

## **The Problem of Identity in Ana Castillo's The Mixquiahuala Letters**

Baysar Taniyan  
Pamukkale University, Turkey  
E-mail: btaniyan@pau.edu.tr

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### **Abstract**

In *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, Ana Castillo treats the problem of identity within cross-national and continental contexts. Her protagonists, Teresa and Alicia, are the subjects positioned between Anglo-American and Mexican cultures. While Teresa and Alicia are portrayed in their search for identity between the borderlands, the identity crisis is also highlighted in a spatial unrest in their attempt - to find a place to satisfy [their] yearning spirits. The quest for identity also implies the deconstruction of the imposed identity of woman as man's the Other and formation of a genuine feminine consciousness. In this attempt, Castillo not only breaks apart the existing patriarchal and racist female identity but also destroys the traditional masculine plot. Teresa's postmodern fragmented identity also characterizes the fragmented postmodern narrative style and structure of the novel which is comprised of 40 letters and the chronology of which is decided by the reader. The fragmented narrative style further implies the deconstruction of patriarchal and symbolic order which functions as a gateway to the solution of identity crisis of Teresa. By deconstructing the symbolic order Ana Castillo attempts to put fragmented pieces of Teresa's self into a coherent order. Then, this study will attempt to analyze the interrelation between Teresa's fragmented identity and fragmented structure of the novel.