



Item Number :
Serial Number :

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Master's Degree in English

DOMAIN: Letters and Foreign Languages
SUBJECT: English
SPECIALITY: Cultural and Media Studies

Title

Gender, Race and Identity in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and Julie Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic* (2011).

Presented by:

- Samia SIKADIR.

Board of Examiners :

Chair:	Nadia NAAR,	MCA, Mouloud MAMMERI University (T.O)
Supervisor:	Mouloud SIBER,	MCA, Mouloud MAMMERI University (T.O)
Examiner:	Arezki KHELIFA,	MCB, Mouloud MAMMERI University (T.O)

Class: JUNE, 2017.

Contents

Contents.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
I. Introduction.....	1
1. Review of the Literature.....	2
2. Issue and Working Hypothesis.....	3
Endnotes.....	5
II. Methods and Materials.....	7
1. Methods.....	7
a. Chela Sandoval’s <i>Methodology of the Oppressed</i>	7
b. Williams Kimberlé Crenshaw’s <i>Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color</i>	10
2. Materials.....	11
Summaries of the Novels.....	11
Endnotes.....	12
III. Results.....	14
IV. Discussion.....	15
1. Gender issues and “Oppositional Consciousness” in Rhys’s <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> Otsuka’s <i>The Buddha in the Attic</i>	15
Endnotes.....	25
2. Race and the “Differential Mode of Consciousness in Opposition” in Rhys’s <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> and Otsuka’s <i>The Buddha in the Attic</i>	28
Endnotes.....	39
3. Intersectionality and the Interaction Between Identity, Gender and Race.....	42
Endnotes.....	51
V. Conclusion.....	54
VI. Select Bibliography	56

Acknowledgements

First, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor **Dr. Mouloud SIBER** to whom I owe this interesting theme. I thank him for his guidance and practical feedbacks and for his sense of duty. Second, I would like to thank **Dr. Nadia NAAR** and **Dr. Arezki KHELIFA** for having kindly accepted to examine my work. Last but not least, I would like to thank my family for their patience and understanding.

Abstract

This study has compared Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1996) and Julie Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic* (2011). It has examined the way these two authors bring to the fore issues related to the exploitation and the marginalization of women in the Caribbean and the American spaces, respectively. In the discussion of these issues, focus has been put on the way oppressions of gender and race constitute a barrier to the process of constructing an independent self and identity. For this purpose, the theoretical framework of this dissertation has been borrowed from Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* (2000) and Williams Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of "**Intersectionality**." On the one hand, it has been assumed that both Rhys and Otsuka incorporate into their narratives various methodologies of resisting the oppressions of such external forces as gender and race. On the other hand, it seemed appropriate to make reference to Crenshaw's theory given that both authors shed light on how identity intersects with social categories like gender and race. The analysis of the two selected novels has, indeed, revealed that social categories like gender, race and identity generally interact and influence each other.

I. Introduction

Women have been relegated to inferiority status. This secondary status attributed to the “helpless sex” has been reinforced by patriarchal institutions and social relations.¹ Because of the prevalence of these systems that strive to keep women on the margins of societies, several Western feminist groups emerged and aimed primarily at emancipating white and “Third World Women” from an established patriarchal order by introducing gender equalities among men and women. However, the way race, class and culture intersect and inform the category of gender has been overlooked within these Western feminist movements.² Put differently, the fact that white and “Third World Women” are of the same gender does not mean that they share the same experiences of oppression.³ Indeed, “Third World Women” are doubly oppressed in the sense that they are subject to male domination and to racial oppression.

Furthermore, due to the “monolithic” state of Western feminist scholarship, “Postcolonial Feminism” emerged and sought to establish the relationship between race and gender.⁴ Indeed, the work of postcolonial theorists aims at introducing improvements to the lives of “Third World Women” by challenging the assumption that the white Western middle-class woman constitutes “the norm.”⁵ Postcolonial feminists like Chandra Mohanty and others reject the assumption that the fact that women share a common identity automatically implies that they share an identical experience of oppression.⁶

Among the postcolonial feminist writers who shed light on the interactions of gender and race and on the way these social categories hinder the process of women’s identity construction stand out the Dominican-born English writer Jean Rhys and the Japanese-American novelist Julie Otsuka. In their major fictional works, respectively *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and *The Buddha in the Attic* (2011), they challenge the tradition of both literature and history by providing doubly oppressed women with stories of their own.

Review of the Literature

Both Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and Julie Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic* (2011) have been subject to criticism. The former has been the object of different critical readings ever since its publication. Among the scholarly discourse on Rhys's narrative, we may cite first Rula B. Qawas's "*The politics of Gender, Class and Race in Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea*" (2008).⁷ Qawas regards Rhys's narrative as a model for examining how women are triply marginalized by the oppressions and intersections of race, class and gender. The critic establishes an analogy between the Jamaican slaves' resistance to exploitation and colonialism and Antoinette's resistance to male domination and exploitation. Both Jamaican slaves and Antoinette have a common point related to the fact that both of them rebelled against the established order.

In addition, in "*Abject by Gender and Race: The Loss of Antoinette's Identity in Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea*" (2012),⁸ Lida Pollanen brings Rhys's novel under the scope of Ania Loomba's ideas, which she develops in her *Colonialism and Postcolonialism* (2005) and Julia Kristeva's notion of the "Abject", which she elaborates in *The Power of Horrors* (1982). By applying these concepts, Pollanen states that one can understand how external forces such as gender and race resulted in Antoinette's identity crisis. The critic argues that Antoinette's madness stems from the oppressive patriarchal system she has known from her early childhood. According to Pollanen, Antoinette Cosway and her mother, white Creole women, occupy an ambiguous position in the Jamaican society in the sense that they are not only "othered" by black Jamaicans but also by white English. In this respect, Pollanen states: "Antoinette and her mother were 'white niggers' who belonged neither to Jamaican nor English culture, but instead were trapped in between."⁹

Wide Sargasso Sea has also been studied from a socio-psychological perspective. In "*Identity Crisis in Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea Revisited*" (2017),¹⁰ Tawfik Youcef and Reem Abu Samra argue that a variety of factors gave birth to Antoinette's crisis of identity. One of the

most important of these is Antoinette's Creole origin which is mainly behind her loss of her sense of belonging. She feels herself neither belonging to the Jamaican community nor to the English one since the former rejects her because she is white and the latter considers her as an outsider because she is of a mixed race.

Among the critical discussions that examined Julie Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic*, there is Juliana Vizan's "*A New Historicist Reading of Julie Otsuka's The Buddha in the Attic and When the Emperor was Divine*." Vizan approaches Otsuka's novels from a new historicist perspective. She views Otsuka's works as tackling primarily multiple issues that affect negatively Japanese ethnic and gender identity in the American space. Vizan claims that racism and discrimination are inherent in the American society. She sustains this idea by highlighting different racist views held by white societies in general and the American society in particular towards people who "look and act differently."¹¹

Another critic who examines racial issues in Otsuka's narratives is Ingegerd Stenport. In "*Transformation of the Self: A Study of Submissiveness, Trauma, Guilt and Shame in Julie Otsuka's When the Emperor was Divine (2002)*" (2016),¹² Stenport writes on Otsuka's novel in light of Trauma Theory. He argues that this narrative is both a reflection of the denial of civil rights for Japanese American citizens during World War Two and a projection of the way ethnic minorities suffer from discrimination and marginalization in the United States.

One of the illustrative critiques on the Japanese civilians' loss of identity due to racial discrimination in the American space is Lena Ahlen's "*On the Loss of Identity in When the Emperor was Divine*" (2010).¹³ Ahlen claims that the fact that Otsuka does not name the main characters of the novel indicates that even if Japanese Americans have been living in the United States for many years, they are still considered as strangers and outsiders. This, in its turn, alludes to the Japanese people's loss of identity in the American space at a specific period of time.¹⁴

Issue and Working Hypothesis

It follows from the above review of the literature that the two novels have been analyzed separately from different perspectives. To our best knowledge, no comparison was undertaken on Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic*. On account of this, the purpose of the present dissertation is to bring these two narratives into perspective together by putting emphasis on the intersection of questions related to gender and race and the pressures exercised by these two external forces on women's identities.

What might actually be considered as a stimulus that motivates this comparative study is related to the fact that both novels are linked by the notion of the "attic" which has been associated with women's confinement in Feminist Studies. Add to this, *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Buddha in the Attic* involve the journey of Antoinette and the "picture brides" from their motherlands to places that they consider as the "garden of Eden" where, they think, they are going to lead a life of peace and luxury only to become aware in the end that they clung to their fairy tales until the price for believing them became too high. These two parallels we have drawn from our reading of the two authors' texts constitute in our opinion a valid justification for their comparison.

Both Rhys and Otsuka criticize the patriarchal institution on the ground that it leads to the subjugation and exploitation of women. In both authors' texts, women are subject to oppressive patriarchal forces. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette's madness stems from the oppression of the patriarchal power structures she experienced for her whole life. As far as *The Buddha in the Attic* is concerned, the mail-order "picture brides" travel to America with the hope of bettering their lives since they are lured by their husbands' letters and photographs. However, once there they end up disappointed and blindly obeying their husbands.

Both authors bring to the fore issues related to the marginalization of women from other races. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the racial question is very complex. The Creole protagonist, Antoinette, is subject to both black Jamaicans' mockery and to her English husband's snobbery.

The racial issue also permeates Otsuka's narrative. In their daily life, Japanese immigrants have to face the racist words and actions of Americans. They are still viewed as foreign "Others" even if they have been in the United States for many years.

In both authors' narratives, the pressures exercised by the issues of gender and race on women result in an acute crisis of identity. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette struggles painfully for an identity and a place in society. She is "repudiated" by black Jamaicans because of her whiteness, and she cannot ascribe to the English society because she is of a mixed race. In *The Buddha in the Attic*, Otsuka puts emphasis on how the Japanese "picture brides" experience identity issues in the American space due to the combination of patriarchal and racial oppressions.

To examine the above issues, this study will be primarily based on Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* (2000), in which she puts forward different forms of activism and networks of "Oppositional Consciousness" that ensure the pursuit of social justice and empower marginalized subjects. This dissertation will also resort to Williams Kimberle Crenshaw's *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color* (1991). The relevance of Sandoval's theory lies in the way her strategies and methodologies of resisting oppression are present in both Otsuka's and Rhys's narratives. Our reliance on Crenshaw's theory can be explained through the way she examines identity's intersection with gender and race.

In addition to an introduction, methods and materials, and a conclusion, the discussion of this research paper is divided into three sections. The first section consists of the analysis of the gender issue in Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic*. In addition, the second section examines the issue of race in both narratives. The third section tackles the impact of such external forces as gender and race on women's identities in both texts.

Endnotes

¹Sultana Abeda, "Patriarchy and Women's Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis," *Arts Faculty Journal* 4, no. 6(2011), <http://www.banglajol.info/index.php/AFJ/article/view/12929/9293> (accessed May 27, 2017), 1.

²Chandra T. Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *On Humanism and the University I: The Discourse of Humanism* 12, no. 3, <http://www.jstor.org/sici?sici=01903659%28198421%2F23%2912%3A3%3C333%3AUWEFSA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Y> (accessed May 29, 2017), 3.

³Maxin B. Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill, "Difference and Domination," http://www.temple.edu/tempress/chapters/657_ch1.pdf, 1.

⁴Mohanty, *Under Western Eyes*, 3.

⁵*Ibid.*, 6.

⁶*Ibid.*, 21.

⁷Rula B. Qawas, "The Politics of Gender, Class, and Race in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*," *Human and Social Sciences* 35, no.2 (2008), <file:///C:/Users/Ghost160110/Downloads/343-693-1-SM.pdf> (accessed October 10, 2016).

⁸Lida Pollanen, "Abject by Gender and Race: The Loss of Antoinette's Identity in Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*," *Oregon Undergraduate Research Journal* 5, no.1 (Spring 2012), <file:///C:/Users/Ghost160110/Downloads/1891-4846-1-PB.pdf> (accessed October 10, 2016).

⁹*Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰Tawfiq Youcef and Reem Abu-Samra, "Identity Crisis in Jean Rhys *Wide Sargasso Sea* Revisited" *Journal of Literature and Art Studies* 4, no.2 (2017) <https://www.davidpublisher.com/Public/uploads/Contribute/586c4e9b220ec.pdf> (accessed March 13, 2017).

¹¹Juliana Vizan. "A New Historicist Reading of Julie Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic* and *When the Emperor was Divine*," <http://www.upm.ro/ldmd/LDMD-02/Lit/Lit%2002%2025.pdf>, 2.

¹²Stenport Ingegerd. "Transformation of the Self: a Study of Submissiveness, Trauma, Guilt and Shame in Julie Otsuka's *when the Emperor was Divine* (2002)," (Advanced Research Essay, GOTESBORGS UNIVERSITET, 2016).

¹³Lena Ahlin, "On the Loss of Identity in *When the Emperor was Divine*," <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:397127/fulltext01>.

^{13a}*Ibid.*, 3.

II. Methods and Materials.

The woman and racial questions take an important place in the works of such feminist writers as Jean Rhys and Julie Otsuka. Through their narratives, both authors criticize the patriarchal and racial discourses that deprive those on the margins of societies in the Caribbean and American spaces from asserting their identities. As a matter of fact, within the framework of this research paper, it is assumed that Rhys and Otsuka focus on the woman and racial questions. To deal with these issues, the study will be based on Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic*. For theory, it seems appropriate to make reference to Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* (2000) and Williams Kimberlé Crenshaw's *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color* (1991). On the one hand, Sandoval's main concepts accord to the analysis of the major issues of this dissertation through the way oppressed women and marginalized people in the Caribbean and the American spaces are able to resist the power of patriarchy and the pressures exercised by racial discrimination. Krenshaw's theory, on the other hand, seems appropriate given that she analyzes how identity intersects with such social categories as gender and race.

1. Methods.

a. Chela Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed*

Chela Sandoval (1956-) is an acclaimed theorist of "Third World Feminism." In *Methodology of the Oppressed*, she challenges the traditional view held about social activism. This view connects theory with social passivity. Sandoval subverts this claim by designing effective strategies that emancipate oppressed subjects and create new agents capable of "love, hope, and transformative resistance."¹⁴ Said otherwise, Sandoval's theory of "oppositional consciousness"¹⁵ and her "methodology of the oppressed and emancipation"¹⁶ create individuals that are capable of "speaking to, against and through power."¹⁷ It is important to note that Sandoval in her book borrows concepts from the works of both third world theorists such as

Frantz Fanon, Julia Anzaldúa, Toril Moi and Western thinkers as Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault and others in order to elaborate her theory.

The main concepts elaborated by Sandoval in her book fit our analysis since she sheds light on possible mechanisms of resistance against oppression which, we presume, are present in both Rhys's and Otsuka's texts. By reading Sandoval's *Methodology of the oppressed*, the reader gets insight into various strategies for creating social movements to defy oppression. In "The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World," Sandoval relies on the works of different feminist scholars like Julia Kristeva, Toril Moi, Gerda Lena and others to put emphasis on the "expressions of consciousness in opposition"¹⁸ related to differences in the experiences of oppression among white and black women. Sandoval takes into consideration racial, ethnic, cultural differences among these women. She argues that Western feminism failed to take into account the ways race, class and sex inform the category of gender. Therefore, she proposes a topography of "oppositional consciousness" which stems from her analysis of U.S third world feminism.¹⁹ She identifies five oppositional modes of resistance which play an important role in social movements and activism: "Equal Rights," "Revolutionary," "Supremacist," "Separatist" and "Differential."

In the "Equal Rights form"²⁰, Sandoval states that oppositional activists "argue for civil rights based on the philosophy that all humans are created equally." She adds that "the members of the subordinated group argue that the differences for which they have been assigned inferior status lay in appearance only, not in 'reality'."²¹ The "Equal Rights" category seems to suit both Rhys and Otsuka since both of them are feminist writers who support the idea that all humans are created equal.

Additionally, Sandoval's the "revolutionary mode"²² aims at rebelling against an established order and against oppressive patriarchal rules which determine women's fate. Sandoval states that for change to occur in societies, it has to be accompanied by a restructuring of "the categories by which the dominant is ordered."²³ This transformation leads "toward the

goal of functioning beyond all domination/subordination power axes.”²⁴ In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette is a revolutionary woman who fulfils an act of rebellion and resistance through her choice setting fire to her husband’s house and committing suicide.

Many feminists, among them Sandoval, maintain that a “new morality”²⁶ that acknowledges differences and encourages “love” is required to understand the point of view of others. In “Love as Hermeneutics of Social Change, a Decolonizing Movidá”, Sandoval provides a new model of civil and emotional behavior which is mainly the outcome of “love in the postmodern world.”²⁷ She maintains that this latter is an adequate solution to material inequalities between men and women. Sandoval adheres to the belief of third world writers as Fanon, Che Guevara and others who describe “postmodern love” as “‘hope’ and ‘faith’ in the potential goodness of some promised land.”²⁸ In this concern, both Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and the “picture brides” in *The Buddha in the Attic* are subject to economic inequalities and male exploitation, yet they stick to the idea that “love” is needed to ensure understanding among human beings.

Another concept that is incorporated into Sandoval’s *Methodology of the Oppressed* is “Deconstruction,” which seems to be relevant to the analysis of the two narratives given that the aim of the two authors is to challenge the dominant ideologies and to ensure the survival of the subjugated people. Moreover, this concept embodies a revolutionary aspect in the sense that it ensures both the survival of the dominated and contributes to the process of achieving social justice. Sandoval differentiates between the individual “who acts *in concert* with dominant ideology and one who acts *in resistance* to that very ideology.”²⁹ For her, it is necessary to resist and rebel against the dominant ideologies. In accordance with this concept, Rhys revolts against colonial ideologies and emancipates the oppressed through her rewriting of *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Otsuka provides marginalized women with a voice to challenge the dominant discourse.

“Differential Consciousness”³⁰ is another source of empowerment and resistance in Sandoval’s framework. According to the author, “differential consciousness” is an effective way

for oppositional resistance to take place. She maintains that this fifth element of resistance “has a mobile, retroactive, and transformative effect on the previous four, setting them all into diverse processual relationships.”³¹ The differential form is not to be considered in isolation. Rather, it requires knowledge of the other four modes of “oppositional consciousness.” Sandoval considers the differential form as “consciousness in opposition that can gather up the modes of ideology praxis represented within previous liberation movements into a fifth, differential and postmodern paradigm.”³² The “differential form” suggests that oppressed people have to oppose the established order so as to liberate themselves. For Sandoval, the emergence of “transformable social narratives that are designed to intervene in reality for the sake of social justice”³³ enables the subjugated to challenge oppression. This can be related to the two authors who try to make of their literary works a tool to criticize social injustices.

b- Williams Kimberlé Crenshaw’s *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of color.*

“Intersectionality” is a term coined by the American scholar Williams Kimberle Crenshaw.³⁴ She uses this concept to show the link and the intersection between social categories like gender, race, class and identity. In *Mapping the Margins*, for short, Crenshaw examines the ways race and gender intersect and influence women’s conceptions of their identities. She maintains that the marginalization and discrimination third world women experience are heavily influenced by the categories of race and gender.³⁵ Further on, she claims that contemporary feminists and antiracist discourses limited the forms of violence exercised against women to battering and rape. On account of this, she insists on examining the intersecting dimensions of race and gender and the impacts these two forces have on women’s identities.³⁶ In the two selected narratives, Rhys and Otsuka deal with the pressures exercised by gender and race on women’s identities. Through their novels, both authors demonstrate that the interaction and intersection between these three social categories are inevitable.

2. Materials.

a- *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966)

Wide Sargasso Sea is a postcolonial-feminist novel written as a response to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. This narrative traces the story of a Creole woman, Antoinette Cosway, from her poor and lonely childhood to her unhappy marriage with an English patriarchal man to her imprisonment in the "attic" of Thornfield Hall in England. From her early childhood, Antoinette has been subject to the black Jamaicans rejection since she is connected with a former slave owning family. As a married woman with an Englishman she is subject to English snobbery. Indeed, after her marriage with Mr. Rochester, she faces different obstacles, especially after her cousin Daniel Cosway sent a letter to Rochester accusing her of sexual promiscuity and madness. Consequently, Rochester began to reject his wife, and their relationship was marked by tension. Antoinette's lack of affection and love makes her unable to bear her current situation. She goes to Christophine, her nurse, and begs her to make use of her "obeah" powers, a black Caribbean magic, to make Rochester love her again. However, Christophine refused at first and decided to talk with Rochester and try to convince him to love Antoinette again. Her efforts are vain since Rochester decided to move his wife to England where he locked her away in his "attic." Frustrated and disillusioned, Antoinette awakes from a frightening dream and decides to escape the fate of Bertha Mason who had been locked up in an attic for fourteen years in *Jane Eyre*. Antoinette sets fire to her husband's house and frees herself from the chains of a patriarchal order.

b- *The Buddha in the Attic* (2011)

Julie Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic* chronicles the journey of young Japanese "picture brides" traveling by boat to America. After a tiring journey, these women set their feet for the first time on the American soil, and their American dream began to turn into a nightmare when they discovered that their husbands were neither handsome nor financially secure. Besides, their lives are full of hardships as they are obliged to work hard to make a living. Throughout the novel, these women keep struggling against male domination, racial discrimination and injustice.

This latter culminate in the narrative after the attacks on Pearl Harbor. Indeed, Otsuka's text ends with the deportation of the Japanese Americans to hastily built camps because they are believed to constitute a threat to the security of the United States.

Endnotes

¹⁴Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the oppressed* (New York: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*, 55.

²¹*Ibid.*

²²*Ibid.*

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵Che Guevara, quoted in Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed* (New York: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 138.

²⁶Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 156.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 10.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 139.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 88.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 1.

³¹*Ibid.*, 54.

³²*Ibid.*

³³*Ibid.*, 62.

³⁴Sharon Smith, "Black Feminism and Intersectionality," <http://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality>.

³⁵Williams K. Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color." <http://multipleidentitieslgbtq.wiki.westga.edu/file/view/Crenshaw1991.pdf>.

³⁶Ibid., 3.

III. Results.

The study of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Buddha in the Attic* demonstrated that these texts share many thematic issues. Even though the two authors deal with two different periods in their peoples' histories, their preoccupations in these two narratives are very similar. This paper has resorted to Sandoval's strategies of resisting oppression that she fleshed out in her *Methodology of the Oppressed*. It has also made reference to Crenshaw's concept of "Intersectionality." On the one hand, the analysis of the two texts in the light of Sandoval's theoretical framework revealed that the authors focus on gender and racial issues and their repressive power. On the other hand, the two novels display intersectionality and the interaction between identity, gender and race.

The first section of the discussion has been devoted to the analysis of the gender issue in both novels. Both Rhys and Otsuka criticize the patriarchal institution on the ground that it is the very "avenue" where women are enslaved. Both authors denounce patriarchal practices such as arranged marriages that are based on business arrangements and result in the economic exploitation of women.

The analysis of the racial issue in both narratives revealed that both Rhys and Otsuka are advocate the right to equality for all human beings. This is supported by Sandoval's "equal rights" category of social activism and social justice. The analysis has also revealed that both authors highlight their racial and cultural differences. Therefore, both of them challenge the homogeneity and singularity of Western dominant ideology.

The last result of this comparative study is the rejection by the two authors of the assumption that all women in the world share identical experiences of oppression. This is highlighted through their insistence on the interaction and intersection between identity, gender and race. Indeed, the pressures exercised by such external forces as gender and race result in an acute crisis of identity.

IV. Discussion.

Chapter One: Gender issues and “Oppositional Consciousness” in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Buddha in the Attic*.

Both Jean Rhys (1890-1979) and Julie Otsuka (1962-) are recognized as major female writers in postmodern literature. Bringing together these two writers’ works, namely *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Buddha in the Attic*, which are fairly distant in time and display distinct cultural backgrounds and socio-historical divisions, may seem strange at first sight, yet both texts share many aspects that sustain their comparison.

To begin with, the articulations of the patriarchal modes of oppression in both authors’ narratives are comparable. As they appear in both novels, women are marginalized and subjugated to male power. Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and the “picture brides” in *The Buddha in the Attic* are relegated to inferiority status which binds their existence and renders them incapable of making their own decisions, especially in such areas as sexuality and economy. In both texts, this patriarchal system has far reaching consequences on women as it destroys their identities, potentials and abilities.³⁷ However, this patriarchal oppression does not remain unchallenged since oppressed subjects, according to Sandoval, question hegemonic understandings of oppression and develop different forms and modes of oppositional resistance.³⁸ Indeed, Sandoval in *Methodology of the Oppressed* puts forward different strategies of “Oppositional Consciousness” that work hand in hand in order to allow oppressed subjects to fight oppression and achieve true liberation. She maintains that oppressed subjects generally examine the causes and the consequences of their oppression, and from this “reflection [comes] their necessary engagement in the struggle for their liberation.”³⁹ Sandoval’s theoretical framework is a method that can explain the different sources of empowerment and resistance in both Rhys’s and Otsuka’s narratives. The two authors start from the very idea of creating stories for the subjugated and move forward with a strategy of “oppositional consciousness” and a “methodology of the oppressed.”

As it is pointed out above, patriarchal oppression permeates both authors' texts. Both Rhys and Otsuka criticize the institution of marriage on the ground that it is designed to intensify male domination and to maintain the patriarchal order, particularly through the way it reduces women to mere sexual objects and puts barriers to their economic independence. Besides, they examine the negative effects of this institution on women. According to Kathleen Ochshorn, Rhys rejects both "the pressure to conform to the convention"⁴⁰ in the sense that she denies the conventional and conservative standards of life that dominate societies. In *Smile Please: An Unfinished Autobiography* (1979), Rhys projects her ideas on marriage saying:

In those days a girl was supposed to marry, it was your mission in life, you were a failure if you didn't [...] I dreaded growing up. I dreaded the time when I would have to worry about how many proposals I had, what if I didn't have a proposal?.⁴¹

This quote implies that Rhys does not adhere blindly to the different social constructions of femininity.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys voices her ideas on marriage through the character of Christophine, who seems to bear some resemblance to the author herself. Rhys creates a woman who, just like her, rejects the "pressure to conform and convention."⁴² According to Spivak, Christophine is the only independent female character endowed with a sense of logic and reason in Rhys's novel.⁴³ She is able to support herself economically, and she serves no man. Christophine resists both "patriarchal and imperialist laws."⁴⁴ She criticizes the institution of marriage on the ground that it is designed to reinforce male domination. For instance, when Antoinette tells her that she cannot leave her husband, Mr. Rochester, because she is economically dependent on him, Christophine replies: "all women, all colors, nothing but fools. Three children I have. One living in this world, each one a different father, but no husband, I thank my God, I keep my money. I don't give it to no worthless man."⁴⁵ When Christophine tries to convince Rochester to give Antoinette some of her money back, he tries to silence her by threatening her to resort to the judicial apparatus which is male dominated. However, Christophine is confident that he cannot harm her. She says: "No police here. No chain

gang, no tread machine, no dark jail either. This is free country and I am free woman.”⁴⁶ Christophine speaks to, against, and through power.⁴⁷ Therefore, she asserts herself because she transforms her language into what Sandoval calls the “language of revolution.”⁴⁸ In this perspective, Christophine is an oppressed subject who uses the “language of the oppressed”⁴⁹ to counter male domination. By so doing, she proves that the “subaltern can speak.”⁵⁰

Like Rhys, Otsuka criticizes the institution of marriage on the ground that it is responsible for the enslavement and the exploitation of the Japanese “picture brides” who work inside and outside home like machines. Otsuka denounces such practices that strengthen male domination and worsen the feminine condition. In her narrative, she sheds light on the way the presence of the male figure restricts the freedom of these women who occupied a subordinate position in their native society and who still occupy the same position in the American society that welcomed them coldly. These women are trapped in the “cage” of patriarchal oppression from the very beginning of the novel. Indeed, patriarchal practices such as arranged marriages, through photographs and family recommendations, forced the “picture brides” to leave their homes in Japan and make a risky journey by boat to America to marry and be exploited by Japanese men they had never met. In this concern, Otsuka writes:

Some of us [picture brides] worked quickly because our husbands had warned us that if we did not they would send us home on the very next boat. *I asked for a wife who is able and strong*. Some of us came from the city and worked slowly, because we had never before held a hoe. “Easiest job in America,” we were told. Some of us had been sickly and weak all our lives but after one week in the lemon groves of Riverside we felt stronger than oxen. One of us collapsed before she had even finished weeding her first row. Some of us wept while we worked. Some of us cursed while we worked. All of us ached while we worked. Our hands blistered and bled, our knees burned, our backs would never recover.⁵¹

The above quote suggests that the marriage of the “picture brides” rests on exploitation and male domination.

Due to the existence of such inequalities and the oppression of women within societies, several feminist groups emerged and approached gender inequalities differently. Among these feminist groups one can mention the Liberal Feminist Theory which can be explained “as an individualistic form which concentrates on women having their equality through being

responsible for their actions and choices.”⁵² Liberal feminists put emphasis on the equality of men and women under the law. They assert that women have to be guaranteed equal rights even if they are biologically different from men.⁵³ Sandoval argues that women have to be guaranteed equal rights “based on the philosophy that all humans are created equally.”⁵⁴ She states that this “form of oppositional consciousness”⁵⁵ is labeled by feminist theorists as liberal feminism. In this sense, both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Buddha in the Attic* embody female characters that are deprived of their rights because of their sex and are in a constant struggle to have equal rights with men.

Furthermore, both Rhys and Otsuka employ their narratives as tools for fighting oppression. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys provides a corrective form to the English canonical text, *Jane Eyre* (1847), in which Bertha, the so-called “mad” Creole woman is ideologically and stereotypically represented. Therefore, Rhys can be regarded as an “oppositional agent” who counters and challenges colonial ideologies which, as Fanon writes, are “tainted with supremacy.” According to Jythimol P:

Intertexts critique the gaps, fissures, silences and absences in the ideological constructions of patriarchy by voicing the silences, filling the gaps and making the invisible, visible. Intertexts interrogate and challenge the marginalizations of both gender and race through alternate readings and the reclaimed presence and voice of those at the periphery of dominant discourse.⁵⁶

This is the monumental task that Rhys initiates in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Indeed, she is deeply disappointed because of Brontë’s negative portrayal of Bertha. In this respect, she says:

When I read *Jane Eyre* as a child, I thought, why should she [Brontë] think Creole women are lunatics and all that? What a shame to make Rochester’s first wife, Bertha, the awful madwoman, and I immediately thought I’d write the story as it might really have been. She seemed such a poor ghost. I thought I’d try to write her a life.⁵⁷

In her narrative, Rhys creates a life for a character that is not attributed human qualities in Brontë’s novel. Bertha Mason who is reduced to a “monster” is revised as Antoinette Cosway, a woman with an irrepressible beauty. Rhys “places [Bertha/Antoinette] in her own land”⁵⁸ and strengthens her with a voice that allows her to tell her own story from her own point of view.

Similarly, Otsuka in *The Buddha in the Attic* revives the story of the forgotten “picture brides” who sailed to the United States to marry Japanese men they had never met. These “picture brides” escaped from their family’s poverty and the restrictions imposed by the Japanese society which was characterized by male domination and conventional life⁵⁹ and went to America with hope of leading luxurious lives thanks to their marriages. In this context, Otsuka writes:

At night we [picture brides] dreamed of our husbands. We dreamed of new wooden sandals and endless bolts of indigo silk and of living, one day, in a house with a chimney. [...] We dreamed we were in the rice paddies, which we had so desperately wanted to escape [...] We dreamed of our older and prettier sisters who had been sold to the geisha houses by our fathers so that the rest of us might eat, and when we woke we were gasping for air. *For a second I thought I was her.*⁶⁰

However, the “picture brides” were deeply disappointed when they discovered that their husbands are neither young nor financially secure. In addition to this, they find themselves working every day tirelessly in fields. In this concern, Otsuka states:

My husband is not the man in the photograph. My husband is the man in the photograph but aged by many years. My husband’s handsome best friend is the man in the photograph. My husband is a drunkard. My husband is the man ager of the Yamato Club and his entire torso is covered with tattoos. My husband is shorter than he claimed to be in his letters, but then again, so am I. [...] My husband was smuggled into the country across the Mexican border [...] ⁶¹

This quote suggests that the “picture brides” are disappointed when they discovered that their husbands lied to them about their age and financial status.

It is worth pointing out that the system of “picture marriage” was initiated in order to facilitate the establishment of families and Japanese communities in the United States.⁶² However, its consequences were not as positive as they were supposed to be. The impoverished “picture brides” saw the “picture marriage” as a way to be accepted as a legal immigrant in the United States where, they thought, they were going to be free, independent and able to experience the American way of life.⁶³ These Japanese women opted for marriage because they wanted to be liberated from the patriarchal frames that contained them, as seen in this quote: “A FEW OF US on the boat never get used to being with a man, and if there had been a way of

going to America without marrying one, we would have figured it out.”⁶⁴ This implies that these women’s strong desire for liberty and independence pushed them to escape from the restrictions of the Japanese society which was based on male domination and conventional life. Ironically, the “picture brides” found themselves leading a more conventional life as they were obliged to accomplish the roles of mothers and housewives.⁶⁵

Sandoval claims that the “supremacist form”⁶⁶ of “oppositional consciousness”⁶⁷ views the differences due to which subordinated groups are relegated to inferiority status as contributing to their uniqueness and “higher evolutionary level than that attained by those who hold social power.”⁶⁸ In this perspective, both Rhys and Otsuka highlight the qualities of the subjugated groups. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Christophine says to Rochester: “[Antoinette] is Creole girl, and she have the sun in her.”⁶⁹ This implies that Antoinette’s Creole origin is her source of pride, and it allows her to be associated with light and warmth. Similarly, Otsuka in her text demonstrates that the biological differences between men and women do not weaken women. Otsuka empowers the “picture brides” through her depiction of the way they can perform the same jobs as men or much better than them. Otsuka states this in what follows:

“In the fields my wife is as good as a man,” they would say, and in no time at all this was true. [...] Some of us worked quickly just to show them that we would pick plums and top beets and sack onions and crate berries just as quickly if not more quickly than the men.⁷⁰

This suggests that these women can perform the same job as their husbands or better than them.

Both Rhys and Otsuka shed light on the economic inequalities that hinder women’s economic opportunities. Along with the different social assumptions and beliefs that give birth to prejudices which associate women with passivity and submissiveness, some traditional legal systems were designed to reinforce the status of women as inferior beings.⁷¹ Indeed, in traditional societies governed by patriarchal customs, a woman, after marriage, is not only considered as the property of her husband but also her property and inheritance become absolutely her husband’s.⁷² Drawing on Marx’s ideas, Sandoval argues that private property was behind women’s oppression because their rights to inherit or manage their property were

severely limited.⁷³ In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Mr. Mason, Antoinette's step father, left a part of his fortune to Antoinette. However, being a woman, she is denied the right to control her inheritance. Consequently, her stepbrother, Richard Mason, who represents patriarchal law, becomes her lawful protector. He takes decisions on her behalf and forces her to marry Rochester. It is worth saying that Rochester is the youngest son in his family, and in accordance with prevailing English law of the time he would not benefit from his father's fortune. As a solution to his misfortune, he marries Antoinette, secures her inheritance and dominates her in all aspects of her life. However, Antoinette is not satisfied because of her economic dependence on Rochester. She uses what Sandoval labels "the language of the oppressed"⁷⁴ to rebel against these oppressive power structures and reclaim her money. Unfortunately, her attempts are countered by her husband's strong opposition. In an exchange with Antoinette, Christophine advises her to "pack up"⁷⁵ and leave her English husband. Antoinette cannot follow Christophine's advice since she is aware that she is economically dependent on her husband. She says: "He will not come after me. And you must understand I am not rich now, I have no money of my own at all, everything I had belongs to him."⁷⁶ This implies that thanks to his marriage to Antoinette, Rochester is financially secure while his wife cannot have control over her own property. Rochester himself recognizes this fact when he says:

I have not bought her, she has bought me, or so she thinks. I looked down at the coarse mane of the horse [...] Dear father. The thirty thousand pounds have been paid to me without question or condition. No provision made for her (that must be seen to). I have a modest competence now. I will never be a disgrace to you or to my dear brother the son you love. No begging letters, no mean requests [...]⁷⁷

This suggests that Rochester is the one who benefits from his wife's fortune. It also implies that he does not love his wife; he is just grateful to her giving him her money.

Likewise, in *The Buddha in the Attic*, severe limitations are placed on the "picture brides" to circumscribe their economic opportunities. The avails of their labor and efforts are in the power of their husbands. All what they acquire through their hard work belongs to their husbands. Otsuka, in her narrative, shows how these women are subject to a commercialized

marriage market in the sense that they are used as commodities to be bargained and exchanged for better business purposes. Indeed, they are not only exploited by their husbands but also by their capitalist employers who benefit from the commodification of these women through the medium of photography.⁷⁸ Therefore, it can be said that patriarchal oppression and capitalist exploitation are these women's worst enemies. Marxist feminists argue that the capitalist system oppresses women in the same way as the patriarchal system does.⁷⁹ Marx argues that employers in a capitalist system live in the lap of luxury at the expense of the workers who live very modestly and receive low wages for their exhausting labor.⁸⁰ However, women in a capitalist system are exploited in a way that is worse than other workers. Indeed, in addition to fulfilling the roles of mother and housewife, women provide one of the main sources of cheap labor.⁸¹ In this perspective, patriarchal oppression colludes with the capitalist system in Otsuka's narrative to repress the "picture brides" whose great expectations turned into a nightmare as they found themselves obliged to work hard and to obey their husbands. In this concern, Otsuka writes:

*A clock and a bed are two things a Japanese farmer never used in his life. We were taking over their cauliflower industry. We had taken over their spinach industry. We had a monopoly on their strawberry industry and had cornered their market on beans. We were unbeatable, unstoppable economic machine and if our progress was not checked the entire Western United States would soon become the next Asiatic outpost and colony.*⁸²

The quote suggests that in Otsuka's novel women are the ones who perform backbreaking work every day without having a rest or having the recognition of others for the job they perform. In this respect, "the picture brides" complain:

*Our husbands worked us like slaves. They import those girls from Japan as free labor. We worked in the fields all day long without stopping for supper. We worked in the fields late at night by the light of our kerosene lamps. We never took a single day off.*⁸³

Though these women's American dream turned into a nightmare as they found themselves working as farmers, sharecroppers, laundresses and many other jobs that "no self respecting American would do"^{83a}, they display great capacities of resistance in this harsh environment they are put in.

Sandoval in *Methodology of the Oppressed* departs from the idea of dividing the world into a world created by dominant ideology and the one created by the “methodology of the oppressed.”⁸⁴ In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rochester adheres to a world characterized by a static perception of situations. Antoinette belongs to a world created by the oppressed, a world in which imagination is freed from the restrictions of dominant narratives. Rochester is a man who sticks strongly to Victorian conventions. Victorian people held different ideological assumptions regarding female sexuality. Indeed, in Victorian times women who deviate from the dominant norms of their society were deemed “mad.”⁸⁵ In fact, women who showed their anger, aggression or sexual emotions were considered “mad.”⁸⁶ Therefore, people during that era labeled “madness” as “female disease.”⁸⁷

In *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, Michel Foucault argues that people who deviate from the prescribed cultural norms and modes of behavior of their societies are labeled “madmen.” He states:

[...] It is no longer because the madman comes from the world of the irrational and bears its stigma; rather, it is because he crosses the frontiers of bourgeois order of his own accord, and alienates himself outside the sacred limits of its ethics.⁸⁸

Foucault’s argument can be applied to Antoinette whose powerful sexuality and deviation from Victorian ideologies led her husband to believe that she is “mad.” It is worth mentioning that Rochester adheres strongly to Victorian norms and ideologies. Therefore, he believes that female sexuality is a sign of women’s psychological abnormality. He prefers to be with a woman who can maintain Victorian values rather than with Antoinette who dares to show her sexual emotions. Critic Marja Liisa Helenius states that “Rochester does not understand [Antoinette], her culture or her powerful sexuality, he ends up fearing and then hating her.”⁸⁹ In this concern, Rochester says: “She’ll loosen her black hair, and laugh and coax and flatter (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.”⁹⁰ However, Antoinette by daring to manifest her sexual emotions, breaks out of dominant narratives of the self and the world and accomplishes what Sandoval calls “the bursting of the

self.”⁹¹ Therefore, she can be viewed as a “revolutionary warrior”⁹² who has the skills for decolonizing her imagination by building a world within, yet beyond the worlds of dominant ideology.

Like Rochester, the husbands of the “picture brides” stick to dominant narratives and want their wives to live within the parameters set by the masculine world. They are men who stick strongly to the different ideological constructions of femininity. They want their women to embody the characteristics of the ideal woman as “the angel in the house.”⁹³ This woman ascribes blindly to the ideals of chastity, obedience and gentleness. She is preoccupied with how to maintain good manners and keep “the home a sacred place where high moral standards were expected.”⁹⁴ Working from this foundation, Otsuka in her narrative examines how the Japanese society relegates women to inferiority status by giving absolute power to men to dominate them. The following quote sheds light on the suffering women endure because they live in a patriarchal society:

We threw ourselves into our work and became obsessed with the thought of pulling one more weed. We put away our mirrors. We stopped combing our hair. We forgot about makeup. Whenever I powder my nose it just looks like frost on a mountain. We forgot about Buddha. We forgot about God. We developed a coldness inside us that still has not thawed. I fear my soul has died. [...] We stopped dreaming. We stopped wanting. We simply worked, that was all.[...] We spread our legs for them every evening but were so exhausted we often feel asleep before they were done. We washed their clothes for them once a week in tubs of boiling hot water. We cooked for them. We cleaned for them. [...] ⁹⁵

This quote emphasizes the multilayered pain women endure because of patriarchal oppression and male domination.

Throughout this chapter, we have tried to resort to the “methodology of the oppressed” which primarily forges what Sandoval calls “love in the postmodern world”⁹⁶ which is an essential element that allows the maintenance of human relations. Sandoval describes “postmodern love” as “a breaking through whatever controls in order to find ‘understanding and community’.”⁹⁷ She maintains that love is the medium through which good relationships are established among people. It is a source of empowerment for both men and women. In this perspective, though the “picture brides” and Antoinette are subject to economic exploitation and

male domination, they are true “revolutionaries” who wish that their husbands would share with them great feelings of love. Using Sandoval’s expression, these women are “engulfed by love” because they are aware of the fact that it is the only way through which they can achieve psychological stability in their lives.

Endnotes

³⁷Louisville’s Radical lending library, “Understanding Patriarchy,” https://archive.org/stream/UnderstandingPatriarchy/UnderstandingPatriarchy_djvu.txt

³⁸Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 53.

³⁹Jennifer D. Saxe, “Conceptualizing Critical Feminist Theory,” www.jceps.com/wp-content/uploads/PDFs/10-2-06.pdf, 2.

⁴⁰Kathlen Ochshorn, “Of Woodlice and White Coackroaches: The West Indian Girlhood of Jean Rhys,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies*, 12, no. 2(1991), <http://www.Jstore.org/stable/3346844>. (accessed October 13, 2016), 5.

⁴¹Jean Rhys, *Smile Please: An unfinished Autobiography* (New York: Harper and Row, 1979) quoted in Kathlen Ochshorn, “Of Woodlice and White Coackroaches: The West Indian Girlhood of Jean Rhys,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women’s Studies*, 12, no. 2(1991), <http://www.Jstor.org/stable/3346844>. (accessed October 13, 2016), 5.

⁴²Ochshorn, Of Woodlice and White Coachroaches, 5.

⁴³Gayatri Spivak, “Three women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism,” *Chicago Journals*, 12, no. 1(1985), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343469>. (accessed February 13, 2017), 252-253.

⁴⁴Qawas, “The Politics of Gender, Class and Race in Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea*,” 7.

⁴⁵Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), (Longman: Publishing for the Caribbean, 2006), 136.

⁴⁶Ibid., 190.

⁴⁷Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*.

⁴⁸Ibid., 107.

⁴⁹Ibid., 108.

⁵⁰Gayatri Spivak, *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic200861.files/Spivak.Can_the_subaltern_speak.pdf.

⁵¹Julie Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic* (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 28.

⁵²Wellington Samkange, “The Liberal Feminist Theory: Assessing Its Applicability To Education In General And Early Childhood Development (E. C. D) In Particular Within The Zimbabwean Context,” *Global Journal of Advanced Research* 2, no. 7 (2015), <http://gjar.org/publishpaper/vol2issue7/d238r10.pdf>. (accessed April 2, 2017), 2.

⁵³Judith Lorber, "The Variety of Feminisms and their Contribution to Gender Equality," <http://oops.uni-oldenburg.de/1269/1/ur97.pdf>, 6.

⁵⁴Sandoval, *Methodology of the oppressed*, 55.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Jythimol P, "The woman and the Web: *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* as Feminist Intertexts," http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/25783/11/11_chapter%204.pdf, 2.

⁵⁷Jean Rhys, quoted in Ochshorn, *Of Woodlice and White Cockroaches*, 8.

⁵⁸Jythimol, "The Woman and the Web," 8.

⁵⁹Hosok O, "Cultural Analysis of the Early Japanese Immigration To The United States During Meiji To Taisho Era (1868-1926)," (PhD diss. Oklahoma State University, 2010), 389.

⁶⁰Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 5.

⁶¹Ibid., 31.

⁶²Hosok, "Cultural Analysis of the Early Japanese Immigration to the United States During Meiji To Taisho Era," 213.

⁶³Ibid., 390.

⁶⁴Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 18.

⁶⁵Hosok, "Cultural Analysis of the Early Japanese Immigration to the United States During Meiji to Taisho Era," 390.

⁶⁶Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 56.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 189.

⁷⁰Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 28.

⁷¹Mohamed Gariti, "Feminism in Britain: from William Shakespeare to Mary Wollstonecraft," (phD diss. Tizi Ouzou University, 2012), 120.

⁷²Margot Finn, "Women, Consumption and Coverture in England, c.1760-1860," *The Historical Journal* 39 no.03(2009), http://journals.Cambridge.org/abstract_S0018246X00022450X. (accessed March 12, 2017), 8.

⁷³Heather A. Brown, *Marx on Gender and the Family: A Critical Study*, (Boston: Brill, 2012). <http://ouleft.org/wp-content/uploads/marx-gender-family.pdf>

⁷⁴Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 108.

⁷⁵Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 135.

⁷⁶Ibid., 136.

⁷⁷Ibid., 90.

⁷⁸Naila Kabeer, "Marriage, Motherhood and Masculinity in the Global Economy: Reconfigurations of Personal and Economic Life," <https://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/Wp290.pdf>.

⁷⁹Rosemarie Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (Colorado: Westview Press: 2009).https://excoradfeminisms.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/feminist_thought_a_more_comprehensive_intro.pdf.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 35.

⁸³Ibid.

^{83a}Ibid., 29.

⁸⁴Shelagh W. Patterson, "Archetecutures of Freedom: Literary Collaboration In Contemporary American Poetry," (pHD diss. University of Pittsburgh, 2013).

⁸⁵Tracy T. Schwarze, *Joyce and the Victorians* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida), 143.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), 72.

⁸⁹Marja- Liisa Helenius, "Madwoman as the Imprisoned Other: Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* in light of French Feminist and Anglo-American Feminist Literary Theories," <https://marjaliisa.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/jean-rhys-wide-sargasso-sea.pdf>, 11.

⁹⁰Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 196.

⁹¹Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 129.

⁹²Patterson, "Archetecutures of Freedom: Literary Collaboration in Contemporary American Poetry," 37.

⁹³Askin Haluk Yildirim, "angels of the House: Dickens' Victorian Women," <http://dergipark.ulakbim.gov.tr/deusosbil/article/view/5000064120/5000059991>

⁹⁴Ibid., 5.

⁹⁵Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 37.

⁹⁶Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 78.

⁹⁷Ibid., 139.

Chapter Two: Race and the “Differential Mode of Consciousness in Opposition” in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Buddha in the Attic*.

The analysis of the gender issue in the previous section revealed that women in Rhys's and Otsuka's narratives are subject to severe gender inequalities. Women in both texts are also oppressed because of their race and origin. Because Rhys and Otsuka are interested in both the woman and racial questions, they aim at giving voice to marginalized and exiled figures from the “other side of the world.” In order to understand Rhys's and Otsuka's interest in fighting oppression through their narratives, it is important to bring their texts under the scope of Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed*. In this latter, the theorist develops different strategies of resistance to challenge oppression. She maintains that these methodologies allow oppressed subjects to sustain survival and to assert resistance by subverting dominant power structures, hence, ensuring positive social transformations. Among the forms proposed by Sandoval, there is the “Differential Mode of Consciousness in Opposition”⁹⁸ which “depends on a form of agency that is self-consciously mobilized in order to enlist and secure influence, the differential is thus performative.”⁹⁹ In this sense, Rhys and Otsuka move from the state of subjects to that of agents capable of producing change by challenging “Imperial Power.”¹⁰⁰ Indeed, though Rhys left Jamaica at the age of sixteen and Otsuka was born and raised in the United States, both of them are conscious of their ethnicity.

To begin with, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys provides a corrective form to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* in which Bertha, the “mad” Creole woman, is ideologically and stereotypically represented. This character in Rhys's novel is revised as Antoinette Cosway. Rhys creates a life for this woman who is not attributed human qualities in Brontë's narrative. Indeed, Bertha/Antoinette in *Jane Eyre* is referred to as a “monster” that needs to be tamed “so as not to contaminate Thornfield Hall with the sensual femaleness and West Indian moral degeneration attributed to her.”¹⁰¹ In this respect, Brontë writes:

In the deep shade, at the farther end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it groveled, seemingly

on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face.¹⁰²

This negative portrayal of Bertha pushes Rhys to challenge the Victorian constructions of “otherness” and to give the opportunity for voices from “the other side”^{102a} to speak.

Like Rhys, Otsuka speaks to and against power¹⁰³ by challenging the American dominant narratives related to the Japanese Americans’ internment during World War Two. She gives voice to Japanese immigrants who were imprisoned in internment camps after the events of Pearl Harbor that took place in December 7, 1941.¹⁰⁴ Otsuka, in her narrative, gives the opportunity to these people who were speechless and ashamed at a certain time in history to relate their own version of the story. Viewed under the auspices of Sandoval’s *Methodology of the Oppressed*, Otsuka is a practitioner of the “Differential Mode of Consciousness in Opposition”¹⁰⁵ because she is able to scrutinize “the current situation of power,”¹⁰⁶ and she self-consciously chooses and adopts the ideological stand that fits her own beliefs.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, though she was born and raised in the United States, she does not believe that truth is represented in the American dominant narratives. Instead, she digs deeper into the past to revive forgotten facts to which the United States turns a blind eye. In an interview with Josephine Reed, Otsuka clarifies this point:

I’ve been travelling the country for years and speaking to many young people about the camps, but a lot of them have not heard about the camps still. I think it’s not something that’s included in most American history books, and so some of them are surprised [...] They’ll say, “This is a work of fiction, right? It didn’t really happen.” I’ll have to explain that, yes, it is a work of fiction, but it is based on a very big and often **omitted historical truth**.¹⁰⁸

Accordingly, in her narrative, she reveals the injustices that were perpetrated against innocent Japanese immigrants who, after their relocation to internment camps, lived in very harsh conditions.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, Otsuka empowers these internees through her use of an innovative narrative technique which consists of telling the story from the perspective of the first person plural “we.” On the one hand, the choral “we” allows Japanese immigrants to have an “incremental impact through the power of shared narration”¹¹⁰ as they are united under one viewpoint to give their own version of the story on a historical subject that is avoided in media

and fiction.¹¹¹ On the other hand, this same narrative technique implicates the reader or any ethnic group that experienced marginalization as Japanese immigrants. In this respect, Mie Hihara observes: “Otsuka presents stories which are capable of being read as ‘our’ stories.”¹¹²

Furthermore, the practitioners of Sandoval’s “differential consciousness”¹¹³ challenge the Western desire to conceive situations from one single angle.¹¹⁴ Therefore, they encourage mobility and heterogeneity. In conformity with this concept, both Rhys and Otsuka aim at inscribing and highlighting their racial and cultural differences through their narratives and at showing how Westerners ignore the existence of differences among human beings. Indeed, both authors reject mono-cultural notions and cultural superiority.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys, through the character of the English man Rochester, examines how some Westerners fail to acknowledge differences among human beings. She also shows how their cultural hegemony has negative effects on their relationships with others. For instance, Rochester considers anyone who does not conform to the normative standards set by the English civilization as the “Other.” He constantly underestimates Jamaicans as they do not seem interesting or relevant for him. He describes Christophine’s language as “horrible”¹¹⁵ and Hilda as having a “savage appearance.”¹¹⁶ Rochester fails to understand and to acknowledge the cultural differences between him and the “natives.” This failure leads him to resort to his racist rhetoric to depict them. He tends to perceive them from what is set by the West as the “norm” and does not make efforts to understand their cultural codes. For him, Hilda who laughs all the time is “stupid.” Antoinette tries to provide him with another interpretation of Hilda’s giggle:

Sometimes she’d smile a sweet childish smile, sometimes she’d giggle very loudly and rudely, bang the tray down and ran down.
‘stupid little girl’, I’d say.
‘No. no. She is not stupid. Girls here are very shy.’¹¹⁷

Rochester does not understand that the world “is composed of different kinds of humans.”¹¹⁸ He suffers, using Alice Walker’s words, from a “psychic illness”¹¹⁹ because he wants the “natives” and the English to be “one”¹²⁰, that is, the “natives” have to conform to the modes of behavior set by Europeans. Rochester assumes that the “natives” must have the same features and customs

as the ones he is accustomed with. He does not understand that he comes from a different cultural background. As a result, he misinterprets their behavior.

According to Sheikh F. Shams, Rochester is a white European who “has never experienced oppression or subjugation [he] represents the ideology of the colonizer, arrogantly engaged in the mission to defeat and contain the unfamiliar ‘Other’.”¹²¹ Antoinette, on the other hand, experiences oppression and subjugation just like black Jamaicans. Though the cultural codes of her community seem strange to her, she tries to understand them while her husband tends to impose his ideology on the “natives.” The following scene clarifies this point:

‘Her coffee is delicious but her language is horrible and she might hold her dress up. It must get very dirty, yards of it trailing on the floor.’
‘When they don’t hold their dress up it’s for respect,’ said Antoinette. ‘Or for feast days or to Mass.’
‘And is this feast day?’
‘She wanted it to be a feast day.’
‘Whatever the reason it is not a clean habit.’¹²²

This scene demonstrates that Rochester’s perception of the West Indian culture is merely a projection of the way the colonizer sees the culture of the colonized.

In addition, Rochester fails to understand his wife’s cultural codes. In his relationship with Antoinette, he does not manifest a desire to build a bridge that can unite them since he assumes that the cultural divide between England and the Caribbean is so wide. Hence, Antoinette’s relationship with her husband rests on subordination and inferiority. The racial discourse of colonialism dominates their conversations. Their relationship is shaped by the operations of colonialism and its racist rhetoric. Indeed, he establishes an analogy between Antoinette and the wild natural surroundings of the West Indian landscape.¹²³ For him, his wife belongs to the wilderness of the West Indies while he is part of the beautifully built, well-arranged, civilized world of Britain. Antoinette “represents the wholly otherness”¹²⁴ to Rochester. For him, she embodies emotion while he represents logic and reason. He says: “she was a stranger to me, a stranger who did not feel or think as I did.”¹²⁵ Antoinette’s “otherness” leads to the failure of her relationship with her husband who sees her as different. He is a

hypocrite who promises his wife happiness only to reject her when he discovers how non-English she is. It is worth noting that Rhys unites Antoinette, a Creole woman, with Rochester, an English man because she believes in what Sandoval describes as “the possibility of affinity through difference.”¹²⁶ However, this goal does not seem achievable with Europeans. Indeed, Rochester is overwhelmed not only because of the Jamaican landscape but also because of the cultural and racial differences between him and his wife. Therefore, he maintains that she is an “Other.” The following passage is an illustration:

She wore a tricorne hat which became her. At least it shadowed her eyes which are too large and can be disconcerting. She never blinks at all it seems to me. Long, sad, dark alien eyes. Creole of pure English decent she may be, but they are not English or European either.¹²⁷

Rochester can neither familiarize with Antoinette nor accept her difference. He can only accept her if she embodies European or English features.

Like Rhys, Otsuka in her narrative shows how Americans want Japanese immigrants to “sustain and reinforce the dominant social order”¹²⁸ through their assimilation into the mainstream American culture. Throughout her narrative, she shows how people who “look and act differently”¹²⁹ are often marginalized in Western societies. She demonstrates it through her depictions of the way Japanese immigrants are excluded by Americans because they belong to a different race from a different part of the world. Indeed, Japanese people have a different lifestyle from that of the Americans. They stick to their ideals, customs, habits, racial and national characteristics wherever they go.¹³⁰ For these reasons, they are doomed to remain foreign “Others” no matter how long they have been in the United States because they do not assimilate easily into the mainstream American society.¹³¹ Even if they are not deluded by the vision of joining the American culture, their exclusion and rejection from the American society forces them to conform to the American modes. Still, Americans despise and reject them constantly. They maintain that there is a gap between the American and the Japanese heritage. This gap is widened by racial prejudices and discrimination launched by Americans against Japanese immigrants. In her narrative, Otsuka presents Japanese immigrants who face numerous

problems in their existence. It is worth saying that when the “picture brides” first went to America, they sought to create a new life and opportunities for themselves. They did their best to find their space and selves, but they soon realized that their efforts are countered by hard and challenging circumstances. As a result of these hardships, they end up yearning for their motherland and regret the fact of coming “to such a violent and unwelcoming land.”¹³² They are pushed to the margin to the extent that they avoid drawing attention to themselves when they walk in the street. Otsuka writes it in the subsequent passage:

WHENEVER WE LEFT J-town and wandered through the broad, clean streets of their cities we tried not to draw attention to ourselves. We dressed like they did. We walked like they did. We made sure not to travel in large groups. We made ourselves small for them- *if you stay in your place they will leave you alone*- and did our best not to offend. Still, they [Americans] gave us hard time. Their men slapped our husbands on the back and shouted out, “So sorry!” as they knocked off our husbands’ hats. Their children threw stones at us...¹³³

The quotation above shows that Japanese Americans face profound prejudice in a society dominated by racist views towards people who look and act differently.

Rhys in *Wide Sargasso Sea* throws light on the way Antoinette’s Creole origin is behind her exclusion and rejection. Indeed, despite the fact that Creole people share the same ancestry with European people, a distinction between these two categories is considered necessary so as to assert the cultural superiority of people from Europe in general and the British Isles in particular over the Caribbean born whites.¹³⁴ Antoinette is not English enough because she does not possess the standards that allow her to ascribe to the English community and she is not Caribbean enough because she cannot share the black Jamaicans’ African ancestry. Therefore, she keeps struggling against these two opposing forces. Though she was born in Jamaica and shares the same culture with black Jamaicans, she is excluded from their group on the ground that she is connected with slave ownership, a fact that arises a feeling of resentment in the Islanders. Antoinette feels herself part of the Island’s culture, but this latter does not really welcome her. In this regard, Christophine explains to Rochester: “she is not béké like you, but

she is béké, and not like us either.”¹³⁵ This quotation clarifies Antoinette’s ambiguous position in the Jamaican society as she is neither white like Rochester nor black like Christophine.

Antoinette’s Creole origin makes her subject to even the mockery of Jamaican children. As a child, she has the habit of playing with a native black girl named Tia. One day, they had a bitter quarrel about a sum of money that Tia stole from Antoinette. When this latter started blaming her, Tia took this occasion to mock Antoinette’s miserable situation by targeting her personality and origin. She says:

That old house so leaky, you run with calabash to catch water when it rain. Plenty white people. Real white people, they got gold money. [...] old time white people but nothing than white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger.¹³⁶

This implies that Tia’s treatment of her childhood friend is racist. It also suggests that Tia associates wealth with whiteness.¹³⁷ She thinks that Antoinette cannot be considered as a real white woman unless she acquires the same economic status as real white people.¹³⁸ Antoinette lives in a society that is based on the ideology of ethnic and racial inequality. She is a Creole woman born in Jamaica. However, this does not make her a Jamaican and causes her rejection from the part of the black majority society. She says:

I never looked at any strange negro. They hated us. They called us white cockroaches. Let sleeping dogs lie. One day a little girl followed me singing ‘go away white cockroach, go away, go away. I walked fast but she walked faster. ‘White cockroach go away, go away.’¹³⁹

From what has been said so far, it can be understood that Antoinette is excluded from the Jamaican society because she is not Caribbean enough and is rejected by her husband because she is not English enough.

Similarly, Otsuka, in *The Buddha in the Attic*, shows how immigrants who are from an Asian descent are constantly rejected and discriminated against in the United States. Like Antoinette, the Japanese immigrants can neither ascribe to the Japanese society nor to the American one. In Japan, they are Americans and in America they are Japanese. Throughout her text, the author shows how Japanese immigrants are oppressed by American institutions and in public amenities. By so doing, she demonstrates that the “immortal declaration” that all “Men

are created equal” is not valid in a country that strips humans of their dignity. This idea matches Juliana Vizan’s claim that Otsuka’s text is a projection of representations of power.¹⁴⁰ It is a novel about power and the abuse of it. Indeed, American ushers, barbers and teachers are all given the right to exercise power over Japanese immigrants. For instance, American ushers give Japanese immigrants the worst seats in the second balconies of their theaters. Barbers have “the power to refuse offering their services when Japanese immigrants want a haircut.”¹⁴¹ Teachers despise Japanese children because of their appearance. All these children look alike: black hair, slanted eyes, high cheekbones, thin lips,^{141a} yellow skin and a short stature. All those who have this appearance are despised and alienated from their classmates. These disadvantaged students have discriminatory experiences in American schools. They encounter discrimination from the part of their teachers and classmates. As Otsuka expresses it in what follows:

AT SCHOOL they [Japanese children] sat in the back of the classroom in their homemade clothes with the Mexicans and spoke in timid, faltering voices. They never raised their hands. They never smiled. At recess they huddled together in a corner of the school yard and whispered among themselves in their secret shameful language. In the cafeteria they were always last in line for lunch.[...] One of them, when asked her name by the teacher, replied, “Six”, and the laughter rang in her ears for days[...] Many of them begged us not to be sent back [...]^{141a}

This quote shows how these racially oppressed children become psychologically harmed.

Due to this ill-treatment, Japanese Immigrants realized that there is “no tribe more savage than the Americans.”¹⁴² They become aware of the fact that Americans are not tolerant and liberated as they seem. However, in spite of this discrimination, Japanese Americans resisted and made lives for themselves. In this concern, Otsuka writes:

Their waiters always served us last. Their ushers led us upstairs, to the second balconies of their theaters, and seated us in the worst seats in the house. *Nigger heaven*, they called it. Their barbers refused to cut our hair. *Too coarse for our scissors*. Their women asked us to move away from them in their trolley cars whenever we were standing to close. “Please excuse”, we said to them, and then we smiled and stepped aside[...] Mostly, though, we stayed at home, in J-town where we felt safe among our own. We learned to live at a distance from them, and avoided them whenever we could.¹⁴³

The quotation above shows that discrimination is inherent in the American society. Indeed, Japanese immigrants suffered from segregation and marginalization just like black Americans.

Moreover, it has already been pointed out that Antoinette is rejected by both black Jamaicans and by her English husband. It is worth saying that Antoinette resists the fact that she is rejected from both sides. What worsens her condition is the fact that her husband perceives her as a “mad” woman, especially after he has received Daniel Cosway’s letter which states that madness runs in her family.¹⁴⁴ However, one can argue that Antoinette’s madness is a racialized lunacy since Daniel’s letter reinforces Rochester’s pre-established views and suspicions about his Creole wife. Indeed, when he finishes reading Daniel’s letter, he says: “I folded the letter carefully and put it into my pocket. I felt no surprise. It was as if I’d expected it, been waiting for it.”¹⁴⁵ Rochester’s conviction that his wife is “mad” leads him to take her to England where he confined her in the attic of Thornfield Hall. He believes that since she cannot maintain the values of his society, confinement is her “natural adobe.”¹⁴⁶ However, Antoinette does not bear the “moral constraints of confinement.”¹⁴⁷ As a result, she sets fire to her husband’s house and commits suicide. She is in Sandoval’s terms a revolutionary woman. Indeed, by deciding to set fire to her husband’s house and committing suicide, she fulfils an act of rebellion and resistance because she chooses death over leading an imprisoned life. In this context, Pollanen states:

It is only after death that one can escape the condition of waste, reject and abject and therefore by deciding to burn the house and jump from its roof. Antoinette can break away from abjection [...] In the end Antoinette, like the abject, defies and destroys the limits others tried to set on her and decides to free herself.¹⁴⁸

This quote implies that Antoinette’s suicide allows her to escape the patriarchal and racial frames that contained her.

Like Antoinette, Japanese immigrants during World War Two were confined in internment camps because they have the face of the “alien enemy.” They were viewed as spies who were likely to disturb the American society’s peace. In line with this justification provided by the US government about the internment of innocent Japanese immigrants, Foucault argues that confinement was the outcome of economic, social and political necessities. He adds that the confinement of those who may disturb public order was used as a solution to restore peace in a given community.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, Otsuka in her narrative sheds light on the measures that are likely to

be taken in times of crisis and when one's national security is threatened. Before World War Two, Japanese Americans faced a severe social discrimination¹⁵⁰ and were forced to live in separate communities.¹⁵¹ During the war, they were subject to an institutionalized form of racial oppression. Indeed, after the attacks on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, the US government ordered the relocation of Japanese immigrants to hastily built camps surrounded by wire fences. Ironically, the US government which preaches humanitarian aims had taken an anti-democratic measure during a war that was supposed to be fought for the preservation of world freedom.¹⁵² The attacks on Pearl Harbor intensified the fear of the "alien enemy." The collusion of fear with previous prejudices made Japanese immigrants bear a heavy psychological burden which worsened after the restriction of their freedom.¹⁵³ Otsuka depicts how the Japanese immigrants are always on their guard a few days before their internment. They move in the city "of J-town" with an utmost care. Uncertainty reigns among them, and every day new rumors circulate. They are haunted by the idea that it is their face for which they are guilty. In this regard, the author writes:

[...] We did the things we had always done, but nothing felt the same. "Every little noise frightens me now," said Onatsu. "A knock on the door. The ringing of a telephone. The barking of a dog. I am constantly listening for footsteps." And whenever a stranger car drove through the neighborhood her heart began to pound, for she was sure that her husband's time had come. Sometimes in her more confused moments, she imagined that it had already happened, and her husband was now gone, and she had to admit, she was almost relieved, for it was the waiting that was most difficult [...] Or was there guilt written plainly, and for all the world to see, across their face? Was it their face, in fact, for which they were guilty? Did it fail to please in some way? Worse yet, did it offend?¹⁵⁴

The quotation above implies that fear and hysteria propagated among the Japanese immigrants when their relocation to internment camps started.

In *Methodology of the Oppressed*, Sandoval creates various strategies of "oppositional consciousness" by identifying the different modes of "ideology in opposition that can be generated and coordinated by those classes self-consciously seeking effective liberatory stances in relation to the dominant social order."¹⁵⁵ The "equal rights form"¹⁵⁶ is among the modes of "oppositional consciousness"¹⁵⁷ used by subordinated classes as a way of resisting the dominant

order. Within the “equal rights form”, Sandoval argues that the “exterior physical differences”¹⁵⁸ between the dominant group and the oppressed one are overemphasized. She adds that the subjugated argue that “the differences for which they have been assigned inferior status lay in appearance only, not in ‘reality’.”¹⁵⁹ The “equal rights” category is an appropriate concept to both Rhys’s and Otsuka’s texts as both authors support the idea that all individuals are “created equal.” Both authors demonstrate that oppressed groups are relegated to an inferiority status because of their appearance.

Rhys injects several hints here and there into her narrative that demonstrate her support of equality among human beings. For example, Godfrey, an old servant in Annette’s house, tells Antoinette that: “The lord makes no distinction between black and white, black and white the same for him.”¹⁶⁰ However, Rochester does not believe in what Godfrey tells Antoinette, he rejects the “natives” and his wife because their appearance is different from that of the Europeans. Similarly, Otsuka supports the reign of equality among all human beings. In fact, her writing of *The Buddha in the Attic* is motivated by this fact.

As feminist writers whose countries’ people have long experienced marginalization and subjugation, Rhys’s and Otsuka’s aim is to give voice and create stories for the marginalized “Others.” Indeed, both authors “deconstruct” power relationships through their narratives. Rhys in *Wide Sargasso Sea* challenges “Imperial Power.” Her rewriting of *Jane Eyre* is an “extension of the deconstructive project”¹⁶¹ through which she fills the gaps breaks silence of the colonial text.¹⁶² The author gives voice to the silenced Bertha in Brontë’s novel. This can be related to Sandoval’s use of Derrida’s concept of “deconstruction” whose aim is to deconstruct the dominant narratives to ensure the survival of the marginalized and to challenge “imperial power.” Like Rhys, Otsuka writes to correct past mistakes and to shift perspectives. Indeed, Otsuka grapples with history to fill different holes and to speak out for the marginalized Japanese immigrants who endured years of suffering and injustice.

Endnotes

⁹⁸Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 58.

⁹⁹Ibid., 57.

¹⁰⁰Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, 2nd ed. *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (New York, Routledge, 2007), 6, <http://staff.uny.ac.id/sites/default/files/pendidikan/else-liliani-ssmhum/postcolonialstudiesthekeyconceptsrouledgekeyguides.pdf>

¹⁰¹Susana B. Funck, "Of Mimicry and Woman: A Feminist Postcolonial Reading Of Wide Sargasso Sea And The Biggest Modern Woman Of The World," <http://ppgi.posgrad.ufsc.br/files/2014/06/reaa-36-p-65-91.pdf>, 13.

¹⁰²Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847), (Toronto and New York: Nelson), 351.

^{102a}Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 45.

¹⁰³Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*.

¹⁰⁴Inagawa Matchiko, "Japanese American Experiences in Internment Camps during World War II as Represented by Children's and Adolescent Literature," http://arizona.openrepository.com/arizona/bitstream/10150/196135/1/azu_etd_2246_sip1_m.pdf

¹⁰⁵Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 58.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 60.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸The Big Read, "When The Emperor was Divine," 6. [http://www.neabigread.org/pdf/WhenEmperorDivine\(8.2016\).pdf](http://www.neabigread.org/pdf/WhenEmperorDivine(8.2016).pdf), 6. (emphasis added).

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Ruth Maxey, "The Rise of the 'We' Narrator in Modern American Fiction," *European Journal of American Studies* 10, no.2 (2015), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283169636_The_Rise_of_the_We_Narrator_in_Modern_American_Fiction_11.

¹¹¹The Big Read, *When The Emperor was Divine*, 10.

¹¹²Mie Hirara, "'Our' Stories depicted by Julie Otsuka: *When the Emperor was Divine* and *The Buddha in the Attic*," 2. <http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/acd/cg/lt/rb/634/634pdf/yousi.pdf>

¹¹³Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 57.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 46.

¹¹⁵Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 105.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 92.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 110.

¹¹⁸Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 45.

¹¹⁹Alice Walker, quoted in Sandoval *Methodology of the Oppressed* (New York, University of Minnesota Press: 2000), 169.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Sheikh F. Shams, “Reading for the ‘other’ across the *Wide Sargasso Sea*,” *East West Journal of Humanities* 2 no.2 (2011), http://www.ewubd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/East_West_University (accessed April 18, 2017), 27.

¹²²Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 105.

¹²³Jythimol P, “The Woman and the Web: *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* as Feminist Intertexts.” http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/25783/11/11_chapter%204.pdf (accessed April 19, 2017), 14.

¹²⁴Ibid., 13.

¹²⁵Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 113.

¹²⁶Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 169.

¹²⁷Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 86-87.

¹²⁸Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 42.

¹²⁹Vizan, A New Historicist Reading of Julie Otsuka’s *When the Emperor was Divine* and *The Buddha in the Attic*, 2.

¹³⁰Chris Sager, *American Nativists and their Confrontation with Japanese Labor and Education in California 1900-1930* (M.A Thesis, University of North Carolina Wilmington, 2012), 25.

¹³¹Ibid., 29.

¹³²Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 36.

¹³³Ibid., 52.

¹³⁴Joscelyn Gardner, “Re-Presenting Creole Identity: Theorizing a (White) Postcolonial Creole Feminism,” http://www.joscelyngardner.com/pdfs_texts/Re-Presenting.pdf.1

¹³⁵Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 186.

¹³⁶Ibid., 36.

¹³⁷Qawas, *The Politics of Gender and Race in Wide Sargasso Sea*.

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 35.

¹⁴⁰Vizan, A New Historicist Reading of Julie Otsuka’s *When the Emperor was Divine* and *The Buddha in the Attic*.

¹⁴¹Ibid., 5.

- ^{141a}Andrea Iliescu, Julie Otsuka's When the Emperor was Divine: A Heart Wrenching Evacuee's Diary," <http://www.upm.ro/ldmd/LDMD-04/Lit/Lit%2004%2018.pdf>, 5.
- ^{141a}Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 72.
- ¹⁴²Ibid., 36.
- ¹⁴³Ibid., 53.
- ¹⁴⁴Ezra Uzun, "A Folkloric Study on *Wide Sargasso Sea*," http://thescholarship.ecu.edu/bitstream/handle/10342/3621/uzun_ecu_0600m_10451.pdf?sequence=1
- ¹⁴⁵Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 122.
- ¹⁴⁶Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, Trans. Richard Howard (New York: Vintage Books), 53.
[file:///C:/Users/Ghost160110/Downloads/Foucault,%20Madness%20and%20Civilization%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Ghost160110/Downloads/Foucault,%20Madness%20and%20Civilization%20(2).pdf).
- ¹⁴⁷Ibid., 62.
- ¹⁴⁸Pollanen, *Abject by Gender and Race: The Loss of Antoinette's Identity in Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea*, 7.
- ¹⁴⁹Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 59.
- ¹⁵⁰Matchiko, "Japanese American Experiences in Internment Camps during World War II as Represented by Children's and Adolescent Literature."
- ¹⁵¹Ibid., 164.
- ¹⁵⁰Robinson Greg, "A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese Confinement in North America," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 2 no. 1(2010), <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0qn09858> (accessed April 22, 2017), 2.
- ¹⁵¹Ibid., 3.
- ¹⁵²Ibid.,
- ¹⁵³Ibid.,
- ¹⁵⁴Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 88-91.
- ¹⁵⁵Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 43.
- ¹⁵⁶Ibid., 55.
- ¹⁵⁷Ibid., 49.
- ¹⁵⁸Ibid., 55.
- ¹⁵⁹Ibid., 55.
- ¹⁶⁰Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 30.

¹⁶¹Sylvia Cappello, "Postcolonial Discourse in *Wide Sargasso Sea*: Creole Discourse vs European Discourse, Periphery vs Center, and Marginalized People vs White Supremacy," *Journal of Caribbean literatures* 6 no.1(2009), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40986298> (accessed April 23, 2017), 3.

¹⁶²Ibid.

Chapter Three: “Intersectionality” and the Interaction Between Identity, Gender and Race.

The Previous two chapters have demonstrated that Rhys and Otsuka incorporate gender and racial issues into their narratives. By so doing, the two authors display the interaction of these two external forces and the influence they exercise on women’s identities. In this sense, the two writers draw attention to the fact that identity intersects with gender and race. They, therefore, develop the notion of “intersectionality” of identity with such social categories like gender and race as described by Williams Kimberlé Crenshaw. As a matter of fact, both writers insist on the fact that due to the pressures exercised by gender and race, oppressed subjects experience identity issues. In this respect, Crenshaw states: “the intersections of race and gender highlight the need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed.”¹⁶³ That is to say, the notion of intersectionality connects identity, gender and race. Therefore, in both Rhys’s and Otsuka’s texts the oppressions of gender and race that Antoinette and the “picture brides” face in their daily lives result in an acute crisis of identity.

To begin with, Rhys in *Wide Sargasso Sea* sheds light on how Antoinette’s gender affects deeply her identity. Her marriage with Rochester constitutes an obstacle to the process of her identity construction. Before her marriage, she is offered a glimmer of hope to construct her identity, especially as she spends time in her home with her nurse Christophine who provides her with feelings of safety and security. However, her marriage which is supposed to provide her with a sense of belonging has more destructive effects on her identity than the blacks’ racial prejudice and rejection. Her relationship with Rochester is based on gender and racial inequality. Rochester is a representative of both patriarchal and colonial powers. He does his best to suppress his wife’s voice and her own sense of identity. He tends to control her without taking into consideration her feelings. He intensifies the oppression and discrimination already practiced on her by black Jamaicans. Hence, he suppresses her long time desired sense of identity.¹⁶⁴ It should be noted that Antoinette suffered from a lack of affection, and love from her

early childhood and the fact of being deprived of these feelings that provide her with a sense of security and safety is an element that hinders the construction of her independent self.¹⁶⁵

Antoinette is an alien to both black Jamaicans and to her English husband. She cannot affirm her identity by simply saying “I am Jamaican” or “I am English.” Therefore, she sees herself as an “Other” who does not belong to any cultural group. In other words, if black Jamaicans or Rochester have a simplistic perception of human identity,¹⁶⁶ Antoinette could have constructed an independent self. However, their insistence that she belongs neither to Jamaica nor to England makes her experience an existential dilemma. This is clearly shown when she explains to her husband when she hears the black servant Amélie singing a song about a “white cockroach” the suffering she endures because she is of a mixed race:

It was a song about a white cockroach. That’s me. That’s what they call all of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave traders. And I have heard English women call us white niggers. So between you and I. I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all.¹⁶⁷

Ironically, Antoinette seeks the sympathy of the person who just like black Jamaicans is responsible for her identity destruction.

Similarly, Otsuka in her narrative depicts how the husbands of the “picture brides” are behind the suppression of these women’s identities. Like the patriarchal Rochester, these men oppress their wives to the point that they perceive themselves as bodies that are not endowed with reason and feelings. In this concern, Otsuka states:

We put away our mirrors. We stopped combing our hair. We forgot about makeup. *Whenever I powder my nose it just looks like frost on a mountain.* We forgot about Buddha. We forgot about God. We developed a coldness inside us that still has not thawed. *I fear my soul has died.* [...] We lost weight and grew thin. We stopped bleeding. We stopped dreaming. We stopped wanting...¹⁶⁸

This quote implies that the patriarchal oppression exercised on the “picture brides” makes them lose any sense of self and identity.

It should be noted that the Japanese society tends to preserve traditional gender roles so as to keep male authority and traditional power structures unthreatened.¹⁶⁹ In this society, women are not allowed to deviate from idealized images of motherhood, servitude and gentleness.

¹⁷⁰Consequently, they internalize such ideas and think that when their behavior complies with their gender role identity, they can improve their psychological well-being.¹⁷¹ However, Otsuka in her narrative subverts this traditional perception of femininity by demonstrating that when women strive for others' acceptance by fulfilling their traditional gender roles, their sense of identity becomes completely erased. In this context, Otsuka writes:

MOST OF US on the boat were accomplished, and we were sure we would make good wives. We knew how to cook and sew. We knew how to serve tea and arrange flowers and sit quietly on our flat wide feet for hours, saying absolutely nothing of substance at all. *A girl must blend into a room: she must be present without appearing to exist...* Most of us had good manners and were extremely polite...Most of us spoke like ladies most of the time, with our voices pitched high, and pretended to know much less than we did [...]¹⁷²

Otsuka wants to draw attention to the fact that traditional gender roles have destabilizing effects on women's identities. When women crave to ascribe to their gender role identity, they become self-effacing, invisible, unable to embody an independent spirit and lose any sense of identity.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rochester follows different strategies to suppress Antoinette's identity. Antoinette gives a great importance to her name since she considers that it is the very first factor in the formation of her identity. It is important to note that names "not only grant one a specific identity as a language user, but [they] also direct who that person is."¹⁷³ In this context, Antoinette says: "Names matter, like when he would not call me Antoinette, and I saw Antoinette drifting out of the window with her scents, her pretty clothes and her looking-glass."¹⁷⁴ Though Antoinette rejects the fact of being called by other names, Rochester insists on calling her Bertha. She is stripped of everything that can empower her, including her name:

‘Bertha,’ I [Rochester] said.
‘Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name. I know, that’s obeah too.’¹⁷⁵

By renaming her Bertha, Rochester asserts his male power by using his wife as a mere object. Thus, Antoinette becomes "an unknown quantity ready to be re-invented to his liking on his whim."¹⁷⁶

Similarly, in their host country, the "picture brides" are doomed to face a perpetual dilemma as they struggle to maintain their identities while Americans do their best to suppress

these identities. These women are subject to injustices, discrimination and prejudices that lead to the elimination of their identities. Racial discrimination in America denies these women the right to use even their Japanese names which are the very first factors in the formation of individuals' identities. For instance, their bosses choose for them new names which they find easy to pronounce. In this respect, Otsuka writes: "They gave us new names. They called us Helen and Lily. They called us Margaret. They called us Pearl."¹⁷⁷ This suggests that the "picture brides" are given new names which their bosses could easily pronounce and which are more "appropriate" to be used in the American space. Furthermore, these Japanese women are rejected because of their appearance. As a result, they experience an identity issue which is manifest in the way they are jealous of American women and unsatisfied with their appearance. In this concern, they say:

We [the picture brides] loved them [American women]. We hated them. We wanted to *be* them. How tall they were, how lovely, how fair. Their long, graceful limbs. Their bright white teeth. Their pale, luminous skin, which disguised all seven blemishes of the face. Their odd but endearing ways, which never ceased to amuse- their love of A.I. sauce and high pointy-toed shoes, their funny, turned out walk [...] They seemed so at home in the world. So at ease. They had a confidence that we lacked. And much better hair. *So many colors*. And we regretted that we could not be more like them.¹⁷⁸

Considering the above quote, it can be argued that one of the greatest challenges that face immigrants is related to their constant attempt to assert their identities in a foreign land.

Drawing on Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks*, Sandoval maintains that racial discrimination and colonial domination have a heavy influence on the colonized psyches.¹⁷⁹ She adds that the "superiority" of the colonizer leads the colonized to imitate the former in his modes of behavior and lifestyle.¹⁸⁰ The imitation of the colonizer is manifest in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Indeed, the author puts emphasis on how racial discrimination brings about Antoinette's identity crisis and how it leads her to renounce her own culture and embrace the dominant one. For instance, her mother's marriage with Mr. Mason denotes the extent to which Antoinette craves to fit into the world of the English society. This can be seen in the way she imitates English people in their modes of behavior and lifestyle. By imitating the colonizer, Antoinette wants to ensure for herself a sense of superiority and to secure an identity that distinguishes her from the

“natives.” In this context, she says: “we ate English food now, beef and mutton, pies and puddings. I was glad to be like an English girl.”¹⁸¹ Moreover, as a married woman, Antoinette is still the subject of the oppressions of gender and race, which push her to adopt the dominant culture represented by her husband. By adopting the English culture, Antoinette seeks peace of soul and more importantly her husband’s acceptance. According to Dehn Kubetscheck, Antoinette exchanges her own values, beliefs and likes for those of the dominant culture.¹⁸² She tries actively to conform to her husband’s modes. However, this eagerness to conform leads to the preservation of the other’s power and the constant rejection of the attempts of the marginalized.¹⁸³ In this respect, the critic states that Antoinette wants to assimilate into a “culture that will rename her ‘Bertha,’ will rob her of her inheritance, and will finally confine her to an attic prison. This culture denies [her] any settled identity even when it was on her original identity.”¹⁸⁴

Like Antoinette, the children of the “picture brides” look for the adoption and the assimilation of American way of life in an attempt to fit into the American culture hoping to be accepted by Americans. Though the Japanese “picture brides” struggle to preserve their customs and ethnicity, their children, like Antoinette, are more fascinated by the culture of their country of their birth; it is here that the very conflict and the acute crisis of identity they experience start since the country of their birth does not accept them completely due to some factors like race. Though they are rejected, they strive to blend in the American society. They want to assimilate themselves in American culture and values and reject their parents’ heritage. The more they are discriminated against the more they try to fit into the American culture. These children are embarrassed whenever they are called by their Japanese names. They wish to be identified like Americans, but they do not feel like Americans with their Japanese names. In this concern, Otsuka states:

THEY GAVE THEMSELVES new names we had not chosen for them and could barely pronounce. One called herself Doris. One called herself Peggy. Many called themselves George. [...] Etsuko was given the name Esther by her teacher, Mr. Slater, on her first day of school [...] Mostly, they were ashamed of us. Our floppy straw hats and threadbare clothes.

Our heavy accents. *Every sing oh righ?* Our cracked, callused palms. Our deeply lined faces black from years of picking peaches and staking grape plants in the sun. They longed for real fathers with briefcases who went to work in a suit and tie and only mowed the grass on Sundays. They wanted different and better mothers who did not look so worn out. *Can't you put on a little lipstick?* [...] They never invited over friends to our crowded homes in J-town. *We live like beggars.* They would not be seen with us at the temple on the Emperor's birthday. They would not celebrate the annual Freeing of the Insects with us in the streets on the Festival of the Autumnal Equinox. They laughed at us whenever we insisted that they bow to us first thing in the morning and with each passing day they seemed to slip further and further from our grasp.¹⁸⁵

This quote indicates that the children of the “picture brides” do not bother to mesh the Japanese and the American cultures together because they have already made their choice.

Furthermore, Otsuka depicts the social clash experienced by the Japanese “picture brides” and their American born children. Indeed, the American born children are subject to transformations and to a cross-cultural existentialism as they are caught in the agony of modernity and tradition in America. The gap between them and their parents creates conflicts and disagreements particularly in such areas as religious customs and beliefs. Their mothers expect them to have similar behavior patterns and cultural norms as theirs. Therefore, they make efforts to make them learn their native language alongside their religious customs, traditions, beliefs and social mannerisms. In this respect, Otsuka writes:

ONE BY ONE all the old words we had taught them began to disappear from their heads. They forgot the names of the flowers in Japanese. They forgot the names of the colors. They forgot the names of the fox god and the thunder god and the god of poverty, whom we could never escape. [...] They forgot what to say at the altar to our dead ancestors, who watched over us night and day. They forgot how to count. They forgot how to pray. They spent their days now living in the new language, whose twenty six letters still eluded us even though we had been in America for years. [...] And even when we sent them to the Buddhist church on Saturdays to study Japanese they did not learn a thing.¹⁸⁶

This statement demonstrates that the efforts and anxiety of the “picture brides” in retention of their own culture are vain since their children love the American culture and the American way of life. They consider themselves American as they were born in America. In this concern, Otsuka states:

SOON we could barely recognize them. They were taller than we were, and heavier. They were loud beyond belief. *I feel like a duck that's hatched goose's eggs.* They preferred their own company to ours and pretended not to understand a word that we said. Our daughters took big long steps, in the America manner, and moved with undignified haste. They wore their garments too loose. They swayed their hips like mares. [...] Our sons grew enormous.

They insisted on eating bacon and eggs every morning for breakfast instead of bean-paste soup. They refused to use chopsticks.[...] They spoke perfect English just like on the radio and whenever they caught us bowing before the kitchen god in the kitchen and clapping our hands they rolled their eyes and said, “Mama, *please*.”¹⁸⁷

This quote indicates that there is a social clash experienced by the Japanese “picture brides” and their American born children.

It follows that Antoinette’s race colludes with patriarchal oppression and results in her identity destruction. Indeed, in the process of attempting to realize her independent identity she faces different obstacles. She desires to identify with one culture and one country. As a result, she clings to what she considers her nation, Jamaica. In this concern, Amin Maalouf in his book *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong* (1998), argues that every individual has a strong affiliation that he holds dear to the point that it constitutes his “identity.”¹⁸⁸ He adds that some individuals associate themselves with class, religion or nation. Those who connect themselves with their nation stick strongly to their nationality as a way to affirm their identity.¹⁸⁹ The same can be applied to Antoinette on whom the Jamaican society exercises various forms of pressure and oppression. Still, she dwells on the idea that Jamaica is the appropriate place where she can live. She asserts: “The sky was dark blue through the dark green mango leaves and I thought this is my place and this is where I belong and this is where I wish to stay.”¹⁹⁰

Antoinette also considers her home as an important constituent of her identity and existence. In accordance with Crenshaw’s claim that “home functions as a safe haven from the indignations of life in a racist society.”¹⁹¹ It can be argued that Antoinette perceives her home as a place that provides her with safety and security, as seen in this quotation:

I lay thinking, ‘I am safe. There is the corner of the bedroom door and the friendly furniture. There is the tree of life in the garden and the wall green with moss. The barrier of the cliffs and the high mountains. And the barrier of the sea. I am safe. I am safe from strangers.’¹⁹²

Even the objects of her house provide her with a sense of safety. However, this house which she considers as a place that provides her with support and security is burnt down by the blacks because of their racial hatred and the feeling of resentment that haunt them. On account of this

unfortunate surprise, Antoinette thinks that she has lost one of the basic pillars for the construction of her identity, as viewed in this quotation:

But now I turned too. The house was burning, the yellow-red sky was like sunset and I knew that I would never see Coulibri again. Nothing would be left, the golden ferns and the silver ferns, the orchids, the ginger lilies and the roses, the rocking-chairs and the blue sofa, the jasmine and the honeysuckle and the picture of the Miller's Daughter. When they had finished, there would be nothing left but blackened walls and mounting stone. That was always left. That could not be stolen or burnt.¹⁹³

This suggests that there is a strong connection between Antoinette and her home and even with its objects that play an important role in comforting her life. As a result of this loss, she is desperate and deprived of her identity. Veronika Schuchter explains that Antoinette's desire for a home is motivated by her longing for stability in her life. However, as the same critic observes, Antoinette can neither achieve a state of coherence in her life nor have a home that is a secure and a safe place.¹⁹⁴

After her house was burnt, Antoinette was obliged to attend a convent school which she considers as a refuge that keeps her safe from the hostilities of the outside world.¹⁹⁵ She says: "The girls are very curious but I would not answer their questions and for the first time I resented the nuns' cheerful faces. They are safe how can they know what it can be like outside."¹⁹⁶ Here, Antoinette makes reference to the frightening external world which spoiled her existence to the point that she lost all hope in living and all trust in people:

[...] And 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.¹⁹⁷

This quotation implies that Antoinette is fed up with the blacks' and her husband's racial discrimination and oppression.

In the same manner, Otsuka depicts how the "picture brides" are yearning for their motherland. They feel homesick, sad and nostalgic because they are dislocated spatially and emotionally from the warmth of their parents' homes in Japan where their identity was stable. Doreen Massey asserts that the place where individuals live influences the constitution and the maintenance of their identity and her view that home "may provide [...] stability, oneness and

security”¹⁹⁸ since individuals’ desire for a home is motivated by a “longing for stability and coherence”¹⁹⁹ in their life. As a matter of fact, it can be argued that these are the main objectives that the “picture brides” crave to reach in their lives.

However, it seems that they have the same fate as Antoinette. For instance, the “picture brides” stick strongly to the different objects that remind them of their homeland. They buy their groceries at “Fujioka Grocery, where they sold all the things [they] remembered from home.”²⁰⁰ They also make use of the only means they can afford to connect and be close to their families. Indeed, after years of living in America, they keep writing letters to their parents as a way to maintain ties with their home country. The “picture brides” constantly attempt to settle “home” in their host country. However, they face various conflicts like discrimination, racial prejudices and most importantly cultural displacement. Indeed, the feeling of displacement haunts them and it is intensified by the discrimination and racial prejudice practiced daily against them. What makes them regret and wonder if they “had made a mistake, coming to such a violent and unwelcoming land.”²⁰¹ As a result of this racial discrimination and rejection, they decided to work hard to get the necessary sum of money to return to Japan. What should be noted is that the quest of the “picture brides” for a better life requires dislocation from their homeland, a feeling that they find severe and painful. This feeling of dislocation is intensified by the different challenges that they have to face daily. Indeed, once in America, they are subject to patriarchal and racial oppression. Consequently, they long for going back to their motherland and just the feeling of imagining themselves back there makes them happy. The following quote from the novel sheds light on how the change in location affects people’s perception of their identity:

[...]And when we’d saved enough money to help our parents live in a more comfortable life we would pack up our things and go back home to Japan. It would be autumn, and our fathers would be out threshing in the fields. We would walk through the mulberry groves, past the big loquat tree and the old lotus pond, where we used to catch tadpoles in spring. Our dogs would come running up to us. Our neighbors would wave. Our mothers would be sitting by the will with their sleeves tied up, washing the evening’s rice. And when they saw us they would just stand up and stare. “little girl,” they would say to us, where in the world have you been?” ²⁰²

However, the “picture brides” are similar to Antoinette; they are denied the right to live with their families united in the same home. Indeed, their parents live in a society that has no mercy on women. In the letters they send to their daughters they remind them of the following:

*If you come home [...], you will disgrace the entire family. If you come home, your younger sisters will never marry. If you come home, no man will ever have you again. And so we stayed in J-town with our new husbands, and grew old before our time.*²⁰³

The above quote suggests that the priority of the parents of the “picture brides” is to save the honor of the family from shame.²⁰⁴ They are heavily influenced by the different social constructions that dominated the Japanese society during their era. They prefer to let their daughters suffer rather than dare and bypass the dominant conventions.

Endnotes

¹⁶³Crenshaw, *Mapping the Margins*, 6.

¹⁶⁴Tawfiq Youcef and Reem Abu-Samra, “Identity Crisis in Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* Revisited,” *Journal of Literature and Art Studies* 7 no, 2 (2017),
<https://www.davidpublisher.com/Public/uploads/Contribute/586c4e9b220ec.pdf>, 5.

¹⁶⁵Sakina El Ouardi, “The Impossibility of Creating Identity in Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea*,”
http://biblioteca.unirioja.es/tfe_e/TFE000341.pdf

¹⁶⁶Amin Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 32. http://veraznanjemir.bos.rs/materijal/in_the_name_of_identity_-_maalouf.pdf

¹⁶⁷Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 125.

¹⁶⁸Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 37.

¹⁶⁹Hosok, “Cultural Analysis of the Early Japanese Immigration to the United States During Meiji to Taisho Era,”

¹⁷⁰Ibid.

¹⁷¹Heather Brown and Jennifer Roberts, “Gender Role Identity, Breadwinner Status and Psychological Well-being in the Household,”
https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.361132!/file/serps_2014004.pdf

¹⁷²Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 6.

¹⁷³Tschaepe M. D, “Halo of Identity: The Significance of First Names and Naming,”
<http://www.janushead.org/6-1/Tschaepe.pdf>, 67.

¹⁷⁴Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 212.

¹⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 178.

¹⁷⁶Veronika Schuchter, “You Cannot Imagine How Much I Long To Have A House, A Room, Or Two, A Cave Of My Own: Rooms And Homes In Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *Outside The Machine And Sleep It Off Lady*,”

<https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/english-association/publications/peer-english/9/3%20Schuchter%20-%20You%20Cannot%20Imagine.pdf>, 5.

¹⁷⁷Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 40.

¹⁷⁸*Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁷⁹Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 127-128.

¹⁸⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁸¹Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 47.

¹⁸²Missy D. Kubitschek, “Charting the Empty Spaces of Jean Rhys’ ‘*Wide Sargasso Sea*,”
https://www.jstor.org/stable/3346184?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

¹⁸³*Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁸⁵Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 73.

¹⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁸⁸Maalouf, *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*, 32.

¹⁸⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*,

¹⁹¹Crenshaw, *Mapping the Margins*, 18.

¹⁹²Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 39.

¹⁹³*Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁹⁴Schuchter, “You Cannot Imagine How Much I Long To Have A House, A Room, Or Two, A Cave Of My Own,” 8.

¹⁹⁵El Ouardi, “The Impossibility of Creating Identity in Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea*.”

¹⁹⁶Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 72-73.

¹⁹⁷*Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁹⁸Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender*, (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1994), 167.
https://selforganizedseminar.files.wordpress.com/2011/07/massey_space_place_gender.pdf.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., 168.

²⁰⁰Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 47.

²⁰¹Ibid, 36.

²⁰²Ibid.,52.

²⁰³Ibid., 50.

²⁰⁴Crenshaw, *Mapping the Margins*, 18.

V. Conclusion

Our comparison of Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic* has allowed us to reach certain conclusions on both the authors and their novels. Though these works display distinct cultural backgrounds and socio-historical divisions, they remain significant in providing oppressed subjects with voice and stories of their own. Thanks to this, Creole and Japanese women's experiences of oppression and subjugation can be seen from a different and new perspective. The two works can be considered as a denunciation of several patriarchal practices such as arranged marriages and the perception of women as their husbands' and male relatives' properties.

Rhys and Otsuka use their writings as means to reveal how patriarchal oppression and racial discrimination have far reaching consequences on women and marginalized people. On the one hand, both of them criticize the patriarchal discourse that places the subjugated in a subordinate status by giving power to the male figure to control and dominate women. On the other hand, Rhys and Otsuka criticize the racial discourse and Western dominant narratives that tend to ignore the existence of racial and cultural differences among human beings. Therefore, they aim to break the imposed silence and to improve the condition of the marginalized through their criticism of the patriarchal and racial views of inferiority of women and people from other races in general.

The last conclusion that has been reached is related to the rejection by the two authors of the assumption that gender overrides cultural differences to create women with identical experience of oppression. This is achieved through their insistence on how gender interacts with other social categories like race and how the pressures exercised by these two external forces result in an acute identity crisis. Therefore, it can be said that both writers display an example of intersection between identity, gender and race. They shed light on how these three social categories interact and influence each other in a way or in another.

This paper has put emphasis on the pressures exercised by such external forces as gender and race on individuals' identities in the two selected novels by Rhys and Otsuka. We would like to pave the way for further research and studies. We think it will be interesting to compare Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic* with novels written by immigrant writers like Jhumpa Lahiri, and Amy Tan. Some of these authors' narratives display identity issues faced by the Indian and the Chinese diaspora in the United States due to racial discrimination and to cross-cultural encounter.

VI. Select Bibliography

Primary Sources

Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966). London: Longman Publishing for the Caribbean, 2006.

Otsuka, Julie. *The Buddha in the Attic*. New York: Vintage Books, 2011.

Secondary Sources

Abeda, Sultana. "Patriarchy and Women's Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis." *Arts Faculty Journal* 4, no. 6(2011).

<http://www.banglajol.info/index.php/AFJ/article/view/12929/9293>. Accessed May 27, 2017.

Ahlin, Lena. "On the Loss of Identity in *When the Emperor was Divine*." <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:397127/fulltext01>.

Ashcroft, Bill. Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen, 2nd ed. *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. New York: Routledge, 2007. <http://staff.uny.ac.id/sites/default/files/pendidikan/else-liliani-ssmhum/postcolonialstudiesthekeyconceptsrouledgekeyguides.pdf>

Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre* (1847). Toronto and New York: Nelson.

Brown, Heather A. *Marx on Gender and the Family: A Critical Study*. Boston: Brill, 2012. <http://ouleft.org/wp-content/uploads/marx-gender-family.pdf>

Brown, Heather and Roberts, Jennifer. "Gender Role Identity, Breadwinner Status and Psychological Well-being in the Household."

https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.361132!/file/serps_2014004.pdf

Cappello, Sylvia. "Postcolonial Discourse in *Wide Sargasso Sea*": Creole Discourse vs European Discourse, Periphery vs Center, and Marginalized People vs White Supremacy." *Journal of Caribbean literatures* 6 no.1(2009), <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40986298>. Accessed April 23, 2017.

Crenshaw, Williams. K. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence against Women of Color."

<http://multipleidentitieslgbtq.wiki.westga.edu/file/view/Crenshaw1991.pdf>.

El Ouardi, Sakina. "The Impossibility of Creating Identity in Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*."

http://biblioteca.unirioja.es/tfe_e/TFE000341.pdf.

Finn, Maggot. "Women, Consumption and Couverture in England, c-1760-1860." *The Historical Journal* 39 no. 03 (2009).

http://journals.Cambridge.org/abstract_S0018246X00022450X. Accessed March 12, 2017.

Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*.

Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Vintage Books, 1964.

[file:///C:/Users/Ghost160110/Downloads/Foucault,%20Madness%20and%20Civilization%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Ghost160110/Downloads/Foucault,%20Madness%20and%20Civilization%20(2).pdf).

Funk, Susana B. "Of Mimicry and Woman: A Feminist Postcolonial Reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and the Biggest Modern Woman in the World."

<http://ppgi.posgrad.ufsc.br/files/2014/06/reaa-36-p-65-91.pdf>.

Gardner Joscelyn. "Re-Presenting Creole Identity: Theorizing a (white) Postcolonial Feminism." http://www.joscelyngardner.com/pdfs_texts/Re-Presenting.pdf.

Gariti, Mohamed. *Feminism in Britain from William Shakespeare to Mary Wollstonecraft*. PhD. Diss. Tizi Ouzou University, 2012.

Greg, Robinson. "A Tragedy of Democracy: Japanese confinement in North America." *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 2 no.1(2010).

<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0qn09858>. Accessed April 22, 2017.

Helenius, Marja-Liisa. "Madwoman as the imprisoned 'other': Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* in light of French feminist and Anglo-American feminist literacy Theories."3

<https://marjaliisa.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/jean-rhys-wide-sargasso-sea.pdf>.

Hirara, Mie. "Our" Stories depicted by Julie Otsuka: *When the Emperor was Divine* and *The Buddha in the Attic*." <http://www.ritsumei.ac.jp/acd/cg/lt/rb/634/634pdf/yousi.pdf>.

Iliesco, Andrea. "Julie Otsuka's *When the Emperor was Divine*: A Heart Wrenching Evacuee's Diary." <http://www.upm.ro/ldmd/LDMD-04/Lit/Lit%2004%2018.pdf>.

Ingegerd, Stenport. *Transformation of the self: A Study of Guilt, Trauma, Shame in Julie Otsuka's When the Emperor was Divine* (2002). Advanced Research Essay. GOTSBERG UNIVERSITAT, 2016.

Kabeer, Naila. *Marriage, Motherhood and Masculinity in the Global Economy: Reconfigurations of Personal and Economic Life*.

<https://www.ids.ac.uk/files/dmfile/Wp290.pdf>.

Louisville's Radical lending library. "Understanding Patriarchy."

https://archive.org/stream/UnderstandingPatriarchy/UnderstandingPatriarchy_djvu.txt

Lorber, Judith. "The Variety of Feminisms and their Contribution to Gender Equality."

<http://oops.uni-oldenburg.de/1269/1/ur97.pdf>.

Maalouf, Amin. *In the Name of Identity: Violence and the Need to Belong*. Translated by Barbara Bray. New York: Penguin Books, 2003.

http://veraznanjemir.bos.rs/materijal/in_the_name_of_identity_-_maalouf.pdf

Massey, Doreen. *Space, Place and Gender*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis, 1994. https://selforganizedseminar.files.wordpress.com/2011/07/massey_space_place_gender.pdf

Matchiko, Inagawa. "Japanese American Experiences in Internment Camps during World War II as Represented by Children's and Adolescent Literature."

<http://arizona.openrepository.com/arizona/handle/10150/196135>

Maxey, Ruth. "The Rise of the 'We' Narrator in Modern American Fiction," *European Journal of American Studies* 10, no.2 (2015)."

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283169636_The_Rise_of_the_We_Narrator_in_Modern_American_Fiction_11. Accessed May 1, 2017.

Maxin B. Zinn Mawin B. and Thornton Bonnie D. "Difference and Domination."

http://www.temple.edu/tempres/chapters/657_ch1.pdf.

Mohanty, Chandra T. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *On Humanism and the University I: The Discourse of Humanism* 12, no. 3,

<http://www.jstor.org/sici?sici=01903659%28198421%2F23%2912%3A3%3C333%3AUWEFSA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Y>. Accessed May 29, 2017.

O, Hosok. Cultural Analysis of the Early Japanese Immigration To The United States During Meiji To Taisho Era (1868-1926). PhD diss. Oklahoma State University, 2010.

Ochshorn, Kathlen. "Of Woodlice and White Cockroaches: The West Indian Girlhood of Jean Rhys." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*, 12, no. 2(1991),

<http://www.Jstore.org/stable/3346844>. Accessed October 13, 2016.

P, Jythimol. "The woman and the Web: *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* as Feminist Intertexts."

http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/25783/11/11_chapter%204.pdf.

Patterson, Shelagh W. Architectures of Freedom: Literary Collaboration in Contemporary American Poetry. PhD diss. University of Pittsburgh, 2013.

Pollanen, Lida. "Abject by Gender and Race: The Loss of Antoinette's Identity in Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*." *Oregon Undergraduate Research Journal* 5, no.1 (Spring 2012). <file:///C:/Users/Ghost160110/Downloads/1891-4846-1-PB.pdf>. Accessed October 10, 2016.

Qawas, Rula B. "The Politics of Gender, Class, and Race in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*." *Human and Social Sciences* 35, no.2 (2008),

<file:///C:/Users/Ghost160110/Downloads/343-693-1-SM.pdf>. Accessed October 10, 2016.

Sandoval, Chela. *Methodology of the oppressed*. New York: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.

Sager, Chris. American Nativists and their Confrontation with Japanese Labor and Education in California 1900-1930. M.A Thesis, University of North Carolina Wilmington, 2012.

Samkange, Wellington. "The Liberal Feminist Theory: Assessing Its Applicability to Education in General and Early Childhood Development (E. C. D) In Particular within the Zimbabwean Context," *Global Journal of Advanced Research* 2, no. 7 (2015).

<http://gjar.org/publishpaper/vol2issue7/d238r10.pdf>. Accessed April 2, 2017.

Saxe, Jennifer D. "Conceptualizing Critical Feminist Theory." www.jceps.com/wp-content/uploads/PDFs/10-2-06.pdf.

Schuchter, Veronika. "You Cannot Imagine How Much I Long To Have A House, A Room, Or Two, A Cave Of My Own: Rooms And Homes In Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *Outside The Machine* And *Sleep It Off Lady*." <https://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/english-association/publications/peer-english/9/3%20Shuchter%20-%20You%20Cannot%20Imagine.pdf>

Schwarze, Tracy T. *Joyce and the Victorians*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

Shams, Sheikh F. "Reading for the 'other' across the *Wide Sargasso Sea*," *East West Journal of Humanities* 2 no.2 (2011).

http://www.ewubd.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/East_West_University. Accessed April 18, 2017.

Smith, Sharon. "Black Feminism and Intersectionality." <http://isreview.org/issue/91/black-feminism-and-intersectionality>.

Spivak, Gayatri. *Can the Subaltern Speak?*.

http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic200861.files/Spivak.Can_the_subaltern_speak.pdf

Spivak, Gayatri. "Three women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism." *Chicago Journals*, 12, no. 1(1985). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343469>. Accessed February 13, 2017.

Tschaepe M. D. "Halo of Identity: The Significance of First Names and Naming."

<http://www.janushead.org/6-1/Tschaepe.pdf>

The Big Read. "*When The Emperor was Divine*."

[http://www.neabigread.org/pdf/WhenEmperorDivine\(8.2016\).pdf](http://www.neabigread.org/pdf/WhenEmperorDivine(8.2016).pdf)

Tong, Rosemarie. *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. Colorado: Westview Press, 2009.

https://excoradfeminisms.files.wordpress.com/2010/07/feminist_thought_a_more_comprehensive_intro.pdf

Uzun, Ezra. "A Folkloric Study on *Wide Sargasso Sea*,"

http://thescholarship.ecu.edu/bitstream/handle/10342/3621/uzun_ecu_0600m_10451.pdf?sequence=1

Vizan, Juliana. "A New Historicist Reading of Julie Otsuka's *The Buddha in the Attic* and *When the Emperor was Divine*."

<http://www.upm.ro/ldmd/LDMD-02/Lit/Lit%2002%2025.pdf>

Yildirim, Askin H. "angels of the House: Dickens' Victorian Women."

<http://dergipark.ulakbim.gov.tr/deusosbil/article/view/5000064120/5000059991>

Youcef Tawfik and Abu- Samra Reem. "Identity Crisis in Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* Revisited," *Journal of Literature and Art Studies* 7 no, 2 (2017).

<https://www.davidpublisher.com/Public/uploads/Contribute/586c4e9b220ec.pdf>. Accessed March 13, 2017.