There are also many scenes where she implies she would be the one to control the interview. Although she seems to grow weak in some moments, she always recovers her inner strength and continues to live. Peter Bradshaw reviews the movie as varnished with good taste: “This is a portrait of Jackie Kennedy, well and conscientiously played by Natalie

Portman; it imagines her stunned, stricken existence in the days between President Kennedy's brutal assassination and his state funeral: a period that the film sets out to evoke almost moment by moment, with wordless lonely scenes in corridors, looming closeups on faces, amplified conspiratorial whispers, poignant memories of banal happier times" (*The Guardian*, 2017). The happier times were mainly *A Tour of the White House With Mrs. John F. Kennedy* flashbacks or Camelot times which Jackie wanted to experience one last time just before she moved out of the House. The scenes where she gets dressed in the middle of the night and celebrates good old days are like a reference to the fact that Jackie wants to face her sorrow: this is the only way she can recover.

Besides the fact she was a very smart and powerful woman, Jacqueline Kennedy never chose to be a feminist. She embraced her role as a wife and mother. Even the fact that she was the First Lady of the United States was the second role she enjoyed most. Schwalbe mentions that "although her interest in foreign cultures, the arts, and historic preservation reinforced her image as a modern woman, Mrs. Kennedy held a traditional view of her role as wife and mother" (113). Maj also draws attention to the fact that according to Jackie a woman could only realize herself as a wife through her husband: In her oral history, Mrs Kennedy suggests that women should find their sense of purpose through their husbands, and that the traditional style of marriage is "the best": "It seems to me that a woman always adapts, especially when she is getting married young and unformed. She becomes a woman, the way her husband wants to see her" (87). Such a belief may have led her to believe that she had a perfect marriage regardless of her husband's infidelities. Jackie ignored Jack's extra-marital affairs, mostly focusing on the positive aspects of their marriage. Adler shows that Jackie believed she had an ideal marriage in her own words: "I know my husband was devoted to me. I know he was proud of me. It took a very long time for us to work everything out, but we did, and we were about to have a real life together. I was going to campaign with him. I know I held a

very special place for him— a unique place... Jack was something special, and I know he saw something special in me too...The three years we spent in the White House were really the happiest time for us” (104). According to Jackie, the affairs her husband had with other women could easily be passed over in silence since they were a manner of “working everything out”. Such an implication is also present in the movie *Jackie*: Throughout all the movie, there is not a single reference to John F. Kennedy’ affairs, Jackie only says “He would always come back to us.” While Dixon mentions that Jackie’s “acceptance of her father’s philandering made it easier for her to handle her husband’s with the magnanimity that she did” (7), Alam refers to the possibility that for Jackie it was of greater priority to embrace her roles as a mother, a lady, and the First Lady: “Although Jackie was aware of the rumors of her husband’s womanizing habits, she chose to ignore them as much as possible and put greater priority in fulfilling Jack’s vision of starting a ‘New Frontier’ in American society and in helping the President in all possible ways to fulfil his pledges to the American people. For Jackie, attending and working on Jack’s physical and political well-being were more paramount than his supposed infidelity” (30). However, it was not only rumours; there were hard facts such as the time when “John F. Kennedy left her eight-month pregnant wife and went to the French Riviera essentially for extra-marital sex. It was a difficult time for Jackie Kennedy as she was eight-months pregnant and worried – worried because she had already suffered a miscarriage in the first year of her marriage. This time she was forced to undergo a caesarian operation and gave birth to a stillborn child. For a time her condition was critical” (2013a, 245). White also draws attention the fact that John F. Kennedy “was chronically unfaithful to Jackie Kennedy with prostitutes, secretaries, and actresses such as Marilyn Monroe, Angie Dickinson and Jayne Mansfield” (2013a, 244). Similarly, Leaming mentions Kennedy’s brief affair with Marilyn Monroe, which was quite scandalous, including Monroe’s sensual singing to the President on his birthday:

Less edifying, perhaps, but in its way equally typical of the Kennedy years, was a Democratic fundraiser in the form of a forty-fifth birthday tribute to JFK, which was held a week later in New York. Instead of Jackie, who chose not to attend, the star of the occasion was Marilyn Monroe. The actress sang 'Happy Birthday' in a manner that Jackie's old nemesis, Dorothy Kilgallen, described to newspaper readers as 'making love to the President in direct view of 40 million Americans' watching on TV. (74)

It is quite startling to see that a powerful and smart character like Jacqueline Kennedy, who was very skilled in creating news coverage, preferred to remain silent and ignore it all when it came to her husband's affairs. In the ideal world she created, in Camelot, there seems to be no scandals: Everybody is happy and for women it is enough that their husbands always go back to their incredibly happy families and it is all worked out.

According to the iconological interpretation of Panofsky, Jackie could be defined as an intellectual woman in the first layer. Looking at the way she has been represented in different media texts, the Panofskian question "What does she represent?" could be answered as she was a good wife who was into arts. Her education, her speeches, her image, and her self-representation all reflect a feeling of intellectuality. As a good wife and as an intellectual, she reflected taste in all areas of her life including the way she renovated the White House and tried to turn it into an arts center. All in all, she is the perfect figure to be proud of for Americans. When it comes to the iconographical interpretation, we can say that Jackie unintentionally represents the woman who is always by her husband's side no matter what. She gladly accepts second place after her husband regardless of her skills. Her main goal is to be a good wife and a good mother as she referred many times. She takes the initiative only when needed, like the time when the Kennedys visited different countries or when she led the organization of her husband's funeral. She is the embodiment of the good wife who is mostly ladylike with an inner power that comes to surface only when needed. This may be the reason why Jackie remains as a character many women identified with her in 1960s. She was the

representative of women who were mostly housewives and who preferred to stand by their husbands even when they were expected to compromise by making a concession.

To conclude, we can say that Jacqueline Kennedy was one of the most impressive characters that passed through the White House. She was beautiful, smart, intellectual, stylish and, most importantly, she was powerful. With her experience in media industry, she knew how to control the content in the media and she did her best when it came to the image of the White House and her husband. Her own image was also very carefully and successfully created as people today still remember her as a fashion icon and as a powerful woman who stood by her husband's side at his best and at his worst. Regardless of her passive position when it came to her husband's extramarital affairs, she was one of the best examples in history to show women how to be by a man's side even when he was dead. According to Maj, "without any doubt, Jacqueline transformed the role of the First Lady and became a golden standard against which other First Ladies would be measured" (180). Kaite also mentions some of the significant points that turned Jackie into an icon: "her peculiar status as youthful and educated First Lady, as a fashion icon in the emergence of the televisual age, her strategic refusal to speak much while in the White House, and her refusal to address publically the assassination, all conspire to make her a particularly ripe figure for celebrity canonisation and cannibalisation" (176). In the case of Jackie, it is possible to say that the way she self-represented herself very much affected the way she was represented. This may be directly related to the fact that she was aware of how the media really functioned. At many crucial moments, she used the power of the myth and created iconic moments that would people remember. That could be one of the main sources that made her iconicity go global and survive even today.

3.2.2.EVA PERÓN

“Wherever Perón is, and wherever my descamisados are,
there, too, will be my heart to love them with all the strength of my life
and with all the fanaticism of my soul.”

Eva Perón

(In My Own Words, 1996)

María Eva Duarte de Perón (1919 – 1952) was the First Lady of Argentina from 1946 until her death in 1952 as the wife of Argentine President Juan Perón (1895–1974). She is usually referred as Eva Perón or Evita. She was born in the rural village of Los Toldos, in the Pampas, as the youngest of five children. She was an illegitimate child since her mother was not legally married to her father. At the age of 15, she moved to the nation's capital of Buenos Aires, which is also called “Big Apple” since she wanted to become an actress. She met Juan Perón in 1944 at a charity event organized for the victims of an earthquake in San Juan, Argentina. The two became a couple immediately. They would go through some hard times soon since Juan Perón was imprisoned. After he was released, the two were married. Juan Perón was elected President of Argentina in 1946. The next six years, Eva Perón became quite powerful. She was always by her husband’s side as the First Lady and she was an active one making speeches, she even founded a foundation in her name to be able to help the *descamisados*: the working class, the poor and the needy. When she died at the age of 33 due to cancer, she was called “Santa Evita” in her country. Eva Perón became one of the prominent figures in Argentina and in Latin American History. There are many biographies, movies, novels about her. There is even a musical (a rock musical) about her life which has been staged for a long time with revival tours all around the world. All these show that Eva Perón was and still is an icon: I would like to take a look at the features that made her an icon.

Firstly, it is possible to say that what made Eva a real legend was the fact that she was a mysterious woman. According to Page, the feeling of mystique she has transferred to people made her attractive: “Among her fellow Argentines and foreigners alike, she has provoked love and hatred, admiration and contempt, fascination and indifference, and last but not the least, a thick cloud of bewilderment. Her capacity to stir these responses is central to the mystique that continues to surround her” (3). This could be directly related to the fact that there have been many myths created around Evita’s life. She can be considered as one of the most mythologized characters of the twentieth century. The way she is depicted in different books is so various that it is not possible to come up with a single side of Eva Perón. After reading the literature about her, it is possible to see that some of them reflect Evita in a very negative way. Compared to the negative ones, there are few media texts that reflect Eva Perón as a powerful woman, a dedicated feminist, a respectful First Lady and the embodiment of the modern woman. A study of the literature about Eva Perón shows that there are many myths surrounding her character which also prevent us from seeing the real Eva Perón. These myths mostly start with the one about Eva’s past: “According to rabid Evita-haters, she worked as a prostitute to support herself during her years as a struggling actress in Argentina’s ‘Big Apple’” (5). Page mentions that people preferred to see her as an ex-prostitute to come up with an excuse for disrespecting her. This prostitution issue is slightly referred in many texts as her way to use certain men in order to become famous. Even in the worldwide famous Evita musical and *Evita* the movie, which is based on the musical, Evita is reflected as a woman changing lovers all the time: once she finds a better man, she leaves the present one. Furthermore, there are many other myths about Eva including Evita the Nazi, Evita the Saint, and Evita the Real Power Behind Perón. Among these, the most significant one would be Evita the Saint (Santa Evita) which started with Eva Perón’s embracing the poor and the needy through her foundation. When she died, she was widely accepted in the country as a

saint, and Juan Perón asked the church for his wife's canonization which was turned down. Navarro explains that "she was a Virgin-like figure... she was the childless mother who became the mother of all the *descamisados*, the Mater Dolorosa who 'sacrificed' her life so that the poor, the old, and the downtrodden could find some happiness" (1982, 62).

Another feature that made Eva Perón an icon was her style. As a beautiful woman who tried to become a star once, Evita knew how to use her physical features to draw more attention. Navarro explains how Eva Perón created her style:

She plunged into her life as First Lady as if it were a role, like the ones she had performed on the stage and in films. Her keen eye for theatrical effects was particularly useful in molding her public image, and she was most careful of her hair, by then bleached blonde; her jewels; extravagant hats; and elegant clothes. Although she knew that the oligarchy criticized that image, she sensed that the *descamisados* approved of it, and indeed they looked at her with a strong feeling of self-satisfaction and pride. Furthermore, at a time when the radio first became a powerful means of communication in Argentina, Evita found herself in possession of a very special talent. Having worked for so long in soap operas, she was comfortable in front of a microphone. (1977, 237-238)

Her understanding of glamour made her create her own style, with blonde hair and haute couture clothes, which was one of the reasons why the oligarchy criticized her. However, she enjoyed having a very luxurious style. According to Bourne, "as the glamorous wife of the President, dressed in the most expensive Paris dresses and with costly jewelry, she also offered ordinary people a colourful fantasy for their own escapist dreams which reinforced the image of the Compañera Evita" (283). She tried to show her *descamisados* that it could be possible to become a First Lady with jewelry, fur, or silk clothes although she was one of them. She always emphasized the fact that she was a *descamisada* herself, she came from the streets and realized her dreams on behalf of all the struggling people.

Besides her charisma and her style, Eva Perón was also a very powerful character. Page draws attention to the fact that "during the seven scant years she held center stage in her native land, Eva María Duarte de Perón was called the second most powerful person in

Argentina and the most powerful woman on the planet” (3). She enjoyed power and she reflected power in many areas of her life. She was an open and outspoken woman and both her people and her partner liked these characteristics of her as Page explains: “Evita was open, uninhibited, and outspoken, qualities that he (Juan Perón) liked. Instead of fading into the woodwork when the colonel invited military, political, and trade-union associates to their apartment, she sat in on their meetings and did not hesitate to offer opinions” (7). She did not accept to be a reserved First Lady, as the previous ones, and she became a political figure herself. When Juan Perón was imprisoned, she did all she could to save him. According to Taylor, “risking her life, she went out into the streets to attempt the impossible: engineering Perón’s return to his people and to her” (73). This legendary interpretation led to her perception as “Evita the Power Behind Perón.” To some scholars, it was Evita who organized the *descamisados* and made them protest in Buenos Aires. However, some other scholars, like Navarro, argue that “contrary to what has been stated repeatedly both in Peronist and anti-Peronist works, Evita did not play a major role in the events of October 17. After Perón was arrested, afraid for his life and her own, she left their apartment and slept at friends’ homes. In the daytime, she tried desperately but unsuccessfully to get a writ of habeas corpus for his release” (1977, 262). Eva Perón also addresses those days in her own book, *My Mission in Life*. Once Perón was sent into jail, she says she did all she could: “I rushed into the streets looking for friends who might still be able to do something for him” (28). In the end, she again stresses the fact that the people who helped her was the *descamisados* and not the rich: “As I went down from the proud and rich districts to the poor and humble, doors began to open more generously with more cordiality” (28). No matter what was Eva Perón’s real role during this phase, it certainly added up to her popularity. She became the loved and hated First Lady. Viladrich and Thompson claim that Eva served as a bridge between Juan Perón and people: “Evita entered the government under the guise of a distinctly feminine role,

designed not to compete with her husband. She decided not to be a 'typical First Lady' but to act as a 'bridge' between the people and government, playing the role of mother, martyr and angel of revenge for her *descamisados*, particularly against the aristocratic and ageing Society of Benificence" (344). As a very young woman who finds the inner power to oppose the aristocracy and embrace the working class, the fact that Eva Perón was a very powerful woman resulted in Eva's success: "Eva could appeal to the working class because her message was effective in the sense that it identified deeply-felt working class demands, proposing a particular course of political action to address them. But equally important, she embodied values that were central for the working class and in this sense it was an active agent in her transformation into a leader" (161). Patroni mentions that Eva could create a deep impact on the working class due to her inherent knowledge of working class values besides her powerful character. Apart from her intermediary role, she was also accessible for her *descamisados*. Once turned down by the aristocrats' Society of Benificence, she went on to found her own foundation. Navarro explains that Eva Perón's power became much more visible after she founded Fundacion Eva Perón in 1950: "The nature of Evita's power is perhaps best explained by the Fundacion Eva Perón, her own private social aid foundation, whose funds she controlled exclusively and whose explicit objectives were to complement the social goals of Perón's government" (1977, 239).

Another iconic characteristic of Eva Perón was the fact that she was an ideological character. To some people even today, Eva is the embodiment of Peronism, which is one of the main reasons why people simply dislike Eva Perón without even considering what she meant to do for her country. From the day she started giving speeches till the day she died, Evita always followed the ideology laid down by her husband. She had no political views of her own, she adopted Juan Perón's ideas and never even questioned them. In her two books, *My Mission in Life* and *My Message*, she repeatedly emphasizes that she learnt everything

from Perón. Actually, the way she refers to Perón in her speeches and texts turns Perón into an ideology, a belief, a concept rather than an actual man. She is so dedicated to him that to her Perón is everything, a phenomenon. Some scholars think that Eva was more Peronist than Perón himself. This may be related to the gratitude Eva felt for Juan Perón. The way Juan Perón included Eva in his life was quite different from the other First Ladies. According to Barnes, Juan Perón opened the way for Eva to gain power: “At the start of his presidency, he had given her a desk and few chores to do at the Ministry of Labour. Within two years she was virtually running the country” (111). Juan Perón also made it possible for her to fight against the aristocrats. Flores mentions that the reason why she fought the oligarchy of Argentina may have derived from her childhood: “It is certain that she would have used her position to humiliate them, for her resentment had its roots in the humiliation of her own youth, as the pattern of revenge has since made clear” (100). In the movie *Evita*, Eva similarly says “Screw the middle class, I will never accept them” even as a young girl. Whatever her reason was, she gained the power to fight against them thanks to Juan Perón. What she really did was to discover such a power of the First Ladies and make it compatible with her inner power. Navarro summarizes how Eva Perón became so dedicated to Peronism: “Moreover, he included her in his political life. His heavy schedule generally ended with a round of daily meetings with politicians and fellow officers in his apartment. Contrary to what women were expected to do in such circumstances, Evita was usually present. She did not leave after serving coffee but sat and listened. In these meetings as well as through her conversations with Perón, Evita discovered a very different world from her own. She found herself sharing and defending his ideas” (1977, 230). In a very short time, she becomes a fanatic of Perón and she mentions this proudly in her book *My Message* which she was believed to have written in her deathbed: “...we will defeat them. They have money, privilege, hierarchy, power, and wealth..., but they can never be fanatics... because they have no heart. We do” (58). She also

mentions that she had two main missions in life: “I don’t know which was more worthy of a small life like mine, but my life in the end – one, to fight for the rights of my people, and the other, to watch Perón’s back” (56). Even in her last words, she emphasizes the hostility of the oligarchy drawing attention to the fact that they are always behind Perón’s back. We can say that apart from Peronism, which she adopted through her husband, she also had her own ideology which was openly anti-oligarchy. *In My Mission in Life*, she mentions her long fight with the oligarchy:

As for the hostility of the oligarchy, I can only smile.

And I wonder: why would the oligarchy have been able to reject me?

Because of my humble origin? Because of my artistic career?

But has that class of person ever bothered about these things here-or in any part of the world-when it was a case of the wife of a President?

The oligarchy has never been hostile to anyone who could be useful to it. Power and money were never bad antecedents to a genuine oligarch.

The truth is different. I, who had learned from Perón to choose unusual paths, did not wish to follow the old pattern of wife of the President. (60)

Hence, according to her own ideology, there were many reasons why there was a longtime conflict between her and the oligarchy: Perón was not included in this conflict indeed, she depicted herself fighting against the oligarchy for many reasons, varying from her humble origin to her artistic career, or for not following the old pattern of the First Ladies. Although she did not say it out loud, it is possible to say that she had her own ideology of “Evaism” besides Peronism.

As one of the characteristics that can be attributed to female icons, Eva Perón was also contradictory. According to Navarro and Fraser, she could be aloof in some occasions and very gentle in some others: “She, who could be arrogant and rude with those who threatened

her as rivals or intellectual superiors, was with these petitioners unfailingly gentle and courteous” (123). It can also be seen in her books that she had no mercy on the oligarchy whom she perceived as enemies of herself and Juan Perón whereas she was very caring and thoughtful about her *descamisados*. She worked without pause to answer everybody’s needs because people got used to visiting her in her office: every day, many people went to her and they could talk to Eva in person. Another matter that signalled to her contradictory character is her approach to feminism. In her book, *My Message*, it is possible to see that women mattered to Eva Perón. Whenever she mentions the people she loves, or the people who need her, women come in the second place right after *descamisados*: “I love the *descamisados*, the women, the workers of my people too much, and, by extension, I love all the world’s exploited people, condemned to death by imperialisms and the privileges of land ownership, too much” (49). She also mentioned the importance of women in her speeches. Actually, she was an important figure in bringing up the issue of female suffrage. Donna explains why Eva Perón still cannot be considered as a feminist: “Eva Perón played her first public political role in the battle for female suffrage. Before her trip to Europe, Eva delivered in January 1947 a series of radio speeches advocating suffrage, but not from a feminist perspective. Instead she described herself as Perón’s most dedicated servant. In March Eva exhorted women to take to the streets to demand their rights and defend their homes” (157). Thus, we cannot say that Evita was a full defender of equal rights. She was rather interested in female participation in voting so that her husband would be even more powerful. Similarly, Carlson mentions that Perón defended female suffrage trying to persuade men that women would not become manly:

She promised men that, after enfranchisement, women would not become masculine or overbearing. In fact, she said, the right to political participation would make women more feminine and attractive; they would be Peronist partners to their men. Patriotic Argentine women would place God, country and Perón above their individual desires. And poor women, she promised, would no longer suffer from hopeless deprivation and humiliation in an unjust society dominated by the oligarchy. (189)

To conclude, we can say that what she did for women was really significant since women could get the right to vote in the end and her efforts were crucial in this process. However, her main reason for all these efforts was not providing women with an equal world where they would enjoy their legal rights. She did it to make her female *descamisados* loyal Peronists whose votes would count.

When it comes to the iconicity of female characters, it is equally important to consider the way they were represented in media texts. Especially for a legendary character like Eva Perón who has been mythologized in many different ways, it is rather spectacular to see these representations. Tomás E. Martínez, in his novel *Santa Evita*, says that Evita has become a story, a tale that has been told so many times and in so many ways that she is not what she said or did anymore, “she is what they say she said and what they say she did” (8). Finding everything on Eva Perón rather dubious, he writes about the corpse of Eva. He tells the fictional story what happens to her after she dies.

Another representation of Eva Perón worth mentioning is the movie *Evita*. Directed by Alan Parker (1996), the movie is based on the libretto of the 1970s British musical of the same name. The lyrics which were written by Tim Rice were actually based on another media text, a book titled as *The Woman with the Whip* by Maria Flores, which was indeed the pseudonym of a historical novelist Mary Main. *The Woman with the Whip* is believed to contain a lot of negativity about Eva since it provided a lot of anti-Peronist ideas. In a nutshell, it is possible to say that the movie is the adaptation of a musical which, in turn, was the adaptation of a book that is known as anti-Peronist and thus included a lot of made-up negativity about Eva Perón. However, all these adaptations made people know about Evita since American productions are quite successful in worldwide distribution. Furthermore, they are considered more interesting since their budgets are quite high which results in better productions. This could be one of the main reasons why Parker’s *Evita* is more popular

compared to its Argentinian equivalent: Desanzo's *Eva Perón* (1996). Another reason can be the fact that Madonna starred in the American version, which contained more scandalous scenes. De Grandis briefly compares the two versions: "If Parker's *Evita*, through Madonna, portrays *the femme fatale* in her quest for political power, driven by an unrestrainable ambition that her bastard origin enhanced, Desanzo's *Eva Perón* depicts, through Ester Garis, a revolutionary woman – Evita Montonera" (249). De Grandis also draws attention to the tendency of watching "spectacular politics" and enjoying it (256). Such a tendency would result in more people choosing Eva the *femme fatale* over Eva the revolutionary, which would leave us in the vicious cycle of scandalous lives of the politicians, women, and overall celebrities.

The fact that *Evita* as a 1996 production keeps being the most popular movie among all the versions, including the latest one titled as *Eva No Duerme - Eva Doesn't Sleep* (2015), may also be related to Madonna. Besides the fact that the musical version was also quite popular, the main reason why movie *Evita* has still been popular can be directly related to Madonna's superstar fame as Marta Savigliano notes: "Madonna as a surface/screen superstar, projects an unspecified image of Evita, invading Evita's own strong personality, historical depth, and cultural characteristics with a spectacular blurring of boundaries. She dissipates Evita's national and historical specificity as she renders visible a transcultural Evita in terms of universal woman-ness" (158). The myth of Eva Perón is blended with Madonna's own myth and aura, which ends up in collective memory, although all the movie is a two times adaptation of a book that is known as an anti-Peronist one. When it comes to Eva Perón, the power of iconicity and its results in representation are very visible. Similarly, when it comes to the books written by Eva Perón herself, we again see the power of myth and iconicity. Her second book, *My Message* is a controversial text since some people think it was not written by Eva herself. Page explains the dispute over the manuscript: "Most of the

revolutionary language of 'My Message' may be interpreted as being consistent with Perón's own views, which if nothing else were highly flexible and adaptable to any circumstance or necessity. To the extent that 'My Message' may depart somewhat from what Perón said or wrote, two hypotheses may be offered: Evita may indeed have expressed these thoughts, or someone else doctored the text to make it lean to the left" (38). After studying the language used in the book, the signatures of Eva Perón on every page of the manuscript, and talking to the witnesses who were with Eva Perón when she was lying in her death bed, scholars still cannot come to a conclusion: we are still left with a question mark whether the text is an original Eva Perón manuscript. However, it is not surprising anymore since any media text about Eva Perón is mysteriously contentious: you never know how much of it is true.

Analyzing Eva Perón according to Panofskian iconology scheme could give us signs of what she represents intentionally and unintentionally. A woman and a proud *descamisada* according to the practical experience that signals to the first layer of interpretation, Eva Perón has been represented as a loser who can make it to the top in many media texts and literary sources. The question that explains the secondary layer of meaning around Eva Perón can be answered as she is the symbol of *descamisados* for whom she lived and struggled. However, she also tried hard to be successful and make her way to the most important position as a woman: president's wife. When it comes to analyzing what she represents unintentionally, we can say that her misrepresentation in most media texts originate different myths about her and because these texts are also the ones that are most popular, it leads to her misconception as a woman who could do anything to succeed. The way she made use of different men is a story told over and over in different representations of Evita and it has become a part of her reality. The question "What does she represent unintentionally?" could be explained as a success

story realized with questionable means. She is always questioned for her shadowy past, her love for Perón, her dedication to *descamisados*, her charity work, and even her death.

To conclude, Eva Perón has been an important female icon with her characteristics: she was mysterious, she was charismatic and stylish, she was powerful and ideological, and maybe most importantly, she was contradictory, which helped all the Eva Perón scholars very much in creating the many myths of Evita. It is possible to see disputable matters in iconic representations; however, arguable self-representations are another level that signal to never ending iconicity since each myth will just add up to the cumulative literature. Eva Perón has exactly managed that.

3.2.3.JACKIE AND EVITA: ICONICITY AND FIRST LADIES

In this part, I would like to draw a comparison of the two First Ladies in terms of iconicity. I intend to compare Jacqueline Kennedy and Eva Perón as presidential wives and their iconic features. In his article titled “The First Lady Reconsidered: Presidential Partner and Political Institution”, Robert P. Watson identifies three main ways presidential spouses make political influence: They may have direct influence through practices such as lobbying or writing speeches; they may stay behind-the-scenes and only serve as lover, confidante, and partner; they may become a public figure, which includes attending events, entertaining dignitaries and traveling overseas. In terms of these three ways, we can make a comparison between Jackie and Evita. Firstly, it is possible to say that direct influence as the First Lady was not an option for Jacqueline Kennedy. She preferred to stay out of politics. Besides the fact that she was an important figure, she chose not to transform herself into a political one. When her life is analyzed, politics is not an issue that comes up a lot in her presentation. On the other hand, Eva Perón was all about politics. She was one of the most important political figures in Argentina although she was not officially in politics: “By the time she died, on July

26, 1952, she was undoubtedly the second most powerful political figure in Argentina, though she held neither an elected post nor an official position in Perón's government” (1977, 229). Navarro emphasizes the fact that the way Evita was political was a deliberate choice since she made a great effort to be able to become a political power making speeches and trying to become the leader of her beloved *descamisados*. Here it is significant to note that although both First Ladies acted as exemplary icons, the issues they were role models of were quite different. To many people, Jackie was an exemplary role model of the First Lady who was an ideal wife and mother whereas Evita was a role model as a female leader. Page mentions why Evita is an important figure for female empowerment in Argentina: “Given the enormous political imbalance that had previously existed between the genders in Argentina, the power that she was able to exercise and the way she encouraged female involvement in political activity represented a quantum leap forward for Argentine women” (17). Similarly, Page explains that Eva Perón was a beacon of hope for women, especially the ones who never enjoyed any form of empowerment through economic means, the *descamisadas*: “Juan and Eva Perón represented the aspirations of working-class people and appeared to women to be sincerely determined to improve their lives and working conditions and, most important, to have the real ability to make these improvements. It was not until Perón took office that most women had any real hope of a decent education and economic security for themselves and their daughters” (190). Although both icons are criticized by feminists for not being real feminists, what Eva Perón did in terms of women empowerment is undeniably important, in my opinion.

Watson’s second role as a presidential spouse applies to both iconic first ladies. They were both good wives and exemplary First Ladies. However, it is not possible to say that they stayed behind-the-scenes which is a natural result of their roles as public figures. Both Jackie and Evita were impressive public figures which strengthened their husbands’ positions as

leaders. To start with, Jackie was the perfect public figure for the United States as a smart, intellectual woman with good manners. She had a great style, which is still remembered today. Sultan discusses that she was a fashion icon with her great taste in clothes: “These clothes not only made the woman, but the woman made the clothes. Jackie designed many of her own outfits and knew how to wear the clothes, how to stand, how to move in the clothes so that her classical sources shined through” (53-54). That may be one of the main reasons why her pink Chanel suit became so iconic the day her husband was murdered. Lubin explains why people got so shocked to see the stained Chanel suit that day:

Because it was presidential blood and because first ladies had seemed until now to exist in a world magically sealed off from the messy stains of daily life and suffering—but also because in 1963 the item of apparel known as the Chanel suit was just about as solid a symbol of bourgeois female chic as could be found anywhere in the Western world. By wearing a Chanel suit, a woman gave notice that she was smart, classy, and independent. No one would have expected to see such a garment bloodied like a butcher’s apron. (118)

Hence, when people saw the stained suit, it was also the time when they witnessed the collapse of an ideal world: In the magic kingdom of a handsome king who was married to the most beautiful queen, death was possible, and real. Similarly, Eva Perón showed the world that death was real also in the real kingdom: the reality she had created with her great efforts collapsed with her own death. De Grandis claims that in Argentina the real leader of the masses was Evita: “Who is the leader of the masses? Perón? Evita? Clearly, Evita was” (250). After her death, Perón would remain as the president for only three more years. Then, he was exiled and would have to wait for 18 years until he could come back to power. Evita’s death is considered as one of the main reasons why Perón lost power.

As another element that made them public figures, it is possible to mention public acceptance through intellectuality. White mentions that “Jacqueline Kennedy, to many Americans, signified cultural sophistication – more specifically, French sophistication” (130). Jackie was a key figure when it comes to sophistication: she has a degree in French literature,

she could speak foreign languages, was interested in the history of art, interior design and classical music. She was the perfect person to promote the artistic face of America. On the other hand, Evita was considered as a shame by the Argentinian upper classes: “Her lower-class origin, illegitimacy, supposedly stormy love life before 1944, and notorious affair with Perón created an unsurmountable barrier between her and them once he was elected president in February 1946” as Navarro puts it (1977, 232). She always looked for social acceptance especially by the Argentinian elite and never received it. Her ambition for political acceptance can be related to her search for social acceptance.

The way they controlled their images can be seen as another point to consider in the comparison of the two First Ladies. While Jackie successfully controlled the narrative of her husband and herself, Evita failed at this. Regarding her husband’s affairs, Jackie did never speak, and frequently implied that “her husband always went back to his family”. Similarly, when John F. Kennedy was assassinated, Jackie again used the power of media to create a myth out of Kennedys in the office: She referred to the myth of Camelot, which to this day remains as one of the prominent figures in the history of John and Jackie. On the other hand, Evita was not very skilled in controlling the narrative that was created around her. This triggered the propagation of very different myths about her. Today, there are countless media texts about Evita, and there is nearly no concrete information: anything that is said about Evita results in more mythologization of Eva Perón.

To conclude, Jacqueline Kennedy and Eva Perón are two important figures who are still considered as icons for different reasons. They may share some common features such as being powerful, charismatic, exemplary, smart, and contradictory. However, the reasons why they are attributed these iconic features are quite different. Jackie was the perfect American First Lady who was the ideal mother and a president’s intellectual wife who made Americans proud, Evita was the controversial Argentinian First Lady who had a shadowy past but

promising future with her dedication and ambition. However, the reasons why they are legendary do not change their positions as iconic First Ladies.

3.3.MADONNA AND SELENA: ICONICITY AND POPULAR CULTURE

3.3.1.MADONNA

“I’ve had 20 years of fame and fortune, and I feel that I have a right to an opinion on what it is and what it isn’t. All everyone is obsessed about at the moment is being a celebrity. I’m saying that’s bullshit and who knows better than me?”

Madonna

(Interview with Q Magazine, 2003)

Madonna is a famous American singer, performer, actress, author and businesswoman. Madonna Louise Veronica Ciccone was born in Bay City, Michigan, on August 16, 1958, to Silvio “Tony” Ciccone and Madonna Fortin who had Italian and Canadian-French descents respectively. Madonna’s father was an engineer and her mother worked as an X-ray technician. The couple got married in 1955 and Madonna was born three years later as the third of six children. Madonna’s parents, especially her mother, was a devout Catholic. Madonna even refers to her mother as a “religious zealot.” Growing up with Catholic iconography – including her mother's statues of the Sacred Heart, the habits of the nuns at her Catholic elementary school, and the Catholic altar at which she and her family prayed – would always have an effect in Madonna’s life and be present in her work. Madonna’s mother died of breast cancer in December 1963, aged 30. Madonna, who was only five years old then, was devastated by her death. Although her father married again, Madonna would always

feel the lack of her mother, which created a feeling of loneliness that would come up many times in her music or performance.

Although she was a very successful student, Madonna dropped out when she was a university student at the University of Michigan to move to New York because she wanted to become a star. When she was still a novice in New York, she was raped by an unidentified man and this also one of the turning points for her. Although she was very disturbed, she knew she had to go on with her life, which was centered around becoming a star. Since dancing, which was her main passion at the time was a very disciplinary form of art and it did not pay well, she decided to try her chances at singing. In 1981, Madonna decided to go solo after spending some time with a group and hired manager Camille Barbone of Gotham Records to help her get her singing career on track. Since then, Madonna has changed many managers, producers, companies, but something has remained the same: she is one of the leading female artists all over the world. As of 2017, she has had 13 albums, acted in 21 movies and has done 10 tours. She has produced movies, directed two, and even won two Golden Globes. She has also written a soft-pornographic book called *Sex* and a series of children's books. To this day, she is also a very successful businesswoman who has a record company, a clothing line, and even a skincare product line to launch.

She is the mother of 6 children as of 2017, two of whom she gave birth and four she adopted from Malawi where she founded "Raising Malawi" foundation. Her charity work has been criticized and praised, just like all her actions. She has always been talked about and followed. According to Douglas Kellner, "Madonna had the most impact in the United States on the social construction of identity, fashion, and sexuality" (264). It is possible to say that this impact is global rather than American as she has been a global icon for decades. Actually, she is one of the first names that come to mind when you mention the word icon for many reasons which I intend to analyze in this section.

To begin, Madonna has been a pioneer of many issues regarding music, art, and even culture. The way she wrote, produced, and performed music has always been a matter of cultural studies. John Fiske comments that “Madonna, who has been a major phenomenon of popular culture throughout the late 1980s, is a rich terrain to explore. Her success has been due at least as much to her videos and her personality as to her music—about which most critics are disparaging. It is also significant that her fans and her publicity materials, along with journalistic reports and critiques, pay far more attention to what she looks like, who she is, and what she stands for than to what she sounds like” (2011, 95). As one of the most studied and analyzed celebrities, it is no wonder to see that every move she makes has been overanalyzed in books, articles, and different media texts. Literature study shows that Madonna successfully controlled and rather manipulated the news coverage created about her; it is possible to say that she co-created the content of Madonna, which resulted in a Madonna universe where her fans and scholars follow her closely to either comment and take action.

One of the iconistic features of Madonna that her fans most look up to is her style. In her universe, throughout her career, she has adopted many different styles since she aims to rule the industry and pop culture with the idea of novelty. Blanco discusses the way Madonna has been going through constant change:

Madonna uses clothes as a cultural signifier to communicate her persona du jour. She is the creator of numerous personae expressed through her career in the guise of virgin, boy-toy, whore, material girl, pregnant teen, glamor diva, femme fatale, geisha, ethereal girl, priestess, cowgirl, soldier, and more. Fashion critics, designers, and scholars have discussed Madonna’s influence in pop culture and fashion, from her 1980s thrift-store look to the underwear-as-outerwear trend of the early 1990s, and the Far East styling of her 2009 Sticky and Sweet tour. Her ability constantly to transform her persona has been analyzed utilizing postmodern, feminist, deconstructive, and popular culture approaches among others. (1153)

Nearly in every album she embraced a brand new style that would be inspirational for her fans. For instance, just as people got used to seeing Madonna as a lifetime blonde, she changed her hair to her natural dark hair. Furthermore, right after a very glamorous look in

Bedtime Stories and *Something to Remember* she went on to change to a very natural look that is unpretentious in *Ray of Light*. According to Brown, “Her constant changes of image help keep her audience guessing, as do her ambiguous lyrics, cryptic song titles, and predictably unpredictable offstage behavior” (5). Apart from the fact that her looks is complementary to her image, Madonna also likes to keep followers surprised and amazed all the time. She achieves this in two ways. Firstly, she always makes historical references. In nearly every change she has undergone, she refers to a female celebrity who has been remembered thanks to her iconic features. This serves Madonna to create a more powerful image that is nourished with the power of collective memory. Van den Berg mentions that Madonna uses the power of the cultural archive to continue her reputation: “The female cultural archive is put to work in Madonna. The use of references to Eva Perón and Marie Antoinette, Marilyn Monroe and Greta Garbo, female surrealist painters and Martha Graham’s dancing, and various references to classic films illustrate this. The use of different existing images, stereotypes and styles resonate with continuing cultural themes and mythologies” (152). It is worth mentioning here that she even refers to herself as a cultural archive element. In 2008, she was photographed in outfits that referred to her old self in iconic corsets by Jean Paul Gaultier in times of Blonde Ambition Tour. Similarly, she still makes references to her *Material Girl* look, like the time when she named her clothing line Material Girl. The use of cultural archive in a very effective way certainly gives her power and she wisely uses this power to keep her reputation as the queen of novelty. The second matter to consider when we analyze Madonna’s style is the fact that she is quite good at keeping up with trends. While she goes through constant change, she always watches the latest trends. An analysis of Madonna’s career shows that while changing, she always takes what is happening around her into account. Just like the way she looks for the best music producers, she carefully plans her style. O’Brien draws attention to the fact that Madonna is good at creating herself a unique image that is in line with the tendencies: “In

contrast to the curvy shape and a round tummy of 1980's Madonna, her post-millennial look was skinny and digitally perfect, echoing 'Lollipop Lady' celebrities like Nicole Ritchie and Victoria Beckham who were so thin their heads appeared too large for their bodies" (28). Referring to her cultural archive while keeping up with the contemporary fashion may be the key to Madonna's image, which surely comes out after certain study and planning. Other keywords in Madonna's style would be surprising people with a little bit of exaggeration. Fiske argues that Madonna's excessiveness may be related to her lifetime conflict with the established ideology: "(Madonna's) excessiveness invites the reader to question ideology: too much lipstick interrogates the tastefully made-up mouth, too much jewelry questions the role of female decorations in patriarchy. Excess overflows ideological control and offers scope for resistance. Thus Madonna's excessively sexual pouting and lipstick can be read to mean that she looks like that not because patriarchy determines that she should, but because she knowingly chooses to" (2011, 105). Confronting the established ideology since the very beginning of her career has given Madonna the power to speak up, take action, and be the leader of change.

This power is also directly related to Madonna's character. Although she has been through sad times which she openly talked about (losing her mother) or mentioned in fewer occasions (the time she was raped in New York), she always continued to realize her dreams. Her ambitions always kept her going after the divorces or career challenges she went through. She is known as a woman who has the skill to be very creative, hardworking and bossy. Such a powerful character was equally represented in her work. This reflection of power came in many ways including her rebellion against religion, patriarchy, or widely accepted dichotomies. Van der Berg mentions Madonna's transformative cultural power:

Madonna has been a phenomenon beyond herself for some decades now. New female celebrities are very often measured against the yardstick that Madonna has become. For instance, Lady Gaga is constantly compared to Madonna, as is the quality of her performances

and her potential to be a transformative cultural force. Apart from sustaining her position as one of the most talked-about celebrities in gossip magazines, MTV specials and pop-culture discourse, since the 1980s and 1990s Madonna has become the subject of a wide range of scientific discourses. The symbol Madonna is an object of concern in women's studies, ethnic and racial studies, cultural theory, queer theory, marketing strategies, and now the new field of celebrity studies. (145)

Since I will be mentioning her power to create and affect ideology in forthcoming pages, I would now like to take a look at Madonna's power as a genius in marketing strategies. Madonna, who started her career from scratch without help from a family member and without inherited capital, has been appreciated for being a very good businesswoman for many reasons. Brown considers Madonna "an icon, a metaphor, a symbol of the country's constantly changing commercial psyche" (2) since she is quite good at taking actions that are relevant to successfully control the entertainment economy: Madonna is more than a pop-cult icon, however. She has marketing savvy in spades. Almost every commentator on the Madonna phenomenon, from fellow entertainer to cloistered academician, acknowledges her promotional genius" (4). With the "Sex sells" motto she had in mind at the beginning of her career, she has gained the ability to foresee "the element that sells" in time. Brown claims that Madonna's marketability is built on the fact that she creates legends thanks to a strategy that is based on Seven S's: subversion, scarcity, secrecy, scandal, sell-ebriety, storytelling, and sublimity (6). Here it is also significant to mention that Madonna's marketing strategy has some key factors such as her shows. The way she plans, designs, realizes and most importantly promotes her tours are worth in-depth study, and will give us crucial hints regarding today's entertainment sector. Touring has always been undisputably important in her creation as a star, she has always used the stage and her tours to amaze people and cultivate her star image. Furthermore, she made a lot of money thanks to the tours which shows that the effort and time she invested in them from the beginning of her career has always benefited her economically. She is often referred to as the creator of the fastest sold-

out and highest revenue tours. Aside from her tours, which helped her maintain her musical success and image, Madonna's music videos are also considered another marketing tool she has been using quite successfully. O'Brien summarizes how Madonna's music videos made her a leader with devout followers:

As a young star she was powerfully seductive - one of the first female performers in the pop mainstream to capitalise on video as a marketing tool, and to make that nexus between sex, pop and commerce so explicit. She also challenged notions of the male/female gaze with her book *Sex*, and videos like 'Justify My Love'. Much of her allure was centred around her visual image, and her ability to combine an inclusive sexuality with compelling costume changes and personae. Female stars in her wake, from Britney Spears to Lady Gaga, have been clearly influenced by her ideas on performance and sexuality. (2016, 19)

As it can be seen in this quote as well, Madonna has used different elements in such a successful way that she could succeed in getting a whole image out of them that was also provided her with an economic return. Another issue that backed up her marketing strategy is the fact that she could take risks. According to Djupvik, "the female artist contributes raw talent, which is then refined and channeled into a rational, balanced, and comprehensible form by the male producer" (2) in the established way of the music industry. Hence, female artists are mostly led and controlled by male brains who contribute as investors and rather mentors that could lead the way for them. However, Madonna took the risk of becoming a producer herself and she even founded an entertainment company (which she is no longer attached to). Whenever she could, she took the risk and became involved with the production process. All in all, she refused to remain the one that only contributed the raw talent and she chose to be the brains in her business as well. She has been taking care of nearly every dimension of her career from choosing the dancers that she will be accompanied with in the tours to the songwriting process or even the installations that will be used during her performances. Schwichtenberg also mentions that "Madonna's popular history as an assertive, talented woman in the male-dominated music industry contributes to how we watch and experience her music videos. She is exercising her control over the image she projects musically and

visually” (125). To conclude, it is possible to say that Madonna’s powerful character led to a powerful image of a powerful businesswoman who could build a very powerful empire out of her career.

Now that it is possible to see Madonna as a very creative and successful businesswoman, I would now like to focus on her ideology. According to Prieto-Arranz, Madonna can be characterized by three features that would remain constant throughout her career:

(1) Iconicity. Transgression, novelty and shock will not normally come verbally—explicit lyrics are only rarely found in her Performance and Success in repertoire: Madonna will instead construct her body as a complex, meaningful text.

(2) Sex-religion interplay. Throughout most of her career, Madonna will to a greater or lesser extent resort to these two variables.

(3) Multilayered meaning. The metaphor of the palimpsest, that is, the manuscript which has been written on, scraped off and used again, can indeed be used for Madonna. Her work has gradually developed multiple layers of signification, the validity of each being in turn ambiguous: do the upper, more recent layers invalidate the lower, older layers, or do they on the contrary simply complement them? (179)

Prieto-Arranz claims that Madonna constructs a myth, a legend using her body through using her skills in performance in addition to her skills in reflecting her feelings in her lyrics. The music she creates comes from the power, emotions, and ideas within and it goes through a meticulous process of contemporization to be able to reach more people. Jane Miller relates this to Madonna’s transformational power of culture: “Madonna’s success as a songwriter/rock star lies in the timely appropriation of iconography. To do this is to politicize, to seize the power of the objects and make it her own” (225). The fact that Madonna acts very timely is one of her key terms to success. The second feature that also adds up to her iconicity is the way she plays with rather sensitive topics; her focus on the sex-religion interplay comes to surface in many texts produced by her. Among the many female archetypes Madonna embraced and made public throughout her career, the sex and religion dichotomy is playfully

handled: she seems to have incarnated an ancient icon through her own body politics. Camille Paglia draws attention to the fact that “Madonna has rejoined and healed the split halves of women: Mary, the Blessed Virgin and holy mother, and Mary Magdalene, the harlot” (1992:11). Seeing the potential even in her own name, Madonna has acted as the second most important female figure right after Virgin Mary, the real Madonna, in our lives and she created a new iconology which we could adapt into our everyday lives more easily than the Christian one. Izod agrees with the fact that Madonna presents herself as a type of goddess adding another archetype that represents her personality according to the terms of analytical psychology: “Her stage name registers the first of these obviously in that she projects herself as a type of goddess. The second is the *trickster*, a figure which Jung found recurring in numerous places including dreams, myths, religious iconography and rituals” (90). Similarly, Prieto-Arranz emphasizes that Madonna has represented herself as an icon from the very start of her career: “Focusing on two of her pervading themes, sex and religion, it has showed how Madonna became an icon in the early stages of her career by clearly choosing to use her own body as Signifier. Likewise, this iconicity has always been characterized by a twofold complexity derived from (1) the growing sophistication of both her onstage and music video performances; and (2) the multilayered meaning her messages always seem to convey” (189). Using her body as a signifier and succeeding in doing so through an effective use of multilayered meaning, Madonna has been able to be considered as an artist was able to reach very different groups all around the world. People from very different countries have been loyal fans of her because they thought Madonna was talking to them in a very glamorous way. For instance, Lugo-Lugo explains how Madonna has become the heroine of young girls in Puerto Rico and raised their feminist consciousness:

Madonna provided a means of addressing the contradictions that young women were facing in society, for Madonna was a load of contradictions herself. Her name, Madonna, meaning ‘virgin,’ represents the ultimate image of the Catholic, devoted, submissive, and nurturing

woman, an image that we knew too well from our upbringing and culture. Yet Madonna's demeanor gave other meanings to the image of the Madonna brokered to us by the Catholic Church. Madonna *was* a contradiction, and that helped us come to terms with our own contradictory reality. She was also ambiguous and unpredictable in her statements and in her public life. Such ambiguity helped me and many of my friends learn about, accept, and understand often useless dichotomies such as 'good' and 'bad.' (124)

In another study, Brown and Schulze argue that Madonna's use of multilayered meaning has found different responses in different groups. In her article titled "The Effects of Race, Gender, and Fandom on Audience Interpretations of Madonna's Music Videos", Brown and Schulze study how university students see the videos of Madonna. She compares the answers given by white females, black females, white males, and black males comparatively seeing that they all see different things in her videos (88-102). This could be true, since we have to understand that in a more fragmented society people see the world in their own way, resulting in the fact that an icon is not only what s/he says, rather s/he is what she is heard as. Since Madonna has been quite gifted in sending messages that were adorned with multilayered meanings, it is no wonder that she has been able to talk to different people uniting them in her own universe. The fact that Madonna plays with established ideologies on different levels doubtlessly makes her an ideological person; she does not represent a single ideology in a certain way, rather she uses different parts from different ideologies to criticize, make fun, or praise them and this results in an chaotic and parody-like ideology that could be decoded in different levels. We could say that Madonna creates her own iconography which makes her unique. Fiske explains that Madonna creates her own meaning out of the established systems: "She makes her own meanings out of the symbolic systems available to her, and in using *their* signifiers and rejecting or mocking *their* signifieds, she is demonstrating *her* ability to make *her own* meanings" (2011, 106). While creating her own meaning, Madonna even plays with the creation of meaning. She acts so quickly that it may be quite challenging to keep up with the change she undergoes. When it comes to Madonna nothing is permanent, as Tetzlaff puts

it: “Nothing sticks to her. The sleaze, the blasphemy, the perversity all slide off. Perhaps the audience recognises that Madonna only inhabits these positions as if she were modelling a collection of fashions . . . unaffected for having worn them for a while” (259). Van den Berg similarly mentions that Madonna talks to the public in a very unique way: “Whether it is the domination of women by men in patriarchy, the sexual emancipation of young girls, the bricolage of sexual subcultures, secularisation and new forms of religion, or the tensions between hedonism and international solidarity, very different meanings have found its way through Madonna to the mass public” (147). The way Madonna talks to the public is answered by people in such a riveting way that even the subcultural signifiers have become universal and widely acceptable. What would be unacceptable if done by other people could be welcomed when Madonna does it. Van den Berg explains why Madonna remains a leader when it comes to popular culture: “Although other media have followed and other signifiers are currently communicating similar conflicting messages (Lady Gaga, Lily Allen, Katy Perry, symbols in fashion, and so on), Madonna was much talked about and studied precisely because of her combinations of messages and the way in which she made certain transgressive messages accessible for the mass public” (148). While creating her own iconography, Madonna has chosen to be as controversial as possible. She uses juxtaposition as the main feature of her own universe; the way she created herself while re-creating her own heroines varying from Marilyn Monroe to Frida Kahlo is very postmodern and open to interpretation. Landrum discusses that she is controversial in the ways she uses her books and tours: “Madonna is a paradox. After her shocking *Sex* book in 1994, a decade later she's authoring children's books, and defiantly adopted an African child in 2006...That's evident by her continual reinvention of her herself in three decades as an entertainer. Most people see the ‘Material Girl’ as a defiant hussy who uses blatant behavior as a publicity stunt. Not true! This personality type is prone to chase new ideas and to violate conventional dogmas” (247).

The way she plays with established norms, one of which is the patriarchy, through her own iconography brings up the question as to whether Madonna is a feminist. Many scholars agree on the idea that Madonna is a great feminist while some others discuss whether she could be considered a real feminist. For instance, Camille Paglia thinks that Madonna is the true feminist. In a newspaper article dated 1990, she writes “Madonna is the true feminist. She exposes the puritanism and suffocating ideology of American feminism, which is stuck in an adolescent whining mode. Madonna has taught young women to be fully female and sexual while still exercising total control over their lives. She shows girls how to be attractive, sensual, energetic, ambitious, aggressive and funny -- all at the same time” (New York Times, 1990). Paglia emphasizes that Madonna neither fears nor despises while celebrating eternal values of beauty and pleasure. Likewise, Lugo-Lugo mentions the groundbreaking change Madonna has brought to the music performed by women and created a difference in young girls’ lives:

Through this subversion of cultural norms Madonna gave my generation a slap in the face and made most of us stop and rethink the traditional roles we were expected to perform in society, pushing us beyond the conventional rebellion that many teenage girls go through. This Madonna-inspired rebellion meant much more than merely challenging adults and other authority figures. This rebellion was about questioning traditional roles and beliefs in a society where traditional roles and beliefs were set in stone. (118)

Making people, especially women, question their roles in society is one of the primary aims of feminism and achieving this through art makes Madonna a real feminist, as Paglia mentions. On the other hand, Fiske thinks that what Madonna really succeeds in doing is securing the male gaze as “she is teaching her young female fans to see themselves as men would see them; that is, she is hailing them as feminine subjects within patriarchy, and as such is an agent of patriarchal hegemony” (2011, 97). Besides the fact that Madonna brings up the issue of femininity versus masculinity, she does indeed create an image that centers around the male gaze in her videos which she defends by saying that whatever she does, she does it on

purpose and willingly which shows that it is not the male gaze she focuses on, but rather women's liberty. For instance, in her controversial book *Sex* which received highly critical acclaim, she writes "I don't see how a guy looking at a naked girl in a magazine is degrading to women" (58). In fact, she does not see male gaze as a problem; as long as a woman does what she wants, there is no problem with being gazed at. Van den Berg mentions that what really matters about Madonna's feminism is the fact that she creates reference points for everyone to figure out: "Far more revealing is the mechanism in which reflexive messages of feminism *and* of patriarchy, of traditionalism and post-tradition, are communicated through the symbol, Madonna. The point is, exactly, that both continuation and discontinuation of social norms is communicated, thereby giving the self-reference points for meaning making in individual private lives" (149). It is also worth mentioning here that apart from her videos or performances Madonna herself has been a female figure that is powerful, assertive, smart, self-sufficient, and most importantly independent. She has been the ideal representative of the modern woman with her success, love life, beauty, style, and behaviour.

When it comes to assessing Madonna's representation and self-representation, the best sources to look at are her documentaries she created using her tours besides her music videos. Having mentioned the music videos many times in the previous pages, I would like to analyze the documentary movies of her tours, the most significant of them is probably *Madonna: Truth or Dare*. This movie includes the footage of Madonna's famous Blond Ambition Tour in 1990 with some important scenes from her private life. The time she talks to her father on the phone or when she visits her mother's grave are quite sincere moments of a rather fragile Madonna whereas the scenes she is in bed with her team are quite aggressive and bold. Madonna shows us her private life with her controversial characters: both a virgin and a trickster/whore. However, it is significant to emphasize that while Madonna supposedly shows us her world in all terms, she only shows us the sides she wants us to see like the times

when she prays with her dancers just before going on the stage. Manners questions Madonna's sincerity in terms of feminist discourse: "In this emergent feminist discourse, the speech uttered was sometimes eerily attentive to the silences that constitute it. For all the showing and telling in *Truth or Dare*, for instance, the only two doors actually shut in the cameraman's face were those that would have exposed not Madonna's bared body but Madonna as bodyproduct and as producer: the doors of her home gym and her business meetings" (163). Madonna follows the same pattern of superficial sincerity in her other documentary movies. In her 2005 dated *I'm Going to Tell You a Secret* documentary following her 2004 Re-Invention World Tour, she tells us about her tour and her private life. This time, she mostly explains her ideology: She calls the modern, material, illusionary world we live in a beast while giving hints about the turning points in her life like the time when she first got pregnant and met Kabbalah, the belief she has been devoted to. While *Truth or Dare* shows her deep connection to her late mother, *I'm Going to Tell You a Secret* focuses on her relationship with her father who says "She is growing up not with us, with the world." In *I'm Going to Tell You a Secret*, we see a mature Madonna who is more interested in love, family ties, or belief. She says "The only thing that's gonna change the world is spirituality, not politics" and mentions her devotion to Kabbalah for nearly 20 minutes in a 120-minute documentary. She also refers to the stage as a cage "at least filled with light" probably referring to her contradictory feelings about being an artist.

Another crucial issue on Madonna's self-representation is the way she enjoys visibility. Besides her art, which is criticized as a celebration of male gaze, Madonna herself enjoys gaze in her private life. O'Brien mentions that "Madonna has always resolved issues in public: Compelled to seek mass love and attention, and yet overly sensitive to criticism, she created her own vicious cycle" (2007, 461). The time when she married Sean Penn and enjoyed media attention or the time when she went to Malawi to adopt a baby and took

cameras with her can be considered as examples of Madonna's tendency to welcome gaze whether it is male or female. This may be another strategy to stay current which is undeniably successful. Through this gaze she manages to keep constant, she represents herself the way Faith and Frances call "the bad girl who is rewarded for her sins" (55). This could be the one of the best definitions for the image Madonna has created throughout her career. Her art revolves around the image of the bad girl who enjoys being bad and is simply accoladed for it: she is either rewarded literally or metaphorically since she gains experience. She never loses.

In terms of Panofsky's iconology theory, the first layer of meaning would define Madonna as a female performer. When you study Madonna, the first two features that come forward are her sexuality and her performing skills. She is a very talented singer and dancer who happens to emphasize her femininity. The second object of interpretation according to Panofsky's scheme defines Madonna as a defender of freedom. In her songs, videos, concerts, movies, books, documentaries, Madonna is represented as a woman who stands up for freedom of choice. What you do does not matter as long as you choose to do it. When it comes to the third layer of interpretation of Madonna as an icon, it is possible to say that Madonna unintentionally represents a good businesswoman. In many texts, the fact that she does not have an amazing voice or dancing skills is emphasized and this signals to her good marketing skills. She may not dance or sing very well but she knows how to plan, get hold of the *Zeitgeist*, foresee, and produce. She represents the realization of dreams through hard work and genius and this may be one of the main reasons why many people still identify with her over the years. Many people think they have the potential to succeed but they cannot due to various reasons. Madonna is the hardworking woman who can succeed in different eras in the name of everyone dreaming of it.

To conclude, Madonna has been one of the most important icons of popular culture with her extraordinary character and work. She holds many titles such as the most famous

woman in the world, the most successful female performer, best-selling female rock artist of the 20th century, highest-grossing solo touring artist of all time, but it is also equally important to mention that she is the symbol of women's empowerment. She is unusual both in her musical performance and the way she lives: she is powerful, exemplary, representative, ideological, stylish, and controversial. She is quite skilled at staying current and keeping up with the *Zeitgeist*. She is always present in our lives, she is never out-of-date. As Sochen puts it, "it is clear that Madonna continues to search for ways to create and recreate her successful image and remain a star. What pathways she will choose and how effective they will be remains to be seen" (192). Her iconic features seem to keep her motivated to follow and more importantly, co-create the *Zeitgeist* of the moment.

3.3.2. SELENA

"Sin ustedes no somos nada - Without you we are nothing."

Selena

(In all her interviews for Mexican TV)

Selena Quintanilla, who was considered "Queen of Tejano" or "Mexican Madonna", was born on April 16, 1971, in Lake Jackson, Texas. She was the youngest of three children of Mexican-American Abraham Quintanilla and Marcella. Her father loved music and when he was young he had a group called The Dinos which was not successful due to the perception that Mexicans could not make "white music". His devotion to music came to surface when he decided to form a band with his children: Suzette on the drums, AB playing the guitar, and Selena as the lead singer. Selena was only 6 years old then, but her father always claimed that Selena had a special talent even then. The musical group called Selena y Los Dinos started

playing at Abraham Quintanilla's restaurant. The restaurant had to be closed down since it failed, the family went bankrupt and relocated to Corpus Christi, Texas. However, since Abraham believed in his children, the band hit the road, performing at weddings, cantinas and festivals throughout southern Texas. Selena could not attend school, hence she continued her education via correspondence school. In the meantime, although Selena grew up speaking English, her father taught her to sing in Spanish so she could better address and appeal to the Latino community. She learned the lyrics phonetically at first and eventually learned to speak Spanish fluently. Over the next few years, the band got bigger with the addition of new members and started recording for a small, local label. Their first album, *Mi Primeras Grabaciones* came out in 1984, but it wasn't sold in any stores; Quintanilla would take the album with him and sell it at the band's performances. The band recorded 5 albums in this manner, including *Alpha* in 1986, *Preciosa* and *Dulce Amor* came out in 1988. They started to become famous as well; in 1987, Selena won the Tejano Music Awards for "Best Female Vocalist" and "Best Female Performer." She was only 15. In the next 7 years, Selena would continue to win award after award. Her brother AB acted also as a producer. In 1989, she signed a record contract with Capitol/EMI and made a few of albums including *Ven Conmigo*, *Entre A Mi Mundo* and *Baile Esta Cumbia*. In 1992, she married the band's guitarist Chris Perez although her father objected at first. Her 1993 album *Selena Live!* won the "Best Mexican-American Album" Grammy, making Selena the only Tejano artist to win a Grammy award. Selena also began to realize another dream of hers and became a designer; she founded the clothing company Selena Etc. and started to sell her designs in boutiques. Soon after *Live's* release, Selena went to work on an English-language album that she hoped would hopefully place her on the top of the U.S. pop music charts. Unfortunately, she did not see its success. Selena died on March 31, 1995, in Corpus Christi, Texas, after being shot by Yolanda Saldivar, the founder of the Selena fan club and manager of her clothing line.

Saldivar was about to be fired for embezzling money and the real reason why she killed her remains a mystery to this day. Selena's murder shocked the Latino community, and her fans around the world mourned the singer's passing which led to her canonization and iconicity.

The iconic features that have made Selena a significant symbol and is followed devotedly even after 25 years since her death are worth in-depth analysis. To start with, it is important to mention that what Selena did as a female representative of Tejano music remains unique: Apart from winning a Grammy at a very young age, she was also consecutively awarded at the Tejano Music Awards. She was named the “Top Latin Artist of the '90s” and “Best-selling Latin Artist of the Decade” by *Billboard*, for her fourteen top-ten singles in the top latin songs chart, including seven number-one hits. She was also very good at performing with her looks, moves, and unique style in singing while in mixing different genres in music.

As a very young and beautiful girl, she was quite attractive which was one of the reasons why she was so celebrated by the crowds. Furthermore, she also had a different style which she presented to the crowds with the clothes she herself designed. Deborah Paredez also mentions that Selena's style made her fans see that she was still one of them:

It was very well known among her fans that she performed in outfits of her own design, characterized by their sexual suggestiveness; she would often combine low-cut, sequin studded bustiers with midriff-baring, tight-fitting, flared-cut pants. These costumes led many mainstream chroniclers to (mis)label her the ‘Tex-Mex Madonna’ when in fact Selena's style was more reflective of a decidedly working-class Tejana self-fashioning than an uninspired attempt to copy Madonna's style. (2009, 12)

Her clothes were quite bold and assertive, and celebrated Latina body. In the movie *Selena* which is produced mainly by Abraham Quintanilla with two other producers (which may be the main reason why it is called a biopic and treated as a real biography) and directed by Gregory Nava, Selena is depicted as a young and innocent girl who had two dreams: singing and designing. She was very much interested in creating her own sense of fashion which she reflected first in her own clothes and then her own clothing line. The reason why she wore

bustiers was explained in the movie by Selena herself: she wanted to be cool, she did not only look up to Madonna but also to Janet Jackson and Paula Abdul. Her peculiar style and beauty is still celebrated and one of the latest examples of her iconicity is the MAC cosmetics Selena Makeup Launch in 2015. When Selena fans created an online petition to MAC for a Selena product line to commemorate her on the 20th year of her passing away and thousands signed it, famous cosmetics brand MAC answered the call and announced a forthcoming collection that would be dedicated a Selena. The product line included the items Selena would use in her makeup and each item was named after Selena songs such as “Como La Flor lipstick” or “No Me Queda Mas eyeshadow.” This is the concrete proof that Selena is still followed by fans even after 20 years of death and these fans probably did not even see her in her lifetime. Being a Selena fan is transmitted from one generation to another. To her fans, Selena was and probably has been the perfect representative and this is one of the most important iconic features of her.

Muniz explains how Selena, a young girl from Texas who had English as her native language became the ultimate representation of all Latinos:

The music of Selena took the *Tejano* music experience to a familiar place, allowing *Latinidad* to be experienced through its mix of techno, *cumbia* and bilingual lyrics. Selena was one of the first major artists to cross over from Mexico’s top charts over into the United States. As a result, she served as a representation and embodiment of Latinos/as, an increasingly majority minority group at the time. This time period in the early to mid-1990’s in the United States not only saw an increase in a migrant Latino/a population but also anti-immigrant legislation and fear of an ‘other.’ These anti-immigrant nativist policies marked a period when Selena’s music was giving agency to the Latino/a community and provided an outlet for community building. (6)

Hence, it is possible to say that Selena succeeded just when Latinos needed somebody to represent them: a young woman born and raised in the poverty of the *barrios*, being proud of her working class roots and never denying her simplicity, rose to a level of national celebrity and international visibility never seen before. Broyles-González draws attention to the fact

that Selena was an important role model for marginalized chicanas: “she was someone who made it big time, someone to be hugely proud of; she reached the pinnacles of greatness using her cumbia-centered countercultural arsenal from the oral tradition. She laid down footprints to follow” (191). Just as she was proud of the Latinos, Latinos responded in the same way and idolized her. She, in turn, said humbly that “she was, in fact, one of them.” Paredez also agrees that “Selena and her subsequent phenomenon opened up a space for the representation of working-class, brown women and made visible traditionally ignored Latina/o histories and the ongoing Latina/o presence within U.S. cultural, political, and economic spheres” (2009, 13). Her fans admired Selena for the fact that as she made herself visible on the national and international arena, she also gave struggling Latinos in the U.S. an opportunity to be heard. She showed that Latinos in the United States mattered culturally, politically, and economically. Alcazar tells us about her own experience as a Selena fan and how she began taking pride in her cultural roots and no longer felt shame and embarrassment about being Mexican: “She resisted the colonial beauty standards of both Mexico and the Anglo industry and was proud to have dark hair, big hips and full lips. Selena made it okay for us to maintain and even embrace our cultural roots while still being American. This was reflected in our day-to-day lives and in the way we presented ourselves to others” (8). In the movie *Selena*, there is a scene where Selena’s father reminds her that “she is also Mexican deep inside”. As an American who is also Mexican, once she remembers her own roots, Selena becomes the medium to remind other Americans that they are also Mexican deep inside and they should be proud of it. The music and message of Selena’s songs not only go beyond the physical borders of the United States of America and Mexico but also appeal to the people that come from multiple communities and identities. This is the exact reason why she is a leading representative of *Latinidad*. Guzmán and Valdivia mention that “Latinidad describes any person currently living in the United States of Spanish-speaking heritage from more than 30

Caribbean and Latin America countries. It is an imagined community of recent, established and multigenerational immigrants from diverse cultural, linguistic, racial, and economic backgrounds” (208). Similarly, Valdivia defines Latinidad as “the process of being, becoming, and/or performing belonging within a Latina/o diaspora” (53). With the idea of diaspora Valdivia offers, Latinidad becomes a concept that is directly related to otherness. In this context, Esposito emphasizes that Latina women are othered “to the extent that her body will always be a source of curiosity and fascination as an exotic object” (329). Besides the fact that Selena was an ideal representative for Latinas, she was also the ideal Latina for Anglo culture: she was acceptable since she had the exotic features of the beautiful other. This ends up in the fetishization of Latina body along with hard work, as in the case of Selena and Jennifer Lopez, who starred in *Selena* movie: “In the case of Latina stars such as Selena and Lopez, what is fetishized is the prototypical American story of hard work to achieve success and the notion that anyone, including a Latina, can be wealthy and staggeringly successful if only she works hard enough and has a big – but no so big to cancel out racial fluidity- butt” (189). Perry mentions the key to success for Latinas as hard work and big butt which is, in fact, the representation of being beautiful in exotic terms. Paredez also refers to Selena’s frequently discussed body besides her remarkable stage presence, sound, and moves: “Specifically her ample rear end emerged as a site of obsessive racialized sexual fantasies and of identification by many women from across the Latina spectrum” (2009, 25).

Besides being the right person at the right time, Selena was also at the right place: Texas. Vargas refers to Texas or Tejas as the “third space”: “Tejas is a site of third space cultural production that emerges in conversation with the discourses of Anglo-Texan colonialism and Mexicano nationalism. ‘The making of Tejas’ represents a community that comes into being through the productions of music and its associated cultural practices, including Tex-Mex language, racialized working-class aesthetics, and counter-hegemonic

historical narratives” (118). Selena was quite successful at reflecting this third space culture with her peculiar additions. She updated the music, she reflected the Tejana women in the best possible way with her beauty and sincerity, she had very humble manners. Broyles- González underlines Selena’s constant referral to her fans: In her interviews or award speeches, “she would always say ‘Sin ustedes no somos nada’ (‘Without you we are nothing’) or ‘Lo mas importante es tener un amor para el público’ (‘The most important thing is to have love for your public’)” either in Spanish or English” (190). Her sincerity made the public perceive her as a very good young woman which led to a stronger image of “one of us”. She was beautiful inside and out.

Selena was a beautiful and stylish young girl with a great talent, but still the way she became an icon is related to other concepts as well. According to many scholars, one of the main reasons why Selena became a Latina superstar is the fact that she died at a very early age in a very unlikely way. Paredez claims that the Latin boom exploded right after Selena died, in other terms, it started over Selena’s dead body: “Dead Latina bodies were frequently celebrated and sometimes reviled by a range of communities throughout the 1990s to facilitate emerging and often competing articulations of latinidad, or Latino/a identity. That is, the Latina tomb was regularly raided to promote, to contain, and often to capitalize on the cultural, economic, and political Latin Boom in the United States” (2009,7). When Selena died, Latino power was seen visibly in the way Latinos paid respect to their star by buying all the magazines published as a tribute to Selena or in the way they went to her funeral and mourned for days. In another article, Paredez refers to Selena’s death as the beginning of a process that can be called as posthumous iconization:

Selena’s popularity gained tremendous momentum after she was murdered at age 23 by the former president of her fan club in 1995. Following her death, a staggering number of memorial tributes, public performances of grief, and a proliferation of Selena impersonations were enacted in her honor. Mainstream representational and corporate forces capitalized on Selena’s posthumous iconization, invoking her as a

means for increasing profits by tapping into the Latina/o market and for reinforcing the borders of America. (2002, 65)

While showing the world Latina presence and power, Selena became a legendary character. Since the reason why she was shot by her employee did not make sense to many people, her death is considered as a great mystery even today, and this added up to her legendary status along with her early death. Morrison claims that once she was gone forever, Selena literally became saturated with meaning and “much of this saturation process began at the time of her death, when her status as a pop icon within the Mexican-American community transformed into that of a saint or martyr—a tragic symbol of the unmet hopes and dreams of *la gente* seeking full enfranchisement” (33). The reference to unmet hopes can be seen in many texts. For instance, Perry mentions “the exploitation of Selena’s American dream story” as one of the crucial elements that turned her into an icon along with her racial and ethnic flexibility (185). Similarly, Paredez emphasizes that “the tragedy of her death was often characterized by her inability to fully cross over to American culture” (22) as the reason why so many Latina/os mourned her death so much. She was on the verge of making into the center of American culture when she was killed by another Latina. Inevitably, she became a victim, a martyr who deserved to be treated as a legend.

This legendary status of Selena was secured with the release of *Selena* movie which continued with many acts such as Selena’s English album release, Selena’s statue in Texas, Selena’s musical and Selena commemoration by many artists in shows. *Selena* the movie is one of the few films that tells the story of a Latina. In the movie directed by Nava, Selena is depicted as the perfect Latina who truly deserves to become a superstar. Morrison mentions the movie as an ode to Mexican community:

Throughout the film, Nava portrays Selena as a wholesome, family-oriented ‘good girl,’ disavowing the undeniable eroticism surrounding her celebrity (an eroticism that the film itself visually invokes through glamorous costuming, flattering lighting, and caressing camera movements). By investing in Selena the qualities of virtue and worthiness, Nava implies these

qualities should be carried over to the Mexican-American community generally. He posits her commercial success as a marker of the growing consumer and demographic clout of Latina/os in the U.S.—now the country’s largest ‘minority’ group. (36)

This dichotomy of good girl Selena and sexy Selena is subtly depicted in one of the very first scenes. When Selena goes on stage at the opening of the movie, her father says “You are beautiful” and her mother says “good girl.” Her sexuality is present throughout the movie but not referred to openly. The killing is also metaphorically depicted, probably due to the fact that such a presentation that included victimization would make Selena less of a marketable “girl next door” and more of a “miserable Latina.” Bruce Williams explains how the movie talks to both Americans and Latina/os: “Belonging to two worlds and addressing an audience for the most part of similar split heritage, it sells Tejano culture to an English speaking audience by avoiding linguistic barriers. At the same time, it addresses a Latino population through music and culture, and through its recognition that many Latinos, like Selena herself, are more fluent in English than in Spanish” (67). So while the main target was the mainstream audience in a global context, the movie still talked to the Latin community in a peculiar way through its dynamics. For instance, the scene where Selena’s father Abraham talks to Selena and says “Being Mexican American is tough, you gotta be twice as perfect as anybody else. Our family has been here for centuries and yet they treat us as if we just swam across” can be considered as a summary of the Latin community’s struggle.

In another representation, *Corpus: A Home Movie about Selena* (1998) by Lourdes Portillo, Selena is considered from a very different angle. This movie questions the cultural heritage Selena has left Latinos with. Portillo visits Selena’s hometown, Corpus Christi, interviews people, pays a visit to Tejana Fine Arts Academy, talks to people who still have Selena memories, and discusses Selena’s legacy with intellectuals. According to Morrison, Portillo’s movie discovers a rather uncomfortable reality: “that virtually no other popular figure of Chicana young womanhood exists in the American mainstream—the implication

being that the only good Chicana is a dead Chicana” (38). During the intellectuals talk, author Sandra Cisneros, who is surprised to find a Selena keychain saying that this is the first Latina icon that is different than *Virgen de Guadalupe*, agrees with this theory: “You have to die before you’re twenty-five years old. That’s how you get on the cover of Texas Monthly. You get bludgeoned, raped, or shot. If you’re Chicana, that’s the only way you get on the cover.” In the movie, there is also the scene where Selena-like young singers at the Tejana Fine Arts Academy give their opinions on why they like Selena so much and their most common answer is “She is like me” or “I am like her.”

Another representation of Selena was the musical staged in 2000, *Selena Forever*. Despite the fact that the show has positive reviews, it was abruptly cancelled due to the low ticket sales. Paredez mentions that the fact that the show was cancelled was directly associated with Latino community’s behaviour: “While the show’s cancellation resulted ostensibly from a dispute over marketing between the show’s producers and the Los Angeles promoters at the Universal Amphitheatre where the musical was scheduled for a five-day run, interviews published in news features covering the controversy pointed toward Latina/os’ inability to perform proper theatre etiquette as the source of the show’s woes” (2002, 75). The show was not evaluated as another performance as any other musical. When it failed economically, the media directly blamed it on the Latin community and their theatre etiquette which echoes what Selena’s father said, “Latin community was literally treated as if they just swam across” in *Selena* the movie.

If we want to analyze Selena’s iconistic character in terms of Panofsky’s iconology studies, we can say that the first layer, that is the layer that answers the question “What?” using practical experience, defines Selena as a Latina woman. When it comes to the second question that is “What does she represent?”, we can say that Selena represent American dream for Latinos. As a representative of working class and their music, she was on the way to heart

of American music industry when she was killed at the age of only 23. Many scholars agree on the fact that Selena was mostly represented as the possibility of realizing the American dream for Latinos. This also related to what she represents unintentionally according to the third layer of iconographical interpretation. It is possible to say that Selena unintentionally represents destiny: She was the ideal Latina who deserved the best because she was humble and hardworking, however, she failed due to reasons she could not control. She died without fully realizing her American dream and this incident shocked Latinos. Their representative who they felt very proud for turned into a source of pain. From then on, they could do nothing but mourn.

To conclude, Selena has been an icon that is still remembered thanks to her many iconic features such as being stylish, exemplary, representative, and legendary. But most of all, she is so subsumed by the Latino community that she is not only an icon: she is a Latina icon who is a stylish Latina, an exemplary Latina, a representative Latina and a legendary Latina. It is difficult to find a text, a documentary, or an interview that refers to her as an American more than a Mexican. The facts that she spoke English better than Spanish, that she enjoyed Donna Summers, and that she lived and died in the United States are ignored.

3.3.3.MADONNA AND SELENA: POP CULTURE AND ICONICITY

Now that I have studied Madonna and Selena in terms of iconization, I would now like to make a comparative analysis of these two female icons. To start with, it is possible to say that both characters are representative, which is one of the main iconic features. Madonna is considered the “queen of pop.” She is an international icon who represents not only women but also anybody who wants to fight the established norms or simply enjoy good music that is in line with contemporary trends. This diversity, which is celebrated in her shows, music videos, and all representations such as social media images, makes her even stronger. The

way she embraces everybody no matter what their nationality, religion or sexual tendency is makes her the ideal representative for everybody. Blanco refers to this process as “her creating a system in which all logic is under her control and where appearance and persona are expressed in her postmodern array of styles. Each one of her creations functions as a mini narrative on identity and image construction and offers an opportunity to add new levels of interpretation to a popular culture sign” (1154). This endless mini narratives and image construction process of the essence of Madonna universe which may include and exclude anyone anytime. On the other hand, Selena is “the queen of Tejano.” She represents Latinas who are proud to be represented by a young and innocent girl who is also sexually attractive: “a young woman born and raised in the poverty of the *barrios* rose to a level of celebrity and visibility never seen before. Her huge voice and highly visible persona was an unprecedented achievement, especially given the utter lack of nationally visible Mexican Americans and the general voicelessness of Chicana woman in the mass media” (191). Broyles-González emphasizes that what made Selena the queen was the fact that she was the first one to do that, she spoke in the name of people who suffered from voicelessness as one of them. To make a comparison between Madonna and Selena, we can say that Madonna is the queen of Madonna universe which we are very familiar with, which we live in whereas Selena is the queen of a far away country we may never heard of as global viewers. This is of course very much related to the hegemony of American culture and Selena’s sudden death at the age of 23.

Secondly, both women are stylish. They were both followed and taken as an example for their style. Madonna has been quite successful at following and actually co-creating fashion. She is famous for reflecting the *Zeitgeist*, she is always fashionable; she gives people something to talk about and take as an example. Selena, on the other hand, was fashionable for the Latin community. She was trying to get hold of the fashion *Zeitgeist* which was co-

created by Madonna. Had she more time, she could have become a fashion icon like other Latino icons that are looked up to today.

Last but not the least, both female characters are legendary. Madonna is the ultimate “boytoy” and “hard candy” of pop culture or, in other words, contemporary culture. According to van den Berg, “Madonna provides individuals with frames of reference for their everyday behaviours” (147). This way she creates a legend out of herself and presents it to people. On the other hand, the way Selena has become a legend is more about her fans than herself. Just when she was about to become visible in the international arena and crossover to American culture, thus realizing her own American dream, she unfortunately failed and her fans, who admired her for being one of them, could only survive this pain by turning her into a legend. She may have partly failed her American dream due to unexpected and uncontrollable reasons, and it could happen to any Latina: there are “certain pleasures and punishments of being a Latina/o” as Paredez puts it (2009, xv).

To conclude, it is important to underline the fact that this is not a balanced comparison as it is Madonna on the one side whereas Selena who was killed at a very young age and at the beginning of her career is on the other side. Madonna has never been referred as the counterpart of anybody whereas Selena was referred as “Mexican Madonna.” For Selena, Madonna was a reference point, a basis, a standard. Selena filled a void that was present for a long time and was not even paid attention to: she took an out-of-date music type with her not-so-good Spanish and made it to the hearts of her fans who still ask for Selena products even after 20 years of her death. When Madonna enjoys being herself saying “Bitch, I am Madonna,” Selena is still gladly remembered by her fans some of whom were not even born during her lifetime: she is in the minds and hearts of Latinas like an image, “como una flor”.

4.CONCLUSION

“Pinar, I can see that you are a feminist.”

My advisor Ana Maria Manzananas Calvo, 2017

When I first started to think about my PhD studies, I came up with the idea that icons have rarely, in fact, never, been studied in a historical context. Not many people have paid attention to the relationship between Panofsky’s icons and the pop icon Madonna. Today, we simply refer to our favourite celebrities as icons. In a broader context, it is possible to say that we do not question iconicity that much, we prefer to accept people we look up to as icons.

Now that I have studied the term icon, the historical context of female identity, and some leading icons in a comparative way, I can say that there are some certain reasons why we refer to some women as icons while we forget some others as time passes and they fade away. In addition to the fact that female icons have some common features, such as being powerful, representative, ideological, informative, mysterious, exemplary, self-made, victimized (by her own gift), and contradictory, they are also stylish. Each icon I have analyzed was stylish in her own way. This may be due to the fact that when a woman becomes an icon, she automatically becomes a reference point for fashion: the way she wears her hair, her makeup, her clothes all become a center of attention and she becomes stylish even when that is not her intention. Style is the easiest aspect to imitate and that may be the starting point for fans.

The concept of iconicity might have changed throughout history, but an important peculiarity of icons has remained the same: An icon is still something we look up to. The wooden art works we looked up to and prayed have come alive today. We still look up to the icons and pray to be like them, which we may consider as a sign of self-identification. We want to be as powerful, stylish, and self-created as them. What they achieve, they achieve in

our name. When they fail, we feel like we also fail and suffer with them. And as Kitch argues, “when such an icon dies, then, something dies in ‘us’” which continues in a process in which “news coverage moves out of the realm of obituary and into that of tragedy” (185). This points to the undeniable connection between today’s icons and the media: It is not the icons but their media representations we fall for. Taking Giddens’ theory that “the self is more and more a reflexive project, an open product, a constituted identity” (1991, 75), I would like to suggest that the self is an open product mostly constituted by the media, and that the media provides us with some reference points with which we can constitute our identity either consciously or unconsciously. These reference points are celebrities who are “part of new modes of social control,” according to van den Berg (152). That is why we want to have that bag used by the icon we admire or to travel to that place our favourite celebrity has been to.

Looking at the concept of icons and female identity from a joint perspective, it is possible to say that female icons are solid reference points as women who lead the way, and this provides us the answer to the question “What do the icons represent?” in Panofsky’s iconology scheme. Leading the way may mean fighting for the suffrage movement, trying to break down “the glass ceiling”, or making other women spend more money on shoes. The fact that today’s iconicity is more related to pop culture can be explained as the mediatization of what is marketable. It is also worth mentioning here that the way we are presented with icons is totally dependent upon American culture. We watch Frida, Evita, and Selena in American movies and within the context of American culture. In today’s cultural hegemony, a non-American figure can only become an icon if she is marketable, as in the case of Frida, Evita, and Selena. Selena was American, but still she was marketed as more Mexican than American, which should be studied as a case by itself with a focus on representation. Moreover, once an icon who is worth a representation in the mass media is presented to the audience in the right way, she would have a chance of becoming a female icon. The latest

example to this may be the movie *Hidden Figures* (2016) which tells the story of three coloured women who worked for NASA and achieved groundbreaking success. Thanks to a book written on these successful women and its movie adaptation, more people are aware of these three women and, what is more, more women are inspired by them. Thus, it is possible to say that iconicity is very much dependent on the media.

This brings us to the third question of Panofsky's framework which is "What does the icon stand for?" In women's world, icons mostly stand for inspiration. Female icons inspire more women to take action. Throughout history, female icons have inspired people to write, to publish, to get an education, to work outside the house, to fight for female equality, to have legal rights, to get equal pay as men, to be more intellectual, to be better. The icons I have analyzed in this study similarly inspired women to excel in their own ways: Georgia O'Keeffe and Frida inspired women to become better artists, Jacqueline Kennedy and Eva Perón inspired women to better political actors, and Madonna and Selena inspired women to be better singers. Today's icons stand for an improved version of the self. Hence, they are also connected to the concept of Kuntswollen, for they inherently have that artistic purpose which directs their lives and they either reflect or inspire it in other women as well.

In an ideal world, there would be as many female presidents, female businessmen, female judges as men, but unfortunately, it is still a man's world; hence, it is possible to say that female icons also stand for struggle. While Jacqueline Kennedy publicly ignores her husband's infidelity (which is impossible to turn a blind eye to since it is celebrated by Marilyn Monroe's signing in a very sexy way in front of millions of people), Madonna who is seen as the symbol of freedom may experience her ex-husband Sean Penn's violence. In another case, rebellious Frida screams her pain due to Diego's reckless character. Eva Perón, who may have had more political talent than her husband, leaves the stage to him. Selena confronts male-domination to become a Tejano star and Georgia O'Keeffe accepts with

sadness that her unfaithful husband does not want children. All these make me think: would it be possible for women to be so creative without this suffering? Or could this be a rationalization to give in to male dominance?

What characterizes all these women is that they were all significant female figures that always lived in the middle and survived thanks to their iconic features. This leads to the conclusion that all these women are in-between struggling hard to find their way in the male dominated world. In her groundbreaking work *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Gloria Anzaldúa theorizes about mestiza consciousness which she refers to as being in the borderline of many cultures at the same time: “Because I, a *mestiza*, continually walk out of one culture and into another, because I am in all cultures at the same time” (99). As a *mestiza*, she is always in the middle struggling to find her way. In my opinion, every woman is a *mestiza* trying to find her way in the male-dominated world. Either she is a non-American or American, religious or non-religious, uneducated or educated, single or married, a virgin or a whore, she continually walks out of male-dominated culture to limited female-dominated culture and back. She is in all cultures at the same time. To recall George Orwell’s famous quote, “all women are *mestizas*, but some women are more *mestizas* than others” and female icons are with us along the way leading, inspiring, accompanying us.

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