



UNIVERSIDAD DE JAÉN
Centro de Estudios de Postgrado

Master's Dissertation/
Trabajo Fin de Máster

OTHERNESS AND THE DOUBLE IN
JANE EYRE AND *WIDE SARGASSO*
SEA

Student: Peláez Ruiz, Irene

Tutor: Dr. Julio Ángel Olivares Merino
Dpt.: English Philology

June, 2022

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Abstract

This dissertation is a research on how some women throughout history, and in particular, in the early nineteenth century, were displaced not only from their country and roots, but also from themselves. A search for identity and fighting otherness, this dissertation uses *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Brontë, and its prequel, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, written by Jean Rhys years later, in order to explore and identify the causes of the discrimination the protagonists of these well known texts go through. Furthermore, this document shows an investigation on the reasons for the Otherness they face not only in cultural aspects, but also in relation to ethnicity and gender.

Key words

Identity, the Double, doubleness, the Other, Otherness.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people, without whom I would not have been able to accomplish this dissertation and made it through my masters degree Online Masters in English Studies (OMiES).

The Universidad de Jaén team, especially to my supervisor Julio Olivares Merino, whose kindness from the beginning and supportive attitude towards my decisions have made me believe in myself and my work. I really appreciate his enthusiasm, support, encouragement and patience.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the professors of the subjects in this Master's Degree, since they have allowed me to think outside the box as well as connect gender, race, and women throughout history in this research.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues from this Master and my family for their support and encouragement when there were moments of stress and pressure.

1. INTRODUCTION

“The double”, also known as its German concept “Doppelgänger”, is a term used to describe the situation in which one person seems to have a duplication or a parallel with another one, physical or psychologically, or even both ways (Rank, 1925, p. 14-15). Whereas “the Other” refers to the person who is perceived by a group as being different and, therefore, not belonging, and sometimes even threatening (Cambridge online dictionary, 2022)

Jane Eyre, by Charlotte Brontë and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, by Jean Rhys deal with the two concepts of “double” and “Other” in several ways. This research aims to identify and find reasons to the situation of discrimination when analysing the doubleness and otherness associated to the main characters of these two novels.

This chapter provides an introduction to the investigation first, by giving information about the background and context of both the authors and their novels, and then showing the objectives and relevance of this dissertation.

Jane Eyre was written by Charlotte Brontë and first published in 1847. Charlotte was born in Yorkshire, England, in 1816. When her mother died she was very young and her aunt took care of her and her sisters together with her father. In 1824 she and her three sisters went to school for clergymen’s daughter since her father was a clergyman. Unfortunately, due to the death of Mary and Elizabeth, the rest of them went back home. Years later Charlotte continued going to school and then she became a teacher and a governess. Unfortunately, she was disappointed and tried to do her best in order to create her own school. This was something that did not flourish. However, she and her sister became very successful with the writing of poems, plays, and many stories. This started when they were very young with the creation of a world they called “Angria” and the tiny books in which they included their stories. When the three sisters were older, they started publishing their stories under male pseudonyms: Charlotte was known as Currer Bell, while Emily and Anne used the pen names Ellis and Acton Bell. *Jane Eyre* was published in 1847 and has been considered a classic that successfully illustrates the portrait of the life of a woman named Jane and the struggles and difficulties she faces in relation to her wishes and her social condition. The book serves as a critic of Victorian assumptions about gender and social class.

This work is thought to be inspired by the author’s life and, according to Cregan-Reid (Britannica, 2022) and many other critics, Jane is an “unconventional heroine, an independent and self-reliant woman who overcomes both adversity and societal norms”. The autobiographical elements present in the novel of Charlotte Brontë are easily recognisable.

On the other hand, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), by Jean Rhys, tells the story of Antoinette, the white daughter of ex-slave owners, who lives on a plantation. This novel explores the themes of race, oppression of slavery and the Caribbean history. Jean Rhys was born in Dominica, in the Caribbean, in 1890. She was the daughter of a Welsh doctor and a white Creole mother. This fact led her to live between two different and competing ideologies: one that wanted to portray Caribbean life, and another one that added the racial pluralism. However, the author was more influenced by the black servants who were the people that raised her and gave her the opportunity to learn and immerse in the language, customs, and beliefs of the natives from the Caribbean.

Wide Sargasso Sea shows not only the views from a West Indian writer, but also the modernism present in Europe, since the author moved to England when she was a teenager. At this moment, she had a feeling of displacement that stayed with her all through her life and, therefore, this feeling and feature are present in her novels and her characters. In the 1920s Rhys traveled through Europe and learned loads from the culture, as well as from the fact of living in a patriarchal society being a single woman. The latter theme plays an important role in her writing. It was not until 1966, with the publication of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, when she went back to literature and writing. In her novel she draws the concepts of a nineteenth-century Caribbean context, where she portrays the lives of the people, how women were treated, as well as the colonised.

Jean Rhys read *Jane Eyre* when she was very young and, since this very moment, she started imagining the Caribbean and the character of the creole wife of Mr. Rochester. Years later she decided to write a novel about her life, a prequel to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. This novel tries to humanise the racial characterisation of a West Indian woman. With this novel, Jean Rhys, who was a West Indian, wanted to tell the other truth, the other side of the story.

1.1. Objectives

Firstly, this dissertation aims to give reasons for the Otherness women had to face, in particular in the context of *Jane Eyre* and its prequel, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, not only in terms of cultural aspects, but also in relation to ethnicity and gender. This will be done by showing the importance of identifying one's identity, and, therefore, the others' so that they are accepted and welcomed in any group within society.

Secondly, this document has also the aim of giving voice to the paralysed, marginalised, and the people who, in one way or another, are imprisoned, and finally, set themselves free

from captivity, as well as empower themselves by giving every reader the opportunity to know about these characters, who once were shut and now have a voice.

1.2. Justification and relevance

Identity could be defined as what people answer to the question “who are you?” (Vignoles, 2017). The answer could be related to who we are in personal and or social contexts. In truth, as it is explained in the chapter “Self and identity” in *Handbook of social psychology* (Swann & Bosson, 2010), identity is a social phenomenon. From the early suspicions that we have of self-awareness to our reflection on the meaning of life and our place within society. Nowadays, due to scientific advances there exists a wide range of investigations that give information about the nature of the self.

The relevance of knowing who we are, our identity, the group we belong to in society, allows us to identify the other, and by doing so, we also identify the self. This topic of the search of the self is seen in Charlotte Brontë’s novel *Jane Eyre* and Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* through their main characters Jane and Antoinette. Both of them are in search of their identity, their self, and in one way or another, they feel they are the Other. That is, they feel they do not belong to the place they are at, or with the people they are. The concept of “doppelgänger” or the double is also used in these novels in order to show the other self of these protagonists and that they have not discovered yet.

The main focus of this dissertation prevails on the analysis of the concepts of double and otherness in order for the discovery of the self to take place. In particular, focusing on Jane and Antoinette in the aforementioned masterpieces. By doing so, they are recognised by themselves and empowered to be the real Jane and Antoinette. That is, they are given a voice and are recognised so that their lives are theirs, since each of us needs to be heard, noticed, and remembered.

1.3. Sections

In the first section an introduction is outlined. Here the two concepts are briefly presented as well as the two novels and authors are introduced in order for the reader to be contextualised. Within this section there is also a part which is designated to identify the objectives of this Master’s Dissertation and the justification and relevance of the topic itself.

In the following section, the literature review is described. In this part of the dissertation, a description of the topic in general terms is outlined, the main authors who have been investigating the presence of the double and otherness and the connection of these concepts to

the search for identity, in particular in the novels *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and some gaps that have been noticed. The literature review also leads and justifies the research objectives and questions of this investigation.

In section number three the methodology is presented. Here the process of gathering information is described, as well as the limitations found during the activity.

In the results section, the information that has been investigated after doing research is described. Here the concepts of “otherness” and “doppelgänger” are defined as well as illustrated in literature. Moreover, their presence in both novels is presented.

In the following two sections the limitations of the study and the lines for future research are described.

Finally, the conclusions and the references are the last sections of this dissertation. Here, the conclusion will be drawn on the observations made through this analysis of Bertha’s role in the evolution of Jane and her finding the Self, her identity, by finding herself.

2. Literature review

The literature review is conducted in order to ensure understanding of the double and otherness in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* by identifying similar work done within this area, as well as comparing them and recognising some gaps that demand more investigation. Therefore, this dissertation aims to identify the elements of doubling and otherness in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, two concepts that are highly connected with the search of identity and the self.

Through the last few centuries, the investigations regarding the meaning of identity have caused a huge concern within the research fields of scholars across the world. There are many definitions for this abstract concept. Identity, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2022), refers to the “characteristics, feelings or beliefs that make people different from others”. The study of identity is, as Vignoles (2017) points out, the study of how we, as individuals, answer the question “who are you?”. In his text with Schwartz and Luyckx (2001), they mentioned how the explicit and implicit meanings of the answers to that question are very determinant. However, the concept of “identity” has some meanings who are contradictory with one another (Vignoles et al., 2011). Therefore, many authors have proposed that the term is very broad to be meaningful (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). There is a wide range of investigations on personal and social identity, and both types of identities are connected with each other.

Erikson (1968) defines identity as a “fundamental organising principle which develops constantly throughout the lifespan”. Identity not only involves experiences and relationships, but also beliefs, values and memories. All these create a person’s subjective sense of self. He summarizes it with the following statement:

I shall present human growth from the point of view of the conflicts, inner and outer, which the vital personality weathers, re-emerging from each crisis with an increased sense of inner unity, with an increase of good judgment, and an increase in the capacity ‘to do well’ according to his own standards and to the standards of those who are significant to him. (Erikson, 1968, pp. 91-92)

When he mentions the capacity “to do well” he refers to the importance given to the things we do based on sociocultural factors.

According to Lacan’s psychoanalytic theory (1978), individuals should have the power to express desires and needs through language. Moreover, Sartre, in his *Being and Nothingness*

(1943), explains how the existence of the Other affects our Self. The Other is the thing the subject is not, or everything the subject does not have. For Lacan (1978), the discovery of the Other means the ability to express ourselves and to distinguish between “I” and “you”, that is, to acquire personal and social identity.

The identity development is the process which takes place during childhood and adolescence (Erikson, 1968) and, at this stage of self awareness, a person could feel apart or that he or she does not belong to a place, a group, or themselves. This idea is connected to the feeling of being another person, or holding some feelings so that the group that person is with does not see them.

The Other has been usually used by philosophers and social scientists such as Freud in order to refer to anyone who is not “I”. This fact actually defines “me”, since it means everything that I am not. However, the Other has sometimes been defined as “woman”, and this has caused controversy, since women, as the Other, were something to be feared, something to be conquered. As Simone de Beauvoir explains in *The Second Sex*:

She [woman] is defined and differentiated with reference to man, not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other. The category of the Other is as primordial as consciousness itself. (1949)

Jean-François Staszak explains in his article about Other/otherness (2008) that the difference of the Other is seen as negative. In fact, he follows, humanity is divided into two groups: “one that is the norm and whose identity is valued, and another that is defined by its fault, devalued and susceptible to discrimination” (Staszak, 2008). He mentions that dominant groups such as Westerns with colonisation, are “in a position to impose their categories” (Staszak, 2008).

The “double” is sometimes known as its German name “doppelgänger”, which is a term that refers to the situations in which a person seems to be a duplicate or a parallel to another. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, a Russian writer who explored human psychology in social, spiritual and political contexts, illustrated quite well the concept in his novella *The Double* (1846), in which the main character finds someone who is his exact double physically, but very opposite in character. In fact, the protagonist and the double have some difficulties in their process of self-identification (Buber, 1959)

3. Research Methodology

The objective of this research is to define the concepts of double and otherness in literature, in particular their presence in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* and Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Moreover, we also explain the relevance of these two concepts in society and how their value assists in getting to know the self, the identity of those subalterned, marginalised.

The methodology followed in order to manage this dissertation has been as it is explained in the next paragraphs. Firstly, and very important, both novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, have been read thoroughly. Apart from doing this and after the close reading of such texts, a wide range of articles related to the topics of doubleness and otherness in literature have been studied. From these authors' articles, many ideas and reflections are gathered and expressed in this document.

In order to identify and evaluate the presence of the double and otherness in both novels, it is relevant to know the interest that made Charlotte Brontë and Jean Rhys write these novels. For this reason, research on their lives was needed. After this introductory process, the following step to be followed within this research was the identification of the concepts of "double" and "otherness" in both novels. This is the area which is more tedious, since much time and reading is necessary, as well as quotations from the books, and connection with the context and the authors' lives are required.

Some of the pieces of information found while doing the close reading were important for the explanation of the concepts, such as sentences said by some characters who were clearly connected to the double or otherness as was worth mentioning. However, the organisation of these ideas, characters, quotes, and context took much time, and this was something that limited the work. Therefore, the decision of doing it by following the chronology of the stories was made.

3.1. Instruments

The instruments used in order to achieve the completion of this Master's Dissertation have been mainly the textbooks *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which are summarized in the following paragraphs. Several articles and books written on this topic have also been consulted and they can be found in the reference list at the end of this document.

Jane Eyre tells the story of Jane Eyre, a young girl who was an orphan raised by her aunt, Mrs Reed, who was, together with her children, very cruel towards Jane. Later on in the story, Jane was sent to Lowood School where the headmaster did not treat her well. Moreover,

the conditions at this school were very poor and consequently, Jane's best friend died. In the near future, Jane became a teacher at that institution. However, she did not feel she belonged there, so she applied to get a job as a governess at Thornfield Hall and she was accepted. There, she starts to have some feelings for her employer, Mr Rochester. One night, there is a fire at Thornfield that nearly kills Mr Rochester. However, Jane could save him. Rochester thought this was made by Grace Pool, a servant, although Jane does not think it was her.

Rochester confessed his love for Jane and his wish to marry her. They are about to marry when a man turns up at the church and tells them that Rochester already has a wife and therefore, he cannot get married again. Here is the moment in which the reader gets to know Bertha, Rochester's wife, who is mad. He explained this situation to Jane and he told her he still wants to be with Jane. However, Jane runs away and becomes homeless again and in search of her place in life. As the protagonist recognises in the novel, "how people feel when they are returning home after an absence, long or short, (she) did not know. (She) had never experienced the sensation" (Brontë, p.240)

Jane, luckily, was hosted by The Rivers family and she felt very welcomed and healthy again. Moreover, she inherited her uncle's wealth and estate and she was asked to go on a missionary journey with St John Rivers and to become his wife. However, she could not accept this offer since she did not love him in that way, and she started hearing Rochester calling her, as if in a dream. At this moment, she decided to return to Thornfield, since she expected something had happened. Indeed, she found out the building had burnt down and Rochester is not living there anymore and was blind because of the fire. The novel ends with them married, since Bertha had passed away in the fire, and Rochester regains his sight.

In order to understand the novel it is helpful to get to know the context in which it was written as well as the setting and place of the novel itself. *Jane Eyre* is set in the north of England in the nineteenth century, when the people from this country were going through some important changes in society. The economy, which was based on rural activities, transited towards an industrial one due to the Industrial Revolution. Charlotte Brontë, in her novel, refers to some of these relevant changes, such as education, the role of women in society in relation to employment, and marriage. In relation to the first topic already mentioned, the society of that time thought education came together with the social class of that person, as well as the important fact of boys and girls being taught separately. This is something that can be appreciated in the novel when Jane goes to school and when later on she becomes a teacher in the same institution. Unfortunately, many of these young students would leave school at a very early stage and go to work at a factory in order to support their families. However, there were

wealthy or middle class families who could afford to enroll their sons and daughters in private schools. The conditions in these types of schools were, as it can be noticed in *Jane Eyre*'s Lowood Institution, harsh and similar to those in orphans. The figure of governesses was something quite important in those times. They were in charge of going to the homes of upper and middle class families to teach different subjects to their children. These women belonged to the group who had the opportunity to receive a level of education, that is, they were daughters of the middle classes. They taught subjects such as grammar, history, geography, music, and sewing.

Brontë through the voice of Jane illustrates in *Jane Eyre* how the Victorian female struggled for independence and autonomy and shows the oppression and inequality women had to face during the 19th century:

“I scarcely knew what school was; Bessie sometimes spoke of it as a place where young ladies sat in the stocks, wore backboards, and were expected to be exceedingly genteel and precise” (Brontë, p. 27)

In relation to this, and fascinated by Brontë's novel, Jean Rhys, a Creole writer, wrote a prequel about the “mad woman” Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre*. This character is known as Antoninette Conway Mason in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Therefore, Rhys' novel cannot be treated without mentioning and analysing *Jane Eyre*, since, in a way, *Wide Sargasso Sea* serves as a response to Brontë's novel.

Jean Rhys wrote *Wide Sargasso Sea* in 1966, and with it she intends to illustrate the life of Bertha Mason Rochester, a minor character in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Jean Rhys wrote most of her works during the 1930s. However, with the rise of feminist and Postcolonial literary studies she became very interested in the topic and *Wide Sargasso Sea* became a very relevant piece of literary work.

Wide Sargasso Sea is structured in three parts which take place in different parts of the world. The first part is set in Jamaica in the 1830s when Great Britain had ended slavery in its West Indian colonies. The protagonist, who is called Antoinette Conway, is the narrator of this part of the novel. Here she tells her family's story in Jamaica and how they freed their slaves, although the situation was described as not very organised. Her and her mother, Annette, lived with their servants, including Christophine, Antoinette's servant, who was Mr Cosway's wedding present to his wife.

Antoinette's mother married again to an Englishman, Mason, who had arrived in Jamaica to profit from the white Creole landholders' economic problems. Thanks to his work in Coulibri Estate. This made the situation good in some ways. However, other people were angry due to the presence of the white family. This is the reason why one night a group of people burned the house. Antoinette's brother Pierre was really injured and he eventually died. This incident led Antoinette towards a breakdown and she was sent to an asylum. Mason at that moment decided to stay away from Jamaica. Meanwhile, Antoinette stayed with her aunt Cora until she was sent to live and study at a convent. Later, she married a woman, unnamed in the novel.

In the second part of *Wide Sargasso Sea* the reader gets to know the story of Antoinette and her husband on their honeymoon. Her husband, at the beginning, did not like the Caribbean landscape, but later he did when he had the opportunity to meet some of the local people, like Daniel. Daniel warned him about the secrets in Antoinette's family and he, who had never loved her, accused her of not telling him the truth about her family and origins, and he had an affair with their servant. Antoinette got really angry and attacked her husband, who thought Christophine had given Antoinette something to help her sleep. Christophine advised him that she would remain like that until her husband showed her real love, otherwise she would go into madness. However, he did not believe her words and his relationship with Antoinette is based on coldness.

Finally, in the last part of the novel, Antoinette is locked in the attic of her husband's house, and she is cared for by Grace Poole. One night she dreams of her escaping and setting the house on fire, and she makes her dream come true when Grace is asleep.

Both novels have autobiographical elements, since, in a way, the authors wanted to represent their lives or the lives of those who were unable to speak. Jane and Antoinette are eager to be free, out of captivity, in order to find their place in the world and belong to society. They wanted to have an identity, and avoid being the Other. Gender, madness and colonialism, are some of the main themes included in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

4. Results

4.1. *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*: realism and similarities

Before starting this investigation on the terms “otherness” and “the double”, the similarities found between the two novels caught my attention. Moreover, and as it has been described earlier in this dissertation, both novels contain autobiographical elements in their plots. Therefore, this means they are quite realistic. These autobiographical elements can be easily recognised through the main characters. For example, in *Jane Eyre*, the experience the protagonist lives at Lowood School recalls Charlotte’s days at her school. Moreover, the death of the character’s friend, Helen Burns, reminds the reader of the moment when Charlotte’s sister passed away. These episodes, together with the role of women at the time, illustrate a real portrait of the author and her time.

As for *Wide Sargasso Sea* and its real picture to Jean Rhys’ life, she was born in the West Indies in 1890. Her mother was a Creole and her father was Scottish. When she was a teenager she was sent to England to live with her aunt. However, she was quite influenced by the servants who raised her in the Caribbean with their language and customs.

These two authors succeeded in giving voice to women of that time, who were struggling to be independent and find their Self. Both of them, Antoinette and Jane, suffered from gender and class otherness and not being what was expected from them according to the patriarchal system they were living in. Charlotte Brontë was one of the first authors to create a novel whose main character, Jane Eyre, is a feminist role model. She did so by making the protagonist of *Jane Eyre* the narrator of the story. In fact, when the novel was published, the original title was *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*. First person narrator was used this time in order to give the character the opportunity to tell her story, to give her point of view. As for Jean Rhys, when she read *Jane Eyre*, she felt a huge impulse to give voice to the dark character in the novel, Bertha Mason. She wanted to explore the reasons why Bertha was living that harsh situation, she wanted to give her a life (The Guardian, 1968).

Jane Eyre and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, apart from sharing some characters, they have similarities in relation to otherness and not belonging. Race, gender, and social classes are three topics that are present in both novels. The discrimination felt by the two protagonists reach a point in which they learn from the other and finally find their Self, the other side.

4.2. The Other and otherness

The feeling of not being what is expected or generally accepted is highly connected to the concepts of “other” and “otherness”, which are present in both *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso*

Sea. These two terms play an important role in the protagonists' lives in order for them to find their identity and their Self.

4.2.1. Concept and history

“Other”, according to the Britannica online dictionary (2022), refers to “one person or thing that remains or that has not been mentioned”. It is also used to indicate the opposite or completely different. As for the concept of “otherness”, it means “being or feeling different in appearance or character from what is familiar, expected, or generally accepted” (Cambridge online dictionary, 2022).

Otherness, as expressed by Staszak (2008), refers to the process by which a dominant group, to be called as “Us” or “Self”, creates a dominated group, “Them” or “Other”. This is done by the differences presented as a negative part of their identity and therefore it becomes a reason to discriminate against them. The creation of otherness allows the individuals of a society to be “divided into two hierarchical groups” (Staszak, 2008): them and us. The dominant group, as he explains in his article, is created as a group only by its opposition to the other, and its lack of identity. However, Otherness and identity are two terms that go together, that is, the Other exists because the Self does, and the Self exists due to the fact that the Other exists. This otherness results in the other being the negative side. As de Beauvoir (1952) states, “if the Other of Man is Woman, and if the Other of the White Man is the Black Man, the opposite is not true”. This discrimination done by stereotypes and stigmatisation is abolished at the moment in which the Other is given an identity and is empowered in order to establish their norms.

In the late eighteenth century Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was the first person to introduce the idea of the Other. . He treated the concept of the Other as a part of the Self, a complementation that permits self awareness (Edwards, 1967. Vol. 1, p. 76). Edmund Husserl added that the concept of Other was seen as an *alter ego*, that is, as an “other self”. (Honderich, 1995, p. 637)

In the psychology field, it is also noted that the Other is presented as the unconscious mind, the silence, and the insanity (Bullock, A., Thrombley, S., Laurie, A., 1999, p. 620). Moreover, otherness should not be necessarily related to a minority. In fact, the number of people in countries defeated by the power of imperialism and who have suffered for being the other, is rather vast.

The following are the most relevant types of otherness and discrimination, and the ones that are more common in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

A) Geographical Other

The place every person belongs to creates a great impact on them, providing them with customs and language, among other features. This should be seen as something enriching. Unfortunately, due to the idea of otherness and, in particular to Imperialism and the idea of superiority of the White men, this is something that has caused controversy and negative attitudes towards the natives of certain areas, such as the Western world. This racial perspective arose with the Postcolonial system that created a system “based on domination and subordination” (Johnston, 2000).

When a place was colonised the people who lived there and their lands were exploited. This meant physical domination and cultural subordination of the native people. (Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, 1998)

As Rieder (2008) claims, the colonialist Self believed that imperialism was a civilising mission to educate and culturally assimilate the Other into the empire and that they could civilise them into the Self. Colonies were established and hierarchies of domination were required in order to exploit the subordinated natives and their country (Mountz, 2016). This way there were two groups: the colonists, who could be known as the “Us”, or “Self”; and the colonised, the subaltern native to be exploited, who could be described as “Them”, or “Other”, as Said (1993) describes.

The fact that the white colonists feel superior towards the natives who live there leads to a dehumanisation allowing social class and race to go beyond the limits and becoming the Other, the marginalised.

B) Other types of “Other”

Not all the forms of otherness are related to a specific location. In fact, otherness takes many forms. It could refer to someone from a different nationality, religion, sexual orientation, origin, social class, or even a person who has a condition. They are objects of this otherness and discrimination.

The social exclusion women have suffered from living in a patriarchal system has always existed. It was in 1949 when Simone de Beauvoir applied Hegel’s idea of the Other as a part of self-awareness. Her intentions were to describe a culture dominated by men, which was representing women as the Other. Women have always acted conventionally and have treated themselves as the social Other to men. This, fortunately, is changing due to feminist movements. This otherness causes unequal roles in society and human relationships as well as

in the system itself, since the Other in society could have less legal rights, they even may be seen as less intelligent or less capable to do a specific task.

The same happens with people who suffer from a disability or illness and are confined in asylums or hospitals that feel like prisons. Women were treated to be confined at home doing their domestic roles and the former were seen as useless in society. Therefore, they were ignored, and without a voice to tell their story, to find their Self, since they are the Other.

4.2.2. Presence of the Other in literature

The presence of the Other in literary works is very common. There is usually a character that is an identical other. Mainly, this happens with the protagonist and another character who has similar features, but they are treated as negative ones. This character may be dangerous, or too passionate, even a monster. The types of representations of otherness in literature could be related to class, gender, and race.

Gothic and Postcolonial literary genres are obviously very connected with the preoccupation with the Other. This is treated by Khair (2009), who shares how colonialism affected literature and how it was influenced by the Gothic genre.

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), for example, represents quite well the discrimination felt by the black society, and how it is transmitted to the youngest part of the population, in particular the girls, when all they want as a present is a blond doll since they are so beautiful. However, the protagonist does not understand the reason why this doll is supposedly so beautiful and she even thinks it is in the interior of the doll. Furthermore, this novel focuses on the women characters and tries to examine the complexity of being a woman in a Postcolonial society.

Another way of looking at otherness in literature is through the criticism of the European Self. One famous work that is worth mentioning is Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899), a novel in which the harsh attitudes of the European imperialists towards African natives can be seen. Here, Conrad illustrates the natives as savage and dangerous.

In literature, usually when facing otherness and the Other, there is lack and negativity. However, in his chapter "Can the Other Speak?", Khair (2009) considers to focus on the Other side to speak up. The author explains that Postcolonial texts, in a necessary and brave attempt, narrate the other story. Narrating the other is quite significant since it fills the gaps of colonialist narratives and, in fact, this is what Jean Rhys does in *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

4.2.3. Otherness in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*

The concept of Otherness is present in many parts of both novels. Starting with Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, it was published under the pseudonym of Currer Bell, that is, the author became an Other, due to the fact of being a woman and Victorian regulations in relation to gender and class. In the novel, it is noticeable that the protagonist, Jane, since the early stages of her life, feels that she does not belong where she is or with the people she is surrounded by. She wants to be loved and valued, she needs to have the feeling of belonging. First, at Lowood Institution where she is not treated well and the conditions are harsh. When she found herself comfortable because she had a good friend, the latter became ill and passed away. The novel portrays a strong woman who faces some obstacles in life related to gender and class. She is presented as "a heroine in opposition to class hierarchies and gender assumptions", as Akman (2019) explains.

English society during the nineteenth century was highly concerned about social classes and the social boundaries that people needed to respect. Every person was expected to marry someone from their social class, otherwise this would cause a rejection and discrimination in the family. However, in *Jane Eyre* Mr Rochester, who belongs to the high class, prefers Jane, a governess from the middle-class. In the case of Jane, a woman who has been oscillating between classes due to her circumstances, she believes in being economically autonomous, and, rather than acting like most women in those times, she worked in order to be independent. To her surprise, Mr. Rochester prefers a strong and independent woman:

"To women who please me only by their faces, I am the very devil when I find out they have neither souls nor hearts—when they open to me a perspective of flatness, triviality, and, perhaps, imbecility, coarseness, and ill-temper; but to the clear eye and eloquent tongue, to the soul made of fire, and the character that bends but does not break...I am every tender and true...I never met your likeness, Jane; you please me, and you master me—you seem to submit, and I like the sense of pliancy you impart...I am influenced—conquered; and the influence is sweeter than I can express; and the conquest I undergo has a witchery beyond any triumph I can win."(Brontë, p. 259)

This otherness about not belonging to a certain social class is critiqued by Charlotte Brontë at the moment she wrote *Jane Eyre* since, with her protagonist, she intended to demonstrate that it is through education, manners and intellect, how a person should be valued, and not by their social class. Jane had conflicts on where she stands in society. She was an orphan and, through education, she could reach the upper-class. However, being a governess was considered to be

inferior and dependent on their benefactors. Therefore, Jane's will to fight and change the injustices related to class and gender grows stronger:

“Women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, to absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; 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, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. 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, p. 111)

Jane has been identified as an Other by many literary critics, such as Peters (1996, p.57), who explains that Jane is seen as “a social outsider” and as a threat to society. Peters gives examples from Charlotte Brontë's novel in which the way Jane is excluded can be appreciated. For instance, Jane is seen as an “other”, not only because of her economic situation as already mentioned, but also due to her appearance and personality. She is not the ideal Victorian woman, a beautiful blond girl with blue eyes. She is not the obedient girl that is expected to be within Victorian society, since she reacts and says what she thinks when she disagrees with what has happened. For example in chapter six (Brontë, 1994) when Jane is defending herself and how she thinks people should never allow others to strike at them:

“If people were always kind and obedient to those who are cruel and unjust, the wicked people would have it all their own way: they would never feel afraid, and so they would never alter, but would grow worse and worse. When we are struck at without a reason, we should strike back again very hard; I am sure we should— so hard as to teach the person who struck us never to do it again.” (Brontë, p. 59-60)

The restrictions of society make her remain silent, since she realises is not the kind of girl that is expected to be. As Peeters explains (1996), Jane feels she is marginalised because:

She does not fit into any recognisable category, even at Thornfield, by the very nature of her being a governess, she does not easily fit into the established roles of either gentry or servants. As a governess, she is a dependent; yet she is better born and better bred than the other servants (p.59).

Jane is, in fact, caught between what she wants to do and what it is expected from her. As her name suggests, “Jane”, which refers to something basic, plain, ordinary, may portray her one side that follows the rules of Victorian society, an obedient woman who should marry a man from the same social class, a good Christian, and do the domestic tasks at home taking care of the children. However, and quite surprisingly, her surname suggests the complete opposite. “Eyre”, resembles the word “air”, which represents freedom. Moreover, etymologically “Eyre” means “journey”, and this is what Jane does throughout the novel: a journey in order to find her Self, her place in the world, to feel valued, loved and respected and independent.

At all times during the novel, Jane feels she needs to be herself, and not the voiceless Other. In fact, she always knows when is the right time to move towards another place, in order to be with other people who may accept and value her. When she notices that she is in a moment of harm, in which she is treated harshly and as the Other, she finds a way out and sets boundaries. Chapter sixteen (Brontë, 1991) contains a fragment of Jane’s words when she is talking about her thoughts regarding her as being a woman that wants to rebel but at the same time is silent due to the fact of being a woman and to social norms:

“YOU of importance to him in any way? Go! your folly sickens me. And you have derived pleasure from occasional tokens of preference— equivocal tokens shown by a gentleman of family and a man of the world to a dependent and a novice. How dared you? Poor stupid dupe!—Could not even self- interest make you wiser? You repeated to yourself this morning the brief scene of last night?—Cover your face and be ashamed! He said something in praise of your eyes, did he? Blind pup- py! Open their bleared lids and look on your own accursed senselessness! It does good to no woman to be flattered by her superior, who cannot possibly intend to marry her; and it is madness in all women to let a secret love kindle within them.” (Brontë, p.160)

Apart from Jane’s otherness in relation to class and gender, in *Jane Eyre* there can be found several characters who suffer from being the Other as well. For example, the servants, whom it is considered to be difficult to have a conversation with, or the racial otherness who suffers Bertha Mason, the enigmatic character who the reader finds at the end of Charlotte Brontë’s novel is the wife of Mr Rochester, the “mad woman in the attic” as Gilbert & Gubar (2000) called her. Bertha is known as the colonised and racial other. Bertha Mason, as she

appears in *Jane Eyre*, is the secret wife who is confined in the attic by her husband, Mr. Rochester. However, as previously explained in this dissertation, Bertha Mason is actually Antoinette, the main character of Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the novel that gives her a voice. Antoinette also suffered from otherness since she was a Creole woman from the British colonies, and the people from these territories were treated as inferior by the white colonists. Bertha is described in *Jane Eyre* as having insane and animalistic features. In chapter twenty five (Brontë, 1991), Jane described Bertha to Mr. Rochester and it is clear how she sees her as a scary monster, even as a vampire. This way, Brontë shows how the black people and colonised were the Other.

Othering in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is easily appreciated by the oppression of slavery, the complexity of racial identity and the way women and mind illnesses are treated. Imperialism is always present when reading a nineteenth-century British novel.

Jean Rhys, in an interview by *The Guardian* (1968), expressed that when she read *Jane Eyre* and got to know Bertha Mason felt that she would want to give her a life. In her novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the main character, Antoinette, thinks "There is always the other side, always" (*Wide Sargasso Sea*, 1968, p.106), and in fact this is what Jean Rhys reckoned as well. She thought there was another side, another story, a silenced one that needed to be told.

Being a foreigner in your own life is something that happens to both protagonists, Jane and Antoinette, two women who are placed in areas where they do not belong. In *Jane Eyre*, Jane is constantly searching for her place, whereas in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette is a West Indian who feels a stranger and an exile when she finds herself locked in a room, unable to be free.

The fact that a person is treated as an object, that is, commodified, can be seen in *Wide Sargasso Sea* with Christophine, Antoinette's nurse, who was the father's wedding present to Antoinette's mother. However, this is the first named speaking subject in the text, as explained in Spivak's article on imperialism (1985), a reference worth mentioning since she invoked the emancipation of slaves in Jamaica by saying "no chain gang, no tread machine, no dark jail either. This is free country and I am free woman" (*Wide Sargasso Sea*, p.131). In her influential text "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), Spivak tries to explain how difficult it is for the poorest and most marginalized people to express themselves and their worries, and she adds that they have no voice to demand a fair situation. This way, the native, considered as people from the Third World, become the Other.

Jane Eyre and *Wide Sargasso Sea* also contain gender otherness as mentioned above in this study. According to Maurel (1998), sexual difference is structured in two ways: the

masculine one, always privileged. In *The Second Sex* (de Simone, 1949), this duality is described as Self and Other. In her book she explains how there is an assumption that men are the self, and women, the other. Shoshone Feldman (1975) supports this idea and adds that the woman is viewed by the man as his opposite, as his other, that is, the negative part. This way, women tend to grow in a negative and patriarchal society where men are superior to women. Women, therefore, are defined by what they lack, and this concept of an incomplete other which is in need to of a masculine part or self is what Irigay tries to explain in *Spéculum de l'autre femme* (1974).

For Freud, sexual difference was obvious due to the sex organ. "Female difference is then perceived as an absence or the negative of the male norm" (Maurel, 1998). This could be interpreted as the woman being like a mirror-image or the man's other.

In both novels we see the protagonists, Jane and Antoinette, as the Other in terms of sexuality. The authors tried, in one way or another, to enact the representation of the protagonists' self. Unfortunately, Jean Rhys could not do more than place Antoinette's as the man's other. However, she still manages to question the otherness experienced by women within the patriarchal system, and even though Antoinette is silenced, "it is an active, productive form of silence" (Maurel, 1998). Moreover, not only women were the victims of patriarchy. For Rhys, Mr Rochester was also a victim of the system, since he, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, as a young son is dispatched to the colonies to buy an heiress (Staley, 1979). In the following passage, a letter to his father, it can be appreciated how he is also a person who does not belong to the place where he is or he does not feel comfortable with what he is required to do, he does not feel he is doing what he would choose. However, he "does not want to be a disgrace" to his father anymore:

"Dear Father. The thirty thousand pounds have been paid to me without question or condition. No provision made for her (that must be seen to)... I will never be a disgrace to you or to my dear brother the son you love. No begging letters, no mean requests. None of the furtive shabby manoeuvres of a younger son. I have sold my soul or you have sold it, and after all is it such a bad bargain? The girl is thought to be beautiful, she is beautiful. And yet..." (*Wide Sargasso Sea*, p.59)

In *Wide Sargasso Sea* Jean Rhys finds a voice for *Jane Eyre*'s Mrs Rochester, the mad Creole woman locked up in the attic. The name of Rhys' novel makes an allusion to the Sargasso Sea, an area in the ocean that could be seen as a "dead centre" (Maurel, 1998, p.129),

and anyone that passes it could be left with “no pride, no name, no face, no country”, as described in *Good Morning Midnight* (Rhys, 1939: 38). Perhaps this is what happens to Antoinette when she crosses the sea towards England — she loses her name, since she is called by Mr. Rochester as Bertha Mason; and her face is out of sight, since she is locked, kept unseen.

4.3. The double - doppelgänger

The double or “doppelgänger”, is related to the dark other of a character in Gothic literature, and by exploring this concept, the dissertation will analyse the meaning of the Other in Jane and Antoinette in order to find their Self.

4.3.1. Concept and history

The idea of the Other is connected with the double, as if there was a mirror in which a person could see her or his double which is a part of their own Self. As Tommasino (2021) expresses, “the Other is able to bring balance and organisation to the whole system. However, by fulfilling the role of the centre, this Other cannot be part of the structure itself, consequently creating a situation of lack”. This lack “defines a desire which aims at being Other than the self, an Other which is simultaneously different and indispensable for the self” (Tommasino, 2021, p.18).

Freud and his idea of the Uncanny (1919, p.124) explains the relationship between the subject and its own enemies. With the uncanny he refers to what was initially kept hidden and that has eventually become visible. This fact provokes fear feelings, as it refers to what is unknown by others, repressed. (Botting, 2013, p.14). The idea of strangeness, as expressed by Richard (2002, p.47) might be related to the feelings that have been repressed and thought to be as completely different and strange from the Self, but actually, they are not that different.

Undoubtedly it is necessary to give special mention to Gothic literature when referring to the Double or doppelgänger. It is thought that with the publication of *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole (1764), Gothic fiction had been born. As Punter (1980, p.4) states in his *The Literature of Terror*, the word “Gothic”, due to its meaning in the past, at that time its meaning led towards a derogative one which had to do with the barbaric and the uncivilised. Later, by the end of the century, some positive and romantic ideas were added (Punter, 1980, p.5). Some elements from the Gothic novels are “the presence of a tyrannical villain persecuting a young lady, dark and gloomy settings, events which cannot be given logical explanations and passions overpowering reason” (Tommasino, 2021, p.25). Moreover, it is common to find “castles, medieval settings, the haunting presence of mysterious elements, suspense and terror

conveyed by the presence of ghosts and supernatural creatures, and a taste for haunted ruins and disturbing atmosphere symbolising a return to the past” (Tomasino, 2021, p.25). Botting (1995, p.6) notes that it was during the second half of the eighteenth century when some themes were added to this genre: boundaries between opposing poles like light and dark, good and evil, reason and imagination. As the same author follows in the text (Botting, 1995, p.6-7), the sense of terror and fright resulted into one of the most important elements in Gothic fiction: the double.

The figure of the double is related to the Other in the sense of alienation, as Downie explains, “the double symbolises the alienation of the human subject” (2020, p.476). This figure meant the addition of physical and psychological issues. As Smith (2007, p.94) explains, the double element reminded him of the Freudian double seen as “a harbinger of death, as a liberator from censorship, and as a mode of repression”. Therefore, the double, makes the human being unsure of their identity and reality itself. This caused an alienation of the Self, since they were divided between what the individual wished to do, following their impulses, and what they were expected to do. Botting (1995, p.8) claims that the presence of the double is also seen as a threat to society, since it represents the desires of the people, bringing out the “most frightening sides of the inner conscience which could cause society to crumble down” (Tommasino, 2021, p. 28).

4.3.2. Presence of doppelgänger in literature

The presence of the double in literature coined a different name: doppelgänger, a term used by Jean-Paul Richter that referred to a person’s double. (Tommasino, 2021, p.28) This doppelgänger, according to Kristeva (1980, p.35), comes from our most hidden fears, and it could appear as a haunting character, questioning the existence of the self, causing as a consequence, a duality in the person in question. Moreover, as John Herdman (1990, p.14) assures, the doppelgänger makes the individual to confront their fears and repressions:

The Doppelgänger is a second self, or alter ego, which appears as a distinct and separate being apprehensive by the physical sense (or at least, by some of them), but exists in a dependent relation to the original. By ‘dependent’ we do not mean ‘subordinate’, for often the double comes to dominate, control, and usurp the functions of the subject; but rather that, qua double, it as its *raison d’être* in its relation to the original (Herdman, 1990, p.14).

The character in Gothic literature finds himself or herself within a confrontation with their double, and this could influence their life and fate. According to Rank (1925, p. 13-15), the idea of the double in literature has been presented as a shadow or a mirror image that reveals the “double in terms of likeness and as an admonition of death, or as a living rival in love and life”.

There are many examples of doppelgänger present in literature. One of the most famous novels with this Gothic motif is *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, by Robert Louis Stevenson (1886), a text that has Hyde as the evil double of the honorable Dr. Jekyll, who created Hyde in his laboratory in order to prove that “man is not truly one, but truly two” (Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, 1886 p. 49). Another well-known novel which includes the element of doppelgänger is *Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley (1818). This story shows how Victor Frankenstein creates a creature made of old body parts. The outcome results in a frightening double of himself.

The first and main feature to recognise the double in literature is the “ongoing rivalry between the double and its own original, the former being conceived as opposed to the latter and chasing it in a continuous competition which might lead to inevitably disastrous outcomes for one of the pair” (Tommasino, 2021, p. 30). This rivalry comes from the fact of these two characters sharing similar life experiences, such as in *Jane Eyre* with Jane and Bertha, as it will be described in the following section of this dissertation. As Tommasino (2021, p.31) shares Rutelli’s observations (1984, p.62-63), “the double is often able to invert and alter the relationship which relegates it to a subaltern creature”. In fact, the double “embodies the guilt and fears of the original and it has to be consequently hidden, opposed and destroyed. However, the final resolution of this double-original clash can be solved in the final recognition of a situation of balance and equality between these two opposing poles” (Diederich, 2014, p.105)

The Gothic element of the double or doppelgänger has the goal to give justice to society or to an individual through the finding of identity, value of cultures or social classes within the system. Moreover, as Zivkovic (2000, p.121-128) explains in the article, the double is seen as a way of reuniting with a lost side of the self, something that happens to Jane and Antoinette.

4.3.3. Finding the Self through the double in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*

The role of the Other being exemplified by the doppelgänger is usually seen as the dark side of a Self and it is thought that it needs to be destroyed in order for the Self to be free. However, in reality, it is through acceptance how one can find the Self. As Tommasino (2021,

p.33) explains it, the process of accepting oneself requires facing the Other. This is something that might be scary but it is necessary to get to know every side of ourselves in order to find our own identity. Both novels explore this doubleness.

At the end of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Bertha Mason, who is Mr. Rochester's Creole wife, is introduced. The strange thing about this character is that she has been locked in the attic since she arrived in England from the Caribbean. She has been the Other, as previously explained, due to racial and behavioural features. In this novel, Bertha's appearances are very few, even though her role is highly relevant to the plot of the story and Jane's discovery of the Self. Bertha Mason is thought to be "Jane's double who symbolises Victorian women's furious resistance to social prescriptions and patriarchal pressures" (Akman, 2019, p.41). In the same article, this author claims Bertha is:

Jane's other whose violent nature, uncontrolled passion, sexuality and blackness contrast sharply with Jane — a white English woman with moral convictions who is simply wayward, in a place to be the moral compass to the vagabond Mr. Rochester (Akman, 2019, p.41).

As Gilbert and Gubar (1979, p.359) explain, "Bertha has the task of representing Jane's dark double and her avatar from a psychological point of view, while she is and does what Jane does not dare to be and do in her life" (Tommasino, 2021, p.56). Despite the fact that both characters have their differences, there are also some similarities that are worth mentioning in order to understand the element of doppelgänger here. Firstly, their family contexts are similar in terms of alienation. Jane is forced to live with her mean aunt who excludes her from the family, as it can be appreciated at the beginning of the novel when she says "she really must exclude me from privileges intended only for contented, happy little children" (Brontë, 9). As for Antoinette, her mother passed away when she was very young and she was raised by her black nurse Christophine. She also had to deal with harsh relationships from her county fellows. Both of them had suffered during childhood and adolescence. Confinement is something that Jane and Antoinette have experienced in her lives, as if they were animals. The former, when she was still living with her aunt, and Antoinette, as Bertha Mason, when she moved to England until she could escape. There are some comments that labelled Antoinette and Jane as a mad animal or a monster.

At Thornfield Hall Jane begins to work as a governess and finds herself in a love relationship with her master Mr. Rochester. Here, she is trespassing the rules of Victorian society which bans marriage between two people from different social classes. Moreover,

Mr. Rochester acts as a Sultan in an Eastern fashion: in one of their trips to Millcote, Jane is urged by her husband-to-be to accept the high-priced gifts he has intended for her, consequently feeling like a female slave objectified by the powerful male gaze of her master (Tommasino, 2021, p. 59, from Joyce, 1993, p. 593).

The main difference between Jane and Antoinette lies in their attitudes towards the treatment they receive. In fact, Jane searches for her autonomy and independence as well as her self-determination, whereas Antoinette's attitude is passive and silent while taken to Thornfield Hall to be locked, without a place to belong, and with her name taken away from her. As a consequence, she was left with no identity at all.

As previously explained, it is through the reflection in the mirror that an individual recognises their Self, at the moment in which that person sees the Other. Therefore, when Mr. Rochester's relationship with his wife is discovered, the confrontation between the two protagonists, Bertha and Jane, take place:

In the deep shade, at the farther end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What is what, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it grovelled, 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 (Brontë, p. 310).

Bertha is described with the use of these words uttered by Jane as something that she is not, that is, as the Other. That is, as Tommasino explains:

Bertha embodies all the negative qualities which cannot be ascribed to Jane, consequently becoming her alter-ego, a double who dared to satisfy Jane's innermost impulses. The encounter with the Other causes the subject to disintegrate, thus leading to a moment of interior crisis, which is what leads Jane to flee Thornfield as soon as she discovers Bertha (2021, p. 63).

As it is explained in Diederich's text:

According to Marcus, rivalry moves the double to confront the original, as it aspires to obtain what its original has taken possession of. As far as Bertha is concerned, her antagonism aims at gaining back what Jane now enjoys, Rochester's love (p. 104-105).

Moreover, it is also thought that despite the fact that Jane wants to marry Rochester, she is not able to do this because of his being married. Therefore, as Tommasino (p.64) points out, both "female characters' fate proves to be indivisible, as Rochester appears to have conceived Jane as Bertha's replacement". Finally, the last fact that allows Jane to be free is Bertha's freedom itself. The life of Bertha ends when she sets Thornfield Hall on fire and she dies. This is seen as a "rebellious act which aims at gaining her true self back, ending an age of enslavement and confinement" (Tommasino, p. 64).

5. Limitations of the study

The main limitations found in the process of this research have been related to the vast amount of text and articles related to this topic which I did not have the time to read and include in this dissertation. Moreover, there were some other limitations regarding the access to certain articles which were closed or available only to users of the website.

6. Lines for future research

In the process of this research, the topic related to the subaltern and how these people are marginalised has caught my attention. This, together with the alienation of women in other contexts are some lines for future research. Moreover, I would be very happy if I could continue adding more information to this dissertation.

7. Conclusions

The search for identity is something that has been present in the life of every individual since the beginning of time. "Who are we?" is a question that needs to be answered. This is what Charlotte Brontë and Jean Rhys try to do with their protagonists Jane and Antoinette. They want them to find their Self, to have a voice.

The concept of the Other refers to the idea of not belonging, lacking the features that are common or accepted by society. The types of otherness could vary from racial, gender, or

class. In both novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the three types of otherness are present. Antoinette is a Creole woman who lives in the Caribbean and is suffering from the slavery-type of treatment from the colonists. Moreover, she is married Mr. Rochester, a man who does not love her, and who takes her to England, changes her name, leaving her with no identity at all. Furthermore, due to the fact that her mother has mental problems, she is also thought to be mad, and therefore, her husband locks her up in the attic and lives there until she escapes and dies. Jane, in a similar way, suffers this otherness since she was very young and sent to live with her mean aunt who treats her harshly. She finds herself as an outsider at school too, and when she is working as a governess. Jane, not as Antoinette, rebels and finds a way to react and disobey. For this reason, her becoming the Other is more prominent, since Victorian society bans non-submissive women. What Jane suffers from is gender and class otherness. However, she fights them and finds a way out. With the discovery of her dark double, Antoinette, a woman full of passion and all the things Jane has been repressing during her entire life, she discovers her Self.

Surpassing otherness through the double is what the two protagonists do. Jane and Antoinette eventually forge their identities when they meet with each other, that is, with their double or doppelgänger. Despite the fact of being recognised as opposites, they are, in fact, two sides of the same coin, they need each other to find their identity, to know who they are. This Gothic literary element, the doppelgänger, allows Antoinette to find freedom when she sets Thornfield Hall on fire. This is the moment when Jane can be herself, since her darkest side has died. Therefore, she finds herself being autonomous, independent, loved, and valued, victorious against the patriarchal society in which they were living.

Both authors, Charlotte Brontë and Jean Rhys succeeded in giving a voice to these two women, whose personal growth together with their roles as women in society have been well illustrated, and given the power to forge the Self by accepting their other side, their fears and passions, their dark Other.

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