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Intersectional (De)Othering: A Foucauldian-Feminist Analysis of Jane Eyre, Wide Sargasso Sea and NW

Date of submission: Tuesday 23 April 2019

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Abstract

A Foucauldian-Feminist Analysis of Jane Eyre, Wide Sargasso Sea and NW

Up until the late 1970s, the feminist focus was on the legal, educational and political inequality experienced by women living in a patriarchal society (McLaren 2002). In this sense, oppression of women was imposed through top-down flows of power, and in order for women to become liberated, male-constructed institutions must be changed. Therefore, women's liberation was to be established through a discourse of sameness, in which men and women were considered equal (or 'same') and women were to have full legal, political, educational, and economic freedom. However, such binary opposition between men and women constructs a discourse centred on an essentialist identity and group membership, in which not only men and women are considered 'same', but where all women are defined according to a sense of sameness, a shared sense of womanhood. In their 'mutual' struggle against patriarchal oppression, feminism has had a tendency to categorize women in essentialist terms.

By defining women as a singular construction with a shared sense of sameness, liberal feminism has been termed oppressive, as it uses the same tools used by the patriarchy to oppress women (Lorde 1984). As a result, black/postcolonial feminists have criticized feminist theory for being unjust, as it neglects to recognize the impact that other social categories have on women's oppression. Now deemed as a white and Western feminism, it has been accused by black/postcolonial feminists of ignoring the differences between women in terms of race, class, religion, sexuality, etc. By neglecting to recognize that race, gender, and class categories intersect, Western feminists fail to recognize women's different experiences of oppression, and furthermore, fail to see themselves as potential oppressors.

Therefore, this thesis is an attempt to move beyond the binary oppositions that have dominated feminist theory. By adopting a foucauldian-feminist perspective, I aim to identify practices of power that are both oppressive and productive. In this sense, I move beyond the mainstream discourse of victimization by examining how women shift between positions of oppression and empowerment.

In order to do so, I have formed a theoretical framework that I have termed 'Intersectional (De)Othering'. The theoretical framework derives from an interdisciplinary study with contributing theoretical voices from black/postcolonial feminist theory, poststructuralism, and postcolonialism. In contrast to mainstream feminism, intersectional (de)othering enables an anti-essentialist analysis of the subject's identity formation by identifying multiple structures of power that operate through, across, and within individuals, as well as societies. The theoretical framework proposes that the individual shifts between three subject-position, which I term othered, self-othered, and de-othered.

The concept of intersectionality is applied to the subject-position othered, as intersectionality argues that the individual engages in four domains of power, thereby, illustrating the multiple forces of externally imposed power. The internalization of the imposed discourses of othering, position the individual as self-othered. In this sense, successful othering results in an individual who is self-governing and self-disciplining. However, when these practices of othering become all-consuming and control the individual's subjectivity, she may engage in various practices of resistance, thereby, becoming de-othered.

The power-resistance relationship exemplified through the three-subject positions is dependent on socio-historical contexts. As such, the analysis entails a comparative analysis of the three novels *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), and *NW* (2012), in order to examine the development in the subject's positioning throughout time. From the perspective of black/postcolonial feminism, the thesis adopts a race/gender/class lens.

The three-part analysis shows that: (1) the normality discourse in terms of race, gender, and class has shifted from the beginning of the nineteenth-century to modernity. In the beginning of the nineteenth-century, society defined and confined the individual according to a hierarchal social structure. This is explicit in the analyses of Jane Eyre and Wide Sargasso Sea, as gender, race, and class norms determine and diminish their freedom of choice. In contrast, contemporary normality focuses on the individual, instead of society as a whole, as it is now expected of the individual to live an authentic life where everyone (despite race, gender, and class) is considered equal. (2) The second part of the analysis examines how this shift in normality has affected the individual's subjectivity and identity, as norms are considered internalized. The analysis shows that the shift in normality does not necessarily entail that previous norms no longer guide society. Rather because of this shift the individual

finds herself in an ambivalent position, as she and not society must decide what is normal and abnormal, and right and wrong, etc. (3) The third and final part of the analysis examines how the individual's judgement of right and wrong either results in conformity to the norm or resistance of it. Whereas the same practices of conformity and resistance unfold in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *NW* problematizes the new norm, as the individual cannot conform to the norm as that would entail her living an inauthentic life. At the same time, the individual cannot resist the norm as that would imply that others are wrong, which is in contempt of the new normality discourse that claims that one must not interfere in other people's lives.

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1.

Introduction

A Foucauldian-Feminist Analysis of Jane Eyre, Wide Sargasso Sea and NW

The history of feminism is vast and complex. Today feminism branches out into various ideological movements concerned with the ambivalent factors, which define the categorization of 'woman'. Since the late twentieth century, black feminism and postcolonial feminism have condemned past as well as present discourses that operate in order to victimize and alienate women of colour. When Wollstonecraft wrote *A Vindication of the Right of Women* in 1792, she started a feminist debate, specifically regarding the lack of education available to women and the assumptions surrounding women's role within marriage and family life. At the time, the feminist movement centred on a critique of women's financial dependency on their husband, thereby placing the 'woman' in binary opposition with the 'man'. Similarly, Thompson's *Appeal of One Half of the Human Race* in 1825 argued that the position of the married British woman was similar to that of enslaved Africans, as they were "reduced to a piece of moveable property and an ever-obedient servant to the bidding man" (Walters 2005). Due to its rhetoric of superiority and white privilege, feminist movements prior to the late twentieth century are now deemed as 'white feminism' by neglecting to recognize white privilege and intersecting issues, such as the racism experienced by women of colour (Carby 1982)

Black/postcolonial feminism has criticized 'white feminism' for defining 'women' as a singular construction sharing the same oppression. By neglecting the differences between women in regards to race, class, etc., feminists position themselves as potential oppressors of other women. When feminism failed to acknowledge the differences between women: "then women of Color become 'other', the outsider whose experience and tradition is too 'alien' to comprehend" (Lorde 1984: 117). However, though black/postcolonial feminism focuses its attention on the intersection of gendered race and class, I argue that its intention falls short in its binary opposition between women of colour and white women, which consistently positions women of colour as an inferior Other.

From the Foucauldian perspective, the relationship between power and the subject is both oppressive and productive (Foucault 1982). Such representation is displayed in the novels *Jane Eyre*, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and *NW*, which portray the (in)ability of women, across race and class, to resist stereotypical discourses. This thesis aims to demonstrate that women, across race and class, can, if they choose, alter the hegemonic discourses attributed 'women'. Such stereotypical discourses operate both externally and internally, positioning the woman as othered, self-othered and/or de-othered. Power relations can always be altered; yet, stereotypical discourses remain to exist because we do not resist them.

Socio-historical and cultural contexts, specifically colonialism and patriarchy, play an essential role in understanding the relationship between power and the subject. In this case, the subject exclusively refers to the female protagonists in the novels, as the scope of the thesis is placed within black/postcolonial feminism. Colonialism, patriarchy, gender, race, and class are all considered as intersecting forces of power, which produce and reproduce the individual. Such forces are relational and can, therefore, not be studied in isolation or considered independent, as questions regarding power cannot be discussed without considering the cultural belief system of a society (Hall 1995).

According to Foucault: "Power is everywhere: not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (1990: 93). That is, power is exercised through all social interactions and, therefore, non-binary. It is constantly changing in equivalence with the individual. Power works through and within individuals, cultural belief systems, and institutions. As such, the individual is both an effect and a creator of power. It is, I argue, this ambivalent, complex and contradictive nature of power that enables the individual to become othered, self-othered and de-othered (I will explain these concepts in chapter 2. Theoretical Framework and Method).

Intersectional (de)othering accommodates both top-down and bottom-up flows of power and establishes links between individualizing and totalizing forms of power. I consider categories such as gender, race, and class as social constructions and historical processes that are produced and reproduced within structural, disciplinary, cultural, and interpersonal institutions (Collins 2016). It is, therefore, not my intention to provide proof of a cross-cultural, essentialist intersection of gender, race, and class. On the contrary, by opposing the

idea of an essentialised individual, I intend to illustrate how identity and subjectivity is constantly "remade and remodelled in new and innovative ways" (McLeod 2010: 252).

The concept of intersectionality is included in the thesis, as it supports the claim that systems of race, gender, and class simultaneously construct women of colour (and white women's) lived experience, while simultaneously these system are constructed by the individual (Collins & Bilge 2016) My hypothesis is that though women experience intersections of power that operate to oppress and alienate, women are co-constructors of such power. Like power, identities are also constantly in flux, complex and shifting between various structures. It is highly important to understand that the aim of my thesis is to show that social constructions, such as gender, race, and class, though are powerful stereotypical discourses, can be challenged and altered.

I have chosen to apply intersectionality as the analytical tool of the thesis, as it enables an understanding of how oppression and privilege work as structural, disciplinary, cultural and relational forces, which co-construct and intersect. Members of dominant groups are, therefore, forced to consider factors of privilege in their own identity and positioning, while understanding the multiple oppressions experienced by others. The strength of intersectionality is found in its inclusiveness as it applies to everyone, excluding neither members of privileged or marginalized groups. Despite this major contribution to feminist theory, intersectionality has received some criticism, which I find necessary of mentioning in relation to this study.

First, intersectionality is criticized for challenging the category 'women' by creating multiple genders (Zack 2005). The critic sounds that if there are an infinite number of possible intersections running through the category of women, and if each of those intersections articulate a possible female identity, then this must imply limitless variations of what it means to be a woman. Furthermore, if the variations of female gender are limitless, then the category of women lacks substance. In response to such criticism, I argue that the use of intersectionality in this study should not be understood as a theory on female identity, but rather as an analytical tool that examines the intersection and co-construction of power, which positions women as never truly or essentially inferior. In this context, intersectionality illustrates that it is the experience of gender that varies and not the category of women. The second critic of intersectionality accuses it of dividing the feminist movement, thereby

creating distinctive groups, which each speak for themselves (Bailey 2009). In this study, intersectionality is applied in order to challenge the binary opposition between white women and women of colour, as the very premise of intersectionality is to enable an analysis of intersecting vectors of power, thereby including and uniting the issue of gender equality with contributing issues, such as race and class.

I will examine this complex interplay between power and the individual through an analysis of three novels. I have selected three novels, which narratives unfold during two socio-historical and cultural contexts. This decision is rooted in Foucault's genealogical method, as the normality discourse and its impact can vary in degree depending on the context.

The first novel is *Jane Eyre*, which was written by the English author Charlotte Brontë and published in 1847. The narrative begins with the ten-year-old Jane Eyre suffering emotional and physical abuse at the hands of her wealthy relatives, the Reed family. Due to Jane's strong-willed nature, Jane is sent to live at the Lowood Institution, which is a school for orphan girls. Here Jane must endure further mistreatment by the headmaster, including physical punishment. After working as a teacher for two years, Jane longs for new adventures, resulting in her acceptance of a position as a governess at Thornfield Manor. Despite their difference in social status, Jane's employer, Edward Rochester, asks for Jane's hand in marriage. Their wedding ceremony is, however, interrupted by two men revealing that Edward already has a wife: Bertha Mason, a Creole from Jamaica, who is held prisoner in the attic at Thornfield Manor.

Understandably, the novel is widely studied within feminist theory. The interest in *Jane Eyre* has, however, not primarily been due to the mistreatment of Bertha Mason. Gilbert and Gubert in their widely recognized essay *A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress* (1980), consider the novel as an example of female empowerment as Jane succeeds in rebelling against the social hierarchy. In addition, Bertha has been perceived as the typical gothic doppelgänger, representing Jane's repressed anger towards a patriarchal social order (Gilbert & Gubert 1980). Postcolonial feminist Spivak (1985), on the other hand, criticizes both the novel and feminists for neglecting to recognize the oppression of the Creole woman. Accordingly, *Jane Eyre* being told from the perspective of a white middle-class woman during the colonial era is considered by black/postcolonial feminists as racist (Spivak 1985).

In a re-telling of *Jane Eyre*, the Caribbean author Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) is a narrative from the perspective of the otherwise anonymous Bertha Mason, née Antoinette. The novel takes place during the early nineteenth century Jamaica telling the story of a young Antoinette Mason, who is the white Creole daughter of former slave owners. Due to the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833, Antoinette's father suffers financial ruin resulting in his death from alcoholism. During Antoinette's upbringing, tensions increase between the former white aristocracy and their impoverished servants. Their situation changes when an English man named Mr Mason proposes marriage to Antoinette's mother. The estate is repaired, however, continuous discontent among the freed black population results in the death of Antoinette's younger brother. After Antoinette's mother descents into madness, Mr Mason leaves Jamaica and Antoinette is sent to live at a convent school. Once Antoinette turns seventeen, Mr Mason presents Antoinette into society as a cultivated woman, where she is sold to an English man for thirty thousand pounds. From here on out, Antoinette descends into drink and madness resulting in her being brought to England and locked away in an attic.

The third novel *NW* written by the English author Zadie Smith in 2012 tells the story of two working-class women, Leah Hanwell and Natalie Blake, née Keisha. Growing up in the Northwest side of London, their transition from childhood to adulthood proves turbulent as they struggle with the expectations of society as well as themselves. Leah, who is of Irish ancestry, spends much of her adolescence with Keisha. In adulthood, she enjoys smoking cannabis with her neighbour and is married to Michel, an immigrant from the French Guadeloupe. Unaware to Michel, Leah has no desire to have children and, therefore, takes contraceptives in secret. In contrast, Natalie, of Jamaican ancestry, attends a top law school where she meets her future husband Francesco de Angelis, a wealthy Italian immigrant, who she has two children with. However, Natalie is discontent and begins a secret life involving sexual relationships with couples.

The comparative analysis of these three novels examines the danger of reducing others to essentialized identities based on social categories. While the protagonists are products of their environment, they each exhibit distinctive responses to their circumstances. The theoretical framework enables an analysis of how the individual is both a product of society and a producer of it. In this sense, norms can be challenged through the realization that there are multiple valid self-interpretations.

So far I have introduced the scope of the thesis. In chapter 2, I will explain the theoretical framework intersectional (de)othering, which enables an analysis into the normalizing and non-normalizing positioning of the subject. These normalizing and non-normalizing practices are categorized into three subject-positions: othered, self-othered, and de-othered. Chapter 3 consists of a comparative analysis of *Jane Eyre*, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and *NW*, in order to examine how the subject is othered, self-othered, and de-othered due to the normality discourse, which is determined by shifting socio-historical and cultural contexts. Ultimately, chapter 4 concludes that as the normality discourse is imposed on the individual with the intent to produce certain characteristics, the individual struggles with a loss of self as she must constantly manoeuvre between old and new norms. As such, the relationship between power and resistance cannot be defined in simplistic and fixed terms, as the individual's identity and subjectivity is constantly changing.

Chapter 2.

Theoretical Framework and Method

2.

Theoretical Framework and Method

Foucauldian-Feminism and Intersectional (De)Othering

My intention with intersectional (de)othering is to enable an analysis of how women, due to intersecting social categories, may experience both oppression and empowerment. It is not my aim to merely illustrate how social constructions, such as gender, race, and class work as powerful stereotypical discourses, which the individual is a product of. Instead, intersectional (de)othering enables an analysis of the reproduction of an autonomous individual as she gains knowledge regarding the workings of such social constructions. The theoretical framework, therefore, demands an interdisciplinary study by drawing on theoretical and philosophical voices from within black/postcolonial feminist theory, postcolonialism, and poststructuralism. In the following chapter, I will illustrate how and why I incorporate the three ideologies, thereby, forming the concept intersectional (de)othering.

2.1 Feminist Theory and Foucault

Since the eighteenth century, feminist theory has concerned itself with multiple perspectives regarding women's oppression. In general terms, all feminist theories study the subordination and liberation of women (McLaren 2002). Whereas liberal feminism during the eighteenth century centred its argument on the binary opposition between men and women, today women's oppression is approached from the much broader perspective of multicultural and global feminism (McLaren 2002). I will not use time to chronologically define and distinguish between the various feminist perspectives. There are too many to be discussed here. Instead, in the following, I will discuss the black/postcolonial feminist perspective in relation to 'Western' liberal feminism, and how Foucault's ideas, I argue, can be applied in order to promote the feminist aim.

Even though I use the term black/postcolonial feminism, I acknowledge that they are two theoretical perspectives in their own right. Nonetheless, I have chosen to apply both black-

and postcolonial feminist voices under the term black/postcolonial, as both reason for a more nuanced understanding of the female oppression and empowerment caused by the multiple intersecting forces of power. According to black feminist theory, race and gender intersect, as women of colour experience both racism and genderism simultaneously (Lorde 1984, Carby1982). Similarly, postcolonial feminist theory is concerned with the general misrepresentation of women in once colonized countries, as they experience the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy simultaneously (Mohanty 1984, Spivak 1988). These perspectives emerged in response to the whitewashing that took place in Western feminism (McLaren 2002).

Up until the late 1970s, the feminist focus was on the legal, educational and political inequality experienced by women living in a patriarchal society (McLaren 2002). In this sense, oppression of women was imposed through top-down flows of power, and in order for women to become liberated, male-constructed institutions must be changed. Therefore, women's liberation was to be established through a discourse of sameness, in which men and women were considered equal (or 'same') and women were to have full legal, political, educational, and economic freedom. However, such binary opposition between men and women constructs a discourse centred on an essentialist identity and group membership, in which not only men and women are considered 'same', but where all women are defined according to a sense of sameness, a shared sense of womanhood. In their 'mutual' struggle against patriarchal oppression, feminism has had a tendency to categorize women in essentialist terms (reference to abstract).

By defining women as a singular construction with a shared sense of sameness, liberal feminism has been termed oppressive, as it uses the same tools used by the patriarchy to oppress women (Lorde 1984). As a result, black/postcolonial feminists have criticized feminist theory for being unjust, as it neglects to recognize the impact that other social categories have on women's oppression. Now deemed as a white and Western feminism, it has been accused by black/postcolonial feminists of ignoring the differences between women in terms of race, class, religion, sexuality, etc. By neglecting to recognize that race, gender, and class categories intersect, Western feminists fail to recognize women's different experiences of oppression, and furthermore, fail to see themselves as potential oppressors (reference to abstract). Lorde argues that when Western feminism failed to acknowledge the

differences between women: “then women of Color become ‘other’, the outsider whose experience and tradition is too ‘alien’ to comprehend” (Lorde 1984: 856).

In addition to its criticism of Western feminism, black/postcolonial feminism has studied the oppression that takes place within the individual’s ‘group membership’. In this sense, black/postcolonial feminism recognizes that postcolonial women and women of colour experience multiple forms of oppression (or double colonization. See Peterson & Rutherfold 1986), for example, in terms of race and gender, and must, therefore, resist her positioning within two marginalized identities. According to black/postcolonial feminism, the colonial experience is gendered (Carby 1982) and, as a result, it criticizes mainstream postcolonial theory for neglecting to recognize the colonial woman. Postcolonial feminists argue that postcolonial theory is a male dominated field of study that fails to acknowledge issues concerning gender. Whereas the postcolonial male is marginalized in terms of race, the postcolonial woman experiences double colonization, because of her gender. Even though the postcolonial male and female both share the marginalization of being a postcolonial subject, they do not share the marginalization connected to gender:

> In this oppression, her colonized brother is no longer her accomplice, but her oppressor. In his struggle against the colonizer, he even exploits her (Tyagi 2014: 45).

Similarly, women of colour do not only experience oppression and marginalization imposed by white men and women, but they may also find themselves victimized by men of colour. Interestingly, there is a tendency among women of colour to ‘accept’ the oppression imposed on them by men of colour, as they both belong to a marginalized group in terms of race (Lorde 1984). These examples illustrate that any movement of opposition, “any movement that targets the culture as guilty of suppressing voices will soon find that within its own ranks some voices are more equal than others” (Gergen 2001: 157). Even within the broader perspective of black/postcolonial feminism there exist biased beliefs.

In order to understand the processes and practices that take place within the ambivalent and contradictory relationship between oppression and opposition, Michel Foucault becomes helpful. Mainstream postcolonial theory has previously applied Foucault, in order to examine the colonial discourse (see Said 1976, Bhabha 1994). In this sense, oppression and

marginalization has been examined from the perspective of a Western superiority and Eastern inferiority discourse. Feminism, on the other hand, has been and still is inconclusive, as it disagrees on whether or not Foucault is helpful or dangerous to the feminist aim (McLaren 2002). On the one hand, Foucault "represents a dangerous approach for any marginalized group to adopt" (Hartsock in McLaren 2002: 24). Hartsock claims that Foucault's theory of power cannot help neither feminists nor marginalized people, as Foucault writes from a superior perspective and does not account for unequal relations of power. Foucault, Hartsock argues, merely exposes power and resistance of it, but does not account for how to defeat power (McLaren 2002). On the other hand, feminists have found Foucault to be influential. For example, Mohanty mirrors Foucault when she argues that:

> '[W]omen' as a group, as a stable category of analysis, is that it assumes an ahistorical, universal unity between women… this move limits the definition of the female subject to gender identity… power is automatically defined in binary terms: people who have it (read: men), and people who do not (read: women). Men exploit, women are exploited (Mohanty 1984: 344).

In agreement with Mohanty, I argue that women cannot be categorized in reductive terms, such as 'victim', 'oppressed', 'passive', etc. Despite the disagreement within feminist theory, I believe that Foucault's ideas regarding power, resistance, subjectivity and agency can promote and assist feminist ambitions. Whereas feminist theory tends to examine 'sameness', I argue that Foucault's focus on difference can challenge hegemonic beliefs and discourses.

In his *Discipline and Punish* (1977), Foucault examines the strategies used by social institutions, in order to discipline individuals to submit and become 'docile bodies'. Norms and hegemonic discourses enable discipline, surveillance and repression of the individual, as they become normalized. These norms, Foucault argues, are socio-historically dependent and the individual is, in this sense, a product of socially constructed identities (Foucault 1977, 1982). As a contribution to feminism, this thesis's theoretical framework intersectional (de)othering enables an analysis of how gendered, raced, and classed norms are dependent on the normality discourse, and how the individual can never be truly 'normal'.

Cryle and Stephens's (2017) genealogy of normality is an essential contributor to the development of the thesis's theoretical framework. Through their examination of how

cultural practices from the eighteenth to the twentieth century shaped the normality discourse, their contribution to this thesis is an understanding of the developments within subjectivity and identity. The normality discourse is a central element to the development of feminist theory and its study, the normality discourse is traditionally considered as exclusively binary. However, Cryle and Stephens (2017) illustrate how the term 'normal' cannot be reduced to a binary, as it interacts and is formed by historical conditions. By understanding the genealogy of normality, specifically what the term 'normal' meant in different contexts and how it functioned, I argue, that the individual can resist social categorization.

Foucault's perspective on power then becomes an essential part of my examination. Therefore, intersectional (de)othering examines three of Foucault's principles: (1) how social institutions discipline the individual; (2) how power becomes normalized and internalized; and (3) how power and resistance are always simultaneously present. I have chosen to examine these three principles through what I call subject-positions, namely othered, self-othered, and de-othered. Thus, intersectional (de)othering is a theoretical framework that calls for an examination of the normality discourse through the gender, race, and class norms within their socio-historical and cultural contexts. Because these norms intersect, co-construct and oppose one another, the individual finds herself in three subject-positions, which are essentially dependent on her interaction with power and, therefore, are always in flux. In the following subchapter, I will provide an elaborate account of the construction of the theoretical framework and its elements of analysis.

2.2 Intersectional (De)Othering

According to the standpoint perspective, "our understanding in the world stems from our particular location in the world" (Fitzgerald 2014: 14). As a result, because the individual is a product of social categorization, she too is an agent in positioning both herself and others within various social categories. It is within this context that I form the theoretical framework intersectional (de)othering. By coupling the concept intersectionality (Carby 1982, Lorde 1984, Mohanty 1984, Spivak 1988, Collins 2000, 2016) and the concept othering (Bhabha 1983, Fanon 1952) with Foucault's philosophical considerations regarding the relationship between power-resistance and the subject (Foucault 1977, 1982, 1994, 1998, 2001), intersectional (de)othering enables an anti-essentialist analysis into the subject's identity and subjectivity.

In contrast to mainstream feminism's focus on binary oppositions, intersectional (de)othering enables an analytical framework, which focuses on identifying the multiple structures of power (or what Foucault terms 'force relations') that operate through, across, and within individuals, as well as societies. By force relations, I am specifically referring to power structures that operate as stereotypes or norms. Force relations may consist of any social construction; however, I exclusively choose to focus on stereotypes in terms of race, gender and class. According to the race/gender/class lens racism, sexism and classism aim to define individuals in dichotomous terms, such as black-white, man-woman, etc. Such binary oppositions position the individual either as the norm or as a deviant from the norm. The stereotypical discourses connected to these terms, apply perceived 'superior' or 'inferior' traits, in order to identify 'the subordinated group' and position that group as other or abnormal (Andersen 2009: 79).

In the context of intersectional (de)othering, I consider categories such as race, gender, and class as intersecting force relations. In this sense, women (and men for that matter) are never just gendered subjects, but are simultaneously defined and confined within multiple social categories. Each of these categories shapes the other resulting in multiple intersecting systems of power. Furthermore, because these intersecting systems of power are embedded in social institutions, such as identity and interpersonal relationships, the race/gender/class lens is not merely concerned with victimization and oppression, but also how "people contest and challenge the systems of subordination and representation that oppress them" (Andersen 2009: 79).

As such, intersectional (de)othering operates within a genealogical method where the socio-historical and cultural context is essential to understanding the stereotypical discourses. With his *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and *The History of Sexuality* (1998), Foucault examines how truth and knowledge are realised through discourses, which in turn operate as a force of power. This means that knowledge and truth are constructions, which are dependent on the subject's position within a network of intersecting forces. Within this network, the individual who benefits from raced, gendered, and classed relations is positioned as powerful:

> In the thrust towards economic equality women turn on men… In the drive towards gender equality, white women are found guilty of silencing the black voice; the educationally privileged guilty of elitist (Gergen 2001: 157)

According to the individual who finds herself (or himself) within such a system of privilege, race, class, and gender do not matter (Andersen 2009: 73). The discourses of truth and knowledge, therefore, produce a subject who is defined and confined according to privilege or subordination. This also means that the discourses determine the subject's freedom, structuring of thought and perception of self and others. Whereas Foucault applied the genealogical method to study discourses regarding punishment, madness, and sexuality, I will examine how simultaneous intersections of gender, race, and class position the subject within three subject-positions. I will return to these subject-positions shortly.

From a Foucauldian perspective, power is not merely oppressive, but also productive. In this sense, power produces an ambivalent subject, as "[i]dentity is a set of stories that change with historical circumstances, and identity shifts with the way in which we think, hear and experience them" (Hall 1995: 30). Power then is not a totalitarian structure, institution, or set of skills held by an exclusive group of privileged people. Instead, power is relational, as it consists of multiple force relations, which influence, construct, and oppose one another. Power consists of both subtle and blatant practices, which determine the subject's behaviour through discipline and surveillance. According to Foucault, social divisions operate within a network of top-down and bottom-up forces of power (Foucault 1977: 176). In order to identify the intersections of gender, race, and class, Foucault proposes that:

> One must first let them [forms of power] stand forth in their multiplicity, their differences, their specificity, their reversibility: study them therefore as relations of force that intersect, interrelate, converge, or, on the contrary, oppose one another or tend to cancel each other out (Foucault 1994: 59).

Power, Foucault argues, should be understood as a network of force relations that simultaneously constrain and enable subjectivity. As such, "neither race, nor class, nor gender stand alone as organizing principles of society; rather, they intersect, overlap, intertwine, simultaneously structure, and weave the fabric of all people's experiences" (Andersen 2009:75).

Even though Foucault provides feminist theory with a rich account on the concept 'power', he fails to distinguish between the many types and levels of power (McLaren 2002).

Therefore, I have chosen to include the concept intersectionality. Intersectional analysis, which is rooted in feminist theory, helps to bring to light the individual's multiple identities, which in turn are produced and opposed within a network of multiple oppressions (Garry 2011). In order to identify the network of force relations, intersectionality becomes a fruitful tool of analysis. According to Collins and Bilge (2016) intersectionality is:

> A way of understanding and analysing the complexity in the world, in people, and in human experience… when it comes to social inequality, people's lives and the organization of power in a given society are better understood as being shaped not by a single axis of social division, be it race or gender or class, but by many axes that work together and influence each other. Intersectionality as an analytical tool gives people better access to the complexity of the world and themselves (Ch.1).

In order to examine the multiple intersections of gender, race, and class, I embrace Collins's concept 'matrix of domination', which consists of four domains of power. First, the structural domain of power determines the overall organisation of power, for example, through social institutions such as legislation, schools, etc. Second, the governing of the individual is implemented and managed within the disciplinary domain of power. As such, schools will apply rules and practices of governmentality that align with the current norm. Third, the rules and practices established through structural and disciplinary domains are legitimized by the norms and values a given society holds, namely found in the cultural domain. Fourth, these domains of power determine how the subject sees and understands others as well as herself.

Collins calls these four domains of power 'the matrix of domination', as to illustrate that even though domains of power can be categorized, they are never truly isolated but rather intersect and influence each other. Collins argues that the matrix of domination is always open to change, as social change can be instigated through the resistance of power within the cultural and interpersonal domains of power (Collins & Bilge 2016). As such, although socio-historical and cultural forces define the subject, the individual is supposedly able to resist and transform such relations, as cultural and interpersonal domains of power are open to individual influences and agency (McQueen 2015: 85).

2.2.1 The Genealogy of the Normality Discourse

Certainly, these four domains of power differ according to the socio-historical and cultural contexts, in which the narratives of the three novels *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and *NW* (2012) take place. Therefore, this section aims to briefly examine and discuss the genealogy of the normality discourse, as the norm determines and regulates who is normal and abnormal. De Beauvoir once argues that: "The category of *Other* is as original as consciousness itself. The duality between *Self* and *Other* can be found in the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies" (De Beauvoir 1949: 26). In this sense, practices of othering (the act of positioning the Other opposite oneself) is a human reality that most likely will continue to exist.

As this thesis aims to provide an anti-essentialist perspective on identity and subjectivity within intersections of gender, race, and class, the normality discourse proves an essential component in the female protagonists' lived experiences. According to Cryle and Stephens (2017), up until 1945, the idea of normality was a term used in the scientific world. Normalization was then applied to describe medicine, sexuality, etc, whereas after 1945, the idea of the normal entered popular culture. This is illustrated in the two novels from the nineteenth-century. In the context of colonialism, the female protagonists experience discourses of normality that are applied according to their gender, race, and class. However, the term 'normal' is not explicitly applied throughout the narratives, but instead operate implicitly through the protagonists' positioning within the social space.

The narratives of *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* both unfold during the nineteenth-century, which at the time the British Empire was the largest and most successful imperial and colonial force (Steinbach 2017). By the end of the eighteenth century, the British Empire was the largest exporter of African slaves gaining its financial wealth from slave-worked plantations (Steinbach 2017). Racism in the context of slavery and colonialism was justified through discourses that perceived "African sensuality, eroticism, spirituality, and/or sexuality as deviant, out of control, sinful, and as an essential feature of racial difference" (Collins 2004: 98). Whereas the terms 'black' and 'white' once were used as binary oppositions in terms of 'good' or 'bad', 'pure' or 'impure', etc., the terms were now being used as "notions of racial difference" (Collins 2004: 98).

In 1807, Britain abolished its trade in slaves and by 1833 Britain's Emancipation Act abolished the use of slaves throughout the British Empire. Resulting with a decline of the West Indian colonies, colonizers and planters struggled financially, resulting in tensions throughout the hierarchal social structure. According to the Victorian normality discourse, what was considered as abnormal was defined in terms of rank (Steinbach 2017).

During the nineteenth century, "the need to classify and rank objects, places, living things and people" (Collins 2004: 98) produced the primitive discourse, in which people of colour were categorized as 'primitive' or 'savage', thereby placing them at the bottom of the hierarchal ranking system. Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* portrays the relationships between the Jamaican population and the white Creole slave owners after the Emancipation Act. Among many issues, the novel examines the continuous racism towards the black population despite the abolishment of slavery:

> No more slavery! She [Christophine] had to laugh! These new ones have Letter of the Law. Same thing. They got magistrate. They got fine. They got jail house and chain gang. New ones worse than old ones – more cunning, that's all (Rhys 1966: 11).

As Christophine argues even though the slave trade and the use of slaves had been abolished, racism still was very much alive after the Emancipation. Instead, what was considered abnormal was now confined in secrecy in order to avoid scandal and shame (Foucault 1961: 66).

Rubin (2015) argues that the normality discourse gradually began to develop during the beginning of the nineteenth-century, in terms of a new morality of the self. As such, Rubin provides a distinction between previous normality discourses and the modern discourse, which positions the self as primary. Previous normality discourses demanded that the individual fulfilled her obligation to society. In this sense, society was primary. In contrast, the new normality of self-fulfilment demands that the individual takes advantage of her 'capacities and opportunities', while avoiding to interfere with the lives of others (Rubin: 3). This distinction proposes a shift from homogeneous values to individualized values:

> "The old morality's general norm produced the particular assertion that an adult woman's role is to raise her children and assist her husband. The new morality insists that all people, regardless of their gender, should choose the relationships and career that they find most fulfilling" (Rubin 2015: 3).

However, even though this transition from a norm of depersonalization to personalization, it "leaves us with no place to stand. Instead of gazing on a fragmented, rapidly changing pattern of social developments from some fixed vantage point, we are bouncing around inside the kaleidoscope" (Rubin: 2). From this perspective, the normality discourse is not merely imposed on the individual, as the individual must also manoeuvre within it. Lorde argues that:

> We have all been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: *ignore it*, and if that is not possible, *copy it* if we think it is dominant, or *destroy it* if we think it is subordinate (Lorde 1984: 855. Emphasis mine).

However, the genealogy of the normality discourse indicates that the relationship between power and resistance cannot be understood in such simplistic terms as Lorde claims. Therefore, in the following subchapter I will explain how the three subject-positions, not only define and confine the subject, but also how they negotiate identity within a dynamic of exchange and inclusion. Intersectional (de)othering then enables an analysis, which Andersen and Collins (In Andersen 2009) term 'shifting the centre', as the analyses of the three novels aim to understand "the lived experiences of those historically defined as 'other'" (Andersen 2009: 72) rather than from the viewpoint of dominant groups.

However, the subject-positions intersect, positioning the individual always in-between, as "governance directs attention to the… actions… techniques… by which actors place themselves under the control, guidance… of others, or seek to place other actors under their own sway" (Rose 1999: 16). As such, the perceived Other shifts according to the historical conditions and, therefore, this thesis includes both white women and women of colour, as these so-called 'groups' have experienced marginalization and oppression during the course of history.

2.2.2 The Three Subject-Positions of Intersectional (De)Othering

Due to the ambivalent and complex nature of power, the subject cannot be reduced to an essential entity with unchangeable personal characteristics, as her "identity is a relational achievement… constituted by multiple facets, each reflecting a different domain of human relationship and each representing but a partial aspect of the whole" (Gergen 2001: 162). As a product of the changeability of socio-historical and cultural contexts, the individual exists as a post-modern subject who has no fixed identity:

> The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent 'self'. Within us are contradictory identities, pulling in different directions, so that our identification are continuously being shifted about (Hall 1992: 277).

Elaborating on the theoretical framework intersectional (de)othering, I will argue in the following that the normality discourse creates three subject-positions, which are present throughout the three novels. The novels *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and *NW* (2012) narrate within socio-historical and cultural contexts, which are both oppressive and productive, and, as a result, place the individual within three intersecting and contradictory subject-positions.

The individual is both a cause and effect of power, as identity is a relational construction. It is, I argue, within the complex relationship with power that the subject both experiences and co-constructs three types of positioning, namely: **othered**, **self-othered,** and **de-othered**. These three subject-positions do not occur in a chronological succession. Rather they intersect, co-construct, and oppose one another.

Othered

In *The Second Sex* (1949), Simone de Beauvoir argues that: "one is not born but becomes a woman" (14). With this phrase, de Beauvoir distinguishes between biological sex and the social construction of gender, thereby positioning women as a product of history. According to de Beauvoir, women are considered as the second sex, as they are defined in relation to men and, thereby, positioned as the other. However, the process of othering operates within a more complex and intersectional relationship, as socio-historical and cultural contexts determine the normality discourse and, as a result, the intersections of gender, class, and race.

The first of the three subject-positions is produced through the process of othering, resulting in the positioning of the subject as othered. By the term othering, I am refering to the process where stereotypes produce false knowledge about a minority group and individuals within that group (Collins 2004). Patricia Hill Collins's term 'controlling images' illustrates how stereotypes are "designed to make racism, sexism, and poverty appear to be natural, normal, and an inevitable part of everyday life" (Collins 1990: 68). From this perspective, stereotypes regarding race, class, and gender operate within a large network of power rooted in the structure of social institutions. An analysis of the four domains of power (structural, disciplinary, cultural, and interpersonal) illustrates how gender, race, and class intersect and thereby construct stereotypes. From this perspective, the analysis on othering is constructed according to the four domains of power. As a result, each category with its stereotypical attribute gains meaning through an intersectional relationship (Andersen 2009).

Andersen (2009) argues that othering is "maintained through stereotypes that sexualize groups in different but particular ways" (84). As such, stereotypes categorize the Other due to certain perceived social characteristics. For example, African American women are perceived as promiscuous and white women are either 'madonnas' or 'whores', depending on their positioning within the social hierarchy: "working-class women are more likely to be seen as 'sluts' and upper-class women as frigid and cold" (Andersen 2009: 84). Othering then, I argue, distinguishes between the normal and the abnormal, thereby operating within a system of binary oppositions, in order to confine the marginalized subject as Other.

I consider the process of othering as a reflection of hegemonic cultural and social thought. In this sense, Foucault's genealogical study on social constructions, such as punishment, madness, and sexuality contributes to this thesis's understanding of the workings of othering. Within a system of binary oppositions, it is the dominant group and the individuals who 'belong' to that group that essentially define the norm. In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha argues that: "racist stereotypical discourse, in its colonial moment, inscribes a form of governmentality that is informed by a productive splitting in its constitution of knowledge and exercise of power" (118). Within this hierarchal social structure, men are positioned as subjects who exercise the power of governmentality (de Beauvoir 1949). On each end of the hierarchal scale are binary oppositions. At the top of the scale is the white male, whereas at the bottom is the black female. Between these oppositions, the black male and the white

female are positioned, depending on social standing and other socially constructed categories, which construct a perceived superiority and inferiority.

The hierarchal social structure then is simultaneously gendered, raced and classed. Examples of gendered, raced and classed divisions are found in both American and British legislation. In 1870, the Fifteenth Amendment of the American Constitution granted men of colour the right to vote, yet still opting to alienate white women and women of colour. As a result, feminists appealed to the white women in the Southern American states by arguing for the necessity of their votes in order to counter out the black votes (Adams 2014). Across the pond in Britain, the Representation of the People Act 1918 granted the vote to women over the age of 30 either with property qualifications and/or with a University degree. Men could, however, vote from the age of 21 despite having no property qualifications or education. The practice of othering then is understood as top-down flows of power, which are incorporated into structural institutions. In this sense, legislations operate as a structural domain of power that governs the individual through Foucault's three technologies: hierarchal observation, normalizing judgement, and examination (Foucault 1977). First, discipline takes the form of hierarchal observation. Secondly, the disciplinary power judges normality':

> The judges of normality are everywhere. We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the 'social worker'-judge; it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever he may find himself, subjects to it his body, his gestures, his behaviour, his aptitudes, his achievements (Foucault 1977: 304).

The normalizing judgement constitutes a ranking and rating system, which judges the individual's competences. In his *Discipline and Punish* (1977) Foucault argues that rules, hierarchal categorization, and culture are inscribed and reinforced through the human body. The body is disciplined and controlled through time and space, which during the eighteenth century became common methods of exercising domination and authority.

In terms of space, social institutions, such as schools, monasteries, etc. exercise discipline in the form of physical enclosure. Within these spaces, school curriculums and itineraries structure the subject's time. Ultimately, the technology of examination makes it possible to

categorize and to punish the subject. The aim (or the telos according to Foucault) of such governmentality is to produce 'docile bodies', who conform to the norm.

In this sense, disciplinary power is productive, as it shapes individuals into 'docile bodies'. I interpret the term 'docile bodies' to be the result of a reconstructed subject who submits to the norm and is, as a result, normalized. The 'docile body' constitutes the second subject-position that I term 'self-othered', and which will be the focus of the following section.

Self-Othered

In the previous section, I explained how the process of othering consists of both top-down and bottom-up forces of power. From structural institutions, such as schools and legislations, which operate to discipline and produce self-governing individuals to the interpersonal domain, in which the dominant subject positions the marginalized as othered, those who are able to self-govern and self-discipline are considered suitable in disciplining and governing others who are considered marginalized or inferior, such as women.

In extension, whereas othering is understood as the praxis of defining, confining, and governing human behaviour, self-othering is its premise. In this context, othering operates to produce self-governing and self-regulating subjects, who reinforce the stereotypes attributed gender, class and race categories. Whereas the normality discourse is externally imposed thereby positioning the subject as othered, the internalization of such a discourse results in the process of self-othering. That is, by positioning women as an object at the intersections of power, disciplinary norms aim to produce self-governing subjects:

> Identities actually come from the outside; they are the way in which we are recognized and then come to step into place of recognitions others give us. Without the others there is no self, there is no self-recognition (Hall 1995; 30).

By drawing on intersectionality, which is the conceptualisation of the interlocking systems of oppression studied in feminist theory, the process of othering does not merely confine the subject to one form of alienation and degradation. Consequently, the subject risks the internalization of stereotypical discourses resulting in feelings of inadequacy (Fanon 1952). In his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Fanon argues that colonized peoples suffered psychological damage as a result of internalizing colonial discourses, ultimately producing

the black subject with an inferiority complex. With a desire to be accepted (or as I term 'de-othered'), the black subject would imitate the culture of the colonizer, thereby, embracing what was considered to be superior and civilized ideals.

Foucault (1977) argues that central to disciplinary power (or othering) is the aspect of surveillance, which operate in order to discipline the individual into becoming a docile body. This constant surveillance, Foucault argues, ultimately is internalized and normalized in the individual's psychology. From this perspective, surveillance succeeds when it is internalized by the individual, who then becomes self-governing and self-disciplining.

In addition, Bhabha's terms hybridity and mimicry prove helpful in understanding the complex situation the Other finds herself positioned. Because the individual experiences multiple forces of othering, the individual finds herself positioned in an in-between space, a hybrid who in some contexts is perceived as normal, while in other contexts is perceived as abnormal.

The hybrid identity then not only becomes an object to impose power, but also a site of resisting the processes of othering and self-othering. According to Bhabha (1994), the hybrid finds herself positioned in-between several identities, communities, norms, etc., and, in turn, hybridity creates an in-between space – a third space – where norms can be challenged and resisted. In this sense, a third space is located between intersectional (de)othering's three subject-positions, in which the subject can always negotiate her positioning. Within the third space is the possibility of agency, which threatens the oppressors' or the colonizers' authority. Bhabha (1984) argues that agency is exercised through 'mimicry', which is the strategy of resemblance.

Through the normality discourse, the individual is encouraged to self-govern and self-discipline in order to imitate and assimilate to the norm. However, hybridity ironically inhibits the subject's social conformity, as the individual always will to some degree deviate from a norm. As the perceived Other engages in acts of mimicry, it becomes apparent that she, despite attempting to conform, cannot. In this sense, the oppressor realizes that the disciplinary authority then can never obtain absolute control over the Other. It is through this realization and recognition of social and cultural differences, that the Other can regain her agency and, thereby, reconstruct her identity. This process of internalizing normality

discourses, I argue, produces a subject who colludes in her own positioning as the Other, thereby forming the second subject-position self-othered.

De-Othered

Whereas the processes of othering and self-othering consist of imposing and encoding normalizing techniques on the subject, the process of de-othering is a non-normalizing practice of freedom, as the subject through self-production detaches herself from her normative identity. I do not consider power as simply oppressive, but also productive. Therefore, I argue that stereotypical discourses not only inflict power, but that they also motivate the resistance of repressive norms and the regaining of agency.

Foucault argues that "discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart" (Foucault 1998; 100). Resistance towards the normality discourse emerges when the subject recognizes that external and internal forces of discipline have become repressive. When norms become too governing, too restrictive, and inhibit the subject from embracing her multiple identities then power too can be productive. Through the act of consciousness-raising the individual may come to the realization that norms are not universal and that there are many viable forms of life.

Foucault's later work emphasizes that power can only exist simultaneously with resistance (Foucault 1982, 1994). Without resistance, Foucault argues, there is no power. From this perspective, I argue that feminist theory can benefit from applying Foucault's perspective on power, as it calls for an examination of both inner and outer processes of power and resistance. By elaborating on practices of othering and self-othering, I argue that there exists a complex network of multiple possibilities for women (across race and class) to feel empowered.

Whereas the subject-position 'othered' examines how the individual deviates from the normality discourse, the subject-position 'de-othered' examines how the individual can navigate within the normality discourse in an attempt to feel empowered and 'free'. Manoeuvres of de-othering are manifested through acts of resistance and conformity. I argue that within a dynamic of power and resistance, the individual may either engage in acts of

resistance, such as parrhesia and silent refusal, or choose to conform to the normality discourse by resorting to appropriated domination.

Much of black/postcolonial feminist theory argues that especially women of colour are muted and made invisible (see Spivak 1988, Lorde 1984, Carby 1982, Mohanty 1984). Paradoxically, Foucault argues that only through parrhesia can the individual become truly free. Foucault argues that:

> Parrhesia is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself) (2001: 19).

Central aspects of parrhesia are thus those of truth, danger and duty. According to Foucault, parrhesia is an act of truth, as the parrhesiastes speaks her personal truth because she 'knows' it to be true. From this perspective, parrhesia "presupposes that the parrhesiates is someone who has the moral qualities which are required, first, to know the truth, and, secondly, to convey such truth to others" (Foucault 2001: 15). By speaking one's personal truth involves an aspect of danger, as parrhesia can only be practiced at the risk of losing something: "the tyrant may become angry, may punish him, may exile him, may kill him" (Foucault 2001: 16). The parrhesiates then is someone who speaks her truth despite its risk. However, the parrhesiates is not required to speak the truth, as she 'is free to keep silent. The parrhesiates then engages in parrhesia, because she believes it is her duty. It is a voluntary act in which identity and subjectivity is constructed. Davies (1992) argues that:

> Who we are, our subjectivity, is spoken into existence in every utterance, not just in the sense that others speak us into existence and impose unwanted structures onto us, as much as early feminist writing presumed, but, in each moment of speaking and being, we reinvent ourselves inside the male female dualism, socially, psychically, and physically (In Lipton & Mackinlay 2017: 66-67).

In contrast, whereas some have considered the act of silence to be oppressive, others have argued that silence may function as an act of resistance (Keating 2013). It is fruitful to examine the act of silence, as black/postcolonial feminists argue women of colour are made

silent. This stands in contrast to Foucault's claim that the individual is free to resist oppressive discourses. Because this thesis adopts a foucaudian perspective on gender, race, and class oppression, I consider silence as an act of resistance. This is not to say that acts of silence are not imposed on individuals, in an attempt to confine and define the individual. However, I believe that the relationship between power and resistance is both oppressive and productive. This dynamic of power is externally as well as internally imposed on the subject. When practices of discipline and surveillance become too controlling, the individual may engage in acts of silent rebellion. This means that the individual may choose freely to remain silent instead of speaking her truth. Keating (2013) calls this practice 'silent refusal'. From this perspective, black/postcolonial feminism is challenged by the aspect that women of colour (and white women for that matter) may not exclusively be mute, as a consequence of oppression.

The process, however, is two-fold, as the individual's practices of resistance may simultaneously support the structures of domination by oppressing others. Tappan (2006) argues that as norms are normalized by society, the individual may internalize and thereby conform to a norm that otherwise may be perceived as oppressive. Tappan's term 'appropriated domination' is a consequence of the power and resistance dynamic. As my discussion on feminism aimed to illustrate (section 2.1), liberal, Western feminists had a tendency to alienate women of colour in their struggle for emancipation. In this sense, certain acts of resistance may empower some people while simultaneously oppressing others.

These practices of resistance and conformity, I argue, were once supportive of the de-othering process. However, the development in the normality discourse to the modern 'morality of the self' (Rubin 2015) complicates the relationship between power and resistance. Accordingly, the individual is now expected to live an authentic life while simultaneously treating others as one's equal. This complexity in balancing one's self-fulfilment and the fulfilment of others may prove that Foucault is mistaken to argue that every individual is free to resist oppression.

2.2.3 Operationalization of Intersectional (De)Othering

Earlier I examined how the process of othering is understood from both a liberal feminist and black/postcolonial feminist perspective. Lacking, however, is, I believe, the understanding that oppression of women is not merely externally imposed, but is also imposed from within,

making the subject a contributor to her own oppression – and the oppression of others for that matter. By adopting a foucauldian-feminist perspective on the relationship between power and resistance, I propose an analysis into the processes of othering, self-othering, and de-othering throughout three novels, in order to examine how women are limited as well as limit themselves and others, and how the subject may resist such limitation.

Power, therefore, is a multidimensional process, which involves various forms of social discrepancy, internalization and resistance. It is within this context that my concept intersectional (de)othering assumes Foucault's anti-totalizing conception of power, in order to establish a more dynamic understanding of power in women's lives beyond that of domination and victimization. The theoretical framework intersectional (de)othering thus aims to identify the practices of oppression, as well as the practices of resistance.

The aim of this thesis is to challenge the notion that the individual and subjectivity are entities that can be defined and confined according to separate social categories. The analyses will illustrate that identity is contradictory and, therefore, the individual is simultaneously repressive and productive. Because the subject has no fixed or pre-determined identity and, therefore, is considered a socially constructed product, neither are the three subject-positions fixed, but differ according to the context.

Even though the thesis constructs the analysis in a chronological structure, as the individual perceivably progresses through external power to internal power to resistance of power, the analysis illustrates that the process from oppression towards opposition is not a linear journey. Identity is contradictive, as the oppressor may find herself oppressed in some contexts, while the oppressed may be positioned as the oppressor in other contexts. In essence, because of her multiple identities the individual cannot be defined and confined in terms of a reductive and fixed category, such as 'normal'.

As such, this thesis is positioned within the social constructionist perspective, as it takes the "social constructionism hypothesis that all other aspects of humanity are created, maintained and destroyed in our interactions with others through time" (Galbin 2014: 85). It is also essential to clarify that I do not intend with this thesis to provide a universal and essentialist proof of women's oppression and resistance. Instead, I reject the liberal feminist notion of women as a homogeneous group, as not all women share the same oppression: "to treat them

as a unified group characterized by the fact of their 'exchange' between male kin, is to deny the socio-historical and cultural specificities of their existence" (Mohanty 1984: 341).

Analytical Approach

In order to examine the individual's changing position within the relationship between power and resistance, I will conduct a comparative analysis of the three novels. In the following section, I will elaborate on my considerations regarding the analysis of this thesis.

First, I find it essential to explain my choice in literature. As mentioned in the Introduction, I have chosen the novels *Jane Eyre*, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and *NW* as the objective for my comparative analysis. This choice is centred on three principles: (1) the novels' focus on female protagonists; (2) the progress through three historical eras; and (3) the British-Caribbean historical link.

These three principles are interrelated, which proves to be an essential and contributing element to the thesis's findings. As this thesis is positioned within a feminist perspective, it is obvious to choose three novels that examine the woman's position within a society, which changes according to shifts in moral- and social norms. This thesis specifically focuses on how women both experience and engage in practice of oppression and opposition. This is not to say that men are not subjected to multiple forms of oppression. I firmly believe that men, like women, also experience oppression in terms of race and class. However, due to the thesis's focus on power and resistance, it is apparent to position the thesis within a feminist perspective, as feminism is a social and political movement of resistance towards the marginalization of women.

The first novel takes place during British colonialism, and as such colonial norms become an influential factor in women's lived experiences during the nineteenth-century. As a counter-narrative, *Wide Sargasso Sea* extends on the colonial experience among women, whereas *NW* complicates and debates notions of identity and subjectivity in terms of, but not limited by race, gender, and class.

The three novels range over a 165-year period, thereby, providing insight into the conditions of women during the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries. The British-Caribbean link is present throughout the three novels, illustrating how socio-historical and cultural

conditions such as colonialism affected and continues to affect contemporary societies and identities. Therefore, the Caribbean-British link poses questions regarding identity formation deriving from colonial and postcolonial contexts. According to Stewart (2016):

> Caribben Creoles… become the forerunners and the prophets of world Creoleness. They participate in a temporally complex condition of cultural knowledge validated simultaneously by their historical emergence from the plantation past and by their current dedication to expressing this inward authenticity through the medium art (3).

In this sense, as this thesis aims to examine the relationship between power and resistance from a race/gender/class lens, it seems fruitful to include Caribbean history and culture. In the Caribbean, the legacy of colonialism, imperialism and slavery continue to pose questions about identity, culture, freedom and belonging.

By applying the theoretical framework intersectional (de)othering to a comparative analysis of the three novels, practices of power and resistance prove contradictory, as they are simultaneously oppressive and productive and are further complicated by the normality discourse.

The analyses are structured according to the three subject-positions. The first analysis 'Othering' examines how the female protagonists in *Jane Eyre*, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and *NW* experience categorization in terms of their race, gender and class, in order to discipline them according to the norm. The second analysis 'Self-Othering' examines how the protagonists internalize the normality discourses, thereby becoming self-disciplining and self-governing individuals. Thirdly, the analysis 'De-Othering' examines the relationship between power and resistance. Here the individual's freedom is dependent on either resistance of oppression or by oppressing others in an attempt to position oneself as 'normal'.

The three analyses will illustrate that depending on the circumstances, the individual is never entirely othered, or self-othered, or de-othered, but is instead constantly shifting between these subject-positions.

Chapter 3.

Analysis

3.
Analysis

Intersectional (De)Othering in Jane Eyre, Wide Sargasso Sea and NW

The chapter 'Intersectional (De)Othering in Jane Eyre, Wide Sargasso Sea and NW' has three aims. First, it seeks to identify the external forces of disciplinary power across the three novels. Second, these norms are examined through their (possible) internalization. Third, I aim to discuss how external and internal imposed norms and rules act simultaneously oppressive and productive, and how every individual supposedly is free to challenge, criticize, and resist her positioning. By applying the theoretical framework to the analysis, I seek to examine why neither white women nor women of colour can exclusively represent inferiority or superiority, and in turn cannot be positioned as either normal or abnormal.

In this sense, I aim to challenge the discourse of victimization that is dominant within feminist theory. Resting on the assumption that the individual should not be reduced to a passive product of power, the following chapter presents an analysis of the three subject-positions of intersectional (de)othering. Therefore, the analysis is divided into three chapters. Within these three chapters, I will present a comparative analysis of *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and *NW* (2012), in order to examine the normality discourse that is imposed, internalized, and resisted by women of all colours.

3.1 Othering

According to Collins and Bilge (2016): "power operates by disciplining people in ways that put people's lives on paths that make some options seem viable and others out of reach" (Ch.1). As such, in the relationship between power and the individual, those who are equivalent to the norm experience a sense of superiority whereas those who deviate from the norm must be disciplined into conformity.

Black/postcolonial feminists argue that the difference between superiority and inferiority are caused by historically constructed norms, which continuously position women of colour as deviating from 'superior' racial, sexual, and feminine qualities, just to name a few (Carby 1982). Positioned at two opposing poles, the white woman represents the desired qualities, which women of colour are expected by society to strive towards.

In an attempt to move beyond the superior-inferior binary, I find it essential to examine the complexity and subjectivity of all women of colours. In this sense, an intersectional analysis of the raced, gendered and classed discourses that are imposed and experienced by the white woman and the woman of colour can shed light on the practices of othering, and, in turn, ultimately challenge such positioning. In this sense, by first identifying the multiple practices of othering offers a more nuanced understanding of how women (across race and class) experience confining spaces.

The practices of othering are examined through an intersectional perspective. In this sense, Collins's (2016) four domains of power (structural, disciplinary, cultural, and interpersonal) will guide the analysis of othering throughout the three novels. As these domains of power intersect, they will distinguish throughout the analysis and some domains may prove more influential in one novel, whereas of lesser relevance in the other novels.

This chapter focuses on how norms are imposed on the individual from the outside. Norms regarding race, gender, and class will be examined within and across Collins's four domains of power. In an attempt to provide clarity, I have divided the following analysis into three subchapters, as each subchapter focuses on a specific novel and its given discourse of normality, in which the novel's narrative unfolds. By doing so, the analysis provides an overview of a perceived shift in the normality discourse, which covers a period of 165-years beginning with the first published novel *Jane Eyre* (1847) to the last published novel *NW* (2012).

3.1.1 Victorian Female Normality

In order to understand the practices of power and its implications on the individual, Foucault argues that power must first be understood in its relation to history (Foucault 1998). In this sense, the socio-historical and cultural context in which the narrative of *Jane Eyre* unfolds is

an essential contributor to understanding the practices of othering that are imposed on and experienced by Jane.

During Victorian Britain, British society was organized hierarchically, especially in terms of gender and class. Beginning in the late eighteenth-century, the terms ‘class’ and ‘classes’ were widely used to describe the organization of British society (Steinbach 2017). To an important degree, class was not only used in reference to people’s financial income, but also as a means of categorizing the individual’s social standing, in terms of “education, employment, cultural choices and personal values” (Steinbach 2017). Britons adopted a three-class model divided into working, middle, and upper classes. As social standing operated as a force of power, class intersects with various other social categories, such as gender, which was one of the main contributing factors in the organization of Victorian society. In its complexity, the three-class model dictated the gender roles according to the woman’s (and the man’s) status within society.

The ideology of the Victorian period was very much rooted in the ‘doctrine of separate spheres’ (Steinbach 2017: 156), in which membership and categorization in terms of gender and class determined the individual’s place in the world. Whereas working-class women worked in factories and domestic service in order to provide for their families, middle-class women were according to the ideology expected to be domestic and, therefore, exclusively focus on the home and children. Though middle-class women were not intended to work, women who were not married and who were without family support could not avoid working. In such a situation, only few options for the middle-class woman were considered respectable, such as working as a governess or dressmaker (Steinbach 2017), and it is in such a circumstance that Jane Eyre finds herself positioned.

Jane Eyre is the daughter of a wealthy mother and a father who was a clergyman, thereby positioning her social standing within the upper middle classes. Jane’s mother was frowned upon by her family for marrying beneath her social standing, thereby leaving Jane with no inheritance. After her parents’ death, Jane is sent to live with her aunt Reed at Gateshead Hall, who treats her poorly. The maltreatment exercised by Mrs Reed, I argue, is due to the normality of gendered and classed discrimination. As a woman of the upper class, Mrs Reed cannot sympathize with Jane’s situation despite sharing a marginalized position as ‘woman’.

It is then within the domestic sphere at Gateshead that the reader is first introduced to Jane as Other. Within her positioning as 'othered', Jane is excluded "from privileges intended only for contented, happy little children" due to her lack of "a more sociable and child-like disposition" (Brontë 1847: 1). As the head of the household, Mrs Reed imposes discipline by providing rules and restrictions for Jane's social inclusion: "Jane, I don't like cavillers or questioners; besides, there is something truly forbidding in a child taking up her elders in that manner. Be seated somewhere; and *until you can speak pleasantly, remain silent*" (Brontë: 1. Emphasis mine). The normality discourse that is imposed on Jane regarding her gender and class require that Jane either 'speak pleasantly' or 'remain silent'. In this sense, the domestic sphere provides Jane's first encounter with a disciplinary force, as Gateshead Hall is a structural institution that operates in order to punish Jane's perceived abnormalities and discipline her into conformity.

In an attempt to escape her positioning as Other, Jane agrees to be sent to the Lowood Institution, a charity-school for orphan girls. However, Jane quickly realizes that she has merely progressed from one disciplinary institution to another. During the eighteenth-century, the disciplines of time and space became a common method of exercising domination and authority (Foucault 1977). Educational institutions, such as schools, monasteries, etc. began to exercise discipline in the form of physical and mental enclosure. The individual was now being monitored and judged according to a hierarchal rank, and compared to her fellow students (Foucault 1977). From this perspective, institutions such as Lowood, educated and trained girls to conform according to the norms of society. Schools then became structural institutions, which functioned to impose discipline and produce 'docile bodies'.

Docile bodies in this sense were determined by Victorian society, which was designed according to patriarchal norms. It was expected of women to be passionless and passive, whereas men were considered independent and 'manly' (Steinbach 2017). During the Victorian period, the institutions of marriage and motherhood represented the norm of the middle-class woman, thus women were from a very young age educated and disciplined accordingly. Educational institutions were designed to prepare young women for their destiny as wives and mothers (Steinbach 2017).

Lowood operated as such a structural organization of power by creating a disciplinary environment, in order not to accustom the girls "to habits of luxury and indulgence, but to render them hardy, patient, self-defying" (Brontë: 70). Similar to the rules imposed on Jane at Gateshead, the Lowood Institution operated according to the Victorian female normality discourse, as girls were disciplined to be silent and obey the orders given by their superiors:

> Again the bell rang: all formed in file, two and two, and in that order descended the stairs… prayers were read by Miss Miller; afterwards she called out—Form classes!...A great tumult succeeded for some minutes, during which Miss Miller repeatedly exclaimed, "*Silence!*" and "*Order!*" (Brontë 1847: 47. Emphasis mine).

Schools, such as Lowood, functioned to train girls to become governesses, schoolteachers, or any other occupation that was considered suitable for a woman of genteel upbringing (Steinbach 2017). As a patriarchal institution, it is Lowood's school inspector, Mr Brocklehurst, who is the enforcer of disciplinary education. Assimilating to the norms perceived at the time as superior, Mr Brocklehurst, a wealthy white male, functions as the governing authority in defining and confining the normal from the abnormal. When the girls deviate from the norm, it is Mr Brocklehurst who imposes punishment and discipline:

> It becomes my duty to warn you that this girl [Jane], who might be one of God's own lambs, is a little castaway – not a member of the true flock, but evidently *an interloper and an alien* (Brontë 1847: 74. Emphasis mine).

The normality discourse regarding gender and class that determines the operation within structural and disciplinary domains of power is further prevalent within Jane's interpersonal relationships. In addition to the binary opposition between normal and abnormal, which structure the disciplinary education at Gateshead and Lowood, Jane is once again positioned as Other in her relationship with Edward Rochester. Throughout the novel, from a self-perceived and socially granted superiority, Edward engages in reducing women according to gendered, raced, and classed stereotypes.

Edward's first victim of patriarchal, racial and classed oppression is his wife Bertha, née Antoinette, Mason. Edward describes Bertha according to the sexualized primitive discourse,

as “tall, dark, majestic…’she allured me’ ” (Brontë 1847: 367-368). Bertha’s ethnicity is regarded in terms of a sexual temptress, and Edward’s forbidden attraction to Bertha forces him to fixate her within her otherness. Even though Edward finds Bertha majestic, he positions and categorizes her as an inferior Other, who is “intemperate and unchaste… her cast of mind common, low, narrow… course and trite, perverse and imbecile” (Brontë 1847: 368-369).

The intersections of gender and class are central determinants in the relationship between Jane and Edward. From his patriarchal positioning and superior social standing, Edward views Jane as an “elf”, “fairey”, “sprite”, among several nicknames due to her perceived “look of another world” (Brontë 1847: 144). During their first meeting, Jane is instantly positioned as Other when Edward asks her if she is waiting for ‘her people’ – “the men in green” – when she “bewitched” his horse (Brontë 1847: 144). By imposing discourses of otherness, Edward positions Jane as inferior and himself as superior.

Edward’s categorization of Jane does not merely take form in labelling her as an otherworldly creature, but also as an object that can be claimed and bought. After Edward seemingly secures Jane’s hand in marriage, he begins to treat Jane in a reductive manner, which disturbs Jane: “I thought his smile was such a sultan might… bestow on a slave his gold and gems had enriched” (266). Moments later Edward thinks to himself: “Oh it is rich to see and hear her! Is she original? Is she piquant? I would not exchange this one little English girl for the grand Turk’s whole seraglio; gazelle eyes, houri forms and all!” (Brontë 1847: 322). Edward’s comparison of Jane to an oriental mistress, whose duty it is to fulfil his desires, again fixates Jane within an inferior position starved of respect and equality.

By adopting the colonial and patriarchal norm, Edward’s identification as superior is consistently present throughout all of his romantic relationships. Through the othering of his female acquaintances, Edward consistently positions himself as superior and maintains his superiority by disregarding the identity and subjectivity of his female companions. Prior to his relationship with Jane, Edward reveals that he had three mistresses: Clara from Germany, Giacinta from Italy, and Celine from France (Brontë 1847: 375). In relation to their foreignness, Edward’s Britishness merely reinforces his sense of superiority and authority. Their nationalities are of great importance to their othering, as women from these countries

were considered promiscuous and sexually deviant (see McClintock 1997 for gendered nationalism).

Similarly, as a woman, Mrs Reed finds herself othered by her son John Reed, who is positioned as the family's patriarch. Positioned as the superior, John is at liberty to engage in physical and emotional violence without punishment despite that "he twisted the necks of the pigeons, killed the little pea-chicks, set the dog at the sheep… called his mother 'old girl'" and "bluntly disregarded her wishes" (Brontë: 11). Ranking of gender, race, and class is the determining factor of normal and abnormal throughout *Jane Eyre*. Even the maids at Gateshead become an accomplice of patriarchal oppression by confining Jane within her perceived otherness:

> You ought not think yourself on equality with the Misses Reed and Master Reed, because Missis kindly allows you to be brought up with them. They will have a great deal of money and you will have none: *it is your place to be humble, and to try to make yourself agreeable to them* (Brontë 1847: 8. Emphasis mine).

Jane's othering is defined according to her disobedience towards her 'superiors'. Because Jane is confined within her individual otherness, the maids cannot share her suffering. Instead, they suffer the pitfall of joining the patriarchy by restraining Jane to a chair and locking her in the red room.

As such, Victorian norms regarding gender roles and social standing position Jane at the intersection of multiple oppressions. As an orphan, Jane must rely on her aunt Reed. However, Mrs Reed, who considers Jane's otherness as in desperate need of disciplining, dislikes Jane. Jane experiences intersections of classed and gendered norms, which position her in-between the superior and inferior classes and must, therefore, obtain work as a governess. However, as a governess, Jane's positioning becomes further complicated, as she becomes both disciplined and disciplinary. I will return to this ambivalent positioning in the analysis on self-othering.

3.1.2 The Primitive Discourse

The analysis on the othering imposed on Jane Eyre centred on what I term the Victorian Female Normality discourse. Rooted in a socio-historical and cultural context where society was organized according to a gendered and classed hierarchal structure, the Victorian woman found herself limited not only due to her gender, but also because of her social status. In this sense, the categories working, middle and upper class determined the woman's opportunities, freedom and value. Even though Jane experiences double oppression in terms of gender and class, as a white British woman, Jane's positioning is very different to that of the white Creole Antoinette Mason from *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Whereas intersections of classed and gendered norms are imposed on Jane, Antoinette experiences multiple oppressions as a result of raced, classed, and gendered norms.

Similar to *Jane Eyre*, the narrative of *Wide Sargasso Sea* takes place during the Victorian era. However, the narrative of *Wide Sargasso Sea* unfolds in the Caribbean after the Emancipation act. Whereas the colonial context in Brontë's narrative was essentially obscured, Rhys positions the consequences of colonialism in the forefront. In comparison to *Jane Eyre*, the intersections of gender, race and class in *Wide Sargasso Sea* are further complicated by Antoinette's creole heritage. Whereas Jane experiences double oppression in terms of gender and class, Antoinette is positioned between the colonial white values and privileges of her slave-owning heritage and her Jamaican identity. As such, Antoinette is neither white nor black and, therefore, neither accepted by the British nor the Jamaican population. According to British society, she is a "white nigger" lacking racial purity. According to the black population of Jamaica, she is a "white cockroach" by being a member of colonial oppression. In this context, Antoinette experiences multiple intersections of raced, gendered, and classed othering, which are imposed by opposing agents throughout the four domains of power.

Besides the Victorian female normality discourse, which primarily applied to the white British woman, the primitive discourse was imposed on women (and men) of colour. Central to the primitive discourse was "the need to classify and rank objects, places, living things, and people" (Collins 2004: 99). Accordingly, African people were perceived by Western society as uncivilized and of a closer resemblance to the apes, thereby positioning African people at the bottom of the hierarchal social structure (Collins 2004). The dehumanization of women of colour by linking African peoples and apes, according to white supremacy,

'justified' their racism (Collins 2004). Much like the Victorian female normality, the primitive discourse was imposed on the individual through intersecting structural and relational institutions.

Antoinette's stepfather, Mr Mason, is the first to impose British governmentality and discipline. Mr Mason's intention, as an Englishman, is to impose order among the 'primitive natives' after the Emancipation. By operating within the primitive discourse, Mr Mason is granted the position of a perceived superior authority and, as a result, is able to impose and maintain discipline and rules on the former Jamaican slaves. In an attempt to gain authority and financial wealth, Mr Mason marries Antoinette's mother, Annette. From the perspective of the primitive discourse, Mr Mason's marriage to Annette functions as a business, a trade in means. According to the primitive discourse, women of colour were perceived as animalistic and 'wild' and in need of discipline. In this sense, due to their wild nature women of colour were considered the white man's property (Collins 2004).

In an attempt to discipline Antoinette into becoming a 'docile body', Mr Mason sends Antoinette to live at a convent school for girls. Like Jane Eyre, Antoinette must be educated and obtain lady-like skills, such as cross-stitching, "cleanliness, good manners and kindness to God's poor" (Rhys 1966: 35). At the convent, the nuns tell Antoinette stories about saints who were "very beautiful and wealthy" and who "were loved by rich and handsome young men" (Rhys 1966: 35). In this context, the structural and disciplinary domains of power intersect, in order to educate and form Antoinette into becoming a prospective wife.

The institution of marriage once again functions as a purchase, as Mr. Mason sells Antoinette to an Englishman. Through marriage, Antoinette financial wealth becomes her husband's property, thereby robbing Antoinette of her agency and positioning her dependent on her husband. As a white British man, Antoinette's husband is well aware of this inequality and does not seem to mind: "I have not bought her, she has bought me, or so she thinks… the thirty thousand pounds have been paid to me without question or condition. No provision made for her" (Rhys 1966: 49).

The primitive discourse operates according to binary oppositions by positioning the individual according to dichotomous terms. As a perceived authority and enforcer of norms, Antoinette's husband considers her as Other. Antoinette's passionate personality deviates

from that of the Victorian woman, and, thereby, positions her as 'wild'. This wild nature is something Antoinette's husband cannot relate to: "I felt very little tenderness for her, she was a stranger to me, *a stranger who did not think or feel as I did*" (Rhys 1966: 69. Emphasis mine). In this sense, Antoinette is defined and confined within a self-other binary, in which her husband represents the norm and she represents the Other, the abnormal, and deviant.

Because Antoinette is perceived as a stranger – something Other and unknown – her husband, who finds it difficult to categorize Antoinette, ultimately confines her within the discourse of madness. According to Foucault (1961), the 'animality of madness' is the discourse of defining madness as "an animal with strange mechanisms" (70) and "unchained animality could be mastered only by discipline and brutalizing" (75). After Antoinette's husband succeeds in getting Antoinette diagnosed as insane, he removes her from her home by taking her to England. Here Antoinette is confined to an attic where she descends further into madness. Showalter argues (1958) that before moral management it was common to hide the Victorian 'madwoman' in the home.

In addition to the primitive discourse imposed by the novel's white British males, the black population simultaneously imposes practices of othering on Antoinette due to her slave-owner heritage. Because Antoinette descends from a family of slave-owners, the black population perceives her as colluding with patriarchal and colonial oppression. In addition, the downfall of the white colonizers after the Emancipation positions Antoinette vulnerable to scrutiny: "Plenty white people in Jamaica. Real white people, they got gold money… Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger" (Rhys: 9). From the perspective of the black population, Antoinette is a 'white nigger', due to the poor morality showed by her family as slave-owners.

Thus, seen from a foucauldian-feminist perspective, the othering imposed on Antoinette is two-fold. Antoinette is othered in terms of the primitive discourse, which is imposed by Western society, as well as, a discourse that positions Antoinette as an oppressor that is imposed by the black population. This intersection of two complex and opposing discourses position Antoinette in-between multiple identities and forms of otherness. The multiple racial, classist and patriarchal forces of oppression that take place in *Wide Sargasso Sea* illustrate how forces of power confine and disrupt subjectivity and identity. The opposing

discourses challenge Antoinette's sense of self, which results in the internalization of otherness and a sense of unbelonging. This will be discussed in chapter 3.2.2

3.1.3 Self-Fulfilment as the New Norm

The following analysis marks a shift from the previous emphasis on the intersections of race, gender, and class norms during the nineteenth century colonial Britain and postcolonial Jamaica towards modernity. According to Foucault, "Modernity… compels [the individual] to face the task of producing himself" (1984: 8). He goes on to argue that rooted in modernity is "man's relation to the present, man's historical mode of being, and the constitution of the self as an autonomous subject" (1984: 8). In this sense, modernity turns its focus away from externally imposed norms and towards the subject's self-realization in the present. Yet, still in the context of the modern condition, the individual continues to be a product of her history.

Whereas much of Foucault's early work focused on the governing and disciplining of the subject, his later work emphasizes the free subject. In the following analysis, which examines the practices of othering in the novel *NW,* I turn to Rubin's (2015) genealogy of morality, as an extension of Foucault. In *Soul, Self and Society* (2015), Rubin argues that with the administrative state came a new modernity, as well as a new morality that he terms 'the morality of the self'. This new morality concerns two components, namely the self and fulfilment, and stands in opposition to previous moralities that considered identity as 'fixed in time' (Rubin: 162). Central to these previous moralities, identity was "not chosen by the individual but assigned to the individual by the social structure" (Rubin: 162). In contrast, the new morality: "views life as a temporally extended pathway… and… people choose the path themselves" (Rubin: 163). This new perspective stands in contrast to the normality discourses that determine the positioning of women during the nineteenth-century, as depicted in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

Whereas Jane Eyre experienced the norms of femininity and social standing through governmentality and discipline, NW illustrates how governmentality has shifted from a top-down flow of power to a bottom-up flow of power, as it is now the individual who is responsible for herself and society. Whereas Jane experiences double oppression in terms of her gender and class, and Antoinette is othered by two opposing cultures, as she simultaneously experiences gendered, raced, and classed othering by both the white colonial population and the Jamaican population, *NW* illustrates how gender, race, and class norms

continue to discipline and govern the individual during the twenty-first century. However, intersections of othering are further complicated in *NW*, as othering now depends on the decisions made by the individual on her life path.

The contemporary normality discourse is centred on the individual's authenticity and self-actualization. Where there once was an emphasis on the binary oppositions that structured the cultural and social norms, there is now emphasis on the self as primary in all its complexity. The normality discourse then has developed from a depersonalization to a personalization of the individual. As my analysis on the practices of (self)othering in *NW* will illustrate, it is not explicitly racial, classed, and gendered norms that determine Leah and Natalie's positioning as Other, but rather their individual search for authenticity through the formation of subjectivity and identity.

In contrast to the norms regarding race, gender, and class that are explicitly defined in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, in *NW* such norms implicitly guide the protagonists' everyday lives. Issues concerning career, marriage, motherhood, sexuality, friendship, etc. are no longer primarily perceived as institutions that operate to discipline the individual into becoming a docile body, but instead are considered either a hindrance or assistance in Leah and Natalie's life-path as authentic and self-fulfilling individuals.

This is not to say that race, gender, and class norms no longer exist. Even though the normality discourse has shifted since the beginning of the nineteenth-century both Natalie and Leah experience being positioned as Other, because of their race, gender, and/or class. For example, as a pupil Natalie is offered the chance to attend a court case. Initially, Natalie believes that she is chosen to assist the prosecution, because she is the most competent. However, her "innocence and pride was preserved up until the moment she took her seat and spotted the victim's family in the gallery, unmistakably Jamaican" (Smith 2012: 237-238). Natalie's suspicion that she was chosen, not because of her competence, but instead because of her Jamaican heritage turns out to be correct when the prosecutor claims to the court that "'this is not a trial about race'", as he simultaneously "[directs] the jury's attention to Natalie Blake with a slight move of his arm" (Smith: 238). From this perspective, it appears that Natalie is taken advantage of by the prosecution with the intent of avoiding race becoming an issue to the case.

Within this context, Natalie is positioned as Other and the self-perceived superior (the prosecutor) benefits from her marginalization. This uneven dynamic of power becomes further explicit when, in a secluded room and to Natalie's shock, the prosecutor "put his hand on her shirt, pulling it aside with her bra" (Smith 2012: 239). However, even though gender and racial discrimination are at play here, the new normality discourse creates a complex situation for Natalie. As Professor Theodora tells Natalie: "The first generation does what the second doesn't want to do. The third is free to do what it likes" (Smith 2012: 242). Theodora experienced continuously being 'reprimanded from the bench and losing her cases' until she understood that because of her skin colour, her passion in the courtroom "reads as 'aggression'. To the judge. This is his house and you are an interloper within it" (Smith 2012: 243). As a woman of colour "it's worse: 'aggressive hysteria'. The first lesson is. Turn yourself down" (Smith 2012: 243).

In contrast, race is not an issue for Leah. As a white British woman living in Northwest London, racial issues are not imposed on Leah. Rather intersections of gender and class define Leah's otherness, most explicit in terms of motherhood. Practices of othering are imposed on Leah as she is expected by her husband, her mother, her colleagues, among several relations, to become a mother. Natalie's husband reminds Leah of her female obligation, as he asks her if it is not her turn soon to have children (Smith 2012: 66). Similarly, Leah's mother argues that Leah "should get on with… It's the next thing" (Smith 2012: 45).

In this sense, the four domains of power continue to operate within modern society, yet, the mode of operation and its content has shifted. Whereas practices of othering in the previous novels are imposed on the subject in terms of race, gender, and class throughout the four domains of power, in *NW* these domains and its force relations operate in a much broader sense than that of social categorization.

Distinguishing *NW* from the previous two novels is the emphasis on identity and subjectivity as reflected in the complexity of everyday life. Practices of othering no longer exclusively take place through social categories, but is now imposed on the individual who is (un)able to be authentic. This is not to say that there are less expectations on the individual now than in the past. However, the content of these expectations have shifted. The norms that now guide the individual are non-interference, incommensurability, and equality (Rubin 2015: 175).

The non-interference principle argues that: "since every person should fulfil herself or himself, no person should interfere with another person's effort to achieve self-fulfilment… and we must not condemn them for the choices they have made" (Rubin 2015: 176-177). In addition, Rubin argues that: "The new morality prohibits judgements that make others feel bad about their chosen life paths. Condemnation of such choices is no longer a means of enforcing moral standards but rather is, in itself, a violation of those standards" (Rubin 2015: 177). The final restriction of the new normality argues that: "People must be treated as equal because each person is a self with his or her own life path" (Rubin: 179). These three restrictions not only differ significantly from the previous discourses, but they also position the individual within a complex space in terms of othering, as well as self- and de-othering.

The morality of self-fulfilment then illustrates that previous normality discourses such as the Victorian female normality and the primitive discourse are strong confining and disciplining discourse, but prove too simplistic in explaining identity and subjectivity. *NW* illustrates otherness, not exclusively in terms of race, gender and class, but also regarding marriage and motherhood, just to name a few. From this perspective, women cannot be reduced and defined by their gender, race, and/or class, as identity is never finite but a narrative that is constructed throughout life. The new morality of self-fulfilment, I argue, illustrates that in some instances mainstream feminism and postcolonial theory are unable to capture the complexity of individuals, as Leah and Natalie illustrate that people have multiple identities beyond that of 'woman', 'black', 'white',etc.

3.1.4 Concluding Remarks on Othering

This chapter set out to examine the practices of othering and how these practices have changed throughout the course of history. As such, I divided the analysis into three subchapters, which each centred on a specific novel within its socio-historical and cultural context. The first analysis 'Victorian Female Normality' examined othering in *Jane Eyre* during nineteenth-century Britain. The second analysis 'The Primitive Discourse' examined othering in *Wide Sargasso Sea* during nineteenth-century postcolonial Jamaica. The third analysis 'Self-Fulfilment as the New Norm' examined othering in *NW* during the twenty-first-century Britain.

Through an analysis of three novels which narratives unfold during three socio-historical and cultural conditions, it becomes apparent that practices of othering have changed throughout time. Whereas race, gender, and class were explicit determining factors during the nineteenth-century, today, though, these social categorization continue to shape society's perspective on the modern individual, it appears more implicit. Race, gender, and class norms have become an integrated part of identity formation, and instead othering comes to the forefront when considering issues such as marriage and motherhood. Thus, the analysis illustrates that the identity and subjectivity are not fixed entities, as norms change according to history.

3.2 Self-Othering

Whereas normality discourses regarding gender, race, and class position women as Other, the internalization of such discourses position women as self-othered. That is, by positioning women as an object at the intersections of power, imposing norms of the individual produces a self-governing subject:

> Identities actually come from the outside; they are the way in which we are recognized and then come to step into place of recognitions others give us. Without the others there is no self, there is no self-recognition (Hall 1995: 30).

Whereas othering is understood as the praxis of influencing, establishing or controlling human behaviour, self-othering is its effect. In this context, othering operates to produce self-governing and self-regulating subjects by positioning the subject in dichotomous terms, such as self-other and normal-abnormal. Whereas othering is the process of externally imposed discipline on the subject, self-othering is the internalization of the binary opposition normal-abnormal, in which discipline becomes self-imposed and normality naturalized. The normality discourse not only determines who is Other, but it also operates as a means to confine the subject through internally imposed norms. In this sense, practices of power are externally as well as internally imposed on the subject.

However, self-othering is not a fixed and predetermined consequence of othering. Even though practices of othering strive to produce self-governing individuals, or docile bodies according to Foucault, this does not automatically imply that othering succeeds in its objective. Therefore, in the following analysis I will examine the practices of self-othering

that take throughout the three novels and, ultimately, discuss whether the normality discourse succeeds in producing self-othering individuals.

3.2.1 Social-Conformity

Similar to the chronology of the previous analysis on othering, this chapter begins its examination with *Jane Eyre*. When Jane must choose between Mrs Reed's rules of either 'speaking pleasantly' or 'remaining silent' Jane chooses silence, as she "mounted into the window-seat: gathering up my feet, I sat cross-legged, like a Turk; and, having drawn the red moreen curtain nearly close, I was *shrined in double retirement*" (Brontë 1847: 2. Emphasis mine). Stuart Hall argues that: "one comes to collude with an objectification of oneself that is a profound misrecognition of one's own identity" (199: 31). Due to the othering imposed on Jane by her family, Jane's decision to remain silent positions her in 'double retirement' or double othering, as othering is both externally and internally imposed. The external and internal othering is most prevalent at the Lowood Institution, as it operates as a disciplinary establishment with an emphasis on obedience, consequently, resulting in its subjects' internalization of the norm.

Objectified by the school's patriarch, Mr. Brocklehurst disciplines the young female pupil into either conforming to the norm or repressing their subjectivity. Successfully reformed, Jane's only friend at Lowood, Helen Burns, endures the institution's patriarchal tyranny through silence:

> The teacher instantly and sharply inflicted on her neck a dozen strokes with the bunch of twigs. Not a tear rose to Burns' eye; and, while I paused from my sewing, because my fingers quivered at this spectacle with a sentiment of unavailing and impotent anger, not a feature of her pensive face altered its ordinary expression (Brontë 1847: 59).

While observing the othering of Helen and her obedient submission, Jane wonders at Helen's silence: "How can she bear it so quietly – so firmly?" (Brontë 1847: 56). Answering Jane's question Helen states that she "was sent to Lowood to get an education and it would be of no use going away until [she has] attained that object" (Brontë 1847: 60). Whereas Jane has not yet conformed to the norm of obedience and silence, Helen has progressed into a self-governing and, in addition, self-othered subject:

> [Miss Scatchard] is severe; she dislikes my faults… I am, as Miss Scatcherd said, slatternly; I seldom put, and never keep, things in order; I am careless; I forget rules; I read when I should learn my lessons; I have no method (Brontë 1847: 60-1).

Whereas Helen has successfully been shaped by the school's disciplinary norm, Jane strongly objects and argues that she "must dislike those who, whatever I do to please them, persist in disliking me; I must resist those who punish me unjustly" (Brontë 63). However, Helen who now is positioned as both successfully othered and self-othered reinforces the normality discourse: "You will change your mind, I hope, when you grow older: as yet you are by a little untaught girl… Heathens and savage tribes hold that doctrine, but Christians and civilised nations disown it" (Brontë; 63). Rightfully so, Jane soon finds herself in a similar position as Helen's, and Jane must decide whether to conform or resist othering:

> There was I, then mounted aloft; I, who had said I could not bear the shame of standing on my natural feet in the middle of the room, was now exposed to general view on a pedestal of infamy… *I mastered the rising hysteria*, lifted up my head, and took a firm stand on the stool (Brontë 1847: 76. Emphasi mine).

As Jane is punished for her disobedience, Jane decides to conform to the norm of silence. In this sense, similar to the othering that Jane suffered at the hands of the maids at Gateshead, the punishment that Jane experiences at the hands of Mr. Brocklehurst succeeds in rendering Jane obedient and self-governing. Jane now knows her position in relation to the norms regarding her gender and class, and obeys by conforming to her socially granted inferiority:

> I sometimes wished to have rosy cheeks, a straight nose, and small cherry mouth: I desired to be tall, stately, and finely developed in figure; I felt it a misfortune that I was so little, so pale, and had features so irregular and so marked (Brontë 1847: 115).

The above quote illustrates Jane's awareness regarding the norms of female beauty. Victorian women were to be tall and majestic, whereas Jane is little. In this sense, Jane's self-perceived otherness in terms of femininity and beauty illustrate Jane's tendency to engage in practices

of self-othering. In addition, the internalization of stereotypes makes sure that Jane does not deviate from her rank: “He is not of your order: keep to your caste, and be too self-respecting to lavish the love of the whole heart, soul, and strength, where such a gift is not wanted and would be despised” (Brontë 1847: 192). Yet despite the odds Rochester proposes marriage to Jane, which she happily accepts.

However, despite Jane’s position as Other and her internalization of otherness, she does not merely submit to patriarchal oppression. Soon it becomes apparent that Jane demands her marriage to Rochester be a union of equals. But the revelation of Rochester’s oppressive relationship with his first wife Bertha, as well as with his previous mistresses, threaten such a union:

> Hiring a mistress is the next worse thing to buying a slave: both are often by nature, and always by position, inferior: and to live familiarly with inferiority is degrading. I now hate the recollection of the time I passed with Céline, Giacinta, and Clara (Brontë 1847: 375).

Rochester’s claim that a mistress is not much different from a slave does not prevent him from proposing such a union to Jane, which illustrates his self-perceived superiority in opposition to the female inferiority: “You shall go to a place I have in the South of France… there you shall live a happy, and guarded, and most innocent life” (Brontë 1847: 366). However, Jane responds: “If I lived with you as you desire – I should then be your mistress: to say otherwise is sophistical – is false” (Brontë 1847: 366). Thus, it becomes increasingly explicit that as Jane experiences several practices of othering, both externally and internally, she starts to fear a loss of self. In order to maintain a sense of self, Jane must become de-othered. This will be discussed in chapter 3.3.1.

3.2.2 In-Betweenness and Unbelonging

The othering of Antoinette is imposed from two imposing cultural and social communities, thereby, positioning her in-between two spaces. Antoinette experiences multiple intersections of oppression in terms of race, gender, and class, which are determined by the socio-historical and cultural conditions after the emancipation of colonial Jamaica. Antoinette’s process of self-othering is complex due to her in-betweenness. By being a partial member of both the

white colonial society and the native black community, social and cultural norms are imposed on her from both sides of a divided society:

> It was a song about a white cockroach. *That's me.* That's what they call all of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave traders. And *I've heard English women call us white niggers* (Rhys 1966: 76-77. Emphasis mine).

Antoinette's exclusion from two societies leaves her with an unstable sense of self, which is further reinforced, as Antoinette begins to internalize her positioning as the Other. Due to her unstable sense of self, Antoinette accepts the othering imposed on her, as she believes that she is to blame for her exclusion. This becomes explicit when Antoinette reflects on her mother's possible motives for ignoring and neglecting her: "When [Annette] saw *I was growing up like a white nigger* and *she was ashamed of me*, it was after that day that everything changed. Yes, *it was my fault* that she started to plan and work in a frenzy, in a fever to change our lives" (Rhys 1966: 102. Emphasis mine). Because Antoinette identifies as a 'white nigger', she believes that she is to blame for her mother's deteriorating health.

Antoinette's belief is reinforced by her mother's unequal treatment of her and her brother, Pierre. According to Antoinette, her mother only "wanted to sit with Pierre… but she pushed me away, not roughly but calmly, coldly, without a word, as if *she had decided once and for all that I was useless to her*" (Rhys 1966: 5. Emphasis mine). The gender norm here is not imposed by a male, but by Antoinette's mother. Antoinette internalizes the belief that she is of less use, because of her gender. The fact that a woman imposes the norm, perhaps merely reinforces her self-othering, as the act becomes normalized.

As a result, Antoinette turns to practices of mimicry in an attempt to be accepted and belong. In contrast to Bhabha's claim that mimicry is an act of resistance, paradoxically in Antoinette's case, mimicry merely seems to reinforce her positioning as Other. When Antoinette attempts to win back her husband's affection, she resorts to her only reference to the British female ideal, which is the painting 'The Miller's Daughter'. The painting portrays an English girl with a dress slipping of her shoulders, and Antoinette mimics the portrait by letting her dress slip off of her shoulders. However, Antoinette's husband who manoeuvres

within the primitive discourse considers Antoinette's attire, as a sign of promiscuity and untidiness (Rhys 1966: 127).

Despite Antoinette's efforts to belong and conform to her husband's norms, it is within her marriage that Antoinette experiences an othering – an alienation and loss of identity – that drive her into madness. In alignment with de Beauvoir's famous argument that one *becomes* a woman, I argue that, in Antoinette's situation, one is not born mad, but becomes mad. This will be discussed in chapter 3.3 'De-Othering'.

3.2.3 Performance and Comparison

From the perspective of the new norm of self-fulfilment, the individual is expected to construct themselves as individuals "rather than as members of a group" (Rubin 2015: 166). Modern morality "celebrates those who strike out on their own, who exceed expectations or even just reject them, who refuse to be defined by their family, their social status, or their circumstances" (Rubin 2015: 166). In addition, Rubin argues that:

> [T]he culture established by the morality of self-fulfilment contains an affirmative expectation that people will choose their own life paths and treats the failure to make such choices, through thoughtlessness or subservience, as a defective way of life (Rubin 2015: 165-166).

It is within this context that *NW*'s two protagonists Leah and Natalie, struggle. In contrast to Jane and Antoinette, who wish for the freedom to construct their identity, Leah and Natalie appear to struggle with the apparent limitless amount of freedom. The novel introduces Leah as lounging in her garden where she hears the phrase "I am the sole author of the dictionary that defines me" (Smith 2012: 3) on the radio. Drawn to its existentialistic sound she attempts to write the words down, but "pencil leaves no mark on the magazine pages" (Smith 2012: 3). As the neighbour's argument distracts Leah, and her thoughts wonder onto other topics, the phrase gradually fades away: "I am the sole. The sole. The sole" (Smith 2012: 4). Smith's narrative from the get-go proposes that the individual is unable to construct her subjectivity and identity, and that the individual's life-path is constructed by external influences.

Similarly, Natalie, neé Keisha, is introduced across 185 fragmented narratives, which proposes an incoherent sense of self. Throughout the novel, Natalie constructs her identity

according to the norms; yet, her sense of self – her subjectivity – is non-existent. As children, Leah and Natalie grew up together in a building society that consisted of five apartment blocks. Each block is named after a philosopher of the Enlightenment, and the reader is informed that Natalie grew up in the block named Locke. John Locke was the founder of the social contract theory and argues that the individual was a tabula rasa. This information proposes that Natalie is a product of her experience, which results in her feeling inauthentic due to an incoherent sense of self: "Natalie Blake had become a person unsuited to self-reflection. Left to her own mental devices she quickly spiralled into self-contempt" (Smith: 256)

Natalie's inability to gain awareness of her own sense of sense, results in a constant performance, in which Natalie 'mimics' other people's identities:

> Daughter drag. Sister drag. Mother drag. Wife drag. Court drag. Rich drag. Poor drag. British drag. Jamaican drag. Each required a different wardrobe. But when considering these various attitudes she struggled to think *what would be most authentic, or perhaps the least inauthentic* (Smith: 282. Emphasis mine).

Natalie's interest in pretence rather than authenticity is also obvious to those around her. Leah regards her as a 'coconut' and Leah's husband remarks on the fact that Natalie once was named Keisha: "It's like: 'Dress for the job you want not the one you have'. And it's the same with names" (Smith: 65).

3.2.4 Concluding Remarks on Self-Othering

Extending on the subject-position Othered, the analysis of Self-Othering aimed to examine the consequences of internalizing the normality discourse. I have argued that since Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* was published in 1847, the normality discourse has developed from the norm of depersonalization to the modern norm of personalization. This change in the normality discourse has consequences on the individual's sense of self. Consequently, the novel's protagonists struggle with a disruption or lack of self.

The aim of normality discourses is to produce individuals, who conform to the norm. In this sense, Jane is expected to be silent and obey. Antoinette is expected to marry a wealthy Englishman, in order to secure her position within a disrupted society. Leah is expected to

fulfil her duty by becoming a mother, as 'it's the next thing', whereas Natalie, as a woman of colour, is expected to be grateful and humble for her financial, romantic, professional, and familial circumstances.

However, the new norm – the morality of self – expects the individual to live an authentic life. The new normality discourse, which began during the early nineteenth century, complicates the protagonists positioning. From the perspective of the new norm, principles such as equality and non-interference disrupt practices of othering and self-othering, as they exceed the boundaries of the relationship between society and the individual. The externally and internally imposed norms then become too restrictive and dominating, and the individual must then decide whether to conform or to resist.

3.3 De-Othering

This thesis set out to challenge the discourse of inferiority, victimization, and passivity among the marginalized and perceived deviant, which is rooted in Western normality discourse. In the previous chapters, I have identified the practices of othering imposed on the perceived inferior, who in this thesis have consisted of women of colour and white women positioned within middle and working class communities. In this context, othering is identified as disciplining and governing forces, which are imposed both outside and within the gendered, raced, and classed subject. It may seem that the analyses so far have contributed to the female protagonists' inferior positioning. However, I argue that by first identifying the forces of (self)othering due to race, gender and class norms, gives way to spaces of struggle, resistance and freedom.

In this sense, I have identified power as a mode or force of action, which, Foucault argues, includes an element of freedom (1982). According to Foucault: "power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free" (1982: 790). He goes on to elaborate on what he means by the 'free subject': "By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportment, may be realized" (1982: 790). As such, practices of power fixate, categorize or oppress the individual while they also give way to elements of freedom, in which the individual is free to construct her own identity and subjectivity, thereby resisting a reductive and fixed positioning, such as Other.

Practices of resistance and freedom, I argue, are ambivalent, as they are products of the internalization of normality. By this I mean that as a result of internalization, the individual who is considered as Other chooses to either engage in practices of conformity or resistance. These practices of conformity and resistance constitute the individual's position as de-othered. Through conformity the individual rejects her otherness by assimilating to the norm. In contrast, the individual who resists conformity embraces her otherness.

I consider practices of conformity and resistance to be actions of agency. The following analysis examines practices of resistance, such as parrhesia and silent refusal, and practices of conformity, such as appropriated domination. However, these practices of conformity and resistance (as examined in sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2) are examined through an analysis of *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Section 3.3.3 will exclusively discuss the process of de-othering in *NW*. As the analyses will illustrate, the new normality discourse (self-fulfilment) proves that alternative acts of de-othering are required. First, I will identify and discuss the practices of resistance and conformity in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Ultimately, through an analysis of *NW*, I will discuss whether or not the individual can ever truly succeed in her de-othering, as Foucault would argue.

3.3.1 Resistance through Parrhesia and Silent Refusal

Lorde once argued that: "[I]t is not difference which immobilizes us, but silence" (1984: 44). By this, Lorde illustrated the necessity to speak up against modes of power, which sought to oppress and fixate identity. Through language and action, Lorde argues, the individual can engage in a life path of self-realization, self-actualization and authenticity. Lorde's *The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action* (1984) mirrors what Foucault terms 'parrhesia', which is the act of speaking frankly and truly. Parrhesia then is a practice of resistance and a mode of freedom.

In the analysis of othering, I illustrated how Jane was reduced to an object within four domains of power. The structural, disciplinary, cultural and interpersonal domains of power, which were exerted at Gateshead Hall, the Lowood Institution and Thornfield, consistently positioned Jane as Other. Not only is Jane a woman, but she is also a woman of the middle-class, which restricts Jane's sense of freedom in several ways. Nonetheless, despite such restrictions Jane continuously throughout the novel aspires towards her agency and freedom: her de-othering.

Despite the (self)othering that Jane experiences, her narrative portrays her life journey through, not only subordination, but also resistance. As illustrated in the previous analyses, the normality discourse that existed in Britain during the Victorian era regarded gender and class as the main ranking criteria. The norms regarding gender and class operated to discipline Jane into practicing modes of self-government and social conformity. However, Jane is outspoken and rebellious. Even though Gateshead Hall and the Lowood Institution operate as disciplinary institutions, indoctrinating Jane to become disempowered, obedient and silent, Jane's otherness, in terms of ethical conduct, ultimately prevents her from conforming to the stereotype regarding her gender and class. Foucault argues that it is through ethical conduct that the individual can obtain self-realization and live authentically.

When Jane Eyre experiences imposed discourses of marginalization and inferiority, whether it be by her aunt Reed, her cousin John Reed or Edward Rochester, Jane resists through the practice of parrhesia: "SPEAK I must: I had been trodden on severely, and MUST turn: but how? What strength had I to dart retaliation at my antagonist? I gathered my energies and launced them in this blunt sentence…" (Brontë: 36).

In her aspiration towards de-othering, Jane must engage in what Foucault terms 'ethical work'. She must practice self-transformation by either resisting "those who *punish* me unjustly… or *submit* when I feel it is deserved" (Brontë: 63. Emphasis mine). Foucault calls such practices as 'practices of the self', which are implemented through self-examination, moderation, and/or renunciation (Foucault 1994).

Because Jane's ethic substance and telos both are centred on the aspiration for equality between the sexes, Jane must resist and rebel against patriarchal oppression, in order to become positioned as de-othered. Initially, when Jane's cousin John Reed would threaten her, she "never had an idea of replying to it" (Brontë: 5), but when her "terror had passed its climax" (6) she resists his tyranny by calling him a "wicked and cruel boy… a murderer… a slave-driver" (6) before, ultimately, engaging in a physical struggle.

Though Jane's resistance of John's abuse results in Jane experiencing further imposed practices of othering (the maids call her 'a mad cat' before tying her to a chair and locking her in the red room), she "like any other rebel slave… felt resolved, in [her] desperation, to

go all lengths" (7). Despite her being severely punished at both Gateshead Hall and the Lowood Institution, Jane, perceiving herself as a rebellious slave, experiences a moment of clarity and encouragement to continue her aspiration towards freedom: "How the feeling bore me up! It was as if a martyr, a hero, had passed a slave or a victim and imparted strength in the transit" (Brontë: 75). Jane's parrhasia most importantly provides her with the sense of freedom that she has longed for. After declaring her dislike for her aunt, Jane exclaims that her "soul began to expand, to exult, with the strangest sense of freedom, of freedom, that she ever felt" (Brontë 1847: 37).

Her resistance towards patriarchal oppression is further and most importantly apparent in her relationship to Edward Rochester. When Edward begins to treat Jane's devotion and affection as an object he can purchase, "the more [Jane's] cheek burned with a sense of annoyance and degradation" (Brontë: 321). Well aware of her 'inferior' positioning in society, Jane is quick to resist Edward's patriarchal oppression: "I will not be your English Célene Varens" (Brontë: 323). Furthermore, when Rochester proposes marriage despite him already being married to Bertha Mason, Jane declines by stating: "I care for myself" (Brontë: 382).

In essence, it is Jane's resistance towards gender and class stereotypes, which forms her ethical substance. As such, Jane's aspiration towards de-othering is defined by her individual experience of oppression in regards to gender and class, which in turn is the driving force behind Jane's rebellion:

> Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties… and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings… It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex (Brontë: 129).

In the quote above, Jane's ethical substance and telos intersect. Both her intention and aspiration revolve around a desire for agency and equality in a patriarchal and classed society. Jane's personal truth is found in her need to speak up against the oppression imposed on her. According to Jane, silence in contrast to the practice of parrhesia, represents an acceptance of the othering imposed on her by a patriarchal and classed society: "I must

dislike those who, whatever I do to please them, persist in disliking me; I must resist those who punish me unjustly" (Brontê: 63). Throughout the analyses on practices of othering, self-othering, and de-othering, Jane's life-path has challenged Jane's character from being a passive and silent girl to a strong and outspoken woman.

The practice of parrhesia is an act of agency through action. As a result, parrhesia functions as a disruption of the othering imposed by socio-historical and cultural discourses related to racial, gender, and class norms. Returning to my findings on the othering of Jane and Antoinette, the normality discourse during the nineteenth-century expected women to be silent and obedient. By deviating from the norm women risked the positioning as Other. In Antoinette's case her cultural otherness resulted in her positioning as mad and promiscuous. In *The Female Malady* (1985), Showalter argues that female outspokenness and madness were interrelated during the nineteenth-century. She says:

> [W]omen were accustomed to being ordered to submit to the authority of their fathers, brothers, and husbands… *Violation of conventions of feminine speech, and insistence on self-expression was the kind of behavior that led to their being labeled "mad"* to begin with (Showalter: 81. Emphasis mine)

In this sense, women who did not conform to the norm of femininity were regarded as Other, which was defined and confined with a discourse of madness. However, Showalter also argues that despite "their training in the discipline of femininity… rebellion was in fact frequent. Victorian madwomen were not easily silenced" (1985: 81). There is a significant difference between speech and parrhesia. In contrast to everyday speech, in parrhesia the speaker is a truth-teller, and is, therefore, "linked to courage in face of danger" (Foucault 2001). So while it is Antoinette's speech that consequently positions her as 'mad', it is in her parrhesia that she resists such positioning.

When Antoinette's husband continuously calls her by the name Bertha, she resists him by saying: "Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name" (Rhys: 115). Throughout the novel, there are several situations where Antoinette's parrhesia is expressed. After her husband's infidelity, Antoinette exclaims: "I hate you and before I die I will show you how much I hate you" (Rhys: 115) and smashes

“another bottle against the wall and stood with the broken glass in her hand and murder in her eyes” (Rhys: 116).

Yet, practices of parrhesia become complicated due to Antoinette’s in-betweenness. Because Antoinette is positioned as, both oppressed and oppressor, she finds herself as an object by which the black people engage in parrhesia, as an action of resistance towards colonial oppression. When Antoinette’s family regains their financial wealth and restores the estate, the hostility and resistance by the native Jamaicans’ increases. As tensions arise between the white Creole settlers and the black population, a rebellion takes place resulting in the former slaves burning down Antoinette’s home, much to Mr Mason’s surprise as he considers the natives to be merely “a handful drunken negroes” (Rhys: 21), who are “too lazy to be dangerous” (Rhys: 17). Yet, the tables have turned and the black population find themselves in a new subject-position, which enables them to rebel and resist their experience of past, as well as present, oppression. Through the act of parrhesia, the former slaves resist their inferior position imposed by the norm of Western superiority: “But look the black Englishman! Look the white niggers! (…) Run away, black Englishman” (Rhys: 25-6). Through their rebellion, the natives argue that there is no difference between black and white: “So black and white, they burn the same, eh?” (Rhys: 26).

However, Antoinette is not ‘the same’ as she neither belongs to the white Creole community or the black community. Her hybrid identity positions her in-between two social and cultural spaces where Antoinette must maneuver among opposing norms, which causes her a sense of unbelonging: “So between you *I often wonder who I am* and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all” (Rhys: 76. Emphasis mine). According to Foucault (2001), parrhesia can only be exercised if the parrhesiates knows her personal truth. However, because Antoinette has a disrupted sense of identity and subjectivity, I argue, she cannot engage or at least succeed in resisting the patriarchal and raced norms imposed on her.

In contrast to Antoinette, Christophine has no problem speaking her truth. As a mother figure, she protects and defends Antoinette by speaking on her behalf, as Antoinette herself is incapable. In a discussion with Antoinette’s husband, Christophine exclaims her truth:

> Everybody knows that you marry her for her money and you take it all. And then you want to break her up, because you jealous of her. She is more better

> than you, she have better blood in her and she don't care for money (Rhys: 120).

In contrast, Spivak (1985) argues that Christophine is silenced by Rhys's counter narrative. Spivak argues that: "She [Christophine] cannot be contained by a novel which rewrites a canonical English text within the European novelistic tradition in the interest of the white Creole rather than the native" (Spivak 1985: 253). However, the practice of silence is paradoxical, as women may either practice silence out of fear or as a mode of resistance. In contrast to Spivak's claim, Hamam argues that:

> "Rhys creates a distinctive place for the black woman such as Christophine because she is represented as the voice of reason, the surrogate mother of Antoinette, and the model of women who are illiterate but are equipped with skills of survival and self-empowerment" (118).

Spivak (1988) is critical of Foucault's claim that: "[T]he oppressed, if given the chance… *can speak and know their conditions*" (25. Emphasis not mine). Instead, Spivak (1988) argues that: "For the 'true' subaltern group, whose identity is its difference, there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself" (27). From this perspective, the Other's subjectivity and resistance of hegemonic norms is muted and made invisible. I argue that there is partial truth to Spivak's claim. As I mentioned earlier, Antoinette's in-between positioning – her hybrid identity – leaves her with a sense of unbelonging. As a result, Antoinette wonders who she is and where she belongs. Antoinette's disrupted identity prevents her from engaging in acts of parrhesia. In this sense, Spivak is correct when she argues that the Other, who goes unrecognized, cannot know herself, and, in turn, cannot speak her truth.

However, there is more than one practice of de-othering. The opposite of parrhesia is silence, and whereas silence has traditionally been considered to be a consequence of oppression, silence can also act as a practice of resistance: "speech has been seen as the privileged catalyst of agency; lack of speech as the absence of agency" (Keating 2013: 26). As Antoinette's husband imposes on her the primitive discourse, Antoinette does not only verbally and physically resist his oppression, but she also retreats to an act of silence: "[Antoinette] tell me [Christophine] in the middle of all this you start calling her names.

Marionette. Some word so…that word mean doll, eh? Because she won't speak. *You want to force her* to cry and *to speak*" (WSS). Keating's (2013) term 'silent refusal' is helpful in understanding the power in silence.

According to Keating: "Silent refusal is a mode of being silent that aims to resist these coercions to speak in the service of power and that seek to challenge enticements to voice in a hegemonic vein" (26). Paradoxically, whereas the act of parrhesia can function as a resistance of tyranny, it also positions the Other vulnerable to scrutiny and confinement within the primitive discourse. By this, I argue that as Antoinette resists patriarchal oppression through parrhesia, she is perceived as mad and promiscuous. However, in contrast to Spivak's (1985) claim, I argue that that Antoinette's husband does in fact hear Antoinette's parrhesia as well as her silence, and that these acts of rebellion threaten his self-perceived and socially granted superiority to the extent that he must confine her in madness.

Thus, acts of parrhesia and silent refusal challenge the argument that silence is representative of a lack of agency. Whereas Jane's parrhesia results in gratification and strength, Antoinette's parrhesia, on the other hand, results in her confinement within the primitive discourse. In consequence, silent refusal proves more gratifying and empowering, as it signifies a refusal of appropriation. From this perspective, Rhys's counter narrative illustrates that acts of resistance serve as empowering, repressive, and contradictory. Essentially, it is much too simplistic to argue that giving voice to the Other grants authority and that, in contrast, silence prevents the empowerment of Other.

3.3.2 Resorting to Appropriated Domination

Extending on the analysis of de-othering in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* is the complex relationship between resistance and conformity. Whereas parrhesia perceivably empowers the Other, her personal truth may be biased due to what Tappan (2006) terms 'appropriated domination/privilege'. Tappan argues that appropriated domination is the result of the individual's mastery of "cultural tools that transmit dominating/privileging ideologies, messages, and scripts". Tappan's term is an extension of the term 'internalized dominaiton', which, Tappan argues, merely focuses on the psychological practices. Instead, appropriated domination positions oppression and domination, not only psychologically, but also as a socio-cultural phenomenon.

The process of de-othering is then two-fold as the subject's resistance towards her positioning as othered may further force a distinction between self-other and normal-abnormal. In her struggle against patriarchal oppression, Jane not only resists the patriarchal oppression imposed on her by John Reed and Edward Rochester, but also takes advantage of Victorian social norms in order to escape patriarchal oppression, and, thereby, "faces the pitfall of joining the oppressor under the pretense of sharing power" (Lorde 1984). She becomes a missionary in her interpersonal relationships by showing others the new norm of the white middle class woman. By positioning herself as a missionary, Jane positions others as inferior and in need of correction and guidance.

In alignment with the feminist rhetoric during the 1830s and 1840s, Jane compares her position in patriarchal society as similar to that of a slave. Due to John Reed's physical and emotional abuse, Jane describes him as a 'slave driver' (Brontë: 7), and in her resistance of patriarchal oppression she considers herself as a 'rebel slave' (Brontë: 8). Yet, within her rebellion Jane, whether deliberate or not, rebels against any woman who may threaten her journey towards freedom. Spivak (1985) argues that Jane's practices of de-othering are at the expense of Bertha Mason, Edward Rochester's first wife.

From this perspective, power is no longer merely oppressive and restraining, but also productive as Jane's de-othering can be accomplished through her positioning of others. The normality discourse regarding race, enables Jane to position Bertha as Other and abnormal:

> In the deep shade, at the farther end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it groveled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face… A fierce cry seemed to give the lie to her favourable report: the clothed hyena rose up, and stood tall on its hind-feet" (Brontë: 352).

Through such a reductive and oppressive account, Jane positions Bertha not only as an inferior other, but also as an animal, an inhuman 'beast'. In this sense, Jane imposes the primitive discourse on Bertha, as she perceives herself as superior. In addition to Jane's othering of Bertha, Jane also positions Blanche Ingram and Adéle Varens as inferior. Firstly,

Jane must position Adéle as other, as she is a product of Edward and his French mistress Célene Varens:

> "As [Adéle] grew up, a sound English education corrected in a great measure her French defects; and when she left school, I found in her *a pleasing and obliging companion – docile, good-tempered, and well-principled*" (Brontë: 546. Emphasis mine)

Poovey (1988) argues that the governess finds herself positioned in-between as she is charged with educating young girls "the 'accomplishments' that would attract a good husband… and… expected not to display willfulness or desires herself" (128). Jane's role as a governess plays an essential part in her de-othering. Poovey (1988) argues that the governess bears "two of the most important Victorian representations of women: the figure who epitomized the domestic ideal, and the figure who threatened to destroy it" (Poovey: 127). The positioning of the governess was both as a defender of gender separation as she performs as a mother, yet as a working woman she "threatens to collapse the difference" between men and women (Poovey: 127). When reflecting on her situation as a woman she sheds some light on how one can become de-othered:

> It is vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquillity: *they must have action, and they will make it if they cannot find it.* Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot. Nobody knows how many rebellions besides political rebellions ferment in the masses of life which people earth (Brontë: 128-9. Emphasis mine).

Secondly, when Blanche arrives at Thornfield speculations arise on whether Blanche and Edward are to marry. By posing a threat to Jane's affection towards Edward, Jane must position Blanche as her inferior, who is unworthy of Edward:

> Miss Ingram was a mark beneath jealousy: *she was too inferior to excite the feeling*… She was very showy, but she was not genuine: she had a fine person, many brilliant attainments; but her mind was poor, her heart barren by nature (Brontë: 221. Emphasis mine).

However, it is not Jane's positioning of Bertha, Adéle or Blanche as other that permits Jane to succeed in her own de-othering. It is rather her dethroning of the patriarch Edward Rochester:

> Mr Rochester continued blind the first two years of our union: perhaps it was that circumstance that drew us so very near – that knit us so very close: for I was then his vision, as I am still his right hand" (Brontë 1847: 546).

Thus, Jane's de-othering relies on the self-other, normal-abnormal distinction and identification. Not only is Jane de-othered through her rebellion towards the stereotypes placed on her, but she engages in the othering of others in order to position herself as normal and thereby also de-othered.

Readings of *Wide Sargasso Sea* have primarily emphasized the oppression experienced by Antoinette in a patriarchal and colonial society. However, through an analysis into the practices of de-othering in which Antoinette engages, it becomes apparent that Antoinette is not merely oppressed, passive and innocent. Similar to Jane, Antoinette too engages in practices of appropriated domination, as she imposes cultural stereotypes on the black population. When Antoinette plays with her friend Tia, she resorts to inferior-superior discourses as she exclaims: "Keep them then, you cheating nigger, I said… I can get more [money] if I want to" (Rhys 1966: 9). Similarly, even though Christophine takes on a mother role by protecting and depending Antoinette from exploitation, Antoinette regards her as an "ignorant, obstinate old negro woman" (Rhys 1966: 85). Furthermore, Antoinette is ashamed of her coloured relative Sandi (Rhys 1966: 32). She, however, does not know why thereby illustrating how the primitive discourse is not only imposed on her, but is also internalized and normalized, unknowingly determining how Antoinette regards herself and others.

Appropriated domination not only entails positioning others as inferior, but also requires the silencing of past acts of oppression (Mardorossian 2005). Mardorossian (2005) argues that both Antoinette and her mother ignore the fact that their Creole heritage connects them with Jamaica's colonial history. This, Mardorossian argues, is illustrated: "When her daughter asks her about Christophine, Old Cosway's 'wedding present', Antoinette's mother does not want her to 'pester and bother her about these things that happened long ago'" (2005: 82). In

this sense, the white Creoles engage in acts of appropriated domination by silencing the shame of their involvement in colonial oppression.

Lorde (1984) argues that: "[T]he transformation of silence into language and action is an act of self-revelation, and that always seems fraught with danger" (42). By danger Lorde means that through the act of resistance, the individual becomes visible and thereby open to scrutiny.

3.3.3 The Danger of Self-Fulfillment

Lipton and Mackinlay in *Concepts of Voice and Feminism* (2017) argue that: "Agency can be enacted in a particular moment while authenticity is produced over time. Authenticity is sustained in our decisions, choices, and achievements. Authenticity is not just about the choices we make but how we make them" (66). However, the temporal narrative that constitutes authenticity is challenged by the fear associated with parrhesia, as it positions the individual as visible. In *The Master's Tool* (1984), Lorde argues that women who are dependent on the 'master's house' are unable to live self-fulfilling lives, as they fear the consequences of their authenticity. Emphasising the relationship between parrhesia and fear, and its consequences on self-fulfilment, Lorde in her *Transformation of Silence into Action* (1984) claims that: "[W]e have been socialized to respect fear more than our own needs for language and definition, and while we wait in silence for that final luxury for fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us" (44). From this perspective, there appears to be ambivalence between the new morality of the self and the old norms, which were accompanied by feelings of shame, guilt and fear.

Rubin (2015) argues that the new norm, in contrast, is accompanied by feelings of regret, which in turn motivates the individual to live an authentic and self-fulfilling life. However, without feelings of shame and guilt, Rubin argues that: "the morality of self-fulfilment frees people… to go astray and make mistakes for which they can blame only themselves" (Rubin: 173). The complexity that accompanies self-fulfilment is now positioned in the opposition between freedom in order not to feel regret and self-mastery in order not feel shame and guilt. As a result of this in-between position that the modern individual finds herself located is the act of secrecy.

The norm of self-fulfilment poses the question of whether or not the individual can ever truly be free to engage in self-fulfilling acts without these actions having a negative impact on the lives of others, thereby, ultimately condemning the premise of the new morality. In *NW*, both Natalie and Leah engage in an act of secrecy. Whereas Leah's husband believes that they are trying to have a child, Leah secretly has several planned abortions and takes contraceptive pills, which she steals from Natalie. According to the new morality, Rubin (2015) argues that:

> Abortion raises an issue… since it ends the existence of a potential human being and thus its chance for self-fulfilment. But the new morality's concept of the self as a narrative existence, a continuous process that extends over time and is shaped by individual or personal choice, means that a zygote or fetus is only a potential self, not an actual one. Thus the determinative issue, from the new morality's perspective, is the woman's self-fulfilment (Rubin 2015: 206).

From this perspective, Leah, on her life path, makes a decision that is true to herself, as she has no wish to become a mother and is quite happy with how things are. However, the norms of the new morality are contradictory. Whereas the new morality argues that: "no person should interfere with another person's effort to achieve self-fulfilment" (Rubin 2015: 176), it also prohibits the disruption and impairment of other's self-fulfilment. In this sense, I argue that there is another dimension to the issue of Leah's abortions. Apart from the self-fulfilment of Leah and her potential child, the father's self-fulfilment is disrupted through Leah's acts of secrecy. The contradictory nature of the new norm then places the modern subject in a complex position, as the individual must decide to be true to one's self or truth to others.

Similarly, Natalie too engages in secrecy by having extramarital affairs. Like Leah, Natalie is also positioned between self-fulfilment and the fulfilment of her husband. According to Rubin (2015), infidelity is a breach of the norm as:

> [T]he morality of self-fulfilment impose[d] in this arena is that the parties to the contract must be honest with each other. Breaching a solemn agreement with one's sexual partner is likely to impair that person's sexual fulfilment, emotional well-being, and expectations for the future and may additionally engender regret regarding the failure of the relationship. It is a major disruption

> of the present, forward-looking, and retrospective aspects of the person's life path, and this is what the new morality condemns" (Rubin 2015: 211).

The expectations and principles of the new norm are, therefore, complex and contradictive, ultimately, positioning the individual between authenticity and inauthenticity. Whereas Jane's parrhesia positions her empowered and Antoinette's resistance is further oppressed and ignored by her husband, Leah and Natalie appear prohibited from engaging in parrhesia as it will disrupt the well-being and fulfilment of their romantic partners.

As such, de-othering derives not only from challenging oppressive gender, race, and class norms, but requires the modern subject to manoeuvre between old and new norms. It is now up to the individual to decide what is right or wrong. Yet, again this is not to say that the old norms no longer exist. They do. For example, when Antoinette's husband changes Antoinette's name to Bertha, it is an act of oppression and confinement. In contrast, when Keisha changes her own name to Natalie, it is an act of resistance of the stereotype connected to the name Keisha. From this perspective, the act of changing a name becomes an act of empowerment. Paradoxically, this act of perceived empowerment plays into what Tappan (2006) terms 'appropriated oppression', as the name Keisha may not represent 'Britishness', whereas, Natalie may represent 'whiteness' and Western superiority. As such, even though self-fulfillment through categorizations such as "wealth, social status, gender, race… are morally forbidden" (Rubin: 180) in modern society, they have functioned as a significant means of social, personal, and relational construction in pre-modern times.

I argue that acts of parrhesia, silence and appropriated domination, as illustrated in the analysis on Jane Eyre and Wide Sargasso Sea, are essentially successful acts of de-othering. However, Smith's *NW* proves that neither practices of othering, self-othering and de-othering can be situated within a fixed analytical framework. *NW* illustrates that not all members of the same group have the same experience of oppression or domination. As such, *NW* is a true intersectional novel that illustrates the individual's complexity beyond the race/gender/class lens. Furthermore, it is an illustration of how the space between the subject-positions othered and de-othered is complex, contradictory, fearful and dangerous for the individual's sense of self.

Chapter 4.

Conclusion

4.
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A Foucauldian-Feminist Analysis of Jane Eyre, Wide Sargasso Sea and NW

From a foucauldian-feminist perspective, any form of social discrepancy that is considered deviant must be challenged. However in order to challenge reductive categorizations and binary oppositions, the practices of power must first be identified within past as well as current socio-historical and cultural contexts. In this sense, the individual's experiences of race, gender, and class norms are subjective; as such norms intersect, take on different forms and have different impacts on the individual depending on the historical context. As a result, the modes of power in which the individual engages in order to challenge marginalization will also vary.

By the beginning of the nineteenth-century, Western society was gradually undergoing a shift in governance and norms from that of depersonalization towards personalization. This meant that the individual and her subjectivity gradually became of greater significance within society as a whole. With this new focus on subjectivity came the realization that the individual is constantly in flux and cannot be characterized as an essential entity. Based on the findings of this thesis, I conclude that the 'normal' subject has developed from a standardized, fixed entity towards a more flexible, adaptable individual. From this perspective, the individual's identity and subjectivity derive from contradictory and much broader forces of power.

Normalization engages in a process of constant changing conditions; historically, culturally, socially, personally, and relationally. Throughout the three-part analysis normalising forces of power do not exclusively occur according to dominance, discipline, and oppression, but are simultaneously productive, empowering, and contradictory. These findings suggest that the relationship between power-resistance and the female subject is far more complex than

merely discourses on victimization and critique of such discourses. An analysis of *Jane Eyre*, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and *NW* identifies three subject-positions that derive from the power-resistance relationship, and these subject-positions constantly change, extend and oppose each other. Within the power-resistance dynamic, forces of individuation and homogenization produce the modern subject who must mobilize and adjust between the old and the new normality discourses.

5.

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