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**Women Between Subalternity and Rebellion in Eugene O'Neill's  
Anna Christie (1920), Janet Neipris's The Agreement (1985) and  
Myriam Warner Vieyra's Juletane (1982)**

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*Dedications*

*To my dear family*

*To my dear husband*

*To my friends and classmates*

*Lamia TOWSE*

*Dedicated*

*To*

*My Father*

*So proud of being your daughter*

*My mother*

*My only support after my father's death*

*My brother and sisters*

*All my beloved friends*

*All my nephews*

*Bon Bon*

*Tassadit Talbi*

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation is a case study which compares the situation of women under subaltern and how they are subversive in America and Africa through the works of Eugene O'Neil's *Anna Christie* (1921), Janet Neipris's *The Agreement* (1985) and Myriam Warner-Vieyra's *Juletane* (1982). The aim of this research is to show how the three authors portray women in both American and African literatures. This justifies our appeal to the theory Bell Hooks's *Feminism is For Every Body* and Judith Butler's theory *Gender Troubles* (1990). These two theories allow us to study those three literary works in relation to subaltern and subversion. In this analyses we have tried to show that in spite of the fact that the three works are products of different eras share the same issue that characterized these periods. The three authors have portrayed the oppression practiced towards women. They have depicted how women are dominated by men and patriarchal societies. They have described also how these women rebel and seek for independence . This research has been divided into two chapters. The first chapter is entitled women experienced subaltern, where we provided the reader by useful information about the idea of women's oppression and how it is shown through the different female characters of the three works. Then in the second chapter we have studied the same female characters and the way they rebel against the oppression of men. Finally, we come to conclude that women as a subject of oppression are always seeking for rebellion to reach equality with men in different places and periods of time.

## Introduction

Women as a subject of oppression and discrimination have a long way of struggle against feminine subalternity towards equality. The difference in culture and history marked the difference in women's emancipation in all over the world. Race, color, patriarchy and class represent obstacles against women's movement towards liberation. In fact, women's rebellion and oppression are narrated and introduced through different literary productions. Our work is concerned with the study of women's struggle in the United States of America, stated in the works of Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie* (1921) , Janet Neipris's *The Agreement* (1985) and through the work of Caribbean African writer Miriam Warner Vieyra's *Jultane* (1982). We are going to examine West Indian women experiences in Africa.

Through the present research paper, we will present women as the oppressed, the subordinate and the deviation and then investigate the forms that their rebellion takes. Our piece of research is concerned with three periods of time in women's history , starting from the Roaring Twenties 1920 to the late twentieth century America and Africa during the 1950. Despite culture and time differences between the three cases, the image of women in these distinct literatures contains many similarities.

In the United States of America, the efforts of Angelina and Sara Grimké often forgotten in the basic narrative of the women's movement by 1840, had inspired other women reformers like Elisabeth Cady Stanton who was the pivotal figure in the women's movement in the nineteenth century. She was among the planers of the first women's convention in Seneca Falls in 1848, and she drafted the Declaration of Sentiments, modeled on the Declaration of Independence which calls for equal treatment of women under the law and voting rights of women. By 1920, the ninetieth Amendment passed and it granted voting rights for all female citizens.



West Indian women grew up as granddaughters of a transplanted population which seeks return to Africa as a solution of disillusionment between keeping their old values and embracing the dominant French culture. Their fact of acculturation is the result of French education. Their quest for identity and desire to return to the mother land, Africa, brought about a movement of educated black population between French Caribbean and West Africa. The movement started during the colonial period in Africa until the post independence period in the 1960. Coming home to their mother land is not an easy task for transplanted Caribbean women, since they are confronted to African Muslim society. Their French background brings about cultural clash between them and traditional African values, most notably the value of women.

The three works depict women in a dual state, varying between subordination and emancipation. Difference in culture results difference and multiplicity in the form of women's suffering and seek to liberation. The female characters of the three works are fighting in different ways to achieve similar goals of equality and liberation.

## **Review of literature**

The three works deal with the subaltern status of women. Eugene O'Neill's ideas on women's inferiority hold an eminent position in his works. Frederick Wilkins comments on feminine inferiority in O'Neill's works and argues that,

The female characters, with few exceptions, are defined only by their biological roles—in other words, by their relationships to the men in their lives. Other than being daughters, wives, mothers, or lovers, the women have no significant careers, except for Eleanor Cape, an actress in *Welded*. Even then, she is her husband's creation, acting in plays he writes for her. The prostitutes, of whom there are many, obviously have a profession, but one which depends exclusively on the favors of men.<sup>1</sup>

The above statement claims that O'Neill limits the role of women to domestic works, and for him woman is the invention of man who dictated to her what she had to do and often called her a prostitute.

Another critic about Eugene O'Neill's work written by Asim Karim, in his study entitled "Eugene O'Neill's Concern with Sexuality and the Behavioral Disorders", has explained the use of prostitution in Eugene O'Neill's works as in *Anna Christie* like a way to escape from loneliness and alienation. He resumes prostitution as the narrowest human behavior as he explains in the quotation below:

Prostitution itself is a regressive human conduct under different conditions. Here too one comes across variations in different plays. In early plays O'Neil uses prostitution to highlight the moral chaos and regression in human behavior. In this way sexuality becomes an indicator of the inner decline or the meaningless routine existence of the concerned, the sailor for instance in SS Glencairn Series in their routine and mechanical existence on the board frequently resort to drunkenness and prostitution to have their sense of diversion from the impending sense of gloom and alienation on the sea.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, Barbara Voglino, in Chapter III of her essay entitled *Perverse Mind: Eugene O'Neill's Struggle with Closure*, criticizes the work of O'Neill and discusses feminism in relation to fatalism in *Anna Chritie* and notes that Anna is portrayed as a militant woman who refuses male's authority and dominance over her. She writes that Anna, in fact, surpasses the audience's expectations. Then, In affirming her own capacity to structure her life, she makes a surprisingly militant assertion of feminism. She refuses to allow either her father or lover to own or direct her, and she boldly defends her past conduct by equating it with the men's<sup>3</sup>.

Making her article on Myriam Warner Vieyra's *Juletane*, Bella Brodzki asserts that the alienation of the protagonist *Juletane* is the result of the facts like acculturation and race. She argues that,

Having experienced "difference" in France as something faintly positive, Juletane evokes the "triangle de traite" here as a legacy of entitlement-unaware that her Caribbean female body is the overdetermined site of contradictory projections, not only of racial oppression and exoticism by Europeans, but more problem- atically, of French acculturation by Africans<sup>4</sup>.

Studying identity in *La Folle et l'Autre Femme: Perceptions of Identity in the Works of Myriam Warner-Vieyra*, Dize Nathan shades the light on Juletane's writing as a means of resistance against prejudices and dominations. He states that Juletane's use of writing allows her to create a physical representation herself, free from the prejudices and domination of patriarchy. Juletane's autobiographical writing is cathartic resistance against external perceptions of her identity. In fact, Juletane represents Warner-Vieyra's militant departure from *As the Sorcerer Said*<sup>5</sup>.

Furthermore, *The Agreement* by Janet Neipris was published in 1985. At that time, Women had already gained a great deal of their rights and a higher social status. Women writers at that time portray women as Patrick O'Donnell explains :

While something of an oversimplification, what can be said with some certainty, however, is that many American writers of color in the 1960's and 1970's were most concerned with establishing the presence and visibility of African American , Asian American , and Native American identities, just as many women writers were concerned with portraying strong, empowered female characters, and felt that realistic modes of narrative containing psychologically complex protagonists was the most effective way to do so .<sup>7</sup>

### **Issue and working Hypothesis**

It appears from this review of the literature that Janet Neipris's play *The Agreement* received much less criticism than O'Neill's *Anna Christie* and Warner-Vieira's *Juletane*. Until now, and as far as far as we are informed, no research comparing the three works has been conducted. our purpose in this dissertation is to offer some insight on the evolution of the way women are portrayed under subalternity and how they react against men's oppression in both American and African literatures.

This comparative study is based on the assumption that the three works were written in different periods and different places, they have in common their clear representation of women subaltern and quest for change. At first sight, the female characters in both O'Neill's and Neipris's plays with Warner's *Novella* are depicted as inferior, sexist and whose only ambition is to free themselves from oppression , but whether this the authors' intention is debatable.

## **Approach**

As for theory, we will rely on Bell Hooks's *Feminism Is for Everybody* (1985) and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990). Indeed, our selection of Hooks and Butler seeks to highlight the feminine subalternity and discrimination in American and African societies. The interest of these theories lies in the fact that it will help us to show how the idea of women otherness is constructed and how it may be restricted.

## **Methodological Outline**

In order to explore the theme of feminine subalternity and subversion against social norms, we will divide our dissertation into four sections. The first will be devoted to the general introduction where we will make an overview about feminism in 1921 and 1980 America and in 1950's Africa. The second will be devoted to methods and materials. In methods, we will provide an overview of the theory of Bell Hooks as developed in her book *Feminism is for Every Body* (1985) and Judith Butler's theory in her book *Gender Trouble* (1990). Whereas in materials, we will make the summaries of the plays *Anna Christie* (1921), *The Agreement* (1985) and the novella *Juletane* (1982), with the historical background of the three works.

The third section will be the results. The discussion section contains two chapters. The first chapter will analyze the major female characters in relation to the ideology of feminism and female's forms of discrimination during the periods in which these works were produced from the theoretical perspective of Bell Hooks. The second chapter will study the same works from the standing point of Judith Butler's theory in *Gender Trouble* (1990) in order to sort out the forms female characters take while engaged in subversive actions against discrimination. Indeed, the differences and the similarities between the three mentioned works in their questioning of women's issue will then be discussed.

## **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> Wilkins, Frederick. *News letter O'Neill's women*. vol.vi, No.2. Suffolk University, (Boston Summer-Fall, 1982).

<sup>2</sup> Karim Asim, *Eugene O'Neill's Concern with Sexuality and the Behavioral Disorders* (Studies in Literature and Language, 2010), 46.

<sup>3</sup> Barbara Voglino, *Perverse Mind: Eugene O'Neill's Struggle with Closure* (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ Press, 1999), 37-38.

<sup>4</sup> Bella Brodzki, *Reading Wrinting Women in Myriam Warner-Vieyra's Juletane* (Studies in 20<sup>th</sup> Century Literature : Vol.17:Iss,1, Article6 , 1993), 8.

<sup>5</sup> Nathan Dize, *La Folle et l'Autre Femme: Perceptions of Identity in the Works of Myriam Warner-Vieyra* (Univerity of Marryland, 2012 ), 21.

<sup>6</sup> Jaspal Kaur Singh, *Representation and Resistance: South Asian and African Women's Texts at Home and in the Diaspora*(:University of Calgary Press, 2008), 115.

<sup>7</sup> Patrick O'Donnell, *The American Novel Now: Reading contemporary American Fiction since 1980* (John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 218.

## **Method and Materials**

### **1- Method**

#### **a- Summary of Bell Hooks's Theory of Feminism:**

Her theory confirmed her importance as a leader in radical feminist thought. Throughout her book *From Margins to Center*, Hooks uses the term White Supremacist Capitalist Patriarchy as a lens through which to **criticizes** various aspects of American culture and offer potential solutions to the problems she explores. A distinguishing feature of hooks theory is her use of what is contemporary called inter- sectionality in her analysis. An analysis of oppression that considers the intersectioning nature of race and gender was pioneered by black feminists organizations of the 1970's. Hooks criticizes the sisterhood frame work of Second Wave Feminism, saying that, "the emphasis on sisterhood was often seen as emotional appeal masking the opportunism of bourgeoisie white women".

The importance of the black women in the feminist movement is illustrated by Bell Hooks. She states that African American women are important and that they are under racism in the movement of Second Wave Feminism. She explains that by learning one another's cultural codes and respecting women's differences "women of color" feel a sense of community, of sisterhood. Women must also acknowledge that they all suffer in some way but that they are not all oppressed none equally oppressed.

Another distinguishing feature of hooks theory is her insistence on the inclusion of men in the feminist movement. Hooks criticizes the anti-male stance of second wave feminism, asserting that this position alienated many poor and working class women particularly non white women, from feminist movement. Hooks asserts that men also suffer in some way as a result of sexism. In essence, these negative effects of sexism on men, according to hooks, can be used as a way to motive them into participation in Feminism.

Hooks asserts “But from the onset of the movement there was a small group of men who recognized that feminist movement was as valid a movement for social justice as all the other radical movement's in our nation's history that men had supported. these men became our comrades in our struggle and our allies”<sup>1</sup>. Men and women made together the United States of America a culture of violence and together should work and transform this culture. Women and men must oppose the use of violence as a means of social control in all its manifestations. In addition to male's inclusion in the feminist movement, Hooks argues for feminist advocacy of child care to emphasize the need for collective parenting.

Feminism according to bell hooks is “simply put, feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression”<sup>2</sup>. It is a movement that does not target men as its enemy, rather it is the structure of the society with which it is at odds. So, according to hooks the feminist movement is an appeal to end the harsh reality of women as being properties and objects in hands of men. It is then a way of freeing women from discrimination, she argues:

"First and foremost feminist movement urged females to no longer see ourselves and our bodies as the property of men. To demand control of our sexuality, effective birth control and reproductive rights, and end to rape and sexual harassment, we needed to stand in solidarity. In order for women to change job discrimination we needed to lobby as a group to change public policy, challenging and changing female sexist thinking was the first step towards creating the powerful sisterhood that would ultimately rock our nation”<sup>3</sup>.

Contemporary feminism progressed as soon as women discovered that males were not the only group who supported sexism, females also could be sexist. Thus the movement ignored the anti-male sentiment. The issue that have to be changed is the patriarchal beliefs of society. In fact, Hooks criticizes the feminist movement by arguing that sisterhood could not be powerful as long as women were competitively at war with one another.

"Initially feminist focus on domestic violence highlighted male violence against women, but as the movement progressed evidence showed that there was also domestic violence present in same-sex relations, that women in relationships with women were and are oftentimes the victims of abuse, that children were also victims of adult patriarchal violence enacted by women and men.”<sup>4</sup>

Our selection to Bell Hooks theory is justified by the fact that Hook seeks to highlight women inferiority in American and African patriarchal societies. Thus, *Anna Christie* (1921), *Juletane* (1982) and *The Agreement* (1980) can be considered as a feminist appeal to free women by being in one hand and keep solidarity

## **b- Summary of Judith Butler's Theory**

Butler (born febraury24, 1956) is an American philosopher and gender theorist whose work has influenced political philosophy, ethics and the fields of feminist queer and litrary theory. The crux of Butler's argument in gender trouble is that the coherence of the categories of sex , gender, and sexuality \_the seeming coherence , for example, of masculine gender and heterosexual desire in male bodies is culturally constructed through the repetition of stylized acts in time.

Butler argued that feminism made mistake in trying to make "women" a discrete historical group with common characteristics. Butler this approach reinforces the binary view of gender relations because it allows for two distinct categories: men and women .Butler believes that feminists should not define women. She also believes that feminists should focus on providing an account of how power functions and shapes our understanding of woman hood not only in the society at large but also within the feminist movement.

Butler proceeds to use drag (cross-dressing) as example of gender subversion through practices of gender parody noting how it draws attention to the performative constitution of gender. The parodic imitations of gender identity that drag artists perform paradoxically reveal that there is no original gender to be imitated, indeed, all gender is based on practices of imitation, repetition and reenactment. Butler explains that femininity and masculinity as traditionally conceived are than consequences of the effective internalization of the taboo against homosexuality, an orthodox gender identity is established via this renunciation of



homosexual desire. Heterosexuality and homosexuality complement Butler's theory of performativity, for again gender is being viewed as an effect of law imposed by culture rather than a cause or origin<sup>5</sup> In this instance the law is the cultural prohibition of homosexuality.

## **2- Materials**

### **a- Summaries of the works**

#### **1-*Anna Christie* (1920)**

*Anna Christie* is a four act play by Eugene O'Neill. It is concerned with the harsh reality of women's lives in the early part of the twentieth century. One afternoon, a Swedish barge captain named Chris Christopherson receives a letter from his daughter Anna whom he has not seen for fifteen years, telling him she is coming. Chris explains that he has rarely visited his family since he is a sailor and that the sea has occupied all his life. At her arrival, she informs Marthy, her father companion, about her difficult past experiences and her hate toward men. After living for few days on the barge with her father, Anna feels healthier and changed. She is deeply impressed by the sea which horrifies her father. He does not want her to marry any sailor. Unfortunately, Anna falls in love with a sailor who is called Matt Burk who she encounters when rescuing him with four other men from a shipwreck. Aware of Chris's marriage refusal, Matt Burk perseverates in his quest, pushing Anna to reveal her past promiscuity at the meantime. Despite that all of them are disappointed, Matt Burke and Anna reconciles and marry at the end.

#### **2-*Juletane* (1982)**

*Juletane* is a novel by Myrian Warner- Vieyra and published in 1982. It tells the story of a young woman who is betrayed by her husband after she discovers that he is already married. Juletane meets Mamadou at Paris where he was studying while she was living with her godmother after the death of her parents. The two started to love each other, and plan to get married very soon. But they have had to endure hardships in their home in Africa. At her arrival to Senegal, Juletane is shocked to meet her husband's co-wives. However, she resigns

to yield herself to the patriarchal and traditional way of living there. While resisting those adopted values, she has set herself to the writing of her life story which affects Helene. In fact, Helene has used it to confront her personality with Juletane. Juletane's story ends up by her death after her husband's tragic accident.

### ***3-The Agreement (1985)***

The Agreement is a one-act play by Janet Neipris. It is set in California. The play is a comedy that tells about the separation of Sigmund and Sybil who wanted to divorce quickly and divide what they possess. The life of the two is similar since each one lives with a date and projects to get an agreement in their divorce. Therefore, Sigmund and his lawyer Lester come to the court where they meet with Sybil and her lawyer Alyce. At the end of their arrangement, the lawyers have gone into Judge Albert's office whereas the old couple has preferred to go into a café and recall memories about the nostalgic moments they spent together.

## **b-Historical Backgrounds**

### **1- Roaring Twenties America (1920's)**

The break from American's past to American's future was characterized by a booming period known as The Roaring twenties. Indeed, the spirit of this decade was marked by productivity, prosperity, technological growth and the emergence of new womanhood, or as most known the Flappers. Thus, the image of this new woman represented the change in popular culture. This new generation of woman incarnated a new way of life and enjoyed more rights than their ancestors. As Rodney P. Carlisle asserted:

Young urban women began wearing dresses that exposed their legs, arms, and even some of their chests. Known for their risqué behavior, flappers raised eyebrows by going out with men on unchaperoned dates and participating in wild new dances such as the Charleston. Other signs of rebellion included wearing makeup, flashy jewelery, short haircuts such as the popular "bob" style, and doing things that were considered "manly", such as driving cars, smoking cigarettes, and drinking alcohol.<sup>6</sup>

As Rodney P. Carlisle summed above, this new generation rebelled against the old values of the Victorian era by showing new behavior. Their way of dressing, using makeup,

smoking and drinking alcohol distinguished them from the image of womanhood in the past. In essence, it is during the 1920's that women in America were granted their right to vote by the ninetieth amendment. Influenced by the ideology of 1920's, Eugene O'Neill's works like *Anna Christie* (1921) are characterized by the portrayal of the American life and the rapid change of The Roaring Twenties.

## **2- 1950's Senegal:**

West Africa knew a womanly French Caribbean return whose quest was for origins and identity. However, this quest for return was hindered by cultural differences. This issue is clearly developed by the Caribbean French writer Myriam Warner-Vieyra in *Juletane* (1982).

Myriam Warner-Vieyra was critical of the situation of women in Africa, especially in Senegal during 1950's and 1960's. In essence, laws in Senegal varied between domestic and international, which means that customs and religion influenced the lives of Senegalese population notably women. Besides, women's inferiority was rooted in customs and religion. As Emily S. Burril, Richard L. Roberts, Elizabeth Thomberry in *Domestic Violence in the Law in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa* (2010) argued: "Islamic law that affirms authority of men over women provides the basis for the principle in the 1972 family code that men are the heads of the family."<sup>7</sup> In this sense, Senegalese women had no access to men's rights except for clothes, food and sex.

## **3- 1980's America:**

Women's seek for change and equality had come a long way since the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention and the Declaration of Sentiments. In essence, a lot of progress had been made in their way toward emancipation. Women's movement through its realizations had gained equality in most fields of life. Thus, contemporary women enjoy more freedom comparing to their predecessors. Women of 1980's had access to universities and higher education. In addition, higher professions were occupied by women like medicine, engineering and so on. The major achievements that marked that period can be illustrated through the first astronaut

woman in 1983 and Mondale-Ferraro ticket in the 1984 for the Vice Presidency. As Theodore Caplow et al. write:

Women devote less time to than formerly to housework and child care but still do most of both. They have achieved near parity with men in educational attainment, but occupational segregation by sex remains high, though declining. Earnings differentials by sex have changed little; employed women earn about two-thirds as much as employed men. Despite gains in economic and political power and growing representation in high status occupations, women remain disadvantaged. Unrealistic standards of beauty and femininity complicate women's role enactment, and certain over-adaptation pathologies are more common than before. Public opinion is increasingly favorable to women's rights and gender equality. The 1980's woman is more likely than her predecessors to perceive sexism in employment or economic life and less likely to define it as legitimate.<sup>8</sup>

As it is illustrated above, even if women reached a specific level of equality with men, the American society still sustains its sexist view toward women.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Bell Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody* (Cambridge, MA : South End Press, 1985), 62.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>5</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York : Routledge, 1990), 81.

<sup>6</sup> P. Carlisle Rodney, *The roaring twenties: 1920 to 1929* (Infobase Publishing, 2014), 27.

<sup>7</sup> Burrell, Richard L. Roberts, Elizabeth Thomberry, *Domestic Violence in the Law in Colonial and Postcolonial Africa* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2010), 211.

<sup>8</sup> Theodor Caplaw, Howard M. Bahr, Bruce A. Chadwick, John Modell, *Recent Social Trends in The United States, 1960-1990* (Mc Gill – Queen's Press, 1994), 82.

## Results and Discussion

### Results

Our research is a comparative study between the works of Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie* (1920), Myriam Warner-Vieyra *Juletane* (1982) and Janet Neipris's *The Agreement* (1985). This analysis is centered on the theme of women's rebellious reaction against patriarchal society's subalternity as they are portrayed in the three works. To achieve our aim we have selected two theories: Bell Hooks's *Feminism is For Every Body* (1985) and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990).

In the first chapter, relying on the theory of Bell Hooks we have analyzed women's dominated status through the new women's unfamiliarity to the 1920's American society. This state of subalternity and strangeness is shared by the French Caribbean women when returning to Africa. This equal representation of French Caribbean and American new women through the works of Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie* (1920) and Myriam Warner-Vieyra's *Juletane* (1982) is the product of the shared hostility of the 1950's African and 1920's American societies toward non conform women . Finally, comparing with the work of Janet Neipris *The Agreement* (1985), women experience less hostility being in a contemporary period.

In chapter two, we come to the analysis of women's reaction and subversion against society's domination in early 1920's and 1980's America and 1950's Africa . By the help of Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, we have first studied the non facticity of gender construction and gender role given to women in the three mentioned works and then come to the conclusion that women during the roaring twenties America rebel the same way the French Caribbean women in 1950's did. Thus, women in the roaring twenties subverted against the Victorian old values as French Caribbean's women reacted against the African

traditional image of women. As a result of women's movement in the two mentioned societies we conclude by the emancipated image of women in the 1980's shown through Janet Neipris's *The Agreement*. In fact, women's of the 1980's still quest for equality with the opposite sex.

Finally, this comparative study of the position of women under oppression and the way they struggle to gain equality with men in the American and French Caribbean works has shown that products from different backgrounds may produce similar literary productions.

## **Discussion**

### **Chapter 1: Women's Subaltern Condition**

In this chapter we will analyze the way female characters are portrayed in Eugene O'Neill's play *Anna Christie* (1920), Janet Neipris's *The Agreement* (1985) and Miryam-Warner Vieyra's *Juletane* (1982). In fact, in this chapter we will try to show how the female characters; Anna Christie, Marthy, Juletane, Helene, Sybil and Alice are seen as inferior to men. Then, we will see to what extent these female characters mirror the theory of Feminism of Bell Hooks in *Feminism is for Every Body* (1985).

#### **1- In Anna Christie**

##### **a- Anna Christie**

Anna is the main character of the play; she represents a victimized woman who wants to free herself from the dominance of the patriarchal society. Anna is a victim of male's domination who tries to rebel and be independent. In fact, she is a woman of a new era (Roaring Twenties) where flappers had gained a certain liberty such as the right to vote, smoke in public places, and many other things in life as Thomas Ladenberg confirms: "The 1920's were a time of female emancipation. After years of struggle women, won the right to vote in 1920. Daring women, Known as flappers, smoked in public, danced till three, and discovered the romantic possibilities of the automobile."<sup>1</sup> But like 1920's American women, Anna is subject of oppression.

In fact, According to Bell Hooks' theory *Feminism for Every Body*, revolutionary feminism focuses on the explanation of patriarchy as a way of domination men use to dominate women. Then, Hooks insists on making women more conscious about the oppression and sexism that men make them bear in their everyday life. Hooks explains:

Revolutionary feminist consciousness-raising emphasized the importance of learning about patriarchy as a system of domination, how it became institutionalized and how it is perpetuated and maintained. Understanding the way male domination and sexism was expressed in everyday life created awareness in women of the ways we were victimized, exploited, and, in worse case scenarios, oppressed.<sup>2</sup>

Anna is the main female character of the play *Anna Christie*. She is the daughter of Chris, a sailor who abandoned her and she is angry about him, “(angrily) His bringing me up! Is that what he tells people! I like his nerve! he let them cousins of my Old woman's keep me on their farm and work me to death like a dog.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed, Anna lives in a farm in the house of her severe cousins. So, Anna can correspond to the woman described by Bell Hooks, for she is dominated by patriarchal society that designs her as this family servant. Finally, she escapes from the house to seek for work, freedom and safe life.

In addition, when Anna goes to New York to meet her father Chris at the pub, she meets Marthy instead and informed her a great deal about her past life. She tells Marthy, "The old man of the family, his wife, and four sons. I had to slave for all of 'em. I was only a poor relation, and they treated me worse than they dare treat a hired girl. (after a moment's hesitation--somerly) It was one of the sons\_the youngest\_started me\_when I was sixteen. After that, I hated 'em so I'd killed 'em all if I'd stayed. So I run away\_to St. Paul."<sup>4</sup>. In fact, the old man, his wife, the sons and especially the younger son who starts her sexually when she was sixteen, used violence toward her.

Throughout the novel, we can notice that Anna suffers from the patriarchal society and hates men since she believes that they are the cause of her sufferance. Thus, when she is speaking to Marthy, she insists on the fact that men are disturbing her wherever she goes. Then, when Anna leaves the house of her cousins, she starts working as a nurse but men are always turning around and seeking to get her for their pleasure. Anna says:

(after a pause--with bitter hatred) It was all men's fault--the hole business. It was men on the farm ordering and beating me--and giving me the wrong start. then when I was a nurse, it was men again hanging around, bothering



me, trying to see what they could get. (She gives a hard laugh.) And now it's men all the time. Gawd, I hate 'em all, every mother's son of 'em! Don't you?<sup>5</sup>

In fact, Anna believes men guilty about her sufferance. Thus, O'Neill portrays Anna as an oppressed women during the roaring twenties (1920) in a time when women start to get more freedom in their lives and be independent. But, men still believed that women cannot reach the same status as them. In this sense, Bell Hooks is also claiming the ending of violence against women; it does not serve the demands of the feminist movement. Hooks asserts:

I am among those rare feminist theorists who believe that it is crucial for feminist movement to have as an overriding agenda ending all forms of violence against women in a manner which implies that it is more horrendous than all other forms of patriarchal violence does not serve to further the interests of feminist movement.<sup>6</sup>

From the quotation above, one may understand that women should struggle for the ending of the violence by patriarchal society and men. So, Anna is portrayed as a struggler; she defies her father and most of the men she encounters. In fact, it is noticeable from the long discussion between Chris and Burke, that they both speak of her as if they own her. Chris\_ "(to Anna\_also in an authoritative tone) You stay right here, Anna, you hear!"<sup>7</sup>. Being very authoritative, her father does not want her to stay with Burke. Then, Burke is also violent since he thinks that Anna will do what he wants. He says, "(Violently) She'll not! She'll do what I say! You've had your hold on her long enough. It's my turn now."<sup>8</sup>

From the description above, one may notice that both of Chris and Burke treat Anna as an object. Anna adds: "You're just like all the rest of them--you two! Gawd, you'd think I was a piece of furniture!"<sup>9</sup>. Thus, Anna still believes that all men are equal since they use her for their interest.

Another way of women's oppression is sexism which is thinking that one sex is superior than the opposite one. In fact, Bell Hooks in her theory *Feminism For Every Body*

(1985) argues that men see themselves as superior to women because of their gender. She explains:

But when it came to the issue of gender they were as sexist as their conservative cohorts. Individual women came from these relationships angry. And they used that anger as a catalyst for women's liberation. As the movement progressed, as feminist thinking advanced, enlightened feminist activists saw that men were not the problem, that the problem was patriarchy, sexism, and male domination.<sup>10</sup>

According to the statement above, one may notice that for Bell Hooks women of the twenties America like Anna think that men like Burke are the first cause of their suffering. In essence, for Bell hooks men's dominance is the product of patriarchy. So, from the first sight and at the beginning of their meeting, Burke insults Anna even if he does not know her yet. He was also rescued by her father from a sea storm and Anna took care of him. Burke says:

Ladies! Ho-ho! Divil mend you! Let you not be making game of me, What would ladies be doing on this bloody hulk? (As Anna attempts to go to the cabin, he lurches into her path.) Aisy, now! You're not the old square-head's woman, I suppose you'll be telling me next--living in his cabin with him, no less! (Seeing the cold, hostile expression on Anna's face, he suddenly changes his tone to one of boisterous joviality.) But I do be thinking, iver since the first look my eyes took at you, that it's a fool you are to be wasting yourself--a fine, handsome girl--on a stumpy runt of a man like that old Swede. There's too many strapping great lads on the sea would give their heart's blood for one kiss of you!"<sup>11</sup>

In *Feminism for Every Body* (1985), Bell Hooks speaks about the issue of parenting. She explains that men are not able to raise their children since they think that house holding and child bearing is for women. In fact, they think if they don't help their wives at raising children, they assert their dominance over women. Hooks argues:

The fact that no one talks about men leaving work to be full-time parents show the extent to which sexist thinking about roles prevails. Most people in our society still believe women are better at raising children than men.<sup>12</sup>

To illustrate the statement above, Chris is the best example of the father who leaves his daughter with her mother without caring about them. In fact, the mother of Anna raised her without the help of her father and after her death, Chris leaves his daughter suffer in her cousins's house. Anna says: "Didn't I write you year after year how rotten it was and what a dirty slave them cousins made of me? What'd you care? Nothing! Not even enough to come out and see me!"<sup>13</sup> In this sense, he prefers working on sea and travelling from one country to another without asking after his

daughter. However, Chris tells Anna about his experience on sea and how it is difficult to him not to see her. He argues that after he earns a sum of money, he thinks about visiting her but he spends it again. Then, he finds himself incapable of coming to her; he has always blamed the sea for this. Chris says:

(slowly) Ay tank, after your mo'der die, ven Ay vas away on voyage, it's better for you you don't never see me!(He sinks down in the chair opposite her dejectedly--then turns to her--sadly)Ay don't know, Anna, vhy Ay never come home Sveden in ole year. Ay vant come home end of every voyage. Ay vant see your mo'der, your two bro'der before dey was drowned, you ven you vas born--but--Ay--don't go. Ay sign on oder ships--go South America, go Australia, go China, go every port all over world many times--but Ay never go aboard ship sail for sveden. Ven Ay gat money for pay passage home as passenger den--(he bows his head guiltily) Ay forgat and Ay spend all money. Ven Ay tank again, it's too late. (He sighs.) Ay don't know vhy but dat's vay with most sailor fallar, Anna. Dat ole davil sea make dem crazy  
fools with her dirty tricks. It's so.<sup>14</sup>

From this, we can understand that Chris is not able to raise his daughter after the death of his wife. He hesitates about telling the truth and says he doesn't know why he leaves her. Thus, if we relate Chris to Bell Hooks idea of parenting; we will find that he represents the traditional view of parenting which dictates that child rearing is a women's role. In fact, Anna blames her father and accuses him of being a non regular father, telling him furiously, "And who's to blame for it, me or you? If you'd even acted like a man--if you'd even been a regular father and had me with you--maybe things would be different!"<sup>15</sup>

Consequently, the character of Anna represents an oppressed woman who tries to live on her own without the help of any man. In sum, Anna is portrayed as a victim of a patriarchal society under the sexism and the oppression of men.

### **b- Marthy**

Another major female character is Marthy, a non-monogamous woman, who lives with Chris without marriage. In fact, this character mirrors women of 1920. According to the theory of Bell Hooks in *Feminism for Every Body* (1985), there are women who choose to be alone without marriage and refuse sharing life with man. So, Hooks argues that there is a

group of women that consider a monogamous wedding as a relationship which makes them the property of men. Hooks says:

Others saw monogamy with men as reinforcing the idea that the female body was property belonging to the individual male she was bonded with. We chose non-monogamous relationship and often refused to marry.<sup>16</sup>

In spite of being fifty years old, Marthy lives with Chris on his barge. She is a free woman that chooses to live and behave like men, "she wears a man's cap double-breasted man's jacket"<sup>17</sup> In fact, Marthy breaks from the old traditions and she is different from the other women who choose to stay in the domestic sphere. She prefers living outside home with an old man on his barge and be free. In a stoic way, she accepts to leave Chris' barge when Anna arrives. She might fit to some particular type of feminists of whom Hooks writes that:

Concurrently within patriarchy many individual feminist women found that non-monogamous relationships often simply gave men more power while undermining women. While women will freely choose to have sex with a man who is partnered with another woman, men will often show no sexual interest in a woman who is partnered.<sup>18</sup>

According to Hooks, the character of Marthy is a non-monogamous woman that is already living with married men on their barges. She is portrayed as an independent woman who thinks that is easy to change a man since there are a lot of others on other barges. Marthy says:

Take a slant in the mirror and yuh'll see. Ho-ho! (recovering from her mirth--chuckling, scornfully) A square head tryin' to kid Marthy Owen at this late day!--after me campin' with barge men the last twenty years. I'm wise to the game, up, down, and sideways. I ain't been born and dragged up on the water front for nothing'. Think I'd make trouble, huh? Not me! I'll pack up me duds an' beat it. I'm quittin' yuh, get me? I'm telling' yuh I'm sick of stickin' with yuh, and I'm leavin' yuh flat, see? There's plenty of other guys on other barges waitin' for me.<sup>19</sup> she rejects Chris and accuses him by the other men on barge.

From the above quotation, we notice that Marthy does not care about leaving Chris. She tells Chris that she is not that kind of women that makes problems to a man who desires to leave. Marthy decides to leave Chris; she has been living with men from one barge to another for twenty years. In addition, Marthy laughs on Chris who is afraid of her reaction. Marthy remarks that, "That's the talkin' In all my time I tried never to split with a guy with no

hard feelin's. But what was yuh so scared about--that I'd kick up a row? That ain't Marthy's way. (scornfully) Think I'd break my heart to loose yuh? Commit suicide, huh? Ho-ho! Gawd! the world's full o'men if that's all I'd worry about!p"<sup>20</sup>

Consequently, Marthy is portrayed as an independent woman who chooses celibacy, living with many men. In fact, her behaviour and way of dressing show that she is a flapper. She is totally different from the traditional women in many ways; wearing skirts, drinking whisky and seeking for equal rights with men. In this regard, Bell Hooks adds: "women having the freedom to be non-monogamous women whether we exercise that freedom or not, continues to disrupt and challenge the notion that the female body belongs to men"<sup>21</sup> In this regard, Hooks insists on the fact that women who choose to be non monogamous challenge the idea that their body is the property of men. So, Marthy challenges Chris and she does not accept to be his object to throw her when he wants, and prefers leaving him since the world is full of guys like him.

As a conclusion, Anna and Marthy are oppressed by the patriarchal American society during the 1920's. Indeed, Anna is a victim of all the men she has met in her life starting by her cousins, her father to end with her lover who finally asks her for marriage. This means that Anna at the end accepts to limit her freedom by marrying Burke. While, Marthy is seen as a flapper who is oppressed by men on barges but she chooses to be free by being a non-monogamous woman, that is to say, she is against marriage and wants to revolutionize men's grip over women.

## 2- In Juletane

### a- Juletane

For Bell Hooks, feminist movement is to defend the right of women without any interference in men; it is to protect females from the oppression of men. "Feminist movement created the context for female bonding. We did not bond against men, we bonded to protect our interests as women."<sup>22</sup> In fact, men see women as their properties, sexual objects and consider them as inferior. "That foundation rested on our critique of what we then called "the enemy within, referring to out internalized sexism. We all knew firsthand that we had been socialized as females by patriarchal thinking to see ourselves as inferior to men."<sup>23</sup>

Accordingly, Juletane, the major character of the novella *Juletane* (1982), suffers from the sexism and the oppression of her husband. Indeed, she is an educated Caribbean women who lives and studies in France but returning to Senegal shortly after her marriage. Juletane is married to Mamadou an African who she met in Paris. Thus, they spend unforgettable moments in Paris but Mamadou has never talked about his wife and daughter in Senegal. Jultane observes that, "I was expecting anything, but not that. That Mamadou had had another women before me, that was possible; but that he was already a husband and father, that I could not comprehend. Would I have been more shocked if he had confessed to being a thief, a criminal? I don't know."<sup>24</sup>

In fact, Juletane is an educated woman who is always dreaming of a prince, but all her dreams vanished after hearing the hidden truth of Mamadou. Juletane said, "I felt as if the world no longer existed, as if all life around me had suddenly stopped. I said nothing. My throat was tight, I was paralyzed by what I had just heard."<sup>25</sup> Juletane was born in the West Indies, more precisely in Guadeloupe, but she is educated in France. So, Juletane represents

the Caribbean women of 1980's who live in France and depicts the cultural obstacles that they face when marrying Senegalese men.

In addition, Juletane cannot accept polygamy. She is not that kind of women who accepts everything done or told by a husband. Juletane is portrayed as being oppressed by the rules of a patriarchal society and laws dictated by men. "I did not want half a husband, neither did I want to take a little girl's father away from her. Mamadou refused to see my point of view."<sup>26</sup> From what has been said by Juletane , we can notice that she thinks that her marriage to Mamadou will take him away from his daughter.

As Bell Hooks asserts, Juletane is shown as an inferior women as regards her husband's behavior. In fact, when Juletane and Mamadou visit relatives, Mamadou does not give much importance to Juletane. He just introduces her and neglects her afterwards; he never cares about her feelings when she is left alone. Thus, she starts to question herself about the way women are seen by men in Senegal. From what she saw, it seems that women have no essential role in their life but they just exist to provide pleasure and to be machines for producing children. Juletane argues:

He would carry on conversations for hours in his native language, with no regard for me. We had to pay a great number of visits to friends and relatives. Whenever we went out he would introduce me, then forget me in a corner, like some discarded object, surrounded by a group of women who were smiling and kind, but who spoke no French. I saw him at a distance, chatting with the men. Neither could I understand this sort of segregation where women seemed to have no importance in a man's life, except for his pleasure or as the mother of children.<sup>27</sup>

Another representation of women as oppressed and inferior to men is shown when they have paid a visit to a general practitioner, "The doctor, a man this time, apparently understood nothing of my problem. He talked mainly with Mamadou, prescribed medication, rest, quiet, and a nutritious diet."<sup>28</sup> From this quotation, we may understand that the doctor is not interested in the real reason which makes Juletane sick; he just talks with Mamadou and

prescribes medication to him instead of her. In fact, she sees all men like her husband who never cares about women's needs.

Indeed, Juletane represents the oppressed women in Africa even if she was educated in France, her society is patriarchal and she cannot free herself from the domination of man. During the baptism of Mamadou's first child, she describes her husband as a monster even if he is handsome. "He was handsome. A handsome monster, selfish, proud on his day of glory."<sup>29</sup> Thus, that day was a happy day for Mamadou, who ignored Jultaner, "I was weeping over Mamadou, so happy, who, in this moment of joy, was not thinking of the pain that he was causing me and which he would pay for one day."<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, Bell Hooks says that, "Women are not oppressed by men but they also receive violence from the same sex which causes violence on children from both sexes".<sup>31</sup> The novella *Juletane* is a good example of the bad treatment of women by other women and how children were also victims of this violence. Thus, the West Indian women (the Caribbean women) of the 1950's were badly viewed and harshly represented. "Women in the works of the Guadeloupian writer Myriam Warner-Vieyra often find themselves outsiders, shackled by "madness" and pushed to the periphery of society by imperial and patriarchal forces."<sup>32</sup> Indeed, Juletane is a Caribbean woman who is depicted by the author as an oppressed woman by different patriarchal forces.

In this sense, Bell Hooks adds that:

Patriarchal violence in the home is based on the belief that it is acceptable for a more powerful individual to control others through various forms of coercive force. This expanded definition of domestic violence includes male violence against women, same-sex violence, and adult violence against children.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, Juletane is not only oppressed by men but she is a victim of women's domination too. She suffers a lot from Ndeye the third wife who is always behind her; she



does not lose any opportunity to show violence. She stays under the tree and starts speaking with her friends in the direction of Juletane to make her suffer more.

"Ndeye is foaming with rage. She continuous to gesture in my direction, jangling her numerous gold bracelets, one of the many reasons for the chronic shortage of money we have been suffering for the past two years."<sup>34</sup>

So, by the time that the family lives a financial crisis, Ndeye continues to show off her gold bracelets which were bought by Mamadou who is the husband of three wives but buys the precious things just for Ndeye. In addition, Ndeye hates Juletane from the first moment she comes with Mamadou as a third wife "the hatred she feels for me is evident, but inexplicable."<sup>35</sup> In fact, Ndeye makes Juletane suffers a lot and the only thing that makes Juletane relaxe and forget about her situation is listening to Beethoven music. Ndeye dislikes hearing to this music, "Ndeye does not like this kind of music. I know what would become of my records if they fell into her hands."<sup>36</sup>

In this sense, according to Bell Hooks, Juletane is a subject of discrimination not only of men but also of women like Ndeye the new wife of Mamadou. Another act of oppression towards Juletane is that Ndeye tries always to let her without food. In fact, she has the habit of giving the food that remains to young *talibés* in order to be sure that when Juletane comes to eat later will find nothing. "Ndeye hastened to give what was left to two young talibés, to ensure that I could not come and eat later, as I sometimes do."<sup>37</sup>

Another kind of women's oppression is racism and Hooks wants the establishment of feminist sisterhood in order to have a successful feminist movement. But, a group of women usually dominates other women because of racism and class differences. "Sisterhood could never have been possible across the boundaries of race and class if individual women had not been willing to divest of their power to dominate and exploit subordinated groups of women. As long as women are using class or race power to dominate other women, feminist sisterhood cannot be fully realized."<sup>38</sup> Thus, if women are racists towards one another, this

means that the movement of feminist sisterhood that seeks for the equal rights under a patriarchal society will never be realized. To prove the idea above, Ndeye is a racist woman who is against Juletane and never tries to be friendly with her, "With the white wives of the colonials. She was quite simply identifying me She was even stripping me of my identity as a black woman"<sup>39</sup>. So, Juletane is racially reprimanded by Ndeye who identifies her to the white colonial wives since she comes from France.

Throughout the novel, Juletane is shown as an inferior woman who is oppressed by the two sexes. First, she is dominated by her husband Mamadou that neglects her after hiding the truth of being married. Thus, knowing that Mamadou has another wife causes sufferance to Juletane. As an educated woman, she has already dreamt of meeting her love prince and has never thought of sharing her husband with other women. Then, Mamadou is not the only person who oppresses Juletane. She even suffers from Ndeye who does not let her live a day without directing insults to her; she calls her mad woman.

In this sense, Bell Hooks speaks about violence which takes many directions. Indeed, violence from men to women, from women to women and finally violence from the both sex towards children. Thus, she says that "women are not oppressed by men but they also receive violence from the same sex which causes violence on children from both sexes."<sup>40</sup>

Therefore, the harsh living of Juletane makes her suffer from many sides. But, the only thing which gives her hope and makes her happy is the children of Awa. After her accident and the death of her child, she becomes completely sad and never speaks to anyone, not even to Mamadou, except the children. Juletane loves them so much, but after their death she is lost in her thinking about who was the responsible of their death. Juletane says:

And about the children's death. Who is responsible for their death...? Didn't they prescribe drops for me? Drops that Mamadou himself was to make me take, and that were to be kept out of the children's reach...? Of course, Mamadou had given them to me, telling me 'No more than ten drops, all right?' At that moment, he was thinking if I swallowed the whole bottle I would solve my problem. This medicine could take care  
41  
of other things...Here come the children.

In this passage, Juletane asks questions about the death of the children, as if she is responsible, "I had taken the bottle intending to swallow a few drops, as I sometimes did to have a quiet night. I found it empty in the pocket of my dress, the next day, the day after the children's death. I could not explain how it had got there. Perhaps it was not properly closed and spilled accidentally...I prefer this explanation. I would not like to know I was responsible for the death of the children."<sup>42</sup> So, Juletane does not want to think that she is responsible of the death of the children even if she is sure that she is the cause of their death. All the violence she experiences might have caused her violence toward the children.

Consequently, according to Bell Hooks's theory, the Character Juletane depicts the life of an oppressed woman who suffers a lot from male's and female's domination. Then, Juletane represents the Caribbean women who have been educated in France. But when they return to their home country, they are often oppressed by men and by the traditions of West Africa during 1950's.

#### **b- Helene**

Another important character in the novella *Juletane* (1982) is Helene. She is reading the diary of Juletane. This diary is found when she is preparing to move into her spacious apartment after she has already decided to marry in order to have a child. Indeed, she is an educated Caribbean woman. She is in love with Hector who leaves her two months before they get married. It was for another woman who is already pregnant. "Two months before the wedding day Hector had sent his best friend to announce to Helene that he had been married the previous day to a French girl who was expecting his child."<sup>43</sup>

Helene suffers a lot from her first love. Then, she chooses to be alone, and never thinks of sharing her life with a man. In this sense, Bell Hooks argues that women have liberty to live either with other women or staying alone, "Some heterosexual women decided that they would choose celibacy or lesbianism over seeking after unequal relationships with

sexist men.”<sup>44</sup> Besides, Warner writes that, “A woman could live by herself. She had sworn never to suffer again because of a man”<sup>45</sup> Indeed, Helene decides to free herself and swore never to suffer again by a man. Then, she takes Ousemane as husband for the purpose of making a child.

She had recently decided to get married, for the simple reason that she wanted a child of her own. She was fond of her husband-to-be. He was ten years her junior, a handsome athletic man, six feet tall, eighty kilos, gentle as a lamb. She was his superior financially and intellectually. Too independent by nature, she could not<sup>46</sup> have tolerated a husband who would dominate her, make decisions, take the lead.

Helene chooses Ousemane as a husband since she is superior to him financially and intellectually. She does not want to marry a man who will dominate her later; a man who takes decisions and she wants to be the leader in a couple's life. Thus, through the description of Helene, we notice that she does not conform to the values of Caribbean African woman who are under the oppression of their husbands in Africa (1950). But, she represents the independent woman of 1950's who seeks for independence from the oppression of man in different ways of domination.

Moreover, Bell Hooks criticizes the feminist movement since she sees that men were victims of patriarchy and support women in their feminist movement, she argues:

Before contemporary feminist movement was less than 10 years old, feminist thinkers began to talk about the way in which patriarchy was harmful to men. Without changing our fierce critique of male domination feminist politics expanded to include the recognition that patriarchy stripped men of certain rights, imposing on<sup>47</sup> them a sexist masculine identity.

In this regard, the sufferance of men from the sexist thinking pushed them to the participation in the movement, “these men became our comrades in our struggle”.<sup>48</sup> So, a small number of men try to help women in their struggle and quest for liberty from the oppression of the patriarchal societies that cause even disaster for men. To illustrate the idea above, Helene doesn't get support from her big brother Jacques. He is afraid of the decision which is taken by his sister and does not want her to be rejected from her husband after marriage. Jacques says:

He is dazzled by your physical, material and intellectual ease and confidence. But for how long? In four or five years, when your menopause begins with all its discomfort, when his ardour for you has cooled, he won't abandon you but he will use your money to marry and take care of a second, young, wife. You will only have two choices: to leave him, hurt and rejected, or to agree to share him. What<sup>49</sup> then?

In fact, Jacques advises her to not marry Ousmane. He wanted to keep her from sufferance and he thought that with time Ousmane will leave her in the future. This can be considered as the result of the sexist view of women as sexual object since Jacques is assuming that Helene's value is restricted to her body and beauty. Then, as he is her brother, he should support her in her life since they live in a patriarchal society. Indeed, Helene lives in Africa (1950) and at that time the Caribbean women were so oppressed by men even if they were educated. Thus, the traditional values of this society are an obstacle to women who want to free themselves from male's domination.

Consequently, The novella *Juletane* depicts the eponymous heroine Juletane and Helene as oppressed. Throughout our analyses, we came to conclude that Juletane stands for the victim of the African old traditions and accepts to be inferior under the domination of her husband even if she has had the choice to leave him. She has remained silent, so she resembles more or less the other co-wives. However, Helene is suffering less than Juletane and learns from her experience. Thus, she chooses to be alone and independent though she finally accepts to marry and have children.

### **3- In The Agreement (1985)**

Janet Neipris's *The Agreement* (1985) is a contemporary work which deals with the issue of divorce in the American society. The author depicts women's problems with men; their divorce and puts emphasis on how women were seen at that period (1985's). In fact, this period was characterized by women independence and the winning of several rights like work and sexual liberty. "Women were beginning to be influential in their own right, not just as extensions of their husbands' power and prestige"<sup>50</sup> This means that women started to be

active in the society by being responsible and having the right to give their opinions . But, men were still showing sexism and tried to oppress them by different ways.

#### **a- Sybil**

Sybil is the main female character of the play; she is the wife of Sigmund. Sybil takes care of her children since her separation with her husband though she is worker at the same time. So, according to Bell Hooks, the main focus of the contemporary feminist movement is to challenge sexism that is still shown towards women. She says: "Challenging sexist thinking about the female body was one of the most powerful interventions made by contemporary feminist movement."<sup>51</sup>

Speaking about the idea of sexism, *The Agreement* (1985) is written in the contemporary period where there are still sexist men. In fact, Sybil goes out on divorce with her husband Sigmund. Then, when the couple meets at the court along with their lawyers, each one has tried to be the cause of their divorce. Indeed, Alice the lawyer of Sybil defends her client by saying that: "Cut the baloney, doctor. You preyed on this woman, demanding favors, refusing coffee of the instant type, laughing at her large buttocks."<sup>52</sup> In fact, Alice defends Sybil by saying that Sigmund insult his wife for her physical appearance and laughs on her large buttocks. In this sense, Sigmund continues insulting his wife and saying: "Why don't I tell them how you slept with your mouth open."<sup>53</sup>.

Furthermore, sexism is also shown by Lyster the lawyer of Sigmund in a much similar way to Bell Hooks' view when he affirms, "Lyster hates all women now. His wife ran away with her secretary"<sup>54</sup> So the fact that his wife lets him and runs with another man makes him a sexist man. Thus, Lyster is in Sigmund's side, and each time he interrupts and says that all women are equal in their behavior: "You women think you're the only ones in the world who ever poached an egg, prepared a report, and looked gorgeous--all the same time."<sup>55</sup> Indeed, Lyster directs his statement to Sybil but Alice is always here to defend her, "I think you

should be disqualified for that sexist statement.”<sup>56</sup> From the previous statement, we may notice that the way the lawyer is defending Sigmund is by showing that Sybil is always inferior to him. Lyster does not stop insulting Sybil: “(to Alice) you haven't got a case and you know it. Sybil Matchett's crazy, a highly eccentric personality, classified according to the American Psychiatric Association under file 509, "bizarrrity as a Classical Disorder.”<sup>57</sup> In this sense, the lawyer thinks Sybil is crazy and has a bizarre personality.

Another act of oppression towards women can be seen in the play through the domination of men and by being unfaithful to their wives. In this regard, Bell Hooks in her theory *Feminism is for Every Body* (1985) says:

When contemporary feminist movement first began there was a fierce anti-male faction. Individual heterosexual women came to the movement from relationship where men were cruel, unkind, violent, unfaithful. Many of these men were radical thinkers who participated in movements for social justice, speaking out on behalf of the workers, the poor, speaking out on racial justice.<sup>58</sup>

So, according to Bell Hooks, the issues contemporary feminists address are those of the domination, violence and unfaithfulness. But there are many other men that support women in this movement, defending them and seeking for a social justice. In fact, Sigmund is unfaithful to his wife. Accordingly, Sigmund asserts: “Dating a lot. (pause) It stinks. That's correct. I date a lot. I have dated twenty-two women in the past year, and I have noted a certain pattern; they jog, the drink white wine spritzers, and make quiche on request. Oh, the quiches I've conquered, the millions of mushrooms and broccoli.”<sup>59</sup> He avows his many dates to his wife while they are waiting for the outcome of their divorce agreement.

Furthermore, when Sybil is speaking with her date, she tells him about her separation with her husband, informing him that she knows from her children that he sleeps with his girl friend Auntie Bambi in Florida. "Auntie Bambi slept in his room I'll bet.”<sup>60</sup> So, Sigmund is unfaithful and Sybil is certain that her husband is sleeping with another woman. Added to this, Lester defends his client and says that he has all the right to be with other women even if

he is married. "My client has every right to participate in social contract with the opposite sex."<sup>61</sup>

However, according to Bell Hooks, there are a lot of other men who are in the side of women and defend her and look for justice. Sigmund can be considered as one of them since he is asking for an agreement with his wife. Sigmund: "God, all we want is an agreement."<sup>62</sup> Besides, when Lyster insults Sybil on the fact that she is an incapable woman and cannot even cook an apple pie, Sigmund refutes this, "Yes, she can! She certainly can. I was married to her, so I know."<sup>63</sup> Indeed, Sigmund is sure that his wife is able to cook since he was married to her and he knows her more than the others would say. In this context, when Alice says about Sybil that she is crazed, Sigmund does not also agree, "Sybil was never crazed. She is a very rational woman."<sup>64</sup> Sigmund is defending his wife and says to Alice that she is a rational woman.

Moreover to Bell Hooks, Sigmund supports his wife against unkind men like Lyster who directs insults to her. "Come on, Alice, You're defending a hot chick here. Admit it."<sup>65</sup> In fact, he says to Alice that she is defending a hot chick but Sigmund again refuses to admit that, "*My wife is definitely not a hot chick.*"<sup>66</sup>

In the contemporary feminist movement, one of the main focus is children. In fact, Bell Hooks is among the feminists who give much importance to the issue of parenting. In this sense, Bell Hooks in *Feminism Is for Every Body* (1985) insists on the importance of male parenting and their equal participation in raising children. Then, the relation of the parents will be better and the equal participation of parenting makes the two parts have a positive experience. Bell Hooks adds:

Positively feminist interventions called attention to the value and importance of male parenting both in regards to the well-being of children and gender equity. When males participate equally in parenting, relationships between women and men are better, whether the two parents are married or live together or separately. Because of feminist movement more men do more parenting than ever before, yet we have not achieved even a sumblance of gender equity. And we know that this equal participation makes parenting a more positive and fullfiling experience for all parties involved.<sup>67</sup>



To illustrate the statement above, Sigmund is in disagreement with his lawyer when he tells him that Sybil should give some furniture to her husband. "I agree. That's crazy, Lester. The kids and her have to live, sleep, work, sit in a chair, to do whatever it is people do every day to use up the time."<sup>68</sup> So, Sigmund is thinking about his children and wants them to live in a comfortable way. In other words, according to Bell Hooks more the parents participate in raising their children. Parenting then will be positive and Sigmund participates in educating his children since he is seeking for the interests of his children even if they are separated.

In addition, Bell Hooks develops the idea of marriage and argues that the main cause of divorce is male's domination. For her, it is the primary force in breaking the relation of a married couple and there are successful marriages where the husband and wife have equal responsibilities. This is the reason of their happiness and even if the couple goes out to divorce, their friendly relationship continues after divorce.

Patriarchal male domination in marriage and partnerships has been the primary force creating breakups and divorces in our society. All recent studies of successful marriages show that gender equity creates a context where each member of the couple is likely to be affirmed. This affirmation creates greater happiness, and, even if the marriage does not last forever, the peer friendship that has been the foundation of the bond continues.<sup>69</sup>

From the above quotation, Sybil might be seen equal to other women of the contemporary period who live under a dominant sexist man. Like most them, Sybil is an independent woman who works and takes care of her children. As a result, she rebels by engaging a divorce indictment. Despite their divorce at the end of the play, they still love each other. They are still friends and headed together to the airport, after their divorce: "Come on, Sybil. (pause) to the airport."<sup>70</sup>

#### **b- Alice**

She is another important female character. She is Sybil's lawyer and she has no place for sentiments. From the beginning of her meeting with Sybil, she is in favor of going in that divorce affair "Beautiful day for divorce"<sup>71</sup>. So, for her it is a nice day to divorce even if she

knows that she is going to separate a married couple with children. Indeed, Alice represents the modern women of the American society. She stands to confront man's sexist and cultural oppression. According to Bell Hooks, in the feminist movement, there are a number of women who are not satisfied by the presence of the anti-sexist men since they think all men are oppressors. In fact, it encourages the interests of feminists who want to establish a greater class movement and access to forms of patriarchy to cause the separation of men and women. Then, they try to portray men as the enemy of women, or the victims. Thus, the focus on men would make some women feminists deviate from future class and power privilege. Those individual activists pushed women to reject men. In this sense Bell Hooks says:

Anti-male fractions within the feminist movement resented the presence of anti-sexist men because their presence served to counter any insistence that all men are oppressors, or that all men hate women. It promoted the interests of feminist women who were seeking greater class mobility and access to forms of patriarchal power to polarize men and women by putting us in neat categories of oppressor/oppressed. They portrayed all men as the enemy in order to represent all women as victims. This focus on men deflected attention from the class privilege of individual feminist activists as well as their desire to increase their class power. Those individual activists who called on all women to reject men refused to look at either the caring bonds women shared with men or the economic and emotional ties ( however positive or negative) that bind women to men who are sexist.<sup>72</sup>

This shows clearly that Alice is like those who reject men and treat them as enemies. Then, she looks for the separation of all the bonds that relate Sybil to Sigmund, either economic or emotional. Indeed, Alice seeks for the divorce of a couple who loves each other and who has got children. In this regard, When Alice is defending her client she calls the adversary as the enemy "It's high. Your expenses are high. That's good. We'll have a better case against the enemy."<sup>73</sup> This means that Alice seeks to prove that Sybil is oppressed and is a victim of Sigmund.

Another instance that shows Alice as a radical woman is the way she defends Sybil. In fact, she promises her, "I can only promise a good fight, not justice."<sup>74</sup> So, Alice seems like she is in a war and does not seek for justice. In addition, Alice ensures her client not to worry, "Don't worry, Mrs. Matchett. You know what they say about me. That my knife goes in so quietly you never see the blood."<sup>75</sup> Thus, Alice says to Sybil that she is not easy and asks her to ask people how they talk about her. Sybil knows very well how to proceed in such a divorce affair.

Furthermore, Alice is a strong woman who is confident in her defense of Sybil. Alice dares to threaten Lester, "You're going to be weeping in your scotch, Lester Ostermeyer. I'm warning you."<sup>76</sup> In this regard, Bell Hooks asserts:

...But when it came to the issue of gender they were as sexist as their conservative cohorts. Individual women came from these relationships angry. And they used that anger as a catalyst for women's liberation.<sup>77</sup>

In fact, there is a group of angry women who encourage other women for their liberation. Thus, Alice according to Bell Hooks is a defender of Sybil; she encourages her to liberate herself from Sigmund.

Through our analyses of Sybil and Alice, we can conclude that both of them depict the image of the educated women in America during 1980's where educational opportunities for women continued to expand. "In the 20th century, however, women in most nations won the right to vote and increased their educational and job opportunities. Perhaps most important, they fought for and to a large degree accomplished a reevaluation of traditional views of their role in society".<sup>78</sup> In fact, Sybil and Alice are women who still face the issue of sexism in their life though they finally accomplish success against the traditional views of the patriarchal society.

As a conclusion, in this chapter we analyzed the main female characters in the three works. Then, we came to conclude that the three authors provided the reader with an insight on how women are seen as inferior to men in two different societies and at three different periods of time. In fact, all the female characters experienced oppression even if the way they are dominated differs from one character to another. So, they are victims of the patriarchal societies that pushed them to seek freedom.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> <http://digitalhistory.uh.edu>
- <sup>2</sup> Bell Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody* (USA :South End Press Cambridge MA, ,1985. 7.
- <sup>3</sup> Travis Bogard, O'Neil Complete Plays 1913-1920 (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 1998), 972.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid., 972-973.
- <sup>6</sup> Bell Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*, 62.
- <sup>7</sup> Travis Bogard, O'Neil Complete Plays 1913-1920, 1006.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., 1007.
- <sup>10</sup> Bell Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*,67.
- <sup>11</sup> Travis Bogard, O'Neil Complete Plays 1913-1920, 985-986.
- <sup>12</sup> Bell Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*,83.
- <sup>13</sup> Travis Bogard, O'Neil Complete Plays 1913-1920, 1008.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., 975.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., 1009.
- <sup>16</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*,79.
- <sup>17</sup> Travis Bogard, O'Neil Complete Plays 1913-1920, 962.
- <sup>18</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*,80.
- <sup>19</sup> Travis Bogard, O'Neil Complete Plays 1913-1920, 966.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., 966-967.
- <sup>21</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*, 80-81.
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid., 15.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 14.
- <sup>24</sup> Myriam Warner- Vieira, *Juletane* (Paris: Presence Africaine, 1982), 14.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.,22.
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid., 23-24.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid., 38.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., 39.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>31</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*, 65.
- <sup>32</sup> Myriam Warner- Vieira, *Juletane*, 1.
- <sup>33</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*, 61.
- <sup>34</sup> Myriam Warner - Vieira, *Juletane*, 4.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid., 48
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., 50.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., 15-16.
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid.,42.
- <sup>40</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*, 65.
- <sup>41</sup> Myriam Warner- Vieira, *Juletane*, 70.
- <sup>42</sup> Ibid., 74.
- <sup>43</sup> Ibid., 27.
- <sup>44</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*, 79.
- <sup>45</sup> Myriam Warner- Vieira, *Juletane*, 28.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., 1.
- <sup>47</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*, 68.

- <sup>48</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>49</sup> Myriam Warner- Vieyra, *Juletane*, 20.
- <sup>50</sup> <http://m.infobareel.com>
- <sup>51</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*, 31.
- <sup>52</sup> Ramon Delgado: *The Best Short Plays 1986* (New York: Applause Theatre Books, 1986), 229.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid., 233.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid., 226.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid., 234.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>58</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*, 67.
- <sup>59</sup> Ramon Delgado: *The Best Short Plays 1986*, 236.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid., 227.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid., 229.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid., 228.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid., 230.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid., 233.
- <sup>66</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>67</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*, 82.
- <sup>68</sup> Ramon Delgado: *The Best Short Plays 1986*, 239.
- <sup>69</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*, 84.
- <sup>70</sup> Ramon Delgado: *The Best Short Plays 1986*, 242.
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid., 223.
- <sup>72</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*, 68-69.
- <sup>73</sup> Ramon Delgado: *The Best Short Plays 1986*, 224.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid.,
- <sup>75</sup> Ibid., 226.
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid., 227.
- <sup>77</sup> Hooks, *Feminism for Everybody*, 67.
- <sup>78</sup> <http://www.wic.org/misc/history.htm>

## Chapter Two: Gender's Performativity and Subversion

In this chapter, our intention will be devoted to the portrayal of women in Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie* (1920), Janet Neipris's *The Agreement* (1985) and Myriam Warner Vieyra's *Jultane* (1982). Our study is concerned with the comparison of women's subversion in different countries through the lives of the female characters in three different periods of time.

### 1- In Anna Christie (1920)

#### a- Anna Christie

O'Neill's *Anna Christie* is a mirror of the roaring twenties America. It mirrors the time of technological and industrial growth, most notably the time of the new woman. In fact, the new woman is the one who is unfamiliar to the old patriarchal society. She is the one who does not respect the gender role that is traditionally imposed on women. According to Judith Butler, this new woman is not struggling against her natural being but against the narrow social position she is given. She is trying to subvert the constructed identity that social institutions imposed. Society makes of the subjects a *tenuously constituted in time identity*<sup>1</sup>, which means that the role given to woman in society is just a culturally made one, not a natural one. Butler states,

When Simone de Beauvoir claims, "one is not born, but, rather, becomes a woman," she is appropriating and reinterpreting this doctrine of constituting acts from the phenomenological tradition.' In this sense, gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather, it is an identity tenuously constituted in time- an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self.<sup>2</sup>

From this extracts, we understand that identities constituted in society are the results of repeated acts. The implications of culturally constructed identities are very real. The emphasis on social construction makes them more susceptible to critique and possible transformation. . A subject, then, acquires his identity through repetition of stylized acts. Thus, woman is a

social product; all of her gestures, movements and enactments are dictated by her environment and culture. Woman learns in her society how to be a woman and thus how to conform to social conventions. This is the case in the Victorian society where woman is taught either by religion or by her family to serve man; to be a mother; and more importantly, woman is taught to believe that she is by nature inferior to man. “During the twenties, the American Woman started to appear on covers as a mature woman, a mother, a nurse, but already she was depicted outside her home quite many times”<sup>3</sup>, Zsófia Anna Tóth states in her article *The (im)morality of the New Woman in the Early 20th Century*, thus this image of respectable woman in her domestic sphere is for Victorian beliefs is the suitable one.

In this context, Butler, however, adds that if a gender identity is just the repetition of acts, not a natural facticity, and if identities are what a subject acquires through time, woman has the possibility to change her identity subversively, which means breaking the laws imposed by society over her body and emotions. She states:

If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or sub- versive repetition of that style.<sup>4</sup>

Then, woman can act differently since her identity is not determined by natural facts, but constructed through social practices. This type of woman can be shown perfectly by the flappers of the twenties in America when O’Neill’s *Anna Christie* was published. New generation of women appeared; they were called flappers. Flappers were young fashionable, slender girls who looked differently from traditional girls. They partied hard and smoked heavily. It was the time when women started to do sports, go to college, to work, and dress more comfortably, seeking only life pleasures previously forbidden by Victorian morality. In his Book *Handbook to life in America: The roaring Twenties*, Rodney P. Carlisle sums up a description of this new generation of women as follows:

Flappers were young women, especially those from late teenage years to 30, who engage in a scandalous activities and flouted the conventions of the previous generations. While every generation has its rebellious teenagers , there was a common thread among flappers that went beyond their bobbed hair and cigarette holders: they openly and proudly disdained authority , presumably in response to the obvious ubiquity of drinking despite prohibition , and the signal therefore that authority was limited in its real<sup>5</sup> power.

*Anna Christie* is a product of a period of rapid change in all domains of life in America. Modernity was occupying all fields of life. Old values were decaying, especially the image of the Victorian traditional woman.. This detail, in essence, is mentioned in O'Neill's *Anna Christie*, for he introduces a female characters Anna and Marthy.

Anna, the daughter of Chris Christopherson, is left alone after her mother's death. Then she goes to live in a farm with her cousins after the departure of her father. He is to spend a twenty-year period without seeing her. Anna is introduced for the first time on stage entering to a bar, the only place that her father told her to find him in his letters to her. In fact, O'Neill portrays her as a non Victorian woman: *"Her youthful face is already hard and cynical beneath its layer of make-up. Her clothes are the tawdry finery of peasant stock turned prostitute. She comes and sinks wearily in a chair by the table, left front."*<sup>6</sup>

From the above description, O'Neill describes the roaring twenties woman as one who dared to wear makeup on her face. Actually, makeup is used as a symbol of prostitution though Anna uses it to hide her innocence. Anna is one of those girls who caused controversy in America during that time. She enjoys her freedom since she has left her cousins who enslaved her. Victorian women were initially prepared for reproduction and child rearing, which means their inescapable restriction to the domestic sphere. However, Anna leaves her cousins in order to seek economical sufficiency. She has worked as a governess, and then turned to prostitution.

Another illustration of Anna's subversion from the play is her intensive drinking. At her arrival to the bar, she orders whiskey, "Gimme a whiskey-ginger ale on the side. "Then,



as LARRY turns to go, forcing a winning smile at him. And don't be stingy, baby.”<sup>7</sup> Women were not allowed to drink wine at that time. Also, one of the dominant features of twenties America was the prohibition. In 1919, the eighteenth amendment of the constitution prohibited drinking or consumption, transportation and manufacture of intoxicating liquor.

According to Judith Butler, society makes laws that suits a category of gender first, and then oppresses other gender minorities. In essence, these are the old values strategy in American society during the Victorian era. Thus, a woman should sacrifice her life to comfort males. For Judith Butler, one should rebel against these culturally made norms. She writes to criticize other feminists:

Feminist theory which presupposes sexual difference as the necessary and invariant theoretical point of departure clearly improves upon those humanist discourses which conflate the universal with the masculine and appropriate all of culture as masculine property.<sup>8</sup>

In this quotation, Butler says that humanist discourse has placed males as the lords of the world and females as their slaves. Society, through time, divides social roles between woman and man in ways that suit man and oppress woman.

Relating Butler's social analysis to *Anna Christie*, Anna conforms to an oppressed woman who is enslaved by her mother's cousins. She has worked hard in the farm as she says to Marthy:

I should say not! The old man of the family, his wife, and four sons—I had to slave for all of 'em. I was only a poor relation, and they treated me worse than they dare treat a hired girl. [After a moment's hesitation—somerly.] It was one of the sons—the youngest—started me—when I was sixteen. After that, I hated 'em so I'd killed 'em all if I'd stayed. So I run away—to St. Paul. (O'Neil:972)

From this extract, we notice that Anna is a fierce woman who could not stand this enslavement by a patriarchal society, so her flight to Saint Paul is a rebellion against this position because she has always been aware that she has had the right for a better life, and that

she can rely only on herself to gain a living. In fact, Anna does not accept living in such an oppressive society.

Furthermore rape is another important kind of oppression that has been exercised upon women and has been widely discussed. Butler says:

A similar line of reasoning is at work in discourses on rape when the "sex" of a woman is claimed as that which establishes the responsibility for her own violation. The defense attorney in the New Bedford gang rape case asked the plaintiff, "If you're living with a man, what are you doing running around the streets getting raped?"<sup>10</sup>

In this quotation, Butler discusses the patriarchal thinking about women. If a woman is getting raped, the blame will be put on her since her place is at home with her husband, not at work. Thus, when Anna arrived to the bar, she tells Marthy about her cousin who started abusing her:

It was all men's fault—the whole business. It was men on the farm ordering and beating me—and giving me the wrong start. Then when I was a nurse, it was men again hanging around, bothering me, trying to see what they could get. [She gives a hard laugh.] And now it's men all the time. Gawd, I hate 'em all, every mother's son of 'em! Don't you?<sup>11</sup>

Anna is considered by her cousin not only a slave but a sexual object. Anna is raped, so no law can protect her as Butler states above. Society supports male's domination and blames woman even after being raped. Moreover, Anna expresses her deep hatred toward man because it is his fault that she became a prostitute. Even when she finds the work as governess, men look to what they can get from her. In fact all what happens to Anna can be related to the sexual-object role given to woman by dominant society.

In addition, Butler's quotation above can be well illustrated in the life portrayal of Anna. Butler explains that in patriarchal societies women are regulated by man. Woman's place is portrayed as being in the domestic sphere. So, for Anna there is no place for her on the barges As Mat Burke tells her as soon as he meets her: "*Ladies! Ho-ho! Divil mend you! Let you not be making game of me. What would ladies be doing on this bloody hulk?*"<sup>12</sup>. This

signifies that at that time ladies were not supposed to live on barges like the solitary fisherman. If they do, then they must be prostitutes. If a woman goes beyond patriarchal society, she is not accepted or respected. As Anna runs from the house of her cousins and finds for herself a job, men consider her as an easy woman. Mat Burke's deduction about Anna is unconsciously dictated to him by the dominant cultural way of thinking of that time. This category of women which attempts to subvert the gender role imposed by their culture is to be punished as Butler puts it:

Hence, as a strategy of survival, gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences. Discrete genders are part of what 'humanizes' individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished.<sup>13</sup>

From Anna's experience, it has been possible to demonstrate how much Anna can be considered as role model of a Butlerian subversive woman. Anna refuses to enact the social role she was allotted, so she is punished by being disrespected and 'othered'. In *Anna Christie*, Anna's subversion and attempt to free herself from her cousin's enslavement and work makes her be targeted by male's sexual oppression; even her vacation on the barge with her father is considered by Mat not good for her social image since his socially-acquired logic assumes that woman is just for home.

Anna's search for the self appears in her denial of men's authority, when struggling with her father and Matt Burk. She refuses to be the property of anybody, either her father or Matt. Unlike the traditional view of women as an object, Anna makes it clear in the play by saying: "First thing is, I want to tell you two guys something. You was going on's if one of you had got to own me. But nobody owns me see?\_ 'cepting myself. I will do I please and no man, I don't give a hoot who he is, can tell me what to do. I ain't asking either of you for a living"<sup>14</sup>. She even threatens her father to leave him and return to prostitution for her economical support.

### **b- Marthy**

O'Neil's *Anna Christie* portrays also another rebellious female character Marthy. She is that kind of women who lives freely, an uncontrollable twenties American woman. Women of her kind are not respected. The social view of free women is represented through the expression of the bartender about Marthy, he says: "(with a chuckle)He's still got that same cow living with him, the old fool"<sup>15</sup>. Indeed, Marthy, unlike traditional women, is independent moves from a barge to another living with men without marriage. Add o her intense drinking of Alcohol. In essence, both Anna and Marthy represent the roaring twenties women, they subvert the norms that restrict women .But at the end it is clear that Anna when seeking for love and family reconciles with society, but Marthy carries her life as a free woman from a barge to the other as she states : " There is plenty of other guys on other barges waiting for me"<sup>16</sup> (966)

## **2- In Juletane (1982)**

### **a-Juletane**

Myriam Warner Viyera's *Juletane* (1982) is a story of an African Caribbean woman who spends most of her life in France with her grandmother after her parents' death. Meeting a Senegalese student in France has given Juletane a family, a lover and a confident whom she marries directly. Juletane is an *acculturate* woman who assimilated French culture and education. She dreams of a family in Africa, the mother land of her ancestors in Guadeloupe. This acculturation will bring about Juletane's alienation and marginalization in Africa. In Africa, she discovers that her husband is already married and has a five years daughter. In fact Juletane is brought right in a polygamous milieu. Being raised in France made Juletane unable to share her husband with another woman; she is unable to integrate in a polygamous country and culture. She cannot absorb the gender role given to women in Senegal, so Juletane will

remain a foreigner to Mamadou's family. From Judith Butler's opinion, the subject or the person Juletane who fails to enact his gender role is not accepted in the given culture. Juletane is incoherent and non-conform to the gendered positions in Senegal. Butler explains that:

In as much as "identity" is assured through the stabilizing concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality, the very notion of "the person" is called into question by the cultural emergence of those "incoherent" or "discontinuous" gendered beings who appear to be persons but who fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined.<sup>17</sup>

She is dreaming of chivalry love, a charming prince; a man that she might own alone and never share with other women. Dize in *La Folle et l'Autre Femme: Perceptions of Identity in the Works of Myriam Warner-Vieyra* states:

The future of African independence is a central theme of the conversations between Juletane and Mamadou in Paris. Juletane has a lot of hope for her future in Africa. Independence brings with it the hope for radical change in the social sphere, but there seems to be little change in terms of gender parity. If men represent the site of colonial trauma, women seem to represent the site for post-colonial trauma. Women are expected to be subservient to men becoming trophies or objects offered to African men as a way to heal colonial transgressions.<sup>18</sup>

In essence, women should serve men after Senegal independence as trophies only.

More importantly Jultane's disenchantment with the Senegalese polygamy made of her a toubabesse which means a French stranger woman in the eyes of the local women. Ndeye, Mamamdou's third wife, is the symbol of an obedient local woman. Juletane considers her as a sexual object; she makes herself beautiful and wears jewelry to attract her husband and play her submissive gender role perfectly: "... *She takes more care of her appearances, her braids are regularly redone, every day she takes endless baths with all aimed at keeping our husband permanently in her bed.*"<sup>19</sup> In patriarchal societies, men are lords and women are sexual servants or objects. Women, like Ndeye, adhere to such a role to compete with co-wives for recognition.

However, as soon as she arrives there, Jultane is othered and put to the margins even by her husband because she is unable to fit to their polygamous culture. Juletane can be considered as a feminist; she is portrayed as an intellectual and wise enough to acknowledge woman's rights. She mourns deeply her destiny and misfortune; she calls Senegal, a *well of misery*<sup>20</sup>. As Butler explains *Performative Acts*, subjects who seem different from the imposed role society dictates is by consequence rejected and punished:

Hence, as a strategy of survival, gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences. Discrete genders are part of what 'humanizes' individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished.<sup>21</sup>

Juletane is a stranger in Senegal, an outsider, who cannot speak their language. Furthermore, Juletane is the mad woman the whole family avoids contacting, even her husband. She says:

Here they call me the mad woman, not very original. What do they know about madness? What if mad people aren't mad? What if certain types of behavior which simple, ordinary people call madness, were just wisdom, a reflection of the clear sighted hypersensitivity of a pure upright soul plunged into a real imaginary affective void?<sup>22</sup> (p2)

Juletane is punished by calling her the mad woman. So, she is clearly against the social norms that describe her as a mad woman. She hates polygamy and criticizes the segregation of women in Senegal. She is astonished by saying:

In short, I was to accept having a husband for five days, since Awa agreed to have him on weekends in the village. It seemed to me that I was on another planet .....As far as I was concerned, a husband was above all the most intimate of beings, another self, not an object to be lent or shared.<sup>23</sup>

Juletane is portrayed as a social critic or a feminist who defends women's rights against patriarchal society. She is deceived by her husband's revealed patriarchal truth.

Mamadou ignores Juletane when arrived in Senegal. But as soon as she is pregnant, she becomes again important for him since he wants children. Later on when she has lost her baby, she is ignored another time. Thus, Juletane is encountering another misfortune to be segregated and marginalized by the Senegalese patriarchal society which only desires

woman's productivity and child bearing. Then, Juletane is no longer a woman since she is not fertile. This prejudice can be viewed through Butler's ideas on the category of women.

Although, for Butler, the category of woman is not a descriptively useful one, she thinks that the limited description of women as reproductive tools is an oppressive description that should be challenged; For Butler, a woman should not be referred to in accordance to maternity; a woman is not only a child bearer. She writes:

The effort to characterize a feminine specificity through recourse to maternity, whether biological or social, produced a similar factionalization and even a disavowal of feminism altogether. For surely all women are not mothers; some cannot be, some are too young or too old to be, some choose not to be, and for some who are mothers, that is not necessarily the rallying point of their politicization in feminism.<sup>24</sup>

At one moment in the story, Mamadou is described celebrating his first son from Awa without caring about Jultane's feelings. She murmurs to herself: "If I had had the child he wanted so much, our life would have been quite different",<sup>25</sup>. Jultane compares herself to the barren tree in their yard, the Mango tree which gives no fruits since years ago. She rebels against her husband's betrayal by asking for divorce. Such a decision is a revolution against Mamadou and his family. More importantly, after the loss of her child, she becomes more aware about Mamadou's hypocrisy, so she stops communicating with him. Her ignorance toward Mamadou shows that she prefers her dignity to man. Contrary to Senegalese obedient women like Awa and Ndeye, Juletane is an intellectual who is informed about woman's rights as a human being, not a sexual object. Through her diary, she is making for herself a different world. Although oppressive social norms are forcibly inscribed upon her, Juletane takes it upon herself to inscribe – through her use of the diary – an identity which she is more comfortable in, Dize explains in his work on Juletane that:

The suggestion that revolt is absent from the works of Warner-Vieyra, especially Juletane is a hasty proposition. Writers and critics like Hélène Cixous and Virginia Woolf emphasize the importance of women writing themselves rather than allowing men to write for them.

Juletane's use of writing allows her to create a physical representation of herself, free from the prejudices and domination of patriarchy. Juletane's autobiographical writing is cathartic resistance against external perceptions of her identity.<sup>26</sup>

Jultane's rebellion is silent and indirect; she rebels by writing in a milieu where women are ignorant and submissive. Jultane questions polygamy and hypocrisy. Warner Vieyra's female character serves as an example of educated and intellectual woman.

### **b-Helene**

Paralleled with Jultane's portrayal as a different cultivated woman who subverts silently, Helene is described as an independent woman who enjoys her life economically and sexually free. In fact, Helene is a woman who "*ordered her life as she saw fit, giving priority to 'me first'*"<sup>27</sup>. Helene's freedom is not given by society, but she is at odds with patriarchal society which expects from women to be obedient to all forms of oppression. In her analysis of gender roles in society, Judith Butler discusses the right to all individuals to enjoy their freedom in performing their gender identity, despite the difficulties that this may entail. The unnaturalness of gender is the argument given by Butler to reinforce her theory by saying:

That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. This also suggests that if that reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body, the gender border control that differentiates inner from outer, and so institutes the "integrity" of the subject.<sup>28</sup>

Helene is aware of the unnaturalness of gender role given to women; she behaves differently from the socially expected ways in which a woman should behave. Furthermore, the social discourse that keeps woman in the domestic sphere is not recognizable for Helene. She is an independent woman who works overseas since she was betrayed by the first man. As Butler states above, Helene is a subject that chooses for herself the way that suits her powerful personality; she constitutes her own identity as a strong woman who relies on herself and helps her family financially. As an educated woman, she moves from a country to another,



occupying higher social positions, which are all in contradiction with the historical submissive role imposed upon women.

Moreover, concerning the non-naturalness of social and cultural convention in constituting gender roles, Butler affirms that gender imitation is parodied by drag, changing one's style proves that gender role is just a parody, not a natural fact. She explains:

In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency. Indeed, part of the pleasure, the giddiness of the performance is in the recognition of a radical contingency in the relation between sex and gender in the face of cultural configurations of causal unities that are regularly assumed to be natural and necessary. In the place of the law of heterosexual coherence, we see sex and gender denaturalized by means of a performance which avows their distinctness and<sup>29</sup> dramatizes the cultural mechanism of their fabricated unity.

In this context, Myriam Warner Vieyra 's character Helene seems to subvert this social role of woman. Helene enjoys free sexual life as man does. Warner Vieyra shows Helene as a rebel female character who revenges her former lover, who married a white woman. As Vieyra describes her : *“She had set out to pay Hector back through every man she met. She would use them for a while, then as soon as they seemed to be becoming involved, she would stop seeing them without any explanation.”*<sup>30</sup> She is a free woman who is making of men her sexual objects. In essence, patriarchal societies devise human being to female and male, and so do to their social roles. They have made of man the lord, the strong , the norm, and of woman the slave, the weak, and the deviation.

However, Helene is not convinced by this social structure and goes beyond the domestic sphere. She is intellectual, strong and confident. Helene represents an image of a modern woman who drinks, smokes and lives without ties. Moreover, this rebellious female character cannot be differentiated from a man since she enjoys the same freedom as him. This fact is emphasized by Butler here below:

That gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex and a true or abiding masculinity or

femininity are also constituted as part of the strategy that conceals gender's performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality.<sup>31</sup>

According to Butler, one can go beyond the social constructed behaviour. She is portrayed as a dominant woman who controls her fiancé, Osman. In fact Helene is used by Vieyra to show how women should be. So like Mamadou who ignores motherless Juletane, Helene is going to marry Osman just to have a child. Thus, polygamy in Senegal is encouraged and accepted by women who are most often uneducated contrary to men. Like Mamadou who got the chance to study abroad, Helene travelled and worked overseas.

All in all, Helene represents the image of a woman who enjoys the same rights as man. So, according to Butler, there is no natural fact that condemns woman and heightens man. Women as well as men should enjoy the same rights; a reality which is absent in patriarchal societies, where because of traditions, religion or politics, man is designed to occupy higher social status than woman. In fact, the role of religion and culture is crucial in the division of the roles of the two sexes. Butler writes:

Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived. As credible bearers of those attributes, however, genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically incredible.<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, Helene's subversion can be illustrated through her sexual freedom. In essence, Myriam Warner Vieyra makes both Helene and Mamadou enjoy the same rights. Mamadou considers his wives as sexual objects and child bearers. Similarly, Helene dates several men and gets rid of them as soon as she feels bored.

Myriam Warner Vieyra depicted the clash of cultures between the Caribbean acculturate women and the traditional Senegalese society. She examines Juletane's disillusionment as well as the interplay of colonially-produced cultural differences among Caribbean and West African women in a traditional West African community. Juletane, who seeks for identity and family comfort in Senegal, is deceived by the patriarchal treatment of

women there; she cannot belong in such a society where she is subjected to Mamadou's masculine power. She chooses to subvert silently by writing and discommunicating with her husband. In fact, she is portrayed as oppressed and trying to get out of that nightmare unsuccessfully. However, Helene is shown as a subversive woman who is contrary to Jultane, for she is stronger and more confident. Helene is depicted as avenger of Jultane's sufferance in Senegal and serves as a model to how women can liberate themselves from patriarchal ties.

### **3-In The Agreement (1985)**

#### **a-Sybil**

Contemporary literature's portrayal of women seems more sympathetic than in the previous literary Works in America. Through time, women have become equal to men progressively. Women's achievements can be examined through *The Agreement*, a contemporary divorce play, written by Janet Neipris in 1985. It is about Sybil and Sigmund Matchett who are about to be divorced; each one is defended by a lawyer. Sybil's is Alice Balley, and Sigmund's is Lester Ostermeyer. *The Agreement* narrates women's emancipation in a patriarchal society. Female characters in this play are shown out of the domestic sphere; they are the representatives of American contemporary women.

In their book *Key Words in American Life*, Michel Rezé and Ralph Bowen argue that Feminist's main object is to break down sexual stereotypes and the inherited assumptions about what is naturally male or female.<sup>33</sup> In fact , this is one same concern of Judith Butler's theory in her prominent book *Gender Trouble* (1990). Butler encourages woman in all societies to be determined according to her own aptitude, not according to cultural norms. She asserts that, "*Woman need not be the cultural construction of the female body.*"<sup>34</sup> . This kind of woman is well illustrated by Sybil and Alice in *The Agreement*. In essence, Sybil, like men, is enjoying her sexual freedom and started dating after her marital deception. Furthermore, Neipris is making an equal description of the female and male characters in the play. From the

issues presented, one can notice American female's emancipation. Things are now different from what they were in the past. Michel Rezé and Ralph Bowen confirm that the contemporary wife:

Is considered to have the same right as the husband to education and career of her own ..... some young women have come to feel so strongly that they must avoid economic and even emotional dependence on a man that they have opted out of marriage relationship all together and have committed themselves to bringing up their children independently as single parents.<sup>35</sup>

Judith Butler highlights the unnaturalness of gender foundations, like the female and male roles. Thus, Sybil is a rebellious woman who gets rid of her man by asking for divorce. She is an independent woman of the 1980's America who is ready to raise her children alone without relying on Sigmund, her husband. She breaks patriarchal norms that grant sexual and economic independence for man only. She is dating another man and speaks freely about her sexuality. This is apparent in her conversation with her date Boris:

Boris: Been dating  
Sybil: I haven't slept with anybody yet if that's what you mean.  
Boris: How come?  
Sybil: nobody's asked me  
Boris: I'm asking you<sup>36</sup>

Like Sigmund who confesses to Sybil that he has dated more than twenty women<sup>37</sup>, she feels free to date men as well. In fact from Alicia's and Sybil's avowals, we notice that dating is common in the 1980's America; change is occurring. For Butler gender roles should go out of their socially drawn limits, female sex is never a standing point to 'othering' her and placing her under man's control. Butler explains "how The "real" and the "sexually factic" are phantasmatic constructions—illusions of substance—that bodies are compelled to approximate, but never can"<sup>38</sup> This makes that biological differences are not sufficient to differentiate between women and man, and treat them with inequality since sex as well as genders are phantasmatic. Thus in the case of Sybil, we notice that her lawyer Alice is including in her notes the sexual deprivation of Sybil by Sigmund, her husband. In fact, women

have the right to charge men because of sexual deprival instead on remaining an object to them.

Butler's call for subversion against traditions, taboos and cultural conventions is somehow realized by *The Agreement's* female characters. Contrary to the past American cultural norm that woman should not own property, Sybil is discussing her right to devise it with her husband. Women in America, according to Puritan customs, should not also be economically free. Linda L. Lindsey in her work *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective* informs about puritan cultural position by arguing that:

An inheritance could produce more economically independent women. Being burned as a witch was a convenient way to rid the colony of its aberrations, foil challenges to gender norms, and maintain the desired social order.<sup>39</sup>

In puritan society, women were deprived from owning a property; they were even burned in order to sustain the patriarchal order. However, Sybil and her contemporaries enjoy this right of property. For example, Alice pleads: "*Oh I'll bet she is with a name like that. (turning back to the case) My client, as noted in the document one hundred and fifty-nine (reading) is asking for the following: the property on West 38rd Street in Manhattan.*"<sup>40</sup> This is to show that law in contemporary America grants women their right to own property. Furthermore, Lester's wife shares property with him:

Lester: Fine thank you, Very civilized. Since we can't come to any decisions yet, my wife is occupying the bottom floor of our home, and I have the top. She's got the kitchen, so I'm simply taking all meals out ... but I got the bathroom, which seemed more essential<sup>41</sup>.

#### **b- Alice**

In her turn Alice is also a perfect model of a subversive woman, for she is strong and fierce in defending woman's rights. She is confident and educated. More importantly, she occupies a high positioned job. Michel Rezé and Ralph Bowen describe contemporary women as follows:

A logical consequence of the principle that men and women should have completely equal access to all professions is that in recent years large

numbers of young women have sought admission to university courses preparing for such traditionally male-dominated professions as medicine, law and engineering.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, like Judith Butler, Alice insists on defending Sybil's rights against her husband and especially against patriarchal society which is represented by Lester, Sigmund's lawyer.

Lester attacks the woman every time he intervenes. He criticizes and condescends women, for they divorce and date with others. However, Alice refutes all those traditionally-set views,

Lester: You women think you're the only ones in the world who ever poached an egg, prepared a report, and looked gorgeous all the same day.<sup>43</sup>

Alice: I think you should be disqualified for this sexist statement.

From the discussed issues and characters above, one can notice that Alice is the model that perfectly suits Butler's feminist expectations for attaining subversive selves and equal-to-man gender roles. Although Sybil enjoys most of time the same rights as men- sexual liberty, right to property, and asking for divorce-, it is apparent that Alice is the spokeswoman of feminist activists .What is distinctive about her is her brave defense of women's rights against hegemonic discourses as represented through Lester. This female character is portrayed by Neipris as an independent, self reliant and more especially holding the highly valued job of 'lawyer'. It is a proof that contemporary American women are emancipated. In a very subversive way, Alice encourages Sybil to get divorced and ask for her rights. She is a resistant who asks for equality between Sybil and her husband contrary to Lester who is the representative of traditional American view of women.

To conclude, one may say that from all what have been studied through the application of Butler's theory on the three works, woman's gender roles are not natural. Butler thinks that genders are religious, political and traditional products. Man is set as the dominant and woman as the dominated. This fact brought about women's feminist movement to resist these injustice and ideologies.

In our works, we have discovered women's early forms of rebellion and challenges. Guided by Butler's ideas, we have studied the unnatural Victorian image of women, and how Anna challenges together with Marthy the old values either by enjoying sexual freedom, self defense and work. In a same way, French Caribbean women subverted the African traditional image of women. In Myriam Warner Vieyra's *Juletane* (1982), subversion takes other forms like silence and writing. Added to this, Helene dates men freely. As far as *The Agreement* is concerned, it is a mirror of 1980's achievements of women movement against other forms of discrimination.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Judith Butler, *Perfrmative Acts and Gender Constitution: An essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory* ( Baltimore:The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988),519 .
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid., 519.
- <sup>3</sup> Zsofia Anna Toth , *The (im)morality of the new woman in the early twentieth century: Theory and Practice in English Studies 4* (Masarykova univerzita, 2005), 257.
- <sup>4</sup> Judith Butler, *Performative Acts*, 521.
- <sup>5</sup> Carlisle Rodney, ed., *Handbook to life in America: The roaring twenties* (New York: Facts on File; 1 edition 2009),5.
- <sup>6</sup> Travis Bogard, *O'Neill Complete Plays 1913-1920*, (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc. 1998),968.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., 968.
- <sup>8</sup> Judith Butler, *Performative Acts*, 530.
- <sup>9</sup> Travis Bogard, *O'Neill Complete Plays 1913-1920*, 972.
- <sup>10</sup> Judith Butler, *Contingent Foundation: Feminism and the Question of "Postmodernism"*(Cambridge: Cambridge Univerity Press, 1994), 18.
- <sup>11</sup> Travis Bogard, *O'Neill Complete Plays 1913-1920*, 972.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., 986.
- <sup>13</sup> Judith Butler, *Performative Acts*, 522.
- <sup>14</sup> Travis Bogard, *O'Neill Complete Plays 1913-1920*, 1007.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., 966.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., 966.
- <sup>17</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York : Routledge, 1990), 23.
- <sup>18</sup> Nathan Dize, *La Folle et l'Autre Femme: Perceptions of Identity in the Works of Myriam Warner-Vieyra*(Univerity of Marryland, 2012 ), 22.
- <sup>19</sup> Myriam Warner-Vieyra , *Jultane* (Paris: Presence Africaine 1982), 4.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.,5.
- <sup>21</sup> Judith Butler, *Performative Acts*, 522.
- <sup>22</sup> Myriam Warner-Vieyra , *Jultane* ,2.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 23.
- <sup>24</sup> Judith Butler, *Contingent Foundation: Feminism and the Question of "Postmodernism"*(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 15.
- <sup>25</sup> Myriam Warner-Vieyra , *Jultane* ,39.

- <sup>26</sup> Nathan Dize, *La Folle et l'Autre Femme: Perceptions of Identity in the Works of Myriam Warner-Vieyra*, 21.
- <sup>27</sup> Myriam Warner-Vieyra, *Jultane*, 1.
- <sup>28</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 173.
- <sup>29</sup> Ibid., 175.
- <sup>30</sup> Myriam Warner-Vieyra, *Jultane*, 28.
- <sup>31</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble : Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, 180.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., 180.
- <sup>33</sup> Michel Rezé, Ralph Bowen, *Key Words to American Life: Understanding THE United States* (Paris:ARMAND Colin, ....), 238.
- <sup>34</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 142.
- <sup>35</sup> Michel Rezé, Ralph Bowen, *Key Words to American Life: Understanding THE United States*, 239.
- <sup>36</sup> Janet Neipris, *The Agreement* (New York: Applause, 1986), 220.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid., 236.
- <sup>38</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 186.
- <sup>39</sup> Linda L. Lindsey, *Gender Roles: A Sociological Perspective* (Boston: Pearson, 2010), 115.
- <sup>40</sup> Ramon Delgado. *The Best Short Plays 1986*, (New York: Applause Theatre Books) 1986, 227.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., 238.
- <sup>42</sup> Michel Rezé, Ralph Bowen, *Key Words to American Life: Understanding THE United States*, 239.
- <sup>43</sup> Ramon Delgado. *The Best Short Plays 1986*, 234.



## Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation, we have come to conclude that Eugene O'Neil, Janet Neipris and Myriam Warner-Vieyra share the same aspects in analyzing the theme of subaltern and subversion as developed in their respected works that are "Anna Christie", "The Agreement" and "Juletane". We notice through our research, the theme of women's oppression and rebellion is so dominant in the three discussed works.

In this research we shed light on the way women are portrayed in the three works, relying on the theory of Bell Hooks *Feminism is For Every Body* (1985) and Judith Butler 's theory *Gender Troubles* (1990). The first theory allowed us to search behind women's oppression of the different periods during which the three works were set. The second, showed us the different ways in which women rely in their subversion against men. This leads to have an insight to the different ideologies that were present in each period ( early and late twenties America and late twenties Africa).

Our comparative study has examined women's issue of subaltern and subversion in Eugene O'Neil's *Anna Christie* (1921), Janet Neipris's *The Agreement* (1985) and Myriam Warner-Vieyra *Juletane* (1982). It has allowed us to discern the shared points between the three works concerning the way women are oppressed by men and the several means they use in their rebellion against the patriarchal societies, so that, they can reach equality with men.

All in all, the three authors have clearly depicted the suffering of women under the dominance of men and their struggle towards independance is very obvious in the three works. Thus, women's subversion is merely the result of the oppression by the patriarchal societies . However, women through time have gained most of their rights and have reached equality with men as being in the same occupations such as; doctors, researchers and lawyers.

Indeed, we have reached the idea that, even if women have attained a certain freedom by being in the same status as men in different domains of life, women are still oppressed by men in a way or another. This opens a window to enlarge the research involving other contemporary literary works that portray this theme.

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