UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

Faculty of Philosophy

Essi Ala

From In-Betweenness to Nothingness

Intersections of Race, Class and Gender in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Master's Thesis
Vaasa 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNIVERSITY OF VAASA
Faculty of Philosophy

Discipline:	English Studies
Author:	Essi Ala
Master's Thesis:	From In-Betweenness to Nothingness Intersections of Race, Class and Gender in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*
Degree:	Master of Arts
Date:	2010
Supervisor:	Tiina Mäntymäki

TIIVISTELMÄ:

Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma tutkii rodun, sosiaaliluokan ja sukupuolen intersektioita ja niihin perustuvaa syrjintää Jean Rhysin romaanissa *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

Tutkimuksen kohteena on romaanin päähenkilö Antoinette, joka joutuu kaikkien näiden kolmen syrjinnän muodon kohteeksi. Syntyperältään Antoinette on kreoli, joten hän ei ole täysin tumma eikä vaalea. Sosiaaliselta luokaltaan Antoinette ei myöskään kuulu täysin rikkaisiin eikä köyhiin. Ennen kaikkea Antoinette on kuitenkin nainen patriarkaalisessa yhteiskunnassa, jossa miehillä on kaikki valta. Romaanissa Antoinette on siis väliinputoajan asemassa niin rotunsa, sosiaalisen luokkansa kuin sukupuolensakin suhteen, ja tässä tutkimuksessa tutkitaan, miten tämä yhteiskunnallinen väliinputoajan asema ilmenee Antoinetten henkilöhahmossa. Lisäksi tutkimuksessa kuvataan, miten tämä yhteiskunnallinen väliinputoajan asema ajaa Antoinetten tilanteeseen, jossa hän kadottaa oman identiteettinsä. Tarkastelun kohteena tässä tutkimuksessa on ensisijaisesti Antoinetten ruumis ja seksuaalisuus. Tutkimuksessa ruumiillisuus nähdään kiinteänä osana identiteettiä ja sen kautta Antoinetten identiteettiä myös suurelta osin kyseenalaistetaan.

Tämä tutkimus nojaa sekä postkolonialismin että naistutkimuksen teoriaan. Yksi tutkimuksen keskeisimmistä päätelmistä on, että Antoinetten henkilöhahmon avulla kirjailija Jean Rhys onnistuu koskettavalla tavalla kritisoimaan koloniaalisen yhteiskunnan toimintatapoja ja syrjinnän muotoja.

AVAINSANAT: Jean Rhys, colonialism, intersectionality, in-betweenness, identity, body

1 INTRODUCTION

Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) most certainly can be placed in the canon of post-colonial literature. It deals with issues of de-colonization from either colonial or patriarchal forms of subjugation or, simultaneously, from both since oftentimes these two are inextricably entwined. When it was published, the novel awakened immediate critical attention, particularly because of its close connections with the power struggles embodied in post-colonial literature.

Wide Sargasso Sea is set in the West Indies roughly in the middle of the seventeenth century, a time when the whole of the Caribbean region was colonized by European settlers. The protagonist of *Wide Sargasso Sea* is Antoinette, a vulnerable, sympathetic young woman who is, in fact, based on another literary figure, that of the mysterious "madwoman" Bertha Mason in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1874). As stated by Jean Rhys herself (quoted in Olaussen 1992: 59), it was outrageous that Bertha, in *Jane Eyre,* was labeled mad without any further clarifications. Thus, one of the ways to account for *Wide Sargasso Sea* is that it is the untold story of Bertha Mason. A story that tries to explain why Bertha became mad and was locked up in the attic of her husband's mansion.

However, a better way to account for *Wide Sargasso Sea* is that it is a tragic story of a woman who tries desperately to belong. Throughout the novel which covers her entire life, Antoinette is in search of an identity which, nonetheless, remains fragmented because of her utter outsider status in society. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette is, in fact, a personification of all the complex human relations and power struggles that take place in the West Indies between its inhabitants. Antoinette is a Creole and therefore she is not truly white or black. She belongs to the impoverished previous landowners, which leaves her between the indigenous population and the new colonialists. Moreover, and most importantly, Antoinette is a woman who does her femininity in an unconventional way in a patriarchal society in which masculinity is the norm. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette is three times othered: a situation which dooms her quests to construct an

identity and find a place in society, in the first place, and a situation which eventually causes Antoinette to loose herself in the pressure of culture and society.

The aim of this thesis is to study the portrayal of the protagonist Antoinette and how she is characterized as a marginal character in regard to race, class, and gender in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

In this thesis, the issue of in-betweenness is important since it is, in fact, in-betweenness that accurately characterizes Antoinette's marginal positions. For instance, as already stated, because Antoinette is a Creole she is neither black nor white, and because she belongs to the impoverished previous landowners, she is neither rich nor poor. Rather, Antoinette is always, in one way or another, characterized as a character that is more in-between than as a character that truly belongs to either side on the divide. Moreover, in Antoinette's story, all of the three marginalizing positions, race, class, and gender, intersect with one another. In Antoinette's story it would, in fact, be made quite impossible to look only at her racial in-betweenness without any reference to class because her race, to a great extent, also defines her class, and her gender also intersects with both race and class. Therefore, intersectionality also plays an important role in this thesis. The reason why particularly the categories of race, class, and gender are chosen for inspection is because these three categories of difference seem the most influential in Antoinette's life. Yet, also because this 'trinity of concepts' seems the primary means of articulating questions on identity (Lucas 2006: 178).

The question that is focused on in this thesis is, how Antoinette's gradual development from a character in-between to a character defined by nothingness, in other words, to a character who cannot form a coherent sense of personal identity, is presented in the novel. Gender is highlighted because Antoinette's three positions of marginalization are looked at in relation to sexuality and the body. Moreover, embodiment is important for it is considered a major constituent of Antoinette's identity and it is, in fact, through embodiment that her identity is mostly called into question.

1.1 Literature and colonialism

A traditional hermeneutic view is that literature is regarded in the light of opening us up to a better understanding of our histories; knowledge which is needed in order for us to improve our futures. This is how literature is regarded in this thesis. As it is, the relationship between colonialism and literature has only quite recently received more attention which, as pointed out by Ania Loomba (1998: 69), is mainly due to the fact that "humanist literary studies have long been resistant to the idea that literature has anything to do with politics, on the grounds that the former is either too subjective, individual and personal or else too universal and transcendent to be thus tainted". Today, however, the view of the relationship between colonialism and literature has almost completely reversed. This has brought along important new ways of looking at both. Loomba (1998: 40) summarises it quite well when she states that "history does not just provide a background for the study of texts, but forms an essential part of textual meaning; conversely, texts or representations have to be seen as fundamental to the creation of history and culture". Accordingly, neither *Wide Sargasso Sea* should be studied without taking into account the larger contexts that have contributed to its origin: that the studies of the novel should always take into account that it has clearly been shaped by colonialism in the same way that studies of the novel can add up to the understanding of colonialism.

Since the discovery of the relationship between colonialism and literature, it is now generally acknowledged that the role of literature was, in fact, immensely important already during the colonial period during which it was largely used to consolidate the imperial power. In *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (1995) Elleke Boehmer gives an apt characterization of the literature of the times, as according to her

> colonialist literature […] on the whole was literature written by and for colonizing Europeans about non-European lands dominated by them. It embodied the imperialists' point of view […] and was informed by theories concerning the superiority of European culture and the rightness of empire. Its distinctive language was geared to mediating the white man's relationship with colonized peoples. (Boehmer 1995: 3)

Yet, while playing an essential part in consolidating and justifying colonialism, literature has most certainly played at least an equally important role in anti-colonial struggles. According to Loomba, literary texts not only reflect the dominant views but rather encode the tensions, complexities and nuances of colonial cultures. Yet, literature is also an important means of appropriating, inverting or challenging the dominant views and representations. (Loomba 1998: 70–71) In fact, the kind of literary texts Loomba is characterizing here are, in contrast to colonialist literature, part of what is now commonly known as postcolonial literature. In other words, postcolonial literature is the kind of literature which critically scrutinizes the colonial relationship and that in one way or another resists the colonialist perspectives (Boehmer 1995: 3); precisely the kind of definition that most aptly characterizes *Wide Sargasso Sea.*

1.2 Race, class, and gender in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Colonialism and its ideology of race, class, and gender are undoubtedly among the most important themes in *Wide Sargasso Sea.* In the novel, the diverse race relations between black and white West Indians are clearly expressed, relations in which the order of superiority is fixed and a white person is always more powerful than a black person.

However, the novel does not only study the relations between the colonizers and the colonized but also explores the complex relations among the white colonizers, i.e. the relations between the previous slaveholding settlers and the new English colonialists that have arrived on the island only after the passing of the Emancipation Act.[1] In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the earlier and the later settlers' relations are aggravated because, due to the emancipation of slaves, the former settlers are now struck by poverty. Their plantations have become ruined because no-one is willing to work at their plantations any longer. Socially, the former settlers are now closer to the native black populations than to the later settlers. Moreover, in addition to their poverty, the former settlers arouse further condemnation because, viewed through the eyes of the new English

[1] The Emancipation Act outlawed slavery, at least, in theory. It was passed in 1833.

colonialists, the former settlers are seen as having become too much like the natives. Their behavior is considered inappropriate because the imperial power rests on the existence of difference between the colonizer and the colonized. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, in fact, the categorization of people is never as easy as black and white, rich and poor, etc., and the novel clearly contests at least one of the initiatory ideas of colonialism, i.e. that white skin color automatically refers to a person who is rich and high up on the social ladder. As colonialism progressed, the categorizations of people into different ranks naturally become ever harder to maintain. According to Elleke Boehmer (2005: 31), in such a situation, one of the ways to strengthen the imperial identity was social stratification, especially in the colonies where class and racial divisions often coincided. Accordingly, in *Wide Sargasso Sea,* in fact, the society characterized has become divisible by three and not by two: the new colonizers, the former settlers, and the local population.

Most importantly, however, in addition to issues connected with race and class, *Wide Sargasso Sea* tells, with almost unbearable cruelty, about the inferior status of women in colonial society. In the novel, the relation of genders could not be any more pellucid; an issue which has, in addition to Rhys, also been addressed by many other postcolonial women writers. Ketu Katrak (2006: 1), for instance, in Politics *of the Female Body: Postcolonial Women Writers of the Third World* states that one of most significant concerns for postcolonial women writers have been the gendered inequalities in patriarchal postcolonial society. As stated by Katrak (2006: 1), particularly the female body and the struggles connected to its ownership have been the issues that have occupied the women writers. In Katrak's own view (2006: 2), the female body is in a state of exile, in other words, un-belonging to itself within indigenous patriarchy strengthened by British racialized colonial practices; indeed something which is true also in *Wide Sargasso Sea.* During colonialism, in the same way as the colonized land and its people were the possessions of their colonizers, the female body belonged to men. Thus, as further stated by Katrak (2006: 8), "a geographical deterritorializing that forces colonizers to depart can be paralleled with how women attempt reclaiming their bodies from patriarchal domination".

1.3 Jean Rhys and her protagonist Antoinette

Rhys was the author of many short stories and novels although she started writing as late as in her thirties. Her first book appeared in 1927, a collection of stories called *The Left Bank,* which was followed by *Quartet* (1928), *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie* (1930), *Voyage in the Dark* (1934) and *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939). Unfortunately none of her earlier books were particularly successful which has been explained by the fact that Rhys' books were decades ahead of their time in theme and tone; almost all her books deal with women as underdogs, alienated and oppressed, but most notably, her books dealt with the issue of female sexuality in such a way that was still rather unfamiliar to the world. In Francis Wyndham's words, "the brutal honesty of the feminine psychology and the muted nostalgia for lost beauty, all create an effect which is peculiarly modern" (quoted in Rhys 1966: 9/10). After the failure of her latest novel and with the outbreak of the war, Rhys dropped completely out of the public attention and was generally thought to have died. Nearly twenty years later, in 1966, Rhys made a comeback with the publication of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, her most famous novel. With the novel, Rhys eventually gained international acclaim and won the Royal Society of Literature Award and the W. H. Smith Award. During the late years of Rhys' life, finally, the cultural climate of the world had changed enough in order for her to be accepted by the public. Helen Carr (2003:98) explained the fame Rhys received after the publication of *Wide Sargasso Sea*: "her attacks on the established order, on snobbishness, on conventional English sexual mores, on racism, were now in tune with the times".

Rhys' own life experiences were the main source of material of which she wrote her fiction. Elaine Savory (1999: 27) characterizes the life of Rhys quite well by stating that "her country was essentially the page and her most important personal connections often other writers or her characters, including her fictional versions of herself". The protagonist of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette, is also clearly based on autobiographical material. She is a compilation of the pain and rawness of Rhys' personal life.

Rhys was born Ella Gwendolen Rees Williams in 1890 on the Windward Islands of Dominica where she also spent her childhood. One of the parallels between Rhys and her protagonist Antoinette is that, in their childhood, both were mainly left on their own. Rhys felt rejected by her mother and mainly just ignored by her father, and therefore she longed to be black, one of those who she considered belonged to the island and were truly part of the place (Carr 2003: 96). Unfortunately, however, in her efforts to identify with the blacks Rhys invariably found that she was not accepted by them but rather only viewed as "alien, suspect, even hated" (Carr 2003: 97). In her own life Rhys was thus an outsider just like Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

Rhys' childhood in the Caribbean was altogether rather gloomy. However, it did give her insights that she would not have received elsewhere. Elaine Savory (1999: 4) claims that Rhys cannot be read seriously without the context of her Dominican life, for it is there that the reader can extrapolate the class, race, religious and gender formations which were laid on Rhys right after she was born; formations which, in *Wide Sargasso Sea,* are also so clearly projected onto Antoinette. As stated by Carr, Rhys

> knew about injustice, she knew about racial hatred […] She knew whites had money and that blacks did not. She knew the colonialists in the past had behaved with unspeakable cruelty; she knew they still assumed their right to oppress economically and to maintain a legal system in their own interest. She knew about fear. She saw in stark and extreme form all the inequalities and prejudices that she would meet in England. (Carr 2004: 99–100)

The fact that Rhys had personal experience of colonialism, in other words, that she personally knew the relation of races during the times, and how race also intersected with class and, most importantly, what it was like for a woman to live in such a society, without doubt gives depth and credibility to her writing. In *Wide Sargasso Sea,* at least, the life experiences of Antoinette seem truly genuine.

The issue of fractured identity is one of the most important themes in Rhys's literature and that is undoubtedly caused by Rhys's lifelong sense of outsiderness. According to Savory (1999: 196), "Rhys was self-contradictory and ambiguous about many issues of identity. She had an intense ambivalence towards both the Caribbean and England and

was, in her culturally complex identity as she grew older, unable to entirely belong anywhere". In fact, Antoinette's words "I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all" (Rhys 1966: 85), could just the same be describing Rhys' personal life. She was simply always an outsider in some respects which is, in the end, the strongest parallel between Rhys and her protagonist Antoinette.

1.4 Earlier studies

Wide Sargasso Sea is a well-known novel and therefore it has also been widely studied. Because of the high number of studies written on the novel, it is not possible to introduce all of the previous studies. Next, however, four studies of the novel are shortly looked at.

In *Three types of feminist criticism and Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea* (1992), Maria Olaussen has studied the novel from three different feminist perspectives, as indicated by the title of her study. The feminist perspectives she has chosen for her study are liberal feminist criticism or gynocriticism, socialist feminist criticism, and black feminist criticism. The prior aim of her study is to answer the question: What is feminist criticism? Olaussen has included *Wide Sargasso Sea* in her study mainly in order to shed additional light on her original question. Overall, Olaussen concludes that *Wide Sargasso Sea* suited the intentions of her study rather well since the novel raises questions dealt by all of the different feminist perspectives discussed. For this thesis, Olaussen study turned out to be very useful. In addition to introducing many of the novel's feminist concerns, it also provided a thorough reading of the novel.

The mother-daughter relation in *Wide Sargasso Sea* has also aroused a great deal of critical attention. In Ronnie Scharfman's view (1981: 90), for example, the lack of the mirroring bond between Antoinette and her mother Annette, in other words, Annette's "refusal or inability to allow her small daughter to perceive her reflection in a loving gaze", is the reason why Antoinette, during her entire life, cannot form a solid

understanding of her identity. According to Scharfman (1981: 100), the mother's concern for her daughter is almost solely a disappointing narcissistic extension of herself and, by denying Antoinette's desperate attempts for identification and unity, Annette dooms Antoinette into a lifelong sense of fragmentation. However, as stated by Scharfman,

> the mother herself is an emblem and a victim of the colonial system [...] subjected to mockery, poverty, suspicion, jealousy, loneliness, fear, and humiliation, as much by the remnants of her colonial community as by the black community surrounding her (1981: 100).

In the same way as Antoinette, also her mother Annette is forced to live her life in what they experience as a dreadful space between the black natives and the white colonizers, accentuated by her femininity. In the end, it is hardly surprising that they both suffer a mental breakdown. As further continued by Scharfman (1981: 102), it is, in fact, particularly through madness that Annette and Antoinette are finally united. Through madness, Antoinette, at last, reaches her desperately longed-for identification with her mother.

The intertextual relationship between Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1874) and *Wide Sargasso Sea* has also aroused a great deal of critical attention. Intertextuality, as defined by H. Porter Abbott (2002: 94), "refers to the fact that all texts (films, plays, novels, anecdotes, or whatever) are made out of other texts". It is based on the idea that we can only express ourselves through pre-existing words and forms. Thereby the power in each text lies in the way it is recontextualized. (H. Porter Abbott 2002: 192)

The intertextual relation of *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* is oftentimes considered so substantial that critics have gone as far as to argue that *Wide Sargasso Sea* is not entirely self-sufficient but rather, requires that the reader know something of *Jane Eyre* in the same way that post-colonial theory for example requires some knowledge of colonialism (Savory 1999: 203). In this thesis, the reason why the intertextual relationship between *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* is examined at such length is in order to indicate that *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a clear political statement. In colonial

discourse, women have mainly been invisible. They have been allotted the role of the other, of the madwomen like Bertha in *Jane Eyre*. In postcolonial literature, however, the other has gained a voice like Antoinette in Rhys's novel.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in their well-known book *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Women Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (2000), originally published in 1979, describe the novel *Jane Eyre* as a distinctively female Bildungsroman in which the problems encountered by the protagonist Jane, in her struggles from childhood towards the almost unthinkable goal of mature freedom, are representative of the difficulties every woman in patriarchal society must meet and overcome: oppression, starvation, madness, and coldness. The whole plot of the novel depends on the outcome of these struggles which Gilbert and Gubar (2000: 339) name as the "secret dialogue of self and soul", in other words, Jane's efforts to come into terms with her imprisoned rebellion and rage. In these struggles, according to Gilbert and Gubar (2000: 339), the most important confrontation for Jane is not, however, with the male character of the novel, Rochester, but rather with Rochester's mad wife Bertha; a character who does not speak a single word in the whole novel and is only represented in terms of what the other characters say about her. However, as also Gilbert and Gubar (2000: 339, 360) acknowledge, Bertha's importance in *Jane Eyre* is crucial and they view Bertha as Jane's truest and darkest double, the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self Jane has been trying to repress.

It was Jean Rhys' deliberate choice to base the protagonist of *Wide Sargasso Sea* directly on *Jane Eyre* and to its protagonist Bertha. Rhys herself comments on her choice by stating that

> the Creole in Charlotte Brontë's novel is a lay figure – repulsive which does not matter, and not once alive which does [...]. She must be at least plausible with a past, the reason why Mr. Rochester treats her so abominably and feels justified, the reason why he thinks she is mad and why of course she goes mad [...]. (quoted in Olaussen 1992: 59)

By creating a life to Antoinette and by giving Antoinette a voice of her own Rhys is, in fact, giving a voice to all Creole women alike. In *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Antoinette is

clearly speaking on behalf of the culturally repressed women to whom Rhys herself also belonged.

Additionally, as stated by Elaine Savory, "because Rhys so dramatically relocates the madwoman in psychological and political terms, she offers both important feminist and important postcolonial paradigms" (1999: 203). In postcolonial terms, on the one hand, Antoinette is a clear proof of the fact that 'the other', the previously marginalized character of Bertha in *Jane Eyre*, can become an essential part of literature. A fact which also speaks of Rhys' wish to rebel against the perceived superiority of the English and thereby make a political statement against the oppressive nature of colonialism; a process which has, in fact, also become to be known as "the process of 'writing back' against the western literary tradition" (Iane 2006: 18).

In regard to feminism, on the other hand, both novels can be defined as feminist (Sherry Lewkowicz 2004). Both protagonists are distressed by the issues posed by being a woman in male-dominated society, and the challenges they meet are fairly similar. Yet, the ways in which the two novels deal with the issue of being a woman are indeed very different. According to Lewkowicz (2004), the time each novel was written plays a crucial role in determining the course of events, and the rather opposite endings of the novels clearly represent the writers' distinct world views. In other words, Jane represents a romantic Victorian approach, whereas Antoinette represents a more realistic conception of a woman, characteristic of Jean Rhys. Moreover, as further pointed out by Lewkowicz (2004), whereas in Jane's world women are literally prevented from participating in society as men do, in Antoinette's world, this prohibition is a great deal more obscure and hidden. In Antoinette's world, it is rather ideology and norms of femininity which are oppressive and which, above all, are so established and internalized that Antoinette simply cannot rise above them and obtain the same happy ending as Jane does at the end of *Jane Eyre*.

The relation of *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* has also been studied by Liz Lewis (2001) who considers the main characters' fragmented selfhoods, and the forming of

doubles in both of the novels as well as between the novels. According to Lewis (2001), Antoinette and Jane can quite naturally be considered each other's external literary doubles. Although their living contexts are very different, both are victims of the patriarchal world order. Yet, also Antoinette and her husband can be seen as doubling each other, in this case, by their misunderstanding of each other's worlds. Both are trapped in the other's world which is a quite different and a great deal more unfortunate setting compared with the double relationship of Jane and her husband, Mr. Rochester, in *Jane Eyre,* who are said to be each other's true complementary doubles. Since the character of Antoinette's husband is based on the character of Mr. Rochester from *Jane Eyre*, these two characters also create another double and the list, in fact, goes on and on. In the end, the conclusions drawn by Lewis in her article are that the doubleness of selfhood can exist across all boundaries, and that each and every one of us has a double life lurking within us. (Lewis 2001)

The reason why previous studies on *Wide Sargasso Sea* were brought up was in order to indicate a gap in research. None of the few studies listed above nor in actual fact any other study found on the novel have concentrated on studying it in such a way that is the intention in this thesis. On the one hand, studies on intersectionality, although now held in high repute, are still fairly recent and. On the other hand, a completely new aspect is brought into this thesis by incorporating the body of the protagonist Antoinette into the analysis and not just viewing her solely as locus of the different oppressions to which she is subjected. In fact, studies on the body in literature are still quite exiguous, as stated by Nathalie Etoke (2006) for instance. In her study onto the body in Francophone African novels Etoke states that her study originated from the absence of critical discourse on the literary writings on the woman's body. According to Etoke (2006: 41), the critical approaches to the novels she studied mainly view the African female figure either as a symbol of gendered oppression or in terms of liberation from gendered oppression, yet without looking at the actual bodies of the characters in these struggles in any more detail.

2 INTERSECTIONALITY – A FIELD OF STUDY AND ITS ORIGINS

I*ntersectionality* is a rather difficult term to define. According to Kathy Davis (2008), intersectionality refers to the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power. As further pointed out by Davis (2008), since intersectionality is always closely tied to questions of power, it is also always closely connected to experiences of exclusion and subordination. According to a definition by Susanne Knudsen (2006), intersectionality is a theory which tries to catch the relationships between socio-cultural categories and identities. It is a theory which stresses complexity, and the categories that may enhance its complexity are for instance gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, class, and nationality; categories which can further point toward identities in transition. (Knudsen 2006) In summary, intersectionality suggests that the many socially and culturally constructed categories of discrimination interact with one another on multiple and on simultaneous levels, and it is a line of thought that examines and explains how these interactions of different categories of discrimination generate a profound social inequality. In other words, in intersectionality, it is believed that the traditional models of oppression within society, for instance, those based on particularly race, class, and gender, do not act independently of one another but rather interrelate with one another.

As can be drawn from the definitions above, intersectionality gives many starting points for a study. The various categories of discrimination can be bridged together in many ways. It should, however, be stressed that in intersectionality, it is always a question of who the person is and from what perspective the amalgamation is looked at. In this thesis, the categories of race, class, and gender were chosen because, no doubt, particularly these three socio-cultural categories best reflect the position of Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and, moreover, are particularly the categories which help to understand her sense of nothingness at the end.

The concept of intersectionality has emerged from the interplay between Black Feminism, feminist theory and post-colonial theory in the late 1990s and the beginning

of the third millennium. Yet, initiatives to this direction are noticeable already in the feminist theories of the 1970s, for instance in post-colonial feminism or in feminism and socialism which, in the same way as theories on intersectionality, concentrate on socio-cultural power orders. (Knudsen 2006)

The term itself was originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, who in 1989 argued that theorists need to take both gender and race into account and show how they interact and shape the lives and experiences of black women. Intersectionality was thus originally intended to address the defect that the experiences and struggles of women of color fell between the cracks of both feminist and anti-racist discourses. (Davis 2008) As it is, women as well as men are not all white, and each and every one of them all not western, either. The blindness of early feminism regarding race has been greatly criticized later. However, up till today the situation seems almost to have reversed itself. Today it is almost unimaginable that woman's studies could only focus on gender. According to Davis (2008), textbooks and anthologies cannot afford to neglect difference and diversity among women, and some studies even face the risk of being neglected by publishers if they do not pay enough attention to such issues. As stated by Davis (2008), "at this particular juncture in gender studies, any scholar who neglects difference runs the risk of having her work viewed as theoretically misguided, politically irrelevant, or simply fantastical".

According to Davis (2008), it is commonly agreed today that since the discovery of intersectionality, it has been heralded as one of the most important contributions to women's studies so far. However, scholars still seem to share the same confusion as to how to treat and view the concept. According to some, intersectionality is a theory while others view it merely as a strategy for doing feminist analysis. It is not even clear whether intersectionality should be limited to understanding individual experiences, to theorizing identity, or whether it should be taken as a property of social structures and cultural discourses. Thus, it is surprising that a theory which is considered so vague has become to be regarded as such a breakthrough among feminist scholars. However, as argued by Davis (2008), the secret to the success of intersectionality lies paradoxically precisely in this vagueness and open-endedness. This argument Davis founds on the

work of Murray S. Davis (1971), according to whom no theory ever became famous because it was 'true' or coherent. On the contrary, successful theories appeal to a concern regarded as fundamental by a larger audience of scholars, and particularly in such a way which is not only unexpected but also inherently hazy and mystifyingly open-ended. (Murray S. Davis quoted in Davis 2008) It is then, as further pointed out by Davis (2008), that the long and painful legacy of the exclusion of difference among women has naturally made it one of the most significant concerns for feminists; concerns which intersectionality finally addressed.

Intersectionality brings together two of the most influential strands of contemporary feminist thought both of which have been dealing with the issue of difference, yet only in somewhat different ways. The first strand of feminist thought has been concerned with understanding the effects of race, class, and gender on women's identities, experiences, and struggles for empowerment. Initially, this strand explored how, with the addition of each new category of inequality, the individual becomes more vulnerable, more marginalized, and more subordinate. Yet, gradually the focus shifted to how the categories of race, class, and gender interact in the social and material realities of women's lives to produce and transform relations of power. The second important strand within feminist thought are those inspired by postmodern theoretical perspectives – perspectives that were in need of assistance in their efforts in deconstructing the binary oppositions and universalisms inherent in the modernist paradigms of western philosophy and science. Thus the advent of theories such as postcolonial theory and diaspora studies which were both in search of alternatives to static conceptualizations of identity. Intersectionality also supported their concerns of conceptualizing multiple and shifting identities. (Davis 2008)

The popularity and success of the concept of intersectionality is explainable in various different ways. On the one hand, intersectionality not only promises to address the everlasting issue of difference and diversity but rather, it promises to do it in such a way that the old ideals of producing theories applicable to all women can also be upheld (Davis 2008). On the other hand, intersectionality further "promises an almost universal applicability, useful for understanding and analyzing any social practice, any individual

or group experience, any structural arrangement, and any cultural configuration (Davis 2008)". The theory can thus be applied on a wide variety of fields of study, and it is most likely particularly this wide applicability of the concept which also explains its success.

3 DISMANTLING THE COLONIAL/POSTCOLONIAL SUBJECT AND IDENTITY

The intention of this section is to provide an introduction to colonialism and imperialism, and also of how these two terms differ from each other and how they are used in this thesis. However, the focus of this section is not so much on colonialism and imperialism as practices than it is in the ideologies behind the two practices, particularly in the ideologies of race and class, yet also on the ideology of gender which will, however, be returned to more closely in the next section. In this section, the question what kind of effects colonial ideologies have on individual people and on their identities are discussed. Moreover, this section discusses how colonialism co-operated with patriarchal ideology with the effect of leaving women subordinate and powerless.

3.1 The colonial/imperial past

The colonial period is described by Robert Young as follows:

> The violent history of colonialism […] a history which includes histories of slavery, of untold, unnumbered deaths from oppression or neglect, of the enforced migration and diaspora of millions of peoples – Africans, Americans, Arabs, Asians and Europeans, of the appropriation of territories and of land, of the institutionalization of racism, of the deconstruction of cultures and the superimposition of other cultures (2006: 4).

As indicated by Young in the above quotation, in its entirety, the magnitude of colonialism was tremendous in many respects. Temporally, colonialism persisted well over four hundred years, and spatially it covered almost the entire globe. As further stated by Young, "by the time of the First World War, imperial powers occupied, or by various means controlled, nine-tenths of the surface territory of the globe; Britain governed one-fifth of the area of the world and a quarter of its population" (2001: 2). Accordingly, also the overall effects colonialism triggered have grown into an extremely great significance.

Before a closer inspection of the colonial period, the terms colonialism and imperialism ought to be defined. That is because oftentimes the terms are united as synonyms and at times further treated as homogenous practices. Edward Said draws the following distinction whereby

> 'imperialism' means the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory and 'colonialism', which is almost always the consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory (Said quotes in Ashcroft 2000: 46).

In this thesis, then, in order to be precise, colonialism refers to the consolidation of imperial power in the West Indies. In practice, it is colonialism which oppresses the people in the West Indies yet imperialism is closely connected to it since it is the driving force behind colonial practices.

Colonialism can be generalized as having been Europe's mission to spread and take control over the rest of the world. However, as pointed out by Young, initially colonialism was not driven by the motive to rule others, but rather, people moved in search of a better life for economic, religious, or political reasons. Early colonial expansion can, in fact, almost be paralleled to the situation of migrants today. (Young 2001: 15–20) Yet, as the Europeans moved and settled in places which were already populated, power struggles between the old and the new inhabitants were inevitable. The situation is most aptly characterized by Loomba (1998: 2) for according to her, "the process of 'forming a community' in the new land necessarily meant *unforming* or re-forming the communities that existed there already". In the course of time, colonialism transformed from its spatial mission into an economic as well as a cultural mission, and at the same time, it became inextricably linked with the downsides of these practices, such as exploitation and subjugation.

3.2 Race and class

As stated by Gavin Lucas (2006: 178) in *An Archaeology of Colonial Identity: Power and Material Culture in the Dwars,* "current theoretical focus on identity politics is very much defined by a trinity of concepts – race, class and gender – which also seem to be the primary means of articulating questions of identity". Whereas previously these concepts have more or less been addressed from separate angles, nowadays they are increasingly been viewed as interrelated and mutually constitutive categories of society. Yet, it is important to note, as also emphasized by Lucas (2006: 181), that "this trinity of concepts is not so much categories of analysis for colonial (or any other) identity as historical formations". They are formations that are always very much tied to a certain time and place. Race, class and even gender, are all constructions of the European culture of the last few centuries, especially of the last two hundred years.

In this thesis, the term race refers to the "classification of human beings into physically, biologically and genetically distinct groups" (Ashcroft et al. 2000: 198). On the one hand, the notion of race assumes that humanity can be divided into unchanging natural types which are recognizable by physical features transmitted 'through the blood', which furthermore permit distinctions of human beings into 'pure' and 'mixed' races. On the other hand, the term race also assumes that the behavior of human beings, mental and moral, as well as individual characteristics, such as personality, ideas and capacities, can be explained through the knowledge of racial origins. (Ashcroft et al. 2000: 198) Accordingly, in this thesis race is regarded as a concept which refers to both distinct bodily features of human beings and to everything else connected with humanity, in other words, to actions and movement, and to reason and emotions. It should perhaps also be made clear that although, today, the term ethnicity is commonly preferred to that of race, nevertheless, in this thesis, the term race is used. This is because the term race is viewed as being more closely connected to the time described in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and therefore also more exquisite in its connotations. In other words, that the term race awakens stronger emotions than the term ethnicity.

The construction of race emerged exactly in the wake of colonialism. As stated by Lucas, it took place "as Europeans started to settle around the globe and where cultural differences between Europeans and others were articulated around perceived physical differences, especially skin color" (Lucas 2006: 182). Racial thinking nonetheless, as pointed out by Loomba (1998: 104), is not only crucial for creating images of the outsider but equally important for constructing the insider, the 'self'.

Although the concept of race is not an invention of imperialism alone, since some form of racial stereotyping dates back much further, it, nevertheless, goes hand in hand with the colonizers' need to establish dominance over the colonized and hence justify their imperial mission. As stated by Ashcroft et al. (2000:198), race quickly became imperialism's most supportive idea, mainly because the idea of superiority that generated the emergence of race as a concept adjusted easily to the desires behind its mission, i.e. to the desires of dominance and enlightenment. As for today, hardly anyone would seriously argue that there are separate races of humanity but rather, that racial difference, as a biologically significant difference, is socially constructed (Lucas 2006: 181–182). In conclusion, as pointed out by Loomba, over the course of time race has functioned as one of the most powerful, yet the most fragile markers of human identity, and skin color has clearly been one of its privileged markers. However, although skin color is considered the prime signifier of racial identity, "race as a concept receives its meanings contextually, and in relation to other social groupings and hierarchies, such as gender and class". (Loomba 1998: 121–122)

As pointed out by Lucas (2006; 178), in the colonial context, the first pair to be associated was that of race and class which owes a great deal to Marxist studies of colonial and imperial histories. Such studies "have seen the development of the slave trade as establishing the grounds upon which later class divisions formed, with racial divisions underlying class divisions so that the two became mutually reinforcing" (Lucas 2006: 178). According to Loomba, the ideology of racial superiority translated easily into class terms. It was argued, for instance, that the superiority of the white races implied that the black man was forever doomed to remain cheap labor and a slave. The imperial mission based on hierarchy of races coincided perfectly with the economic

needs of the colonialists', which resulted in that the processes of class formations were unquestionably shaped by racialization. It should, however, be taken into account that the exact intersection of racial ideologies with the processes of class formations is always very much dependent on the kinds of societies colonial powers penetrated and the specific racial ideologies that emerged there. (Loomba 1998: 126–129) In regard to this thesis, the crossing over of the ideologies of race and class is most simply explained by referring to the alleged pyramid depicting the hierarchical structure of people and dominance: The white western male is at the top of the pyramid while the black native is at the bottom, and the same positions are also directly applicable to class. The darker the skin color, the lower one's position in the pyramid. Gender naturally also affects ones placement.

3.3 Gender

According to Franz Fanon and Gandhi, colonial culture required a specific mindset along with its own ideology, codes and rules that had to be learnt, distinct from the indigenous cultures of both the colonizer and the colonized. In the case of late nineteenth-century British imperialism, as further argued by Fanon and Gandhi, the framework of colonial culture was sustained through an ideology of masculinity. (quoted in Young 2001: 325) The male dominance of colonial culture meant that the white male colonizer and the values he represented dominated over the indigenous population and women in general, independent of ethnicity or nationality. Sexual dominance was an inherent part of the ideology, and the homology of both colonial and sexual dominance contained in colonialism is now generally acknowledged. According to Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (2000: 101), "both patriarchy and imperialism can be seen to exert analogous forms of domination over those they render subordinate" which then further results in that "the experiences of women in patriarchy and those of colonized subjects can be paralleled in a number of respects". No wonder, as further pointed out by Ashcroft et al. (2000: 101), that the interests of feminist and postcolonial studies have always been closely tied. Both fields criticise the unequal power relations which clearly do not belong to the past but still exist not only in the Third world

countries but also in western societies. In the end, both fields of studies aim at a situation in which superiority has transformed into that of balance of power, i.e. a situation in which all people, regardless of ethnicity or gender, are treated and regarded as equal.

Colonial domination was justified by claims that the Europeans were simply of a superior race and more civilized than the ones they rendered subordinate. Similarly, patriarchy rests on the assumptions that the male gender is superior to the female one. Since colonialism and patriarchy can be stated to have worked in harness with each other, their hierarchical relationship can also be described with the help of the alleged pyramid: the white European male is at the top, the black third world female subject at the bottom and everyone else situated somewhere between the two extremes. Most notable, however, is that during colonialism women were always the ones rendered subordinate, sometimes even doubly subordinate, since women of colour could naturally be subjected to both forms of domination at the same time.

4 THEORIZING THE FEMALE BODY

This section deals with gender relations and the body. Questions discussed are: How were gender relations constructed during colonialism? What accounts for the imbalance of power between the genders? What accounts for the portrayal of female bodies as 'docile' and resistant in women's writing? Why do women feel prisoners in their own bodies? Why do women feel that their bodies do not belong to them or that they have no control over their own bodies?

4.1 The mind body dichotomy and its gendered consequences

Kathy Davis (1997) pays attention to the increasing interest by contemporary scholars in the body in her book *Embodied Practices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body*. According to Davis, "the body has clearly captured the imagination of contemporary scholars" (1997:1). Susan Bordo (2003: 5), for instance, accounts for the long absence of the body in western culture simply by looking at the long-lasting dichotomy of western thought according to which the mind is associated with everything that is "the highest, the noblest, and the closest to God while the body is the albatross, the heavy drag on self-realization". As further pointed out by Kathy Davis (1997: 2), up till today, the body has commonly been relegated merely to the domain of biology and viewed almost solely as an enemy to the mind. In other words, the body has usually been seen as something which is not part of the true self, and furthermore, as undermining the best efforts of that self. The mind/body dualism is also clearly reflected in other oppositions, such as culture and nature, and reason and emotion. Whereas the mind is allied with culture and reason, the body is associated with all that is 'other' (Sanchez-Grant 2008). The most important realization of such dichotomies is, however, that they also relate to the prevailing gender relations. Since historically, women have mainly been defined by their biological potentiality to bear children, they are inextricably associated with the body, "the carnival flesh to which the elevated mind is shackled", and thereby simply considered inferior to men (Sanchez-Grant 2008).

A rather radical but an extremely illuminative view into gender relations is also given by Carole Pateman (1988). She begins by referring to the generally established notion of women's subordination as stemming from a male privilege. Further, according to Pateman, patriarchy is ultimately based on a hidden sexual contract that privileges male access to woman's bodies; a privilege named as the 'male sex-right', the original social contract. For women's disadvantage, every social contract since the original one has been underwritten by this male sex right which, in the end, not only initiates the patriarchal right which is "the power that men exercise over women" but also "explains why exercise of right is legitimate". (quoted in Tomm 1992: 212–213) As further pointed out by Winnie Tomm (1992), the influence of the male-sex right does not stop in the bedroom or in the brothel, but extends its authority to the lecture room, the boardroom and, indeed, to the whole of civilized society. In patriarchal cultures, socialization results in the acceptance of the superior authority of men at all levels of society, which further constitutes the social meaning attributed to male sexuality in patriarchy. In such a setting female sexuality is, unfortunately, valued primarily as a means of satisfaction for men's needs and desires, for instance, with respect to contracts such as marriage and reproduction. (Tomm 1992: 212)

In this thesis, patriarchy is understood as a concept that refers to gender inequality. Moreover, it is viewed that men do not only control and dominate women at the household but rather, patriarchy is seen as a system of social structures and practices, in which men exploit, dominate and oppress women at society at large.

The above considerations make clear why women have felt and continue to feel colonized into their very own bodies. In fact, during the course of time, women have had very little power to decide over matters that directly involve themselves; the kind of setting which without doubt render women into positions of outsiderness in the matters of their own lives and bodies, and further set them into a crossfire with the desires women themselves have and with the ones that are merely imposed upon them. As stated by a radical feminist Adrianne Rich (2003: 30), "wherever people are struggling against subjection, the specific subjection of women, through our location in a female body, from now on has to be addressed". According to Rich (2003: 30), a closer

examination onto the female body is needed in order to reclaim women's bodies from whatever form of domination they have been subjected to. She refers to the liberation of women as "a wedge driven into all other radical thought"; a process which would eventually "open out the structures of resistance, unbind the imagination, and connect what's been dangerously disconnected" (Rich 2003: 32). As indicated by Rich, in the battles for equality between men and women, the liberation of the female body plays just as important role as the liberation of women in general. This is simply because if women are fully under the control of men so are their bodies and, moreover, it is in fact precisely our bodies, i.e. our physical features, that define us either men or women. It is, however, important to stress that the experiences of women should not be generalized across cultures and histories, because gender roles are always socially constructed (Rich 2003: 39). For example, during colonialism, the subjection of women was much worse than it is now and it also took different forms in different places.

Even though the body should be viewed an inseparable part of women's struggles for freedom, it has been an absent presence for a long time. One of the ways to account absence is an effort to address this long-lasting imbalance. Moreover, as stated by Davis, the enormous interest in the body is also explicable merely by the fact that today the body is considered a reflection of culture at large. No longer does the body only represents how we fit into the social order, but rather, it is an important means for self-expression. In conclusion, as further stated by Davis, the body is just one more feature in a person's identity project. (Davis 1997: 1–2)

4.2 Female bodies as markers of social realities

Nathalie Etoke (2006) has studied the woman's body in Francophone African Literature written by postcolonial women writers. The prior argument of Etoke's study is that rather than being a stable signifier of female oppression and resistance to patriarchy, a woman's body signifies various other potentially conflicting political projects and positions in postcolonial societies. In the study, Etoke argues that the ways in which the writers write the female body are in fact also ways for the writers to create, perform and

transmit ideologies, that is, processes through which both the writers as well as the readers construct representations of social realities. The theoretical basis for Etoke's study is the work of Michel Foucault and his analyses of the body as a locus of power. As stated by Etoke (2006), with the help of Foucault's analysis she was able to view the ways in which the female body becomes the ground through which many political and social claims are mediated.

According to Etoke (2006), the Francophone African novels she has studied "portray a conflicting woman's body which is torn between docility and resistance". This means that female bodies are rendered 'docile' through values and practises imposed on them by patriarchal power. Moreover, it also means that they can be portrayed as loci of resistance to the colonial ideology and its practises. No wonder that in the novels Etoke studied, the female body is portrayed as a complex entity, an entity whose "fictional itinerary takes the bath of subversion, transgression and negotiation" (2006).

The term 'docile' derives from the work of Michel Foucault to whom it meant subjected and pliable bodies produced by different disciplinary techniques. According to Foucault, the creation of 'docile' bodies is first and foremost the result of power, and power that is exercised through unprecedented disciplinary techniques which are representative in institutions such as the army, the school, the hospital, and the manufacture, and disciplinary techniques which all have the shared purpose of controlling and shaping the body. (Bartky 1988: 128) In Foucault's highly influential attack on humanism, he draws attention to the concern how bodies are often rather violently and arbitrarily constructed in order to legitimate different regimes of domination. For Foucault, "the body became the primary site for the operations of modern forms of power – power which was not top-down and repressive, but rather, subtle, elusive and productive" (Davis 1997: 3).

According to Etoke, in the Francophone African novels that she studied, the reason for the creation of 'docile' and resistant bodies was grounded because by writing the woman's body the postcolonial women writers were, in fact, also further trying to challenge the social and cultural practices that restricted and controlled the body in the

first place. However, since these traditions, rites, and ways of thinking have been prevailing for centuries, the act of writing can only partially challenge them, and therefore, the woman's body continues to be "the ground on which different discourses on social practises, beliefs and free will merge". In summary, as stated by Etoke (2006), "far from being a self-evident entity, the woman's body is a locus of tension, contestation and assertion […] the battleground of conflicting discourses on nationalism, identity and sexuality". In the end, the endeavour to try to define the woman's body becomes an effort "which aims at understanding the struggle for change within social, cultural and political boundaries". (Etoke 2006)

4.3 The exile of the female body

Ketu Katrak writes (2006: 16) in *Politics of the Female Body: Postcolonial Women Writers of the Third World,* that the purpose of her study is to give an "analysis of the female sexuality through the lens of the female body […] and bring significant new insights into the field". According to Katrak (2006: 1), her study creates a good theoretical framework for a study of postcolonial women writers by particularly concentrating on such productions that are involved in the processes of decolonizing from both patriarchy and other forms of domination. Accordingly, since *Wide Sargasso Sea* can without doubt be placed amongst the kind of productions that is being referred to by Katrak, her study also provides good insights for this thesis.

In her study, Katrak points out that the two most significant concerns for postcolonial women writers have been the female body and gendered inequities in patriarchal society. She argues that the female body is in a state of exile, outsiderness and un-belonging to itself within indigenous patriarchy strengthened by British racialized colonial practices. Further, Katrak explains what is being meant by such conditions, and in fact, the definitions given by Katrak of the term exile apply well also to the character of Antoinette. In the study, Katrak discusses both the literal and metaphoric connotations of exile, as well as the concept of 'internalized' and external exile of the female body. The term 'internalized exile', as used in Katrak's study, refers to the

process which the female protagonists undergo “where the body feels disconnected from itself, as though it does not belong to it and has no agency”. Into this process of experiencing internalized exile she includes complicated levels of consent and collusion to domination; domination which the female protagonists try to resist in order to reconnect with their bodies and communities. Further, this process also includes the various ways in which the female body is used to resist such exilic conditions, for example via speech, silence, starvation, or illness. According to Katrak, if these resistances fail, there can be devastating outcomes which can end in murder, suicide, or in complete mental breakdown; exactly what happens to Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea.* External exile, on the other hand, as used in her study, “manifests in migration and geographical relocation necessitated by political persecution, material conditions of poverty, and forms of intellectual silencing in third world societies”. (Katrak 2006: 1–2) At the end of *Wide Sargasso Sea,* in fact, also Antoinette is transported from her birthplace, the West Indies, to England. On the way she looses even the slightest hope she has ever had of re-constructing her identity.

In the study, Katrak concludes that bodily responses by female protagonist vary and are at times successful and sometimes tragically unsuccessful. However, in women’s texts also the unsuccessful conclusions like madness, death, or other forms of social exclusion and un-belonging should be taken into account. According to Katrak, these unsuccessful conclusions can be considered as strategic uses of these female bodies; the kind of uses which often are, unfortunately, the only possible avenues for resistance. By using these strategic means women writers depict how their female characters use covert means, rather than overt political resistance portrayed more often by male postcolonial writers, in resisting patriarchy or colonial oppression. As stated by Katrak, “female covert resistances are undertaken with self-consciousness and remarkable creativity that decides to take risks and confront domination selectively and strategically in the interest of self-preservation”. (Katrak 2006: 2–3)

In the title of her book Katrak refers to a ‘politics of the female body’. Under this concept Katrak has listed all the components that she believes are involved in the process of the female bodies being exiled. To begin with, in accordance with the

discussion above, the politics of the female body includes female resistance to oppression as well as the uses of the female agency to resist patriarchal domination (Katrak 2006: 9).

As further stated by Katrak (2006: 9), the politics of the female body includes socialization which consists of "layers and levels of ideological influences, sociocultural and religious, that impose knowledge or ignorance of female bodies and construct woman as gendered subject or object". Sociocultural parameters of womanhood, like wifehood, widowhood, or mothers of sons valued more than mothers of daughters, are grounded deeply within economic, political, and cultural norms that constitute an ideological framework that controls women's bodies either consciously or unconsciously. In postcolonial cultures it is further common that a traditional, pre-colonial patriarchy is strengthened by colonial Victorian morality and, when socialization patterns are combined with coded structures of morality and behavior, they end up having a hold on women throughout their entire lives. (Katrak 2006: 9–10)

In Katrak's study, the arena of female sexuality is also very important and indeed part of the politics of the female body. In studying female sexuality, Katrak concentrates on questions like accepted versus censored expressions of sexuality, and cultural traditions and norms. Katrak explicates that motherhood in heterosexual marriage is validated and glorified but other manifestations that pertain to female sexuality such as a childless woman, a single woman, or a widow, are pitied and disrespected. In consequence, motherhood is oftentimes considered as an accepted expression of female sexuality whereas, for instance, women who decide to remain single or childless by choice need to be made nonexistent and, at the same time, expressions of their sexuality are censored. (Katrak 2006: 10)

Because it is a common tendency to categorize women into different roles, such as mother, daughter, wife, etc., which reinforce control over women's bodies, according to Katrak, the politics of the female body involves the demystification of these roles. (Katrak 2006: 10–11) The demystification of the roles would mean that unlike commonly made to believe, motherhood, for instance, is not always rewarding,

marriage does not always end in 'happily ever after', or single women are not always necessarily the weakest ones. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, in fact, all of the above are true. Motherhood and wifehood are both equally unrewarding since both Antoinette and her mother end up loosing their minds. Moreover, the strongest woman in the entire novel is a single mother who is, furthermore, dark-skinned and originally a slave. Such uses of the female characters, in *Wide Sargasso Sea,* can certainly be interpreted as resistances or, as referred to by Katrak (2006: 3), they are covert political resistances through which women writers portray how their protagonists and other female characters resist patriarchal or colonial domination from within the system.

According to Katrak, cultural traditions are the arena where the key controls of female sexuality lie; an issue which is further strengthened by the fact that the traditions which usually are the most oppressive to women are located particularly within the arena of female sexuality. Traditions that are being referred to by Katrak include, for instance customs like dowry and the traditional roles women are expected to fulfill as daughter, wife, or mother. These traditions are, at the same time, also clearly ways of objectifying women. According to Katrak, in most third world cultures sexuality may not even be named as such, but rather, the category is divided into various other forms of control over women's bodies. Such a tendency naturally only complicates the study of female sexuality. For instance, a tradition such as dowry is mystified as a social custom, which, in turn, is regarded as having nothing to do with sexuality even though it clearly controls the use of the female body. In reality, social customs do control female sexuality by placing regulations onto marriage arrangements or onto socialization of daughters and sons. (Katrak 2006: 10–14)

5 ANTOINETTE'S JOURNEY FROM IN-BETWEENNESS TO NOTHINGNESS IN RHYS'S *WIDE SARGASSO SEA*

This section comprises the analysis of the portrayal of Antoinette in Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and how she is characterized in terms of in-betweenness in the novel, in other words, how Antoinette's position regarding race, class, and gender always remains between the two poles that the novel offers as normative alternatives. The question that the analysis focuses on is how Antoinette's gradual development from a character in-between to a character defined by nothingness becomes visible, mainly, through her embodiment and sexuality. In the analysis, Antoinette's embodiment plays a major role for it is particularly through her body that she constructs her identity, and it is also through her body that her identity is mainly contested.

5.1 Race and class

The very first words of *Wide Sargasso Sea* establish Antoinette as an outsider. The novel begins: "They say when trouble comes close ranks, and so the white people did. But we were not in their ranks. The Jamaican ladies had never approved of my mother, 'because she pretty like pretty self' (Rhys 1966: 15). In this opening sentence of the novel the word 'pretty' alludes to Antoinette's mother's Creole origins which are then further stated as the reason why she is not accepted amongst the 'ladies' on the island, in other words, amongst the real whites who are the upper classes. In fact, in the novel, the ultimate reason for Antoinette's inescapable position of in-betweenness is the fact that she is a Creole. Antoinette's Creole origins not only doom her an outsider in regard to her race but also in regard to her class; issues which, in the portrayal of Antoinette, during the time depicted in *Wide Sargasso Sea,* intersect with one another.

According to Elleke Boehmer (1998: 9), the term Creole refers to someone who has been born in the colonies and is, accordingly, native born yet not entirely indigenous to the land for s/he is a descendant of settlers. Because the term is also used about a mixed language which has formed as a result of cultural contact (Boehmer 1998: 9), the most

apt word to describe people like Antoinette is, in fact, to use the word a mixture. As a Creole, Antoinette is a mixture of both the West Indian and European cultures in every possible way, and thereby she is also right in the middle of the constant battles that take place between these two parties, i.e. between the new English colonizers and the local inhabitants of the West Indies.

The term Creole has originally referred to a white person of European descent who has been born and raised in a tropical colony (Ashcroft et al. 2000: 57; Boehmer 1998: 9). However, as continued by Ashcroft et al. (2000:57), from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, the most common usage of the term in English was to mean someone who had been born particularly in the West Indies, whether white or black. Such a usage of the term to both whites and Negros then naturally erased its connotation to any particular colour whereby, for Europeans, the term Creole increasingly became to act as a reminder of the 'threat' of the ongoing colonial mixing of races (Ashcroft et al. 2000:57). However, not only did the Europeans want to protect their race but also the local black inhabitants on the island. As a Creole, Antoinette poses a threat to both sides of the divide which explains why she is also mistreated by both the white colonizers and the native inhabitants.

One of the clearest markers of Antoinette's racial in-betweenness is her outer appearance. This is an issue which is directly connected to the body. Ania Loomba (1998: 109) has pointed out that, during colonialism, color was commonly thought of as the most important signifier of cultural and racial difference. As regards to Antoinette's skin color, she is undoubtedly white and thereby also classified as a member of the superior races and a member of the upper classes. However, because Antoinette's skin color is, in many respects, the only marker of her whiteness, unfortunately, she does not blend in with the rest of the whites. In other words, Antoinette is simply not accepted amongst the people that her skin color inevitably defines her as belonging to.

In the novel, Antoinette's husband, for instance, describes Antoinette shortly after their wedding and states that "Creole of pure English descent" she may be yet "not English or European" (Rhys 1966: 56). As further characterized by her husband, Antoinette has

long black hair and also “long, sad, dark alien eyes” which are further referred to as “too big” so that they can appear “disconcerting” (Rhys 1966: 37). The way in which Antoinette is characterized by her husband clearly implies that her husband experiences Antoinette in terms of strangeness. She was not a full blooded European thereby Antoinette was not something that her husband was accustomed to. Especially her husband’s characterizations of her eyes as ‘too big’ and ‘alien’ give away his view of Antoinette as a stranger. In the end, it is not a surprise that the overall opinion Antoinette’s husband has of her is that “she is considered beautiful, and she is, yet …” (Rhys 1966: 59); an opinion which again alludes to Antoinette’s Creole origins and once and for all makes it clear that from her outer appearance, in other words, as regards race, Antoinette is an outsider and does not belong.

Moreover, in the novel there is also a painting which attests Antoinette’s outsiderness: a painting of ‘The Miller’s Daughter’, of “a lovely English girl with brown curls and blue eyes” (Rhys 1966: 30). In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the painting clearly represents the qualities valued in a woman, in other words, the painting represents the European ideal/norm of beauty compared to which Antoinette unavoidably stands out. It is, in fact, also a painting which is stated as Antoinette’s favorite picture in the novel. Thus, no doubt that Antoinette would like to be like the girl in the painting yet cannot no matter what she would do. In the novel, the painting makes concretely visible the void between Antoinette and the desirable qualities in a woman. Antoinette, unfortunately, is not and can never be valued it concretely vismakes the distance and thereby makes concretely visible the distance between Antoinette and the qualities valued in a woman. In fact, in the novel, ‘The Miller’s Daughter’ is stated as Antoinette’s favorite, thus Antoinette would like to be like the girl in the painting but unfortunately cannot no matter what she would do. pisture compared to which Antoinette unavoidably stands out. make her an outsider and imply that she is of mixed race. Moreover, the painting is stated as Antoinette’s favorite picture in the novel, thus Antoinette clearly wants to be like the girl in the painting. Unfortunately, however, no matter what Antoinette would do she would never be able to like the girl in the painting. In the end, the painting , thus Antoinette clearly wants to be like the girl in the picture. that represents which is stated as Antoinette’s favorite picture. Moreover, it is a painting that represents the qualities

valued in a woman, in other words, the painting represents Thus, Antoinette would like to be like the girl in the painting but unfortunately cannot no matter what she would do which, in the end, only worsens her situation as an outsider. In fact, the painting truly makes the distance between Antoinette and how hard she would try. which unfortunately only worsens Antoinette's outsiderness because no matter how hard Antoinette tries, she is never able to look like the girl in the picture.

In the novel, it is made clear that the painting represents the qualities valued in a woman, in other words, it represents the European ideal/norm of beauty, compared to which Antoinette's outer appearances unavoidably set her an outsider and imply that she is of mixed race.

In discussing Antoinette's in-betweenness with regard to her appearance it is not, however, a question of whether she is considered beautiful or not. As already stated, it is all about the issues of whiteness and blackness as a whole, in other words, of color. According to Richard Dyer (1993/2003), whiteness itself is what is considered normal. Whiteness is the norm because it is regarded as being everything and yet nothing at the same time. Understandably, such a quality is not easily 'disarmed', which ensures its dominance. However, as continued by Dyer (1993/2003), it is important to understand whiteness as a culturally constructed category; just the same as it is important to see that norms themselves are usually constructed. Whiteness itself is equally an ethnicity, like the different ethnicities that derive from it, even though it is, in a way, invisible to the eye.

At the Caribbean, during the time depicted in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, people could no longer be easily divided into two separate categories based on their skin color, that of whites and blacks. Rather, due to the region's long and pervasive history of colonialism, the spectrum of colors was a great deal more complicated than that. There were the real whites and the real blacks. Yet, there were also the ones that were, in one way or another, mixtures of these two, whether most visibly like by skin color or only by their habits. In W*ide Sargasso Sea*, now that the former colonizers along Emancipation have lost their status, it is the new colonialists that have the power to decide what is

considered normal. It is their 'whiteness', meaning their color of the skin, their overall appearances, and their ways of action, that set the standards for others, and it is against their 'normality' that others are classified as more or less not normal. Here, it should also be stated that, during the time depicted in the novel, masculinity is also indisputably the norm which dooms femininity, thus all women to a subordinate position. However, issues of gender are returned to more closely in the next section.

One of the most important issues pointed out by Dyer (1993/2003) is, nonetheless, the fact that in western societies power habitually passes itself off as embodied in the normal as opposed to the superior. In other words, normality is what gives you authority in any given society and can also be considered the quality that gives you acceptance, whereas a deviation from the norm casts one an outsider and leaves one powerless, like Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Because she is not truly one or the other, neither a white imperialist like her husband nor a black original inhabitant of the island, the word normality does not apply to her at all. Rather, viewed from which ever direction, she is always in some ways deviating from the norm. Even her beauty defines her as an outcast for she is not the 'classical' type like the blue-eyed and brown haired girl portrayed in the painting.

The time in which *Wide Sargasso Sea* is placed has a major effect on Antoinette's in-betweenness in regard to both her race and class. The novel takes place right after the passing of the British Emancipation Act in 1833, and its further ratification the following year. It was, as stated by Victoria Burrows (2004), a time of great political and social instability in the West Indies. Already on the first page of the novel Antoinette notes that "my father, visitors, horses, feeling safe in bed – all belonged to the past" (Rhys 1966: 15). The senses of fear and the separation of past and present are strongly present in Antoinette's narration from the very beginning. The way in which Antoinette, for instance, characterizes their home brings forth the correlatives that were brought about along the emancipation of slaves, and also clearly reflects the separation of the good old days in contrast to their present situation: "Our garden was large and beautiful as that garden in the Bible – the tree of life grew there. But it had gone wild

[...] All Coulibri Estate had gone wild like the garden, gone to bush. No more slavery – why should *anybody* work?" (Rhys1966: 16–17).

As further pointed out by Burrows (2004: 28), the time after the passing of the Emancipation Act was a time in imperial history "when colonial whites discovered to their dismay that there were different levels within the power structure of whiteness, and that their place within this system was largely dependent on their position within the capitalist/imperialist enterprise". As indicated by Burrows, during the time depicted in the novel, money and whiteness went hand in hand, they were inextricably intertwined. In the same way that money could be lost, also whiteness, and the power that it brought along was also liable to change, and this is exactly what happens to Antoinette.

Antoinette's unfortunate situation is most aptly characterized by her black friend Tia, according to whom "plenty white people in Jamaica. Real white people, they got gold money […] Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger." (Rhys 1996: 21) As it is directly stated by Tia, since Antoinette and her family have lost all their money they have also lost their place in society. In other words, as Antoinette has now quite literally fallen between 'real' whiteness and blackness, she has beyond dispute become an outcast.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, since Antoinette is not like one of the real whites, she is not truly accepted as one of their kind. Yet, neither will Antoinette ever be truly accepted by the locals either. Antoinette notes that "I never looked at any strange negro. They hated us. They called us white cockroaches [...] One day a little girl followed me singing, 'Go away white cockroach [...] Nobody want you. Go away.'" (Rhys 1966: 20) The reason why Antoinette is mistreated by the local inhabitants is that Antoinette is "the daughter of a slave owner" (Rhys 1966: 27). The local inhabitants will never come to accept Antoinette because for the locals Antoinette represents colonialism itself. Moreover, she does not share their experience of slavery.

The only friend Antoinette has in her childhood is, nonetheless, a black girl called Tia whom Antoinette admires greatly, and the like of whom Antoinette herself wants to be.

Antoinette characterizes Tia by saying that “fires always lit for her, sharp stones did not hurt her bare feet, I never saw her cry” (Rhys 1966: 20). Antoinette clearly wants to be as strong as she believes her friend Tia to be. Unfortunately, however, for Antoinette, that will never be possible. Unlike Antoinette, Tia has the support of her own race behind her through which she is able to endure the mistreatment she receives for being dark-skinned. Antoinette, on the other hand, because of her outsider status, truly has no-one defending her. In the end, also Tia ends up betraying Antoinette by stealing all her money and dress, which she does, ultimately, for the same reason why almost all other black people deceive and despise Antoinette. For them, Antoinette will always be one of the exploiters and not the exploited.

After the Emancipation Act was passed the English had promised compensations for the former plantation owners for their loss of property but, as stated in the novel by Antoinette’s mother, “some will wait for a long time” (Rhys 1966: 15). Antoinette’s and her family’s neighbor had, in fact, already shot himself to death because he had grown tried of waiting for the compensations. As also further stated by Antoinette’s mother, “to die and be forgotten and at peace” is a better fate than to know that “one is abandoned, lied about, helpless” (Rhys 1966: 19). That is how desperate Antoinette’s and her family’s situation is. There is really nothing they can do to change their unfortunate position as outcasts in society. Antoinette merely notes that “I got used to a solitary life” for “no one came near us” (Rhys 1966: 15), and by that Antoinette is referring to both blacks and whites alike.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea,* clothes are also good indicators of Antoinette’s in-betweenness. As stated, Antoinette’s and Tia’s friendship ends as Tia steals Antoinette’s money and dress, after which Antoinette is forced to return home wearing the dress Tia has left for her. Antoinette notes of the incident that

> I searched for a long time before I could believe that she had taken my dress – not my underclothes, she never wore any – but my dress, starched ironed, clean that morning. She had left me hers and I put it on at last and walked home in the blazing sun feeling sick, hating her (Rhys 1966: 21).

By stealing Antoinette's dress Tia forces Antoinette to try on the black social position and, moreover, by putting on the dress, Antoinette unavoidably makes a parody of her self. Antoinette is unwillingly pushed into the position of the black girl. She is forced to give up her own social position which makes her feel very unpleasant and uncomfortable.

When Antoinette finally arrives at home, she is very astonished to find out that there are, in fact, visitors outside their house, talking with her mother: "They were very beautiful I thought and they wore such beautiful clothes [...] and when they laughed – the gentleman laughed the loudest – I ran [...] into my bedroom" (Rhys 1966: 22). Compared with the visitors outside their home, Antoinette's exterior presence truly cast her an outsider. Real whites have beautiful clothes whereas Antoinette, wearing Tia's dirty ragged dress, does not count as one of them. In this situation, Antoinette and her clothes, in fact, embody both her racial and social in-betweenness. Not only does her appearance now literally resemble more the native blacks than the whites of her skin colour but her appearance also reflects more the black poverty than the white prosperity.

As the visitors leave the house Antoinette's mother is bewildered at Antoinette's behaviour. She orders Christophine to fetch Antoinette a clean dress and refuses to believe Christophine as she says that Antoinette does not own another. Christophine retorts back to Annette that "she run wild, she grow up worthless, and nobody cares" (Rhys 19866: 22), after which Christophine right away prepares Antoinette for a bath and washes her clean. By washing Antoinette, Christophine simultaneously washes the influence of the black culture away from Antoinette. It is an act through which Christophine tries to protect her own culture from the influence of the likes of Antoinette, i.e. from the influence of 'white cockroaches' like Antoinette. Christophine's message is clear, and that is, that black must not be contaminated. It should, however, be mentioned that in *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Christophine is the only character that truly loves and protects Antoinette. Even though their experiences of racial oppression are not the same, Christophine and Antoinette are still united through their experiences of gender oppression. Christophine is equally a woman like Antoinette

and therefore she is able to sympathise with Antoinette. Moreover, they are both marginalized in the sense that neither is a normative white.

When Antoinette returns home wearing a dirty, torn dress, Christophine is not the only one who reacts strongly but also Antoinette's mother. Antoinette describes her mother's reaction by stating that "I don't know how she got money to buy the white muslin and the pink. Yards of muslin. She may have sold her last ring, for there was one left [...] In a week she had a new dress and so had I." (Rhys 1966: 23) For Annette, the sight of her only daughter, right in front of her, looking like one of the locals is as if her worst nightmare had come true. No longer can Annette deny their poverty and the fact that they have lost their place amongst the upper classes, for Antoinette is now a living proof of their situation.

Moreover, during the times, crossing the colour boundaries was considered strictly forbidden and shameful. Something had to be done and quickly, not only because soon Antoinette and her mother would be mocked even more by the blacks and whites alike, but because soon they would be so poor that they would not even have money for food. The last ring Antoinette's mother has to sell in order to put together enough money to afford the fabric for the dresses represents, in fact, quite aptly their utter poverty and decline in social status.

Shortly after Annette has made herself and Antoinette the new dresses, Antoinette tells of her mother's new marriage. "I was the bridesmaid when my mother married Mr Mason in Spanish Town [...] I carried a bouquet and everything I wore was new – even my beautiful slippers" (Rhys 1966: 24). Again Antoinette's clothes reflect her social situation for Mr. Mason is a wealthy man. He brought along money and prosperity to Antoinette and her mother once again, like during the good old years of the plantation era. Even the Coulibri Estate is renovated back to its old glamour. However, although Mr. Mason does save Antoinette and her family from poverty, he still cannot change the way in which Antoinette is viewed and treated by the other inhabitants on the island. The new colonialists still despise Antoinette. On the day of her mother's wedding Antoinette accidentally hears some white women talking:

> A fantastic marriage and he will regret it [...] Why should a very wealthy man who could take his pick of all the girls in the West Indies, and many in England too [...] marry a widow without a penny to her name [...] As for those two children – the boy an idiot kept out of sight and mind and the girl going the same way. (Rhys 1966: 24–25)

The derogatory tone in which the women are talking of Antoinette and of her entire family without doubt stems from their origins. No amount of money is enough to change the fact that they are Creoles and not 'real' whites.

As the women are talking, they also make a reference to a character called Mr. Cosway. In *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Mr. Cosway is stated as Antoinette's biological father, yet more importantly, he should be seen as the character that clearly makes explicit the distinction between the real whites and Creoles like Antoinette. It should be pointed out that in *Jane Eyre,* Antoinette's real father is, in fact, Mr. Mason and not Mr. Cosway. Thus, compared with *Jane Eyre*, Jean Rhys has created a whole new character into her novel.

As stated by Peter Hulme (2001), through the character of Mr. Cosway Rhys is able to introduce

> a distinction between the pre-Emancipation plantocracy and the later English planters like Mason who brought new capital to the estates previously maintained by slave labor, as well as a distinction between Antoinette's relatives by marriage, such as Richard Mason […] and her biological but *coloured* relatives, including Cosway's sons Alexander and Daniel (Hulme 2001).

To begin with, the incorporation of the character of Mr. Cosway speaks of Rhys' wish to add color to Antoinette's lineage and thereby of Rhys' effort to emphasize that Antoinette should not, indeed, be perceived as a true white. More importantly, however, through the character of Mr. Cosway Rhys is able to highlight the evident distinction which existed between the earlier settlers in the West Indies in relation to those that came to the island after the Emancipation Act was passed. In reality, the difference between the former and the latter settlers was mainly based on public opinion. The previous settlers were treated with suspicion and hatred because, viewed through the eyes of the Europeans, they were seen as having become too much like the natives by

their habits. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Mr. Cosway's sons Alexander and Daniel, whose mothers are both black natives, act as good examples of the former settlers' loosened attitude towards the native inhabitants and towards the alleged rules of colonialism.

The women at the wedding characterize Mr. Cosway as follows:

> Emancipation troubles killed old Cosway? Nonsense – the estate was going downhill for years before that. He drank himself to death. Many's the time when – well! And all those women! She never did anything to stop him – she encouraged him. Presents and smiles for the bastards every Christmas. Old customs? Some are better dead and buried. (Rhys 1966: 24–25)

The above characterization brings forth the general attitude towards the former settlers and towards people like Antoinette and her mother. According to the new colonialists, by their mere existence and influence, the former settlers weakened the imperial power which rested on the existence of difference between the colonizer and the colonized. As cultural and racial hybrids, Antoinette and all other Creoles were living proof of the fact that the superior western human race was not as superior as led to believe, and certainly susceptible to pollution; one of the main reasons why the new white colonialists on the island mistreat Antoinette.

Antoinette's mother's marriage to Mr. Mason does not change the fact that Antoinette is mistreated by the whites on the island. Yet, more importantly, nor does it change the fact that Antoinette is also mistreated by the blacks. In fact, it only ends up making the whole situation much worse. As stated by Antoinette's mother, "the black people did not hate us quite so much when we were poor. We were white but we had not escaped and soon we would be dead for we had no money left. What was there to hate?" (Rhys 1966: 29) In other words, when Antoinette had still been poor, the locals really saw no further reason to hate or mistreat Antoinette. Her poverty, in itself, was already considered an adequate enough punishment for her involvement in the brutal history of slavery. With the arrival of Mr. Mason, however, with his wealth and prosperity, the situation changed. For the locals, it again seems that Antoinette and her mother have as if gotten away with their involvement in slavery. For this reason, after the arrival of Mr. Mason into Antoinette's family, the mistreatment of Antoinette begins again and even

worse than before; a mistreatment which is, overall, on behalf of the locals a strike back at Antoinette's family's involvement in slavery.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea,* even though the Emancipation Act has formally ended slavery, in practice, it has only been replaced by the slave trade. Thus, now that the slaves in the Caribbean are freed and unwilling to work at the plantations, the colonizers are forced to start importing new slaves into the country from overseas. The transformation from the old ways into the new ones are quite aptly referred to by Christophine as she states that

> No more slavery! She had to laugh! 'These new one have Letter of the Law. Same thing. They got magistrate. They got fine. They got jail house and chain gang. They got tread machine to mash up people's feet. New ones worse than the old ones – more cunning, that's all.'

As indicated by Christophine, the end of formal slavery did not improve the conditions of the black in the West Indies. Their race is still been viewed and treated as inferior. What changed are mostly only the means by which the positioning of mastery and subordination is upheld, and the black people are still exploited in all possible ways; ways which oftentimes were rather brutal and involved direct physical violence. In slavery, concrete physical bodies are thus disciplined and rendered docile whereas, in patriarchy, the object is the female body.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, also Mr. Mason's newly received prosperity is gained with the help of laborers imported from the neighboring areas whose working conditions are no better than those of the former slaves; an ugly truth which the locals certainly know. In consequence, the hostility and resistance towards Antoinette and her family once again increases. As pointed out by Antoinette some time after her mother's and Mr. Mason's wedding: "it had started up again and worse than before" (Rhys 1966: 29).

The native inhabitants' hostility towards Antoinette culminates at a night when the locals burn Antoinette and her family's house down, and Antoinette is wounded by a stone Tia throws directly at her face. As the locals are surrounding the house, torches in

their hands, Antoinette remembers somebody from the crowd yelling “look at the black Englishman! Look at the white niggers!” (Rhys 1966: 35). As indicated by Antoinette’s memory, it is now the black people that are paralleled with light because they are the ones holding the torches, whereas Antoinette and her family, especially Mr. Mason, are pictured as being covered in thick, black smoke. At that night, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the positioning of mastery and subordination is temporarily changed, and the locals receive their long longed-for revenge, if only on a small scale. In the novel, the burning of the house clearly embodies the past oppression towards the slaves, and the bodily wound which Antoinette receives in the fire is an echo of the previous slave owners’ brutal physical violence towards their slaves.

When the locals are gathered around Antoinette and her family’s house, ready to act out their revenge, Antoinette sees Tia in the crowd and makes an instinctive move to run to Tia. After all, Tia used to be her friend, in fact, the only friend Antoinette has ever had. While running, Antoinette does not, however, see the stone Tia has in her hand, a stone which Tia throws directly at Antoinette causing Antoinette a bleeding would on her body. As there is blood on Antoinette’s face and tears on Tia’s, Antoinette notes to herself that “it was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking-glass” (Rhys 1966: 38). In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, it is this particular incident that quite blatantly expresses Antoinette’s in-betweenness: As Antoinette is excluded from the real whites on the island she tries desperately to ally with the blacks. She makes an instinctive move to run to Tia. Unfortunately, however, Antoinette’s jump to the other side is prevented because there is a strict demarcation line between the colonizer and the colonized, represented particularly by the imaginary glass of the mirror which is figuratively standing between Antoinette and Tia. The stone Tia throws directly at Antoinette explicitly marks this line and establishes the point beyond which Antoinette can never enter. By throwing the stone directly at Antoinette, Tia shows that she has got to remain loyal to her own race, although she once used to be Antoinette’s friend.

After this incident, Antoinette gets very ill. So ill, in fact, that she has to remain in bed for six weeks. When Antoinette finally gets her strength back, she is informed that her brother Pierre has been killed in a revolt and that her mother is sent to rest at the

countryside. Antoinette's brother and mother are not, however, the only ones who suffer losses, for also Antoinette's hair has had to be cut, which worries Antoinette a great deal. Her Aunt tries try comfort Antoinette by pointing out that it will grow back again, "longer and thicker" (Rhys 1966: 38), yet, according to Antoinette, also "darker" (Rhys 1966: 38). Here, Antoinette's racial in-betweenness is once again referred to for, with the use of the word 'darker', Antoinette is clearly implying that she knows that she has some distant black blood in her veins. Yet, it is not enough to make her a real black in the same way as Antoinette's white skin color is not enough to make her a real white. Rather, Antoinette is a mixture and will always remain as such. However, her hair and the fact that it had to cut also speak of Antoinette's growth in life. It marks the end of her childhood and the beginning of her early adulthood. No longer is Antoinette an innocent little girl but rather a young woman who has obligations in the world. The issue of gender is returned to more closely in the next section.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette herself most aptly puts into words her unfortunate position between the white Europeans and the black natives, and her mistreatment by both sides. Antoinette states that "if the razor grass cut my legs and arms I would think 'It's better than people.' Black ants or red ones, tall nests swarming with white ants, rain that soaked me to the skin – once I saw a snake. All better than people. Better. Better, better than people. (Rhys 1966: 24) In the quotation, Antoinette clearly states that by their actions and insults the people in the West Indies, both white and black, have harmed her so much that little scars by plants are nothing compared with the actions of people. The only thing Antoinette truly wishes for, as she is lying under the beautiful blue sky of the West Indies, is that she could be someone else, "not myself anymore" (Rhys 1966: 24). Thus, already in her childhood, Antoinette starts to loose herself. Her journey from in-betweenness to nothingness has begun.

5.2 Gender

During colonialism, the position of women was that of the 'other'. Women were treated as inferior to men, who were considered the superior sex. Accordingly, because of the

imbalance of power in the gender system, Antoinette's femininity is one of the most substantive constituents of her position as in-between in her life.

The imbalance of power in the gender system, its resultant constant power struggles between men and women, and the issue of in-betweenness are visible already in the way in which Jean Rhys has constructed the novel. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, as in this thesis, the role of gender is highlighted. Before moving on to a more detailed analysis of Antoinette's in-betweenness in regard to her gender, the structure and the narrators of *Wide Sargasso Sea* are briefly discussed, including their styles of narration. These issues highlight the unbearable position of women as outsiders in the matters concerning their own lives and bodies. Therefore, these issues also provide a good introduction to the analysis of Antoinette as in-between in regard to her gender.

Wide Sargasso Sea is written in a three-part structure. The first part of the novel is written from the protagonist Antoinette's point of view and it is also, almost entirely, narrated by Antoinette. This part of the narrative covers Antoinette's growth from around the age of eight or nine till she is almost seventeen. It is then a story of Antoinette's childhood experiences and memories up to the time when she goes to a convent school to receive education.

The second part of the novel begins when Antoinette and her husband are newly wed. In its entirety, it is a story of Antoinette's and her husband's rather short honeymoon spent on one of the Windward Islands at a small estate which had belonged to Antoinette's mother Annette. Apart from the previous section, this section is mostly narrated by Antoinette's husband who, in fact, is not given a name during the whole course of the novel. Nonetheless, because of the novel's intertextual relation with *Jane Eyre*, the reader interprets him to be Edward Rochester from Brontë's text.

In this thesis, however, regardless of the obvious connection of Antoinette's husband to the character of Edward Rochester, the character of Antoinette's husband is only referred to as Antoinette's husband. As stated by Antoinette, "names matter" (Rhys 1966: 147). Thus, in a novel in which names have such an important meaning, Rhys'

choice to leave one of the most important characters of the novel unnamed undoubtedly bears significance.

As pointed out by Robert Kendrik (1994: 1), in *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Antoinette's husband is "the immediate manifestation and enforcer of the network of patriarchal codes (sexism, colonialism, the English Law, and the "law" which demarcates and creates sanity and insanity)". In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette's husband not only represents one man's cruelties and rights over one woman but rather, embodies patriarchy as a whole, an effect which is clearly strengthened by Rhys' choice to leave her character unnamed. Moreover, as anonymous and as the comprehensive representative of patriarchy, Rhys makes it possible that any criticism or judgment which is handed down on Antoinette's husband in *Wide Sargasso Sea,* falls, in fact, at the same time on all men and on patriarchy in general.

The opening words of the section narrated by Antoinette's husband's are: "So it was all over, the advance and retreat, the doubts and hesitations. Everything finished for better or for worse" (Rhys 1966: 55). As pointed out by Victoria Burrows (2004), the opening of the second part is completely different from the hesitant and sensitive style of the first section. Its military metaphors connected to a quotation from the Anglican marriage service right away establish the presence of masculinity. The opening exudes a sense of mastery and conquering whereby it also right away announces the masculine rights over the female body. As further pointed out by Burrows (2004: 44), in the narrative of Antoinette's husband and his metaphor-making, the female body gradually becomes inseparable from the actual surroundings and territory of their honeymoon island. In other words, Antoinette's husband wants to control the female body which he parallels to the surroundings of the island. For him, the female body is as wild and untamed as nature and therefore it needs to be restrained and controlled; a task which he eventually finds insuperable.

On the one hand, Antoinette's husband's narrative and his linking of women with the surroundings of the island only strengthens the fact that during colonialism the situation of women was oftentimes rather similar to the situation of colonized subjects and areas. While the colonized subjects were subordinated and held prisoners in their own

countries and land, women were colonized into their very own bodies. The female body was considered just as much a property as were the colonized peoples and their land, and most importantly, neither had very little say in the matter: the colonized subjects of their land or women of their bodies. On the other hand, however, Antoinette's husband's narrative and his linking of women with nature do not only reflect mastery and conquering but also suspicion and insecurity. Compared with England, he is now in a very different place where, as stated by Antoinette's husband, "everything is too much [...] the flowers too red, the mountains too high, the hills too near" (Rhys 1966: 59). His narrative thus also reflects his fears towards the island, towards a place that seems very strange and wild to him, something that he is simply not accustomed to.

The third and last part of the novel is again mostly narrated by Antoinette, apart from the short italicized beginning that focuses on and is narrated by Crace Poole, the guard and caretaker of Bertha Mason also in Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. The setting of the last section is England and no longer the West Indies. In short, the last section can be characterized as being a brief account of the consciousness of a mad girl, in other words, the story receives its closure in the almost literal transformation of Antoinette into that of her predecessor Bertha Mason.

As the discussion above having to do with the structure of the novel establish, the issue of in-betweenness and the constant power struggle between men and women is visible already in the way in which Jean Rhys has constructed her novel. Since the narrative of Antoinette's husband is left between the two sections narrated by Antoinette, it may appear on the surface that it is in fact the man which is repressed by the woman. However, since the narrative of Antoinette's husband is evidently the longest of all the sections, covering over half of the novel, and judging also from his style of narration, his power is quite clearly left intact. Moreover, in the middle of the section narrated by Antoinette's husband there is one scene which is, in fact, narrated by Antoinette. In this instance the narrator changes quite unnoticeably and it takes a long time for the reader to realize that it is, in fact, Antoinette who is speaking and no longer her husband. In the scene Antoinette is depicted as very downcast and devastated, i.e. completely powerless. She has lost all control of her life and therefore Antoinette has come to ask

Christophine for help. Antoinette wants Christophine to dispense her an Obeah potion which Antoinette believes will return her strengths and power; a plan which eventually completely backfires. In conclusion, this particular scene like the overall texture of the novel seem to imply that no matter how hard women try to resist and take control over their own lives and bodies, in the end, they are always the ones left subordinate and powerless. Like Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, women are exact the ones driven into the ambivalent state of in-betweenness where anything can happen to them.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette's femininity dooms her into a situation of in-betweenness even within her own familial relations. This results from the fact that Antoinette has a younger brother called Pierre whom Antoinette's mother Annette favors over Antoinette. Antoinette notes how, in her childhood, her mother simply "wanted to sit with Pierre […] but she pushed me away, not roughly but calmly, coldly, without a word, as if she had decided once and for all that I was useless to her" (Rhys 1966: 17). During the time depicted in the novel boys were in fact, on the one hand, favored simply because of their sex; a reason why Antoinette's mother favors her son over her daughter, thus regards Antoinette as useless to her. On the other hand, boys were also favored because the male sex was oftentimes seen as the providers and protectors of women

Gender difference between men and women is constructed on the body. Thus, a person is either a man or a woman based on his/hers physical qualities. In this equation, it is the female body which is seen as the site of difference; difference which unfortunately also justifies oppression. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, however, gender in a way seems to overthrow the body because, in the novel, even a weak male body is better than a strong female body. Antoinette describes her brother by stating that he "staggered when he walked" and that he "couldn't speak distinctly" (Rhys 1966: 16). In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, then, not even the fact that Antoinette's brother Pierre is incurably deceased whereas Antoinette, on the other hand, is a completely healthy child, is enough to undermine Pierre's superior position. Despite of his illness, he is still the one that Antoinette's mother prefers.

The final time when Antoinette is rejected by her mother takes place after their house has been burned down by the locals; an incident in which Antoinette receives a concrete physical wound on her body by the stone Tia throws directly at her. After this incident, Antoinette gets so ill that she has to remain in bed for several weeks. In the incident, Antoinette's mother also finally completely loses her sanity and is sent to rest to the countryside, a place which could also be referred to as a mental hospital, and also Pierre dies soon after because he is simply too weak to survive the burns. As soon as Antoinette gains back enough of her strength, she insists that Christophine take her to see her mother to this place where she is resting. As they arrive, Antoinette notes that "I jumped out of the carriage and ran as fast as I could" (Rhys 1966: 40). That is how eager she is to see her mother. When Antoinette finally sees her mother she puts her arms around her and kisses her and, at first, her mother holds Antoinette so tight that she can hardly breathe. Yet, the warm reception and feelings of affection they share soon fade away. As Antoinette tries to hold on to her mother, her mother only leers at the door. She is waiting for Pierre to arrive and when she eventually realizes that her son is not coming, she shakes Antoinette off and flings her so that Antoinette hits the partition and hurts herself. (Rhys 1966: 40) In the incident, Antoinette is thus wounded because of her inferior status, because of the fact that a girl is less important than a boy. Once again she is rejected by her mother, denied belonging and left as an outsider. The bodily wound which Antoinette receives as she falls is a clear demonstration of her unfortunate position as in-between in regard to her gender.

In her late childhood and early adolescence, Antoinette is sent to a convent school to receive education. Antoinette notes of the convent that it is both "a place of sunshine and of death" (Rhys 1966: 47). On the one hand, Antoinette parallels the convent with sunshine because for her it is a "place of refuge" (Rhys 1966: 47), a shelter from the world outside. At last Antoinette is able to feel that she belongs somewhere, that she is more inside than outside, as she is now surrounded by the thick walls of the convent. For Antoinette, the convent is a female sanctuary. All the people in there are women and race is no longer as relevant as it was in the outside world. For Antoinette, the convent is thus a sanctuary from all the oppressions she has, until then, had to bear due to her in-betweenness as regards to her race and class.

On the other hand, Antoinette parallels the convent also with death because it is particularly the place in which she is socialized into womanhood. In fact, even though the convent is run by nuns and the students are all female, the presence of masculinity is constantly felt. Antoinette, for instance, states that the bishop comes every year to visit them (Rhys 1966: 49), and naturally also the presence of Christ, whom the female students are there to serve, is also all the time close at hand. Overall, the convent acts as a miniature model of patriarchy. Even though it is inhabited solely by women, all the regulatory power belongs to men. It is particularly the place in which girls are made into women, in which their inner feelings and emotions are suffocated to the extent that they will make perfect wives and mothers to their future husbands. In other words, it is the place in which docile bodies are produced, for disciplining the body by means such as strict timetables and praying are particularly part of the techniques with the help of which bodies are rendered docile. For Antoinette, then, besides being a concrete refuge from the world outside, the convent is also a gateway which leads her to her most severe position of in-betweenness as regards to gender. That is to say, that from the sheltering walls of the convent Antoinette is lead to the world of subordination to a real man.

As pointed out by Ketu Katrak (2006: 93), colonialist education policies were both racialized and gendered. They asserted the superiority of the English language and culture over the indigenous ones and, moreover, instituted a different curriculum for both male and female students. Both racial as well as gender hierarchies were rooted in Victorian ideologies of domesticity, and in its rigid compartmentalizing of public and private spheres. In most pre-colonial societies, like in the Caribbean before its colonization, such a division was commonly much more fluid. (Katrak 2006: 93)

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the curriculum in the convent is also clearly gendered. One of the things that Antoinette learns at the convent is cross-stitching which is clearly part of the process of disciplining the body and rendering it docile. In the novel, the curriculum is somewhat indirectly referred to as follows: “cleanliness, good manners and kindness to God’s poor […] order and chastity, that flawless crystal that, once broken, can never be mended. Also deportment […]” (Rhys 1966: 45). Such were then the kind of qualities that were cherished and held in high repute in a woman, some of which Antoinette, as a

person who had lived all her life in the West Indies, finds hard to obtain and especially maintain. It is thus not surprising that, in the convent, the most favored girls are all real whites. One time Antoinette, for instance, tries to make her hair look the same as that of one of the admired girls. Yet, she simply has to settle to the outcome that her hair does not look like the other girl's no matter what she does (Rhys 1966: 46), which again only gives away Antoinette's racial in-betweenness. In other words, Antoinette's hair, which is naturally an essential part of her body, acts as a marker of her un-belonging and outsiderness.

The discipline in the convent is also exceedingly strict and naturally because it is one of the most effective ways to produce docile bodies. The girls have to wake up very early and everything they do is regulated by strict rules and schedules. Even the way in which they are supposed to wash themselves in the bath is dictated to them. At some point Antoinette wonders to herself that "what about happiness" (Rhys 1966: 47), but states right after that "I soon forgot about happiness" (Rhys 1966: 47). In the convent, Antoinette simply does not have time to think about happiness for there is always something that needs to be done or learned. The only time Antoinette ever hears talk about happiness is in stories that are being told to her while she is working. Antoinette points out that in the stories told, women are "all very beautiful and wealthy" and all "loved by rich and handsome young men" (Rhys 1966: 45). In conclusion, everything the convent teaches to Antoinette as well as to its other protégées is meant to prepare them for their future lives under their husbands command. Furthermore, it is also well taken care of that even the girls themselves believe that marriage is the ultimate goal in their lives, the only thing that will eventually make them feel whole, content and happy.

As stated by Katrak (2006: 162), cultural traditions such as marriage control women's entire lives. Through traditions women are first socialized into daughters, then further indoctrinated into wives and mothers, or if less fortunate, into widowhood. According to Katrak, as with English education, women experience alienation, even exile from their bodies, in other words, become outsiders in their very own bodies, as they try to negotiate these traditional norms and roles imposed upon them. Moreover, the traditions that are usually most oppressive for women are located specifically within the arena of

female sexuality, even though such traditions oftentimes mystify the actual control over women's sexualities. Marriage is clearly one such tradition. According to Katrak, in many contemporary postcolonial novels, women are represented as reproductive units who are bought and sold through traditions such as dowry and bride price. (Katrak 2006: 157–162)

The first time the idea of marriage is introduced to Antoinette is when she is still at the convent. Mr. Mason, Antoinette's stepfather, has visited her at the convent many times before but during his last visit everything is different. Antoinette describes how, during that last visit, her stepfather holds her at arms length and critically watches her after which he gladly states that Antoinette is taller than he had imagined. Mr. Mason is thus clearly evaluating Antoinette as if she is merchandise. In fact, he goes on and asks whether Antoinette has learnt how to dance, a skill which would naturally increase or make better Antoinette's value at the marriage market. Ironically, however, it is Antoinette who blithely reminds Mr. Mason that she is a grown woman now, shortly after which Mr. Mason also brings up the idea that Antoinette cannot be hidden in the convent all her life. Therefore, he has made arrangements for an English gentleman to come and meet Antoinette, an announcement which immediately makes Antoinette feel uncomfortable. (Rhys 1966:48–49) Patriarchal marriage is not a desirable option for her because as a person born on the island Antoinette is used to a life with more freedom than is provided by patriarchal marriage.

As Mr. Mason then finally leaves, Antoinette states to herself, that "again a feeling of dismay, sadness, loss, almost choked me" (Rhys 1966: 49). As indicated by Antoinette's description, her body quite literally responds to the announcement of marriage with resentment. Subconsciously Antoinette knows that marriage means imprisonment. Moreover, after the visit Antoinette becomes annoyed by the looks that she receives from the other girls in the convent. As stated by Antoinette, "they are safe. How can they know what it can be like *outside*?" (Rhys 1966: 50 italics original) In other words, how can the other girls know what it is like to live in a patriarchal marriage? In a union in which a woman is an outsider in the matters of her own life, and looses all control of her own life and body.

The next night Antoinette also dreams of her impending marriage. In her dream she follows a man and she is sick with fear, yet she states that if anyone tried to save her she would prevent them because that is how it is meant to be. As Antoinette finally wakes up from her nightmare one of the nuns is there to comfort her. Antoinette tells the nun that she dreamt that she was in hell. (Rhys 1966: 48–51) In conclusion, her nightmare not only speaks of her resentment towards the idea of marriage but also clearly indicates that the doctrines in the convent have been successful. They have been able to make Antoinette believe that marriage and thereupon the submission to a man's rule is the only acceptable choice for a woman, because no matter how terrified Antoinette is she would not let anyone try to save her. Overall, the convent has been successful in producing a docile body, a body which willingly submits to being ruled.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Antoinette's husband marries her solely because of her money. For him, their marriage is a contract: "I'll trust you if you'll trust me. Is that a bargain?" (Rhys 1966: 66) In a letter to his father, Antoinette's husband states it even more clearly: "Dear father. The thirty thousand pounds have been paid to me without a question or condition. No provision made for her […] I have a modest competence now. I will never be a disgrace to you or to my dear brother the son you love" (Rhys 1966: 59).

Somewhat ironically, also Antoinette's husband's choice to marry Antoinette can, in fact, be considered in terms of his powerlessness. From Antoinette's husband's point of view, he is not given any other choice than to marry a wealthy heiress. In the position of his father's second son, according to the English law of primogeniture, his father's entire inheritance would go to his elder brother; thereby he would be left completely without money. Patriarchal rules also govern him. By marrying Antoinette he solves his future money problems, and he will not disgrace his father or his brother with his pleads for money. As stated by Antoinette's husband, "I played the part I was expected to play. She never had anything to do with me at all." (Rhys 1966: 64)

For Antoinette, however, their union is the ultimate step towards a position of in-betweenness; a position in which she finally looses all control. The husband takes over

control of her money, her life, and her body. Moreover, she is forced to give up her life to a complete stranger, for her husband is chosen for her by the men in the family. Antoinette thus clearly has almost no control of her own life and body, for even her life-companion is dictated to her; something which is, in fact, rather symbolic of the exiguous power that women in general have in contrast to men: they were not even allowed to choose whom they can marry. No wonder that Antoinette is terrified of her future union and what will happen to her.

An argument Antoinette's aunt has with Antoinette's step brother Richard describes Antoinette's unfortunate, powerless situation. The argument takes place on the day of the nuptials, as Antoinette's aunt tries to prevent the whole marriage from taking place. According to Antoinette's aunt, it is outrageous that Richard is handing over everything Antoinette owns to a complete stranger. Antoinette should, at least, be legally protected. There is, however, little that Antoinette's aunt can do to stop him; after all, she is a woman. According to Richard, Antoinette's husband is an honourable man, not a rascal, so why should he insist on a lawyer's settlement when he trusts this man completely. He would even trust his own life to this gentleman. Nonetheless, it is Antoinette's life that he is trusting to the hands of a stranger, not his own, and despite all her efforts not even Antoinette's aunt is able to make him realize that.

Antoinette herself also tries to fight against her confinement but fails because she simply has no means of resistance at her disposal. Antoinette's husband most aptly characterizes Antoinette's powerless situation as he looks back to the day of their wedding some time after the nuptials. According to him, Antoinette "had given away, but coldly, unwillingly, trying to protect herself with silence and a blank face. Poor weapons, and they had not served her well or lasted long" (Rhys 1966: 76). As stated by her husband, silence and a blank face are the only means Antoinette can use in defense which make it no surprise that her resistances fail. However, Antoinette agrees to the marriage also for another reason and that is because her husband promises her peace and happiness, and above all safety. Because Antoinette has been so afraid all her life, she is easily allured with promises of safety. She is happy to know that at last there is truly

someone on her side; a feeling which unfortunately soon passes because like all other people in her life, also her husband eventually turns against her.

As pointed out by Antoinette's husband, he does not love Antoinette because Antoinette is a stranger to him, a stranger who does not think or feel as he does (Rhys 1966: 78). In Antoinette and her husband's union both cultural and gender differences are standing between the two and preventing them from understanding one another. These differences can, in fact, be understood with the help of the mind/body dichotomy of western thought. While men, in this case white western men, are associated with culture and reason, women and the colonized subjects are associated with nature and emotion. In *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Antoinette's overall emotionality and sensuality seem very strange to her husband. As a real Englishman, he is accustomed more to rationality and discreetness. The body and sexuality are rather repressed in the west, therefore, in the west, a sexual woman is commonly regarded as a whore; a stereotypical view which also guides his approach to Antoinette. In time Antoinette's husband begins to feel exhausted and threatened by Antoinette, as much as he begins to feel threatened by the surroundings of their honeymoon island. In fact, one of the reasons why Antoinette's husband eventually turns against Antoinette is that he becomes afraid of loosing control. He becomes afraid that he cannot control Antoinette's sexuality nor can he control the island. Moreover, he becomes afraid of loosing his own self control. In other words, he becomes afraid of transforming into the like of Antoinette whose emotionality, in his mind, is not only associated with promiscuity but also with madness. Yet, because he is a man, he needs to be in control.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, it is claimed that the female body is considered just as much a possession of its master as the colonized land was considered a possession of its colonizer, and men are seen as having the right to rob the colonized land out of its enrichments in the same way as they are seen as having the right to utilize the female body in any way they pleased. Accordingly, the experiences of the colonized peoples and those of women can be paralleled in a number of ways, with the only difference that while the colonized peoples are held prisoners on their own land, women are held prisoners in their own bodies.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Antoinette's body literally reflects the parallel between land and body. Antoinette, for instance, has bruises on her body which, as stated by Christophine, are the results of the fact that Antoinette's husband has treated her roughly (Rhys 1966: 124). Thus, in the same way as the colonized land was plunged and rubbed by its colonizer, Antoinette's body bears the markers of her victimhood under her husband's command. Moreover, Antoinette also becomes the locus of the loss of freedom and ill-treatment of the slaves owned by her ancestors. Her body becomes the symbol of the patriarchal oppression of colonialism.

The other time Antoinette's body shows signs of ill-treatment is when she is already in England. One morning as Antoinette wakes up she wonders why her wrists are so red and swollen (Rhys 1966: 148). Thus, in the same way as the former slave owners used to tie their slaves from their wrists, so that the slaves could not escape, Antoinette has been tied to her bed over night. In conclusion, both imperial and patriarchal oppression have devastating results over those they render subordinate and, unfortunately, oftentimes the most unfortunate ones are the likes of Antoinette, who get subordinated by both forms of domination.

5.3 From in-betweenness to nothingness

Identity is a concept that is widely and loosely used in reference to one's sense of self, and to one's feelings and ideas about oneself (Robins 2006: 172). Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of identities. Formerly, the discourses on identity have mainly been essentialist. They have regarded identity and the distinctiveness of a person as an experience of some inner essence or property and thereby also held identities as natural, eternal qualities emanating from within the entity. In other words, formerly, the view of identity has been more or less stable. More recent critical accounts, however, show that the view has mostly changed from essentialist to anti-essentialist. Identities interact with changing circumstances and are constantly negotiated within changing power structures. (Heyes 2007) Moreover, identities are considered to be socially constructed. They are instituted in particular social and historical contexts through the play of differences. In

other words, identities are not self-sufficient but rather they receive their essence and positive meaning from what they are not, from what they exclude. (Robins 2006: 172–l75) In reality, then, far from being stable, the prevailing view of identity is dynamic. Thereby, most importantly, identity formation should always be viewed as a process.

In this thesis, Antoinette's identity formation is particularly viewed as a process. In the novel, she is considered a white cockroach by the locals and a white nigger by the new colonialist no matter what she does. The other people's opinions are something Antoinette has no control over unlike her identity which she tries throughout her entire life to build; a process in which Antoinette eventually fails. The forms of oppression she is subjected to, which in this thesis are studied in the areas of race, class, and gender, prevent her from constructing a clear sense of her self. They drive Antoinette into an insuperable position of in-betweenness in which it is impossible for her to keep on existing. In the end, Antoinette ceases to exist. She fades into nothingness because her identity becomes so fragmented.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea,* the mirror expresses the problems Antoinette has with her personal identity throughout her entire life. Such a view is also supported by Liz Lewis (2001), according to whom, in *Wide Sargasso Sea* Rhys uses the mirror to symbolize the duality of self. Moreover, as stated by Gilbert and Gubar (quoted in Lewis 2001), the use of the mirror itself in women's writing can be seen to represent patriarchal judgement; a view which is indeed also true in Antoinette's case.

Accordingly, at the end of *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Antoinette describes in retrospect a time when she had sat in front of a mirror. Antoinette states that "the girl I saw was myself yet not quite myself. Long ago when I was a child and very lonely I tried to kiss her. But the glass was between us – hard, cold and misted over with my breath." (Rhys 1966: 147) Antoinette's effort to kiss her own reflection speaks of her split image of her self. Already as a child, Antoinette struggles with her identity. Unfortunately, Antoinette's sense of her personal identity gains no strength over the years but, rather becomes more and more fragmented. At the very end of the novel, whilst looking in the mirror, Antoinette no longer recognizes her reflection to be her own: "It was then that I

saw her – the ghost. The woman with streaming hair. She was surrounded by a guilt frame but I knew her. (Rhys 1966: 154) As stated by Lewis (2001), Antoinette no longer recognizes her own image in the mirror because her identity has been so thoroughly diminished by patriarchal oppression.

Throughout the whole of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the circumstances of Antoinette's life deny her a coherent identity. In her childhood, Antoinette's in-betweenness regarding her race and class results in that she is neither one or the other, neither a rich white colonialist like her step father Mr. Mason nor a poor native inhabitant of the islands like her sole protector Christophine. If, in her childhood, Antoinette is in any way ever taken into account, it is only with hatred and contempt, and many times Antoinette is also literally wounded on her body because of her outsider status. In her childhood, Antoinette is rejected even by her own mother because her mother regards Antoinette's brother as more valuable than her. Given the circumstances of Antoinette's life, it is not surprising that she is brought up to be an insecure, fearful young girl who is never altogether sure of herself or of who she is.

When Antoinette is eventually married off to her husband, for a little while she is at last able to feel that there is truly someone on her side. After the wedding, Antoinette's husband thus acts as her mirror, making the reflection unified. Rather soon, however, fractures begin to appear in the image when her husband begins to turn against her. Little by little he starts to believe all the rumours and nasty lies that people tell about Antoinette and her mother. For instance, stories of how the entire family is possessed by madness or that the woman he has married is not an honourable woman, only intemperate and unchaste. As sang by one of the servants in their honeymoon house in a very derogatory tone, "white cockroach she marry [...] white cockroach she buy young man" (Rhys 1966: 83). However, while Antoinette has always been a 'white cockroach' to the locals, she has also always been a 'white nigger' to the new colonialists; the kind of view which, unfortunately, also Antoinette's husband eventually adopts.

The ultimate betrayal that eventually draws the remaining zests of life out of Antoinette is her husband's decision to sleep with one of the servants next to Antoinette's room; a

betrayal which, in fact, quite aptly summarizes all of the three positions of in-betweenness in Antoinette's life. In the betrayal, Antoinette is deceived by a black person and a white person at the same time, particularly, because her in-betweenness in regard to her race and class have turned her into a person who truly means nothing to anyone. Yet, the betrayal also gives away Antoinette's in-betweenness in regard to her gender, for her husband's decision to sleep with another women in their honeymoon house reflects the fact that during the time depicted in the novel men's infidelity was not treated as an offence. Because of woman's different status in marriage, if a woman were to do the same as Antoinette's husband, she would have most likely been killed or at least plunged into exile. However, Antoinette's husband gets away with his outrageous behavior without any further consequences, mainly, because he is a man yet also because, in Antoinette's case, there is truly not even anyone to offend for Antoinette is considered merchandise and a person without worth. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, there is simply no shadow of doubt which sex, man or woman is the most powerful one and there is nothing Antoinette can do to change the order of superiority. In a world run by men, women truly have no means of resistance. All possible means are either useless to begin with or made powerless by patriarchal rule.

After Antoinette's husband has betrayed her in their honeymoon house, Antoinette transforms completely. Finally, she gives in to the circumstances that have made her life such a misery. She notes to her husband that

> I loved this place and you have made it into a place I hate. I used to think that if everything else went out of my life I would still have this, and now you have spoilt it. It's just somewhere else I have been unhappy, and all the other things are nothing to what has happened here. (Rhys 1966: 121)

As stated by Antoinette, she has lost all reason to live. She is betrayed by the person who has sworn to take care of her, to protect her, and by the person who has promised her peace and safety. Most importantly, she is betrayed by him in the only house that has ever felt like home to Antoinette. In fact, the honeymoon house has previously belonged to Antoinette's mother, thus to Antoinette the house represents her mother. According to Antoinette, she has loved the place "more than anywhere in the world. As if it were a person. More than a person." (Rhys 1966: 121) Now that her husband has

exercised absolute power over her by taking everything away from her, Antoinette truly has become an outcast. No longer does she have anyone to turn to or anywhere to go to.

As also pointed out by Liz Lewis (2001), Antoinette's husband's rejection of her is the final straw in Antoinette's isolated, painful, emotionally-deprived life which causes Antoinette to adopt an exact mirroring of her mother's expression: "a frown [...] deep as if it had been cut with a knife" (Rhys 1966: ??). An expression which, as also pointed out by Lewis (2001), is symbolic of despair. After her husband's betrayal, hopelessness is all that Antoinette has left and thenceforth she is also depicted as showing nothing but despair or, in fact, depicted as having no life in her at all. Antoinette's husband, for instance, refers to her with characterizations such as "the silence itself (Rhys 1966: 110)" or "a doll that has a doll's breathless, indifferent voice (Rhys 1966: 112)". After her husband's betrayal, Antoinette's is thus depicted as a person who is no longer alive. She has transformed into something inanimate, like a doll, and all that truly remains of the character of Antoinette is her body.

Even though the story of Bertha in *Jane Eyre* and the story of Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* are not the same, the intertextual links between the two characters are extremely strong. Therefore, it is also tempting to interpret that Antoinette's journey from in-betweenness to nothingness receives its closure when Antoinette quite literally transforms into the character of Bertha in *Jane Eyre*. In other words, Antoinette transforms back into the character that she is founded on and thereby ceases to exist as a person on her own right. As stated by Lewis (2001), like Bertha in *Jane Eyre*, Antoinette suffers a breakdown of selfhood which allows her husband to label her Bertha, "the stereotype of madness created by patriarchal society". In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette's husband literally renames Antoinette Bertha which only supports the idea that no longer, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, does Antoinette exist but rather, what remains is Bertha. As stated by Antoinette: "names matter, like when he wouldn't call me Antoinette, and I saw Antoinette drifting out of the window with her scents, her pretty clothes and her looking-glass" (Rhys 1966: 147). At the end of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, it is then in fact the body of Antoinette which remains, whereas her identity as an

embodied self flies away. She thus figuratively drifts into nothingness and only her body remains as an empty container of what once was Antoinette.

Moreover, it is worth pointing out, as further stated by Lewis (2001), that Bertha's madness throughout *Jane Eyre* is implied congenital, whereas Antoinette's madness in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is shown as a reaction to oppression. Accordingly, from one standpoint, W*ide Sargasso Sea* truly is the untold story of Bertha; the story in which Jean Rhys shows the injustice in labelling Bertha mad without further clarifications. In *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Jean Rhys leaves no doubt whether Antoinette is congenitally insane or not. Rhys shows that Antoinette's transformation into Bertha is inevitable not because madness runs in her family but because the circumstances of her life leave her no other choice.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Antoinette's journey from in-betweenness to nothingness receives its ultimate closure when her husband decides to transport Antoinette away from her birthplace the West Indies to England and to lock her up into the attic of his mansion. Along the transportation Antoinette becomes what Katrak (2006: 2) calls an external exile of the female body, in addition to already being an 'internalized exile' (Katrak 2006: 2). Antoinette simply does not have control over her own life and body because ever since her marriage, her fate has been in the hands of her husband.

In its entirety, the story of Antoinette's life is tragic. She is misunderstood and mistreated all through her childhood. When she is eventually sold off to a husband, her husband, unfortunately, does not come to understand Antoinette any more than others before him. Antoinette and her husband are simply worlds apart culturally, which eventually naturally redounds to Antoinette's disadvantage. Moreover, for Antoinette's husband, Antoinette's emotionality and sensuality denote merely madness and promiscuity. According to him, "she thirsts for *anyone* – not me [...] a mad girl. She'll not care who she's loving. She'll moan and cry and give herself as no sane woman would – or could. (Rhys 1966: 136 italics original) During colonialism, the control of female sexuality was indeed strict, in part because women were seen as sexual threats to men; an unjust view which also clearly guides Antoinette's husband's approach to her.

In the end, Antoinette's husband becomes so intimidated by Antoinette and her emotionality, like he becomes intimidated by the entire surroundings of the island, that he sees no other option than to leave the island and return back home to England. The West Indies is simply so different from what he is accustomed to, thereby little by little he begins to feel threatened by the entire country. For him, the unfamiliar ways and customs of the West Indies as well as the country's excessive emotionality equal pure insanity, something which is uncontrollable, whereas England is familiar and rational, a place where he knows how things are run and is thereby able to be in control. As described by Antoinette's husband after his return home from the West Indies: "I was exhausted. All the mad conflicting emotions had gone and left me wearied and empty. Sane." (Rhys 1966: 141) By returning to England, Antoinette's husband is thus able to regain his control over matters, in other words, he is able to preserve his sanity and not let the West Indies drive him mad with its emotionality and unfamiliarity. Moreover, his decision to confine Antoinette into the attic of his mansion is also fundamentally inflicted by his fear of losing control. To him, Antoinette will always be part of the threatening island and the only way he can fully restrain Antoinette and her excessive emotionality is by locking her up into the attic.

For Antoinette, however, her imprisonment means complete non-existence. Antoinette points out that in the attic where she is being held a prisoner there is no looking glass and no window out of which she could see the outside world. Thereby Antoinette states that "I don't know what I am like now" (Rhys 1966: 147). As stated by Robins (2006: 172, identities are not self-sufficient. Neither Antoinette nor anyone else can exist without the presence of mirrors, i.e. without the presence of others through which identities are constructed and maintained. In the attic, Antoinette is finally completely denied an identity because the lack of mirrors and windows simply prevent her from existing. In fact, in the same way as her body, in the attic, has now become invisible to the outside world, Antoinette herself has become invisible to herself. Her journey from in-betweenness to nothingness has come to an end.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has studied the protagonist Antoinette and how she is portrayed as a marginal character in regard to race, class and gender in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The starting point of this thesis is quite aptly stated by Quyatri Spivak:

> In the figure of Antoinette […] Rhys suggests that so intimate a thing as personal and human identity might be determined by the politics of imperialism. Antoinette, as a white Creole child growing up at the time of emancipation in Jamaica, is caught between the English imperialist and the black native. (2003: 271–272)

In this thesis, Antoinette's in-betweenness was thus taken as the starting point for the analysis and, moreover, as the assumption why her identity, throughout her entire life, remains fragmented. Thenceforth, the intention was to study how her in-betweenness unfolds by looking at the three categories, race, class, and gender, and also how these categories intersect in Antoinette's life. The main question that was focused on is how Antoinette's gradual development from a character in-between to a character defined by nothingness becomes visible in her literary life mainly through her embodiment and sexuality. In this thesis, the role of gender is highlighted, as well as the role of the body in the construction of identities. The categories of race, class and gender were chosen for analysis because, as stated by Lucas (2006: 178), these three categories are the primary means of articulating questions on identity yet, more importantly, because particularly these three denominators were found as the most influential in Antoinette's life.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette clearly illustrates, as stated by Homi Bhabha (quoted in Loomba 1998: 176–177), that liminality and hybridity are necessary attributes of the colonial conditions and, that it is "particularly the disturbing distance in-between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness [...] the liminal problem of colonial identity and its vicissitudes". In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, as this thesis shows, Antoinette is an 'other' to all people around her and this is the ultimate reason why her life experiences are so tragic and she eventually ends up loosing herself in the pressure of culture and society.

Wide Sargasso Sea is Jean Rhys's most famous novel and, on the whole, the novel has also been widely studied. In this thesis two aspects were brought into the analysis of the novel and into the analysis of Antoinette, that of intersectionality and the female body. The latter, intersectionality, is a fairly recent concept, yet a concept which after its discovery quickly gained popularity. As stated by Davis, at present intersectionality is heralded as one of the most important contributions to women's studies so far. Firstly, because it addresses the everlasting yet previously oftentimes neglected concern of difference and diversity among women. Secondly, it addresses it in such a way that the old ideals of producing theories applicable to all women can also be upheld. (Davis 2006)

In this thesis, intersectionality played a major role particularly because of its concentration on the issues of difference and diversity. In the analyses of Antoinette, intersectionality made it possible to take notice of the overall circumstances of Antoinette's life. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the oppressions Antoinette is subjected to and the experiences of exclusion she experiences are the results of her race, class and gender in-betweenness specifically all together, and her inability to form a unified sense of herself is the result of her in-betweenness as regards to all of these three denominators. In other words, with the help of intersectionality, a more extensive analysis of Antoinette and of her life experiences has been possible.

The female body, on the other hand, or the body in itself has also long been a neglected entity. The body has, however, quite rapidly risen into an important role and it is also slowly gaining more space in the field of literary studies. As stated by Davis (1997: 2), today the body is seen as an important means for self-expression as well as an imminent constituent of human identity.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette's body also plays a major role in her struggles to form an identity and as this thesis shows, it is through her embodiment that her identity is to a great extent contested. Antoinette's Creole origins and her position amongst the impoverished previous land-owners mean that her outer appearance and her ways of actions distinguish her from both the local inhabitants of the West Indies and the newly

arrived English colonialist. Thereby she becomes mistreated by both. Above all, however, Antoinette's gender dooms her into a situation in which she is not truly even in control of her own life and body. Rather, she is the possession of men like during colonialism the colonized land and its people were the possessions of their colonizers. Throughout Antoinette's entire life, the circumstances of her life impair her efforts to construct an identity beyond fragmentation. Her confinement into the attic of her husband's mansion is the culmination of this process that has been going on throughout her entire life. In the attic, Antoinette is finally, completely denied an identity. Without a window her body is as invisible to the outside world as without a mirror, i.e. without the presence or reflection of others, Antoinette's sense of her self, of who she really is, is invisible to herself.

Through Antoinette's embodiment, *Wide Sargasso Sea,* quite blatantly reflects what Ketu Katrak (2006: 2) calls covert political resistance of patriarchal and colonial oppression in women's writings. As stated by Katrak (2006: 2–3), bodily responses of female protagonist are sometimes successful and sometimes tragically unsuccessful. However, also the unsuccessful conclusions like madness, death, or other forms of social exclusion should be taken into account, for oftentimes they are the only possible avenues for resistance. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette's eventual nothingness can thus also be interpreted as a form of resistance through which Jean Rhys is criticising the workings of the colonial patriarchal society.

WORKS CITED

PRIMARY SOURCE

Rhys, Jean (1966). *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Abbott, H. Porter (2002). *The Cambridge introduction to Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Adjarian, Maude (1995). "Between and beyond boundaries in *Wide Sargasso Sea*." [Web Address]. College Literature, [Cited 15 November 2009]. Available at: http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-16989168.html

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (1995). *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (2000). *The Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. London: Routledge.

Bartky, Sandra Lee (1988). "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power." In *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory*, 128–153. Eds. Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina and Sarah Stanbury. New York: Columbia University Press.

Boardman, Kay (2000). "The Ideology of Domesticity: The Regulation of the Household Economy in Victorian Women's Magazines" [Web Address]. The Johns Hopkins University Press, [Cited 27 January 2010]. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/pss/20083724

Boehmer, Elleke (1995). *Colonial & Postcolonial Literature.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Brontë, Charlotte (1992). *Jane Eyre*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth.

Bordo, Susan (2003). *Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* [Web Address]. Berkeley: University of California Press, [Cited 16 December 2009]. Available at: http://books.google.fi/books

Chandler, Daniel (1994). *Semiotics for Beginners* [Web address]. [Cited 6 May 2009]. Available at: http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/sem09.html

Childs, Peter (1999). *Post-Colonial Theory and English Literature: A Reader*. Edinburg: Edinburg University Press.

Davis, Kathy (1997). *Embodied Practices: Feminist Perspectives on the Body*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Davis, Kathy (2008). "Intersectionality as Buzzword" [Web Address]. [Cited 20 August 2009]. Available at: http://www.kathydavis.info/articles/Intersectionality_as_buzzword.pdf

Degler, Carl (1974). "What ought to be and What Was: Women's Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century" [Web Address]. The American Historical Review, [Cited 15 December 2009]. Available at: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1851777?cookieSet=1

Dirks, Nicholas (2006). "Colonialism". In *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 42–45. Eds. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan Morris. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Dirks, Nicholas (2006). "Postcolonialism". In *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 267–269. Eds. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan Morris. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Etoke, Nathalie (2006). "Writing the Woman's body in Francophone African Literature: Taxonomy Issues and Challenges*"* [Web address]. [Cited 26 September 2009]. Available at: http://www.codesria.org/Links/Publications/bulletin3_06/etoke.pdf

Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar (2000). *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Women Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Hancock, Philip, Bill Hughes, Elizabeth Jagger, Kevin Paterson, Rachel Russell, Emmanuelle Tulle-Winton and Melissa Tyler (2000). *The Body, Culture and Society*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Heyes, Cressida (2007). "Identity Politics" [Web address]. Metaphysics Research Lab, CSLI, Stanford University, [Cited 6 September 2010]. Available at: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/identity-politics/

Hulme, Peter (2001). "Wide Sargasso Sea" [Web address]. The Literary Encyclopedia: University of Essex, [Cited 15 March 2009]. Available at: http://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=8787

Iane, Richard (2006). *The Postcolonial Novel.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Katrak, Ketu (2006). *Politics of the Female Body: Postcolonial Women Writers of the Third World.* New Brunswick, NJ, USA: Rutgers University Press.

Kendrik, Robert (1994). "Edward Rochester and the margins of masculinity in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*." [Web address]. Papers on Language and Literature vol. 30: Oxford University, [Cited 5 May 2010]. Available at: http://www.questia.com/googleScholar.qst?docId=5000240821

Knudsen, Susanne (2006). "Intersectionality - A Theoretical Inspiration in the Analysis of Minority Cultures and Identities in Textbooks." [Web address]. [Cited 10 February 2010]
Available at: http://www.caen.iufm.fr/colloque_iartem/pdf/part_I.pdf#page=61

Lewis, Liz (2001). "The representation of the doubleness of selfhood in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*" [Web Address]. [Cited 2 January 2010]
Available at: http://www.literature-study-online.com/essays/bronte_rhys.html

Lewkowicz, Sherry (2004). "The Experience of Womanhood in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*" [Web address]. Literatures of the Caribbean: Brown University, [Cited 3 January 2009]. Available at:
http://www.postcolonialweb.org/caribbean/dominica/rhys/lewkowicz14.html

Loomba, Ania (1998). *Colonialism/Postcolonialism.* London: Routledge.

Lucas, Gavin (2006). *An Archaeology of Colonial Identity: Power and Material Culture in the Dwars* [Web address]. New York: Springer Science and Business Media, [Cited 15 September 2009]. Available at:
http://books.google.fi/books

Martin, Brian (1984). "Patriarchy" [Web address]. London: Freedom Press, 1990 revised version, [Cited 20 May 2009].
Available at: http://www.uow.edu.au/arts/sts/bmartin/pubs/90uw/uw10.html

Murdock, Adlai (2003). "Rhys's Pieces: Unhomeliness as Arbiter of Caribbean Creolization" [Web Address]. [Cited 10 June 2010].
Available at: http://www.jstor.org.proxy.tritonia.fi/

Etoke, Nathalie (2006). *Writing the Woman's body in Francophone African Literature: Taxonomy Issues and Challenges* [Web address]. [Cited 26 September 2009]. Available at:
http://www.codesria.org/Links/Publications/bulletin3_06/etoke.pdf

Rich, Adrienne (2003). 'Notes towards a Politics of Location.' In: *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader,* 29–42. Ed. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills. New York: Routledge.

Robins, Kevin (2006). "Identity". In *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 172–175. Eds. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan Morris. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Robins, Kevin (2006). "Other". In *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, 249–251. Eds. Tony Bennett, Lawrence Grossberg and Meaghan Morris. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Sanchez-Grant, Sofia (2008). "The Female Body in Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman* and *Lady Oracle*" [Web address]. [Cited 16 December 2009]. Available at: http://www.bridgew.edu/soas/jiws/Mar08/SanchezGrant.pdf

Tomm, Winnie (1992). "Knowing Ourselves as Women". In *Anatomy of Gender: Women's Struggle for the Body*, 209–219. Ed. Dawn, Currie. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Young, Robert (2001). *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing

Quasar, Gian (1999–2009). *The Bermuda-Triangle.Org* [Web address]. [Cited 8 July 2009]. Available at: http://www.bermuda-triangle.org/html/sargasso_sea.html

Scharfman, Ronnie (1981). "Mirroring and Mothering in Simone Schwarz-Bart's Pluie et vent sur Témuléé Miracle and Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea" [Web Address]. Yale French Studies: Yale University Press, [Cited 7 May 2010]. Available at: http://www.jstor.org.proxy.tritonia.fi/?cookieSet=1

Spivak, Gayatri (2003). "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism". In *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 269–272. Ed. Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. New York: Routledge.