

**Postcolonial Cultural Identity and the Caribbean White
Creole in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Phyllis Shand
Allfrey's *The Orchid House***

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Tutkielmassani tarkastelen, miten teokset *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) ja *The Orchid House* (1953) käsittelevät kulttuuri-identiteettiä henkilöhahmojen luonnissa sekä millaisia yhtäläisyyksiä ja eroja näissä esiintyy. Kulttuuri-identiteetti on yksi jälkikoloniaalisen kirjallisuudentutkimuksen keskeisimmistä teemoista. Tarkastelen tekstejä kahden keskeisen teeman kautta: nimet ja maisemakuvaukset. Molemmat teokset käyttävät näitä teemoja monipuolisesti eri identiteetin osa-alueiden kuvaamiseen. Tarkasteluni keskittyy pääasiassa teosten naispäähahmoihin, mutta käsittelen soveltuvilta osin myös muita henkilöhahmoja.

Monet Jean Rhysia ja Phyllis Shand Allfreyta tutkineet kirjallisuuskriitikot ovat olleet haluttomia näkemään teosten välillä olevan yhteyden. *Wide Sargasso Sea* intertekstuaalinen yhteys Charlotte Brontën teokseen *Jane Eyre* onkin usein jättänyt hienovaraisemmat intertekstuaaliset viittaukset varjoonsa. Viimeisimpien vuosien aikana on jälkikoloniaalisen kirjallisuudentutkimuksen saralla kuitenkin ollut havaittavissa yhä enemmän suhtautumista myös näihin intertekstuaalisiin viittauksiin.

Lähtökohtani teosten tarkasteluun on jälkikoloniaalinen kirjallisuudentutkimus ja ensisijaisia teoreettisia lähteitäni ovat muun muassa Patrick Hoganin ja Stuart Hallin käsitykset jälkikoloniaalisesta kulttuuri-identiteetistä. Tarkastelen pääasiallisesti Karibian alueen valkoisten kreolien kulttuuri-identiteettiä. Koska kummankin teoksen keskeisimmät henkilöhahmot ovat pääasiassa naisia, myös naisnäkökulma tulee esiin tutkielmassani.

Tutkielmastani käy ilmi, että teosten välillä on selkeä yhteys siinä, millaisia välineitä käytetään kulttuuri-identiteetin kuvaamiseen. Teokset liittyvät kiinteästi dominicalaiseen kirjallisuusperinteeseen, mutta yhteneväisyyksiä on havaittavissa siinä määrin, ettei niitä pystytä selittämään pelkästään samankaltaisella kulttuurisella taustalla.

Asiasanat

jälkikoloniaalinen kirjallisuudentutkimus, kulttuuri-identiteetti, nimet, luonto, Karibia, valkoinen kreoli, intertekstuaalisuus

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List of abbreviations

OH: Allfrey Phyllis Shand [1953] 1990. *The Orchid House*. London: Virago.

WSS: Rhys Jean [1966] 2001. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. London: Penguin.

1 Introduction

The concept of cultural identity can be considered a central theme in postcolonial literatures around the world. For the Caribbean, postcolonial cultural identity can be seen to be of especial importance due to the region's unique history as a habitat for very different kinds of immigrants and their varying cultures from different parts of the world. Links from the Caribbean literary tradition can thus be drawn to many different literary traditions around the world. Dominican author Jean Rhys's novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) naturally links to the English literary canon through its reference to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, as it tells the story of Bertha Mason, Mr. Rochester's mad first wife, who is locked up in the attic of Thornfield Hall. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys tells the story of a Jamaican-born white Creole woman called Antoinette Cosway who, at the end of a course of events leading to the loss of her sanity, ends up as Bertha Mason. With this recreation Rhys has given birth to one of the cornerstones of postcolonial literature, which, despite being a con-text to a canonical English novel, has gained canonical status in its own right.

In her book *Jean Rhys* (1998), Sylvie Maurel discusses the intertextuality between *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Jane Eyre* through the notion of indebtedness; Maurel states that by "acknowledging indebtedness to another woman writer, she may seek to inscribe her belonging to a female literary tradition or her contribution to the emergence of such tradition, but she also inscribes her difference" (Maurel 1998: 139). This difference is inscribed through the creation of a very different image of the first Mrs. Rochester than that portrayed by Brontë. These kinds of intertextual links are very commonly found in postcolonial literature, as the newly independent nations seek to create and strengthen a culture of their own. At times, however, the obvious intertextual links to a well-known canonical text can leave other more subtle references in their shadow.

The concept of cultural identity inherently includes the notion of belonging. Although the links between *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Jane Eyre* cannot be undermined, there are, however, other intertextual links in the novel that also tie it to the literary tradition of the Dominican woman writer, which have received significantly less attention. *Wide Sargasso Sea* also makes reference to another text from an author with a very similar background to that of Rhys, namely Phyllis Shand Allfrey's *The Orchid House* (1953). Maurel's notion of indebtedness can thus also be extended to the relationship between Rhys and Allfrey. In her indebtedness to Allfrey, however, Rhys does not inscribe difference but togetherness and belonging to the same cultural background. These intertextual links between two texts by postcolonial Dominican women writers is what I will be focusing on in my thesis.

The purpose of my thesis is to analyse the ways in which *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Orchid House* use the concept of cultural identity in character construction and what kinds of similarities and differences are present. Since the scope of this kind of analysis is far too wide for the purposes of my thesis, I have limited myself to examining the texts through two central themes that are present in both novels, namely the themes of names and landscape. I consider these themes to be particularly central for my analysis due to the diversity of their usage as tools for representing the various aspects of postcolonial cultural identity in both novels. In my analysis of names, in addition to discussing naming and renaming, I have also included the notions of non-naming as well as name-calling under this theme. For the part of landscape, I discuss the physical manifestation of nature as a tool for portraying cultural identity as well as emotions. I have, however, mostly limited my analysis to flora and not included the analysis of fauna under the scope of my thesis. The main focus of my analysis will be on the female protagonists of the novels, namely Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* as well as Stella, Joan and Natalie in *The Orchid House*. I will also briefly discuss some other characters, such as the male protagonists Rochester in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and the Master in *The Orchid House*, as well as the two black nannies Christophine and Lally respectively.

Wide Sargasso Sea is set in mid-19th century, and it tells the story of Antoinette Cosway, the daughter in a white Creole plantation owning family who, due to the Emancipation Act, have lost their wealth and status in the society. Part one of the novel is narrated by Antoinette and is a recollection of her childhood at the Coulibri estate in Jamaica. She is rejected by her mother, Annette, and becomes alienated from the rest of the society, taking solace in the nature surrounding her. Part two of the novel is set in Dominica and is mostly narrated by Rochester, who has just married Antoinette. They arrive at Granbois where they are to spend their honeymoon. During their time there, Rochester, who from the start feels like an outsider in the island's landscape, begins to despise Antoinette and the Caribbean. Antoinette begins to lose grip of her sanity and to slide towards alienation from her own self. In part three, Rochester has taken Antoinette to England and locked her in the attic of Thornfield Hall in the care of Grace Poole. In the end, she has completely lost her identity as Antoinette Cosway and has transformed into Bertha Mason, the madwoman in the attic (*WSS*: in passim).

Here I refer to the male protagonist of the novel as Rochester, which can be seen as problematic, as this character is actually never named in the novel; one only knows him to be Rochester through reference to *Jane Eyre*. Undoubtedly for the sake of simplicity, critics such as Loe (2007) and Madden (1995), whose work I will be discussing later, have adopted this name for Rhys's character as well, and this is also what I will be doing in this thesis, although I will discuss the problems of this in more detail in chapter 3.

The Orchid House is set in post World War I years in Dominica, and it also tells the story of a white Creole family. Three sisters – Stella, Joan and Natalie – who have all left their home island, come back to visit their parents in L'Aromatique, an old family estate. The novel is narrated by Lally, the sisters' black nurse, who has come back to the estate to care for the returning sisters' children during their stay. Several subplots ensue from the sisters' return to Dominica, many of which are closely entwined with connectedness to nature as well as different aspects of identity and personality. The arrival of the sisters acts as a catalyst to many changes to the lives of the people on the island as the past comes face to face with the present (*OH*: in passim).

As I already mentioned, both authors were born and raised on the island of Dominica, and they did have contact during their later years of exile in England; Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert explains in *Phyllis Shand Allfrey: A Caribbean Life* (1996) that the authors became friends in England in the 1930s and continued correspondence even after Allfrey returned to Dominica (Paravisini-Gebert 1996: 47-48). Despite this, many critics have been reluctant to see a connection between the works of Rhys and Allfrey, and most only permit Allfrey a passing comment when discussing Rhys's connection to the Caribbean. Even Elaine Campbell, who in her afterword to the 1990 reprint of *The Orchid House* lists a number of similarities between the novels as well as the authors' backgrounds, states that "coincidence and conjecture are all we can summon to support the hypothesis" (Campbell 1981: 239-240) that there would be a connection between them.

John Thieme, in his book *Postcolonial Con-Texts: Writing Back to the Canon* (2001), also discusses the reluctance of critics to see a connection between the works of these two authors and points out that nevertheless "the evidence for arguing the opposite case is persuasive" (Thieme 2001: 84) and continues by stating that, due to their personal connections, "it seems likely that her [Rhys's] Dominican friend's novel inspired her to situate the long central section of her novel in the island of her birth" (Thieme 2001: 85). Phyllis Lassner is also one of the critics who have recognised the connection between the two authors; in *Colonial Strangers: Women Writing the End of the British Empire* (2004), she states that Allfrey's novel "with its modern setting on the island of Dominica and experimental style, provides a necessary addition to the critical space Rhys occupies" (Lassner 2004: 161). She continues by saying that Allfrey's novel "anticipates Jean Rhys's deconstruction of the colonial gothic" (Lassner 2004: 164). It does seem that recent writings on the subject have begun to adopt a more favourable view towards this intertextuality.

I begin my discussion on the subject by a brief introduction to postcolonial literature in general, where I also explain some of the key terminology I will be using in my thesis.

After this I will devote a chapter for each of the two central themes of my analysis. Chapter 3 will be devoted to the theme of names. The use and non-use of names in both texts is significant in that it contributes to the construction and loss of identity in their characters. I will also discuss the concept of name-calling in the novels, as well as the naming of place, which is an issue closely linked to colonial history. In chapter 4, I will discuss the theme of landscape and how the use of landscape in the texts reflects the characters' identity as well as sympathy and antipathy towards the Caribbean. Characters' reactions to landscape also correlate with the relationships between the characters of the novels; a change in these reactions and feelings towards landscape anticipates a change in character relationships. All of these themes are, consequently, intertwined to some degree. Thus, reference to the different themes in all chapters cannot be avoided.

2 Postcolonial cultural identity in the Caribbean

Cultural identity has been one of the central concerns of postcolonial literary criticism. As the concept of cultural identity is a very complex one, attempting to fully define it within the scope of this thesis is certainly not possible. I will thus be concentrating on the aspects of cultural identity that are the most central to my topic. I will begin by explaining some of the key concepts in postcolonial literary criticism that relate to my topic, after which I will continue by briefly introducing concepts related to the Creole identity as well as the female identity, which are issues present in both of the novels I will be discussing in my analysis. Creoleness can have a major impact on a person's cultural identity, as one needs to negotiate aspects of sometimes very different cultures into one's identity. Gender also plays an important role in the formation of one's cultural identity, especially in the form of conforming or not conforming to the expectations other people in the society have for an individual.

Postcolonialism in itself is such a complex concept that defining it briefly is challenging. In *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (1998), Ania Loomba explains that one of the reasons for its complexity is the versatility of the nations and cultures categorised under the term: "decolonisation has spanned three centuries, ranging from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in the Americas, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, to the 1970s in the case of Angola and Mozambique" (Loomba 1998: 7-8). As Loomba points out, differences both between and within the cultures is what makes the issue complex (Loomba 1998: 10). With a category this wide-ranging, it is natural that there is versatility within it, and comprehensive definitions are not easy to make. Ella Shohat, in 'Notes on the "post-colonial"' (1992), also points out that postcolonialism "must be interrogated and contextualized historically, geopolitically, and culturally" (Shohat 1992: 111). For the purposes of this thesis, however, we need not consider this whole spectrum of postcolonial literary criticism, as my analysis is primarily concerned with Caribbean, more specifically Dominican, postcolonial literature.

As Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin explain in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* ([2002] 2005), the “development of national literatures and criticism is fundamental to the whole enterprise of post-colonial studies” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin [2002] 2005: 16). The Caribbean is a somewhat special area in terms of postcolonial literary criticism due to its hybrid nature and its unique history, as nearly the whole population of the West Indies are not native to the islands but have immigrated there from elsewhere, either voluntarily or involuntarily. I will explain this in more detail later in this chapter. The theoretical background for my analysis, then, will primarily be based on works focusing on the Caribbean. In the following sections I will explain the central terminology I will be using in my analysis as well as briefly introduce some of the central criticism in the field.

2.1 Aspects of postcolonial cultural identity

Postcolonial cultural identity is a complex issue that has given rise to much discussion and debate in the past decades, and in this section, I will briefly explain some of the central theory and terminology relating to the subject. Stuart Hall, in ‘Cultural identity and diaspora’ ([1990] 1998), describes two different aspects of cultural identity; firstly, cultural identity can be seen from the communal perspective, where individuals locate themselves in a shared culture, and secondly, it can be seen from the personal perspective, where individuals differentiate themselves from others around them (Hall [1990] 1998: 224-226). These two concurrent “vectors”, which Hall names “similarity and continuity” and “difference and rupture” (Hall [1990] 1998: 226), together define us as individuals and anchor the identity in its environment. Cultural identity, then, is affected by the location and the community we live in but it is not straightforwardly determined by it. Hall goes on to explain how the life histories of individuals guide and transform their identities: “identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past” (Hall [1990]

1998: 225). Therefore, an individual's cultural identity can be seen as a dialogue constructed from both the past and the present.

Bill Ashcroft, in *Post-Colonial Transformation* (2001), talks about creativity and its relationship to cultural identity; he states that imagination and creativity are important parts of the formation of cultural identity, and that it “does not exist outside representation” (Ashcroft 2001: 5). Representation here means that, through their actions, individuals are constantly making statements about who they are. This kind of creativity applies to different forms of art, but it can also be seen in the everyday lives of individuals and how the choices they make on a daily basis reflect their cultural identity. As Hall explains in his introduction to *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* ([1997] 2003), it “is by our use of things, and what we say, think and feel about them – how we represent them – that we *give them a meaning*” (Hall [1997] 2003: 3, original emphasis). In the colonial context, this aspect of creativity has been utilised by both the coloniser and the colonised: “the colonizer to position the colonized as marginal and inferior” and the “colonized peoples to empower themselves” (Ashcroft 2001: 5). Postcolonialism and postcolonial literatures can thus be seen as a power struggle between the coloniser and the colonised. In this power struggle, a division between self and other is inevitable; otherness, or alterity, has been one of the central concerns of postcolonial literary criticism.

As Loomba explains, this binary opposition of self and other has also received much criticism in the field, as it is not sufficient to describe the complexity of identities, and it “is undercut by the fact that there are enormous cultural and racial differences within each of these categories as well as cross-overs between them” (Loomba 1998: 105). The concept of cultural identity is too complex to be divided into such a simplistic juxtaposition. Much debate has risen from the question of how the concept of cultural identity should be described and divided in the postcolonial context. Below I have explained some terminology related to cultural identity and different forms of cultural integration that is mainly based on Patrick Colm Hogan's *Colonialism and Cultural Identity: Crises of Tradition in the Anglophone Literatures of India, Africa, and the*

Caribbean (2000). In his book, Hogan gives a detailed description of various different aspects of postcolonial – and especially Creole – cultural identity that I consider relevant to my purposes.

Hogan divides the concept of cultural identity into two subcategories, namely “practical identity” and “reflective identity” (Hogan 2000: 9). Practical identity contains our knowledge and experiences on how one should conduct oneself in society – knowledge of tradition and appropriateness – whereas reflective identity contains a personal hierarchy of values or what one believes to be important in life and how these relate to other matters of value. These two aspects of cultural identity relate closely to Hall’s categories of communal and personal vectors of identity; practical identity can be linked to Hall’s communal vector, where the individuals negotiate their identity in relation to the surrounding society, whereas reflective identity is close to Hall’s personal vector, where differentiation is sought from the communal experience. Hogan continues by pointing out that both these subcategories are influenced by the customs of the society we live in and our general upbringing (ibid.). Thus, even though one’s identity is highly personal and individual, it is also a product of one’s surroundings, which is what Hall also emphasised in his work. In the postcolonial context, one’s identity is also challenged by the presence of a conflicting cultural setting, which individuals respond to in very different ways. Hogan explains that these responses can include aspiration to return to one’s own roots, integrating with the other, prominent culture, or alternatively attempting to combine the two (Hogan 2000: 10). I will explain these processes further later in this chapter.

2.1.1 The geography of cultural identity

For Caribbean postcolonial cultural identity, place or sense of place can be considered to be of particular importance due to the hybrid nature of the region. In his book *An Intellectual History of the Caribbean*, Silvio Torres-Saillant (2006) explains that when European settlers first arrived in the Caribbean, the native inhabitants, the Caribs, were

made to work, and the harsh labour quickly diminished the native population. The consequent labour shortage was later removed by importing African slaves to work in the emerging plantations on the islands (Torres-Saillant 2006: 16). This resulted in that, excluding a diminished population of native Caribs – who, according to Patrick Baker in his *Centring the Periphery: Chaos, Order and the Ethnohistory of Dominica* (1994), took refuge on the island of Dominica (Baker 1994: 24) – all inhabitants of the Caribbean islands were immigrants, either voluntarily or involuntarily. This naturally has a significant impact on the cultural identities of the region's population.

The postcolonial world can be said to consist of different types of areas based on their relation to migrancy. Hogan divides this postcolonial cultural identity into different geographical regions: “metropolis”, which is the region of the coloniser, “indigenous region”, which is the region of the colonised, and the “region of contact”, which is indigenous to neither side but hosts the contact between these two different cultures (Hogan 2000: 4). This region of contact is where the cultural and social mixing of the two cultures takes place, which then creates new kinds of “contact cultures” (Hogan 2000: 6). This process can also be called creolisation, and it has been studied by numerous people in the field of postcolonialism, most notably by Edward Kamau Brathwaite. In *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* (1971), Brathwaite describes creolisation as “a way of seeing the society, not in terms of white and black, master and slave, in separate nuclear units, but as contributory parts of a whole” (Brathwaite 1971: 307). The descendants of English settlers in the Caribbean, or white Creoles, then, have infused parts of both the English culture and the indigenous culture of the colonised into their cultural identity. This results in that the Creole population falls in between the two cultures, creating a unique cultural identity separate from both.

As Hogan explains, in terms of these geographical regions, the Caribbean differs from many other postcolonial areas in that, in practice, the whole area can be considered a region of contact; the black population of the islands was forcefully brought there as slaves from Western Africa, which prevents them access to their indigenous region, and,

consequently, their indigenous culture (Hogan 2000: 6). Being forced to live in this region of contact strongly affects a person's cultural identity. As Hogan puts it, "under colonialism, in the region of contact, the conflicts are so strong and pervasive that they constitute a challenge to one's cultural identity, and thus one's personal identity" (Hogan 2000: 9). Thus, a person living in a region of contact is forced to create a new cultural identity that is based on both their own indigenous culture and the culture of the other inhabitants of that region of contact.

The female protagonists of both *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Antoinette) and *The Orchid House* (Stella, Joan and Natalie) were born and raised in this region of contact on the islands of Jamaica and Dominica respectively. Being of English descent and having been a part of the privileged classes, they fall under the category of white Creole. The cultural identity of a white Creole is a complex one, as they can, on the one hand, be seen to belong to the ranks of the coloniser. On the other hand, however, growing up in the Caribbean among the predominantly black population and not having even visited the colonial centre, all of these characters have integrated parts of the black Caribbean cultures into their cultural identities, as well. The landscape of their home islands has also become an integral part of their identity, and being removed from that landscape causes them great discomfort. This effect is especially strong for Antoinette and Stella, who feel like a part of them is missing when they are not in the Caribbean.

2.1.2 Cultural integration and hybridity

The cultural integration taking place in the region of contact can be further divided into different stages, which Hogan defines: orthodoxy, assimilation, syncretism and alienation (Hogan 2000: 10-17). Orthodoxy means the integration of one's own cultural traditions into one's identity. This can be either open-minded or unreflective integration (Hogan 2000: 10-11), meaning that the person can either openly embrace the culture and make it a genuine part of one's identity, or alternatively unreflectively and superficially take part in the culture. Assimilation, on the other hand, deals with the internalisation of

another culture's traditions into one's identity. Here, too, a distinction between open-minded assimilation and unreflective assimilation can be made, the latter of which can also be called mimeticism (Hogan 2000: 14-15). Syncretism refers to the adoption of traditions from both cultures and combining them to create a new culture based on the two (Hogan 2000: 16). Alienation, on the other hand, refers to becoming estranged from both cultures, which leads to a loss of identity (Hogan 2000: 17).

Homi Bhabha talks about mimeticism, or mimicry, in a bit more detail. In *The Location of Culture* ([1994] 1995), he explains that mimicry is the repetition of the behaviour of the coloniser, which he calls "a discourse at the crossroads" and "the representation of difference" (Bhabha [1994] 1995: 89). He continues to state that in mimicry "the representation of identity and meaning is rearticulated along the axis of metonymy" (Bhabha [1994] 1995: 90), a transfer of association, which refers to the same superficiality of mimicry that Hogan mentions. For Bhabha, the process of mimicry is the process of reauthorising the colonial power (Bhabha [1994] 1995: 91). Through this transfer of association, or "colonial doubling", the colonised create "a strategic displacement of value" (Bhabha [1994] 1995: 120) that helps in their fight against oppression by the colonial power. Bhabha thus sees mimicry as a positive concept and a tool that colonised peoples can use to differentiate themselves from the colonisers. Hogan, among others, criticises several aspects of how Bhabha deals with mimicry in his article. His most important objection is that Bhabha only addresses the matter from the perspective of the coloniser (Hogan 2000: 26). Bhabha thus sees mimicry only as the colonised mimicking the coloniser and not as a two-way process like Hogan.

To describe the recreation of cultural identity in the region of contact, postcolonial literary criticism has adopted the term hybridity. Hall explains that, especially in the Caribbean, due to it being a region of contact, identities are "constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference" (Hall [1990] 1998: 235). The concept of hybrid identity, then, is not a fixed one but in constant motion, and, as Hall puts it, "a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'" (Hall [1990] 1998: 225). A hybrid cultural identity cannot be solely defined through one's history, but

matters of similarity and difference in relation to the surrounding environment must also be taken into account; in Hogan's terms that is to say that both one's practical and reflective identity are affected. Arif Dirlik, in his article 'The postcolonial aura: Third world criticism in the age of global capitalism' (1994), also speaks for this notion by pointing out that, to a great degree, postcolonial literary criticism "conveniently ignores the part location in ideological and institutional structures plays in the resolution of contradictions presented by hybridity" (Dirlik 1994: 342). The experience of hybridity can thus be very different depending, for example, on the individual's ideology or social status.

Along similar lines to Hogan's division of cultural integration, as Robert Young explains in *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* ([1995] 2003), hybridity can also be further divided into "intentional" and unconscious, or "organic", hybridity (Young [1995] 2003: 20-21). This idea was originally coined by Mikhail Bakhtin to describe language; as he explains in *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* ([1981] 1988), Bakhtin's conception of hybridity, then, is "a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance ... between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor" (Bakhtin [1981] 1988: 358). The idea has subsequently been developed and adapted by postcolonial theorists to describe the different aspects of identity. Young continues by pointing out that organic hybridity as a concept is very similar to Brathwaite's creolisation in that the product of this process is genuine integration of elements from different cultures (Young [1995] 2003: 21). Intentional hybridity, however, creates hybrids with "a politicized setting of cultural differences against each other dialogically" (Young [1995] 2003: 22); that is to say that in intentional hybridity the elements of the different cultures are not fused into one's cultural identity, but the process is more politically than culturally driven. This definition of hybridity, then, would position closer to Bhabha's ideas on mimicry.

Both positive and negative aspects have been assigned to the concept of hybridity. On the one hand, hybridity can be seen as a richness of culture and intellect. Bhabha, for

example, believes that cultural hybridity “entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha [1994] 1995: 4). Bhabha has called this “the Third space”, which means that hybridity is a dialogue between two different cultures and “challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force” (Bhabha [1994] 1995: 37). In ‘The politics of literary postcoloniality’ (1995), Aijaz Ahmad criticises Bhabha’s claim in that he believes it to be too restricting a view to consider cultural hybrids to only encompass the “migrant *intellectual*” (Ahmad 1995: 13, original emphasis). Other definitions of cultural identity have taken its expanding a bit too far, as Ahmad explains, in making it “a generalised condition of postmodernity into which all contemporary cultures are now irretrievably ushered” (ibid.). The concept of cultural hybridity, then, has started to disintegrate to a degree in the past years. The major inclination in this discussion, however, still suggests that cultural hybridity can be considered a positive process.

On the other hand, hybridity can lead to what has been termed in-betweenness, which is a state of alienation, or loss of identity, as the process of hybridity has caused the individual to become an outsider in both cultures. Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a clear example of in-betweenness; as an impoverished white Creole, she is rejected by both the island’s black and white populations, leaving her alienated in between the two. Negotiating the effects of in-betweenness on one’s cultural identity can be an extremely difficult process for an individual, as belonging to a society is an integral part of who we are; being rejected by a community that has become fused into one’s identity can have a devastating effect on cultural identity. In the overall postcolonial context, in the case of Dominica it must be pointed out that its specific colonial history also makes the process of hybridisation even more complex; as for example Helen Carr points out in ‘‘Intemperate and unchaste’’: Jean Rhys and Caribbean Creole identity’ (2003), Dominica, until the early 19th century, was actually a French colony, and even in the time of Rhys and Allfrey, the island’s population was still predominantly French-speaking (Carr 2003: 42-43). Being part of the English-speaking minority thus makes the risk of alienation even greater in the hybridisation process.

2.2 Creole cultural identity

An important distinction that must be made in postcolonial cultural identity is that of colonised and coloniser identity as well as the aforementioned hybrid forms in between these two categories, such as white Creole. The justification of including white Creole literature under the definition of Caribbean has been of some debate in the field. As Carr explains, many critics in the 1970s were of the opinion that for example Rhys could not be considered a Caribbean writer because she was a white Creole. This was largely due to the concept of Caribbean literature being a very recent one, and most critics at that stage were not yet ready to accept white Creole literature into this category (Carr 2003: 40-41). Alison Donnell, in *Twentieth-Century Caribbean Literature: Critical Moments in Anglophone Literary History* (2006), also explains that, during what she calls “a defining moment in the construction of Caribbean literary canons” (Donnell 2006: 34), in addition to excluding the white Creole writer, these critical categorisations also had the tendency to exclude women writers (Donnell 2006: 33-34). More recent discussion, however, has been more sympathetic towards including both white Creole and women writers, as well, and, as I pointed out earlier, Rhys has since been considered to be a part of the canon of Caribbean literature.

Naturally, the white Creole experience is very different from that of the black Caribbean. Hogan explains that, in addition to the “dialectical tension necessarily produced by the history that defines postcolonization literature”, there are also similarities in the themes and structure that arise from this matter of identity (Hogan 2000: 3). Often postcolonial literature is associated closely with the literature of the oppressed, and thus it is important to remember that the literature of the oppressor can equally be considered postcolonial. Whether a person identifies with the oppressor or the oppressed, naturally, greatly affects their cultural identity. Although coloniser and colonised, and consequently white and black, can here be seen as binary opposites, this is not to say that variation could not also be found within these categories in addition to the hybrid cross-over categories between these two opposites. One of the central concerns of postcolonial

literary criticism has been to problematise these clear-cut categories, both within the actual terms as well as in the hybrid forms positioned in between them.

One of the main issues, as Hogan explains, for the coloniser living in the region of contact is that he/she “lives in constant interaction with a culture that questions and alters his/her practical identity” (Hogan 2000: 86). The influence, then, travels both ways. As I have explained above, being influenced by the local culture transforms the coloniser into a hybrid, which results in that the white Creole is not straightforwardly a member of either culture anymore. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the difference between the Creole and the coloniser is clearly visible in the characters of Antoinette and Rochester. In *The Orchid House*, all of the protagonists can be considered Creoles, and thus a similarly clear-cut comparison cannot be made. Comparisons can, however, be made from the experiences the sisters relate having while being away from their home island. In both novels, comparisons can also be made between white and black Creole characters. I will come back to this issue in chapters 3 and 4.

However, successfully integrating elements from two very different cultures is not always easy. Hogan explains that, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette’s Creole identity is made complex through her wishes to identify with both the white and the black communities around her (Hogan 2000: 95). She identifies strongly with her nanny Christophine and her childhood friend Tia, who are both black. On the other hand, she also seeks for attention from her mother. However, both Tia and her mother abandon her in the end, leaving Antoinette cast out from both sides. Christophine, who herself is an outsider in the Jamaican society due to being native to the island of Martinique, becomes a new mother figure for her. Relating to an in-betweeners serves only to intensify Antoinette’s feelings of in-betweenness and loss of identity as she struggles to find her place in a world that has rejected her.

Antoinette, like the sisters in *The Orchid House*, is further divided from the culture of the coloniser due to being white Creole, which inherently contains the notion of being a second generation immigrant; although descendent from white settlers, Antoinette has

never even visited England. Still, there is a visible British influence in the lives of all these characters. Helen Tiffin, in her article “‘Man fitting the landscape’: Nature, culture, and colonialism’ (2005), calls this influence being “ancestrally migrant” (Tiffin 2005: 199). She points out that these ancestrally migrant colonisers “bring with them the values, cultural memories, knowledge, and traditions of their former environments”, which necessarily “influences (through expectation, comparison, and contrast) their perceptions of the new” (Tiffin 2005: 200). Thus, even after several generations, there still exists a backdrop of the so-called original culture that greatly influences the cultural identity of the white Creole.

In *The Orchid House*, the sisters seem to have coped with integrating the elements of the different cultures somewhat better than Antoinette. Although the family still has a rather prestigious status on the island and most of their contacts, excluding servants, are white, the family seems to be well integrated in the society comprising mostly of black people. This can be considered to be largely due to the equalising efforts of Old Master, the sisters’ grandfather, who, as a physician on the island, made a point of treating all inhabitants regardless of skin colour or wealth, and attempted to make white visitors to the island understand the importance of this, as well (*OH*: 9). This brings us back to what I mentioned earlier that Hall has said about past also playing an important role in the construction of cultural identity; in *The Orchid House*, the mutual respect established during their years of wealth was enough to keep the family’s reputation intact even when they lost their money. For Antoinette, there was no respectful family history to help her in her cultural integration, as she was descendent from slave-owners.

Hogan also talks about the importance of wealth or lack thereof for the white Creole identity; he points out that “Antoinette lacks racial status – and thus can be repudiated by blacks and metropolitan whites alike – largely because she lacks economic status” (Hogan 2000: 98). Her status is further undermined when she gets married, as then “she becomes nothing, a statusless nonentity” (Hogan 2000: 99), and, Hogan continues, she “lacks a family to act on her behalf, just as she lacks a home, a nation, a race” (Hogan 2000: 100-101). The loss of identity for Antoinette is extreme: “every aspect of

reflective identity has been broken; every relation of practical identity has been cut” (Hogan 2000: 102). Here we have another reason for the much better situation of the sisters in *The Orchid House*; their severance from their cultural identity is not as extreme as that of Antoinette, and they still have the option of turning to family members for solace.

In both novels, there is a definitive lack of male influence for the female protagonists, especially in their childhood; Antoinette grows up alone with her mother and nanny because her father has abandoned them, whereas the sisters’ father has been taken from them by the war. The only male influence these women receive is through their husbands, which has had a varying impact on their identities. Despite this apparent lack of male influence, due to the patriarchal society that these characters live in, there still exists a backdrop of implied male influence. As these female characters within said patriarchal society are partly defined through their relationship to men, this lack of influence can be seen as detrimental to their societal status. One reason for Antoinette’s severe loss of status and identity can be said to be her time; *Wide Sargasso Sea* takes place earlier than *The Orchid House*, and in Antoinette’s time, the role of the woman was considerably more restricted than in the time of the sisters. In *The Orchid House*, Lally tells that Madam was particular of raising her daughters to be independent of men as she had had to be independent herself (*OH*: 11-12). Compared to Annette, Madam’s situation was also much more favourable, because her husband was not indefinitely gone, only absent for the duration of the war. In the following subsection, I will explain in more detail the female perspective in relation to these novels.

2.3 Female cultural identity and double colonisation

As my analysis of the novels will predominantly be concentrating on female characters, a brief account of some ideas and terminology of feminist literary theory is also relevant. Feminist literary criticism is a vast and complex field, and I will be concentrating on

aspects of it that can be linked to postcolonial literary criticism and are relevant to my analysis.

In her book *Three Types of Feminist Criticism and Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea*, Maria Olausson (1992) talks about three different subtypes of feminist criticism that can be found in *Wide Sargasso Sea*: liberal, socialist and black feminist criticism. Liberal feminism is primarily concerned with equal rights, and socialist feminism critiques the oppression of women through capitalist power structures, whereas black feminism primarily deals with the double oppression of being a black woman (Olausson 1992: 1-28). Olausson, however, takes a rather author-centric approach in her analysis, which somewhat restricts the validity of her work for my thesis. I will be using some of her central thoughts as a basis for this section without going into much detail.

From the perspective of liberal feminist criticism, Olausson discusses the significance of Rhys choosing to use Bertha Mason from *Jane Eyre* as the basis for her protagonist (Olausson 1992: 58). By doing this, Rhys places herself firmly in the continuum of female literary tradition. Her connection to Allfrey also places her in the Dominican female literary tradition. This brings us back to the notion of indebtedness that I discussed earlier. Olausson also brings up the significance of Rhys giving voice to a character that has previously been left without it, thus bringing to the surface one of liberal feminism's key concepts, namely looking below the surface and challenging what has been said (Olausson 1992: 59). This important aspect of feminist literary criticism is also discussed by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (2000). They point out that, historically, the male-dominated Western literary canon has had the tendency to create female characters that are "the paradigmatic polarities of angel and monster" and that women writers creating their own literary tradition "inevitably had consciously or unconsciously to reject the values and assumptions of the society that created these fearsome paradigms" (Gilbert and Gubar 2000: 76-77). Even though the character of Bertha Mason was in fact created by a woman writer, she is still a manifestation of the patriarchal Western society.

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin explain that feminist literary theory has utilised many of the same concepts as postcolonial literary theory; women can, in a way, also be seen as colonised, as they are silenced and marginalised by the men in their society (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2002: 172-173). Another central concept in the field of feminist literary criticism is that of double oppression. The double oppression of women can occur in many different forms; for example, socialist feminism and black feminism, which Olausson discusses, are both concerned with the notion of double oppression. This concept is also a significant issue in the field of postcolonial literary criticism through the notion of double colonisation, which refers to the double oppression of being a colonised woman. As Hogan puts it, the patriarchal society “can be as powerful and pure a force against identity as is colonialism” (Hogan 2000: 86). In *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Orchid House*, the ideas of black feminist criticism can be applied to the treatment of the characters of, for example, Christophine and Lally respectively, but with some modification, the same ideas can also be extended to cover the female protagonists of both novels. Even though neither Antoinette nor the sisters are black women, they can also be seen as doubly oppressed due to being white Creole women. For Antoinette, this double oppression is much clearer than for the sisters. In *The Orchid House*, double oppression is clearest for Joan, as she struggles to be taken seriously in the political sphere of Dominica. Joan, however, does not seem to be primarily oppressed because she is a white Creole but because she is seen as an outsider for leaving the island.

The idea of socialist feminist criticism also has an important connection to both of the novels due to the role that money plays in them. As I mentioned earlier, Antoinette’s, as well as the sisters’, in-betweenness is partly caused by the loss of wealth that drives them into a difficult situation. These women, then, are also oppressed by the capitalist society. Thus, there are various forms of oppression that can be directed at an individual that are not mutually exclusive. The most central forms of oppression in these two novels are the three I have mentioned in this section, namely colonial, patriarchal, and capitalist oppression. Naturally, these three categories are not wholly differentiated, and overlapping can be found within them. A good example of such an overlap is that, in

Wide Sargasso Sea, Antoinette's mother resolves the issue of loss of wealth by marrying a wealthy English gentleman and thus subjecting herself to both patriarchal and colonial oppression, or as Olausen puts it, by "fulfilling the female role she plays her part in preserving the patriarchal structures which in turn give her a relative security" (Olausen 1992: 103). Similarly, in *The Orchid House*, the family is able to regain possession of their old estate because Natalie marries a wealthy man, whom she inherits after his death.

Hogan explains that colonialists often associated the colonised culture with feminine characteristics, whereas the coloniser culture was associated with masculine features (Hogan 2000: 18). Hogan also makes a distinction between stages of integration for the part of gender identity, namely "orthodox masculinity and ... femininity", "degenerate masculinity and ... femininity", "synthesis of masculine and feminine properties", and "loss of gender identity" (Hogan 2000: 20-23). These different associations and stages of integrations can be seen in various forms in both novels. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, this division can clearly be seen in the characters of Antoinette and Rochester. Rochester, as an Englishman new to the colony, represents the colonial centre and its strength and masculinity; he despises everything about his surroundings in the Caribbean and also reflects this dislike onto Antoinette. Antoinette, then, is representative of the colonised culture, or the Caribbean, and its exotic wildness. Deanna Madden talks about this juxtaposition in her article 'Wild child, tropical flower, mad wife: Female identity in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*' (1995); she points out that Antoinette being a "product of this environment" is what makes her alien to Rochester (Madden 1995: 166). I will deal with the subject in more detail in chapter 4.

In *The Orchid House*, this division between the feminine colony and the masculine centre is not as straightforward as in *Wide Sargasso Sea*; the sisters seem to possess both feminine and masculine characteristics. Stella can be seen as the most feminine of the three, and she identifies strongly with the wilderness and exotic nature of the Dominican landscape. Joan and Natalie, however, possess strong masculine characteristics, as well. For Joan, masculinity most clearly comes out in her political activity, whereas Natalie

can be seen as masculine due to her way of treating men, which does not conform to the traditional female role.

Lassner discusses postcolonialism from the perspective of the white colonial woman; she states that many white colonial women writers “challenge assumptions about boundaries between colonial and postcolonial writing” (Lassner 2004: 2-3). She suggests that, in the case of the white colonial woman, a “double destabilization” is required: it is not possible to construct an opposition of “oppressor and victim” (Lassner 2004: 9). Instead, more “fluid and destabilized categories” are required (Lassner 2004: 10). Lassner suggests the use of an expanded concept of in-betweenness, where the white colonial woman becomes both the coloniser and the colonised; as second-generation settlers, they have a hybrid cultural identity, one part of which consists of the colonial settler’s identity and another part of the colonised culture (Lassner 2004: 10-11). She also draws a parallel to Hall’s ideas about cultural identity being a “matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being’” (Hall [1990] 1998: 225). Lassner explains that this kind of in-betweenness gives the white colonial woman writer, although they are at least partly members of the colonising empire, the ability to “see English political and social culture from a critical distance ... while sometimes struggling and then failing to find a place for themselves within it or outside” (Lassner 2004: 11-12).

This unique perspective on culture and identity can be found in both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Orchid House*, and this is what I will be focusing my analysis on. In the following chapters, I will explore the concept of cultural identity through two central themes: names and landscape.

3 ‘Names matter’: Names in the construction and loss of cultural identity

This new name or pseudonym is going to indicate the real you; it will concisely express what you turn yourself into, that which you become. By no means is it simply a convenient brand name, nor one partly belonging to somebody else. ... At first the half-deliberate, half-accidental acquisition – this *magic of a name* – may seem alien, ghostly alter ego only. But the chosen talisman has its own knowing way of being worn, and the individual it rightly fits and ever after designates will, through that form of words, inhabit space and populate the blank page.

(Lykiard 2000: 14, emphasis added)

This excerpt, from Alexis Lykiard’s book *Jean Rhys Revisited*, is actually about Jean Rhys herself in her mature years, but it could just as well refer to several of the characters in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, especially Antoinette, whose renaming certainly has a devastating effect on her life. Naming, renaming and non-naming as well as name-calling – the “magic of a name” that affects many sides of an individual’s identity – then, are important tools in the construction of identity in both Rhys’s and Allfrey’s characters. Names are used in many different ways in both texts, and almost all names, those of characters as well as those of places, seem to be the result of careful deliberation.

Historically, naming has been an important tool of colonial power; as Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin explain in *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* ([1998] 2001), during the process of mapping newly-found land, the colonisers named and renamed places, which can be seen as “a symbolic and literal act of mastery and control” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin [1998] 2001: 32). Discovering a place that is already inhabited and renaming it according to the coloniser’s wishes is a clear encroachment on the territory and culture of the colonised. In postcolonial literature, this tradition has been reversed; postcolonial authors use the tool of naming to their advantage to break the traditional power-relations.

In this chapter, I will discuss the use of these tools – naming, renaming, non-naming and name-calling – in the construction as well as loss of identity in the characters of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Orchid House* as well as explore how the choice of names links the texts to each other. I have divided the analysis of the use of these tools into three subsections, although there will be considerable overlapping between them. At the end of this chapter, I have also dedicated a subsection to the naming of place, which will also serve as a link to the following chapter discussing the use of landscape in the novels.

3.1 Naming and renaming

Both Rhys and Allfrey in their texts place great significance in names, those of characters as well as places. The novels have several characters that have the same names; Christophine is a good example of such naming. In both novels, Christophine is a servant in the family; in *Wide Sargasso Sea* she is Antoinette's nanny, whereas in *The Orchid House* she is the cook. In both novels, Christophine is also a person who is greatly valued by the family. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette is very fond of her nanny and turns to her in times of trouble. In *The Orchid House*, Christophine is not as visible a character as in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, but she seems to be the only person that the sisters want to be cooking their food; from time to time, the family would dismiss Christophine for having children out of wedlock, but this never lasted: "always when the new baby was old enough to crawl it used to crawl in our kitchen, and the children (my little white ones) would recover from their stomach-aches and bad appetites and everything would be the same again" (*OH*: 26). These dismissals, then, were merely a way to keep up appearances in the eyes of the society, as everyone in the family respected Christophine too much to actually lose her.

Baptiste and Godfrey are also names present in both texts. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, we only learn about Baptiste, who is one of the servants at Granbois, from Rochester's perspective, but he seems to think of Baptiste as one of the more intelligent and

agreeable servants (WSS: 41). In *The Orchid House*, Baptiste is Christophine's son and relatively well educated; with the help of Joan, he launches a campaign to found a labour union to help the poor on the island. The two characters named Baptiste, then, are also quite similar. The characters called Godfrey, on the other hand, do not have many similarities. In both novels, Godfrey is a minor character; in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, he is one of the servants at Coulibri, an elderly man, who is one of the few who decide to stay with the family even after the abolition of slavery. In *The Orchid House*, on the other hand, Godfrey is the name of the rich older gentleman that Natalie marries. Here, then, the only similarity seems to be their age.

Even more significantly, however, both authors use actual Dominican place names in their novels. Allfrey mentions places such as the Botanical Gardens in Roseau (*OH*: 7) and the Boiling Lake (*OH*: 89). Allfrey uses these place names to establish the setting of her novel on the island of Dominica. Rhys names the village next to Granbois Massacre (WSS: 36), which is a town near Roseau; thus, even though the island is never named in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, it can be understood that part two of the novel is set in Dominica. Place names from other Caribbean islands can also be found in both novels; for example, both Rhys and Allfrey mention a town called St Pierre in Martinique (WSS: 46, *OH*: 73), and *Wide Sargasso Sea* also uses Jamaican place names, such as Spanish Town (WSS: 3).

In addition to establishing connections, names carry many other types of symbolic meaning in the novels, as well. In *The Orchid House*, the girls play around with names as they try to decide what they want to call a puppy they had bought for themselves. Their father is just about to return from the war and they decide to leave the fate of the puppy's name up to him:

Miss Stella said: "I've thought of two names for him. One is Flanders and the other is Flounders. If Daddy wants to talk about the war, and seems proud of how he rushed around shooting down Germans and Turks, we'll call him Flanders. But if he is rather smashed up – you remember those telegrams, don't you, Joan, about being invalided home and all that? – well, if he is rather a wreck, we'll call the puppy Flounders." (*OH*: 15)

A bit later in the text Lally shows the puppy to the Master, as a gesture of good will and in order to “help to bring the Master out of himself and the bad war days and back to his family” (*OH*: 29), and tells him that the puppy’s name is Flanders. Even though the Master has clearly been traumatised by the war, Lally is, at this point, the only one who sees and accepts his true condition, when the rest of the family still wish to believe that everything could be as it was before the war. The Master certainly proves the naming a mistake very quickly, as he kills the puppy that is handed to him for comfort (*OH*: 33).

There is also questioning of the suitability of names in both texts. In *The Orchid House*, Lally disapproves of Stella naming her son Hel after his father Helmut; she is “ashamed that a child should have such a terrible name” (*OH*: 52). In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette recalls a boy from her childhood who was named Disastrous, despite the priest’s reluctance, because “his godmother thought it such a pretty word” (*WSS*: 83). In both these instances, for the black Caribbean population, the way the name sounds seems to be more important than its actual meaning, whereas for the white Creoles, the significance of tradition, in the form of heritage and prestige, is greater than the actual appearance of the name. This can be argued to be connected to the Caribbean tendency to the preference of using all senses in their descriptions, in contrast to the Western tendency to limit oneself to the use of visual elements. This is an issue I will come back to in chapter 4.

In her use of names, Lally has visibly assimilated some of the characteristics of the coloniser culture into her own and prefers to identify with these features; she discusses the traditional use of names on the island:

In this island we have a habit of calling rare things by common names: mountain cabbage was nothing less than the white heart of a palm-tree, sacrificed for the Master’s dinner. If old Majolie called Miss Stella by a common name, Christophine didn’t translate it to me: and I’ve always been above patois-speaking. (*OH*: 77)

Lally suggests here that using common names is a tradition of the colonised culture and that she deliberately goes against this tradition by choosing to “be above” such common speech. This also highlights the hybrid nature of Lally’s cultural identity, as she refuses,

in matters such as this one, to identify with the culture of the colonised, but she is still strongly aware of the superiority of the people she prefers to identify with: “I nearly said to the Ha-Ha, “Oh, hush!” – But I’m still in some ways a servant, so I withdrew” (*OH*: 205). Here Lally recognises a moment where she is tempted to cross the cultural boundary between herself and her employers but knowingly makes the choice not to. The refusal to use common Caribbean names also links to the colonisers’ tendency to rename as a part of the colonising process, which I will discuss in more detail in section 3.4.

Renaming is an especially significant theme in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The most pronounced example of its effects is Antoinette, whose renaming as Bertha has a devastating effect on her identity; by refusing to call her by her own name, Rochester makes Antoinette feel as though her identity was slipping away from her and thus she starts to slide towards insanity; Antoinette herself contemplates the matter when she is locked up in the attic of Thornfield Hall with Grace Poole, whom she despises:

Her name oughtn’t to be Grace. *Names matter*, like when he wouldn’t call me Antoinette, and I saw Antoinette drifting out of the window with her scents, her pretty clothes and her looking-glass. ... Now they have taken everything away. What am I doing in this place and who am I?

(*WSS*: 116, emphasis added)

Even though she did not approve of or identify with the name given to her by Rochester, the new name starts to slowly affect her identity, or, as Lykiard says in the excerpt I began this chapter with, the new identity “has its own knowing way of being worn” (Lykiard 2000: 14). Here, then, the names truly do matter, as through this renaming Antoinette eventually loses sight of her real identity and can no longer articulate who she is.

Rochester’s renaming of Antoinette also echoes the colonial practice of renaming slaves; as James Walvin explains in *Questioning Slavery* ([1996] 2003), slave-owners often changed their slaves’ names into non-African ones in order to gain control over them. Even though this was an unwelcome process for the slaves, they often grew accustomed to their new names and accepted them in the end (Walvin [1996] 2003: 52). Through

renaming Antoinette, Rochester thus asserts control over her; as Antoinette loses her will to fight and gradually accepts her new identity as Bertha, she simultaneously consents to Rochester's control over her and becomes a metaphorical slave to him. Similar symbolism is also present in the journey Antoinette takes with Rochester to England, as this can be considered a metaphor of the passage slaves made from their homeland to their new lives in the possession of their masters. I will come back to this issue in chapter 4.

Wolfgang Müller, in 'The intertextual status of Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*: Dependence on a Victorian classic and independence as a post-colonial novel' (2007), makes a similar point of Antoinette's renaming that also relates to the above-mentioned slave metaphor. Towards the end of part two, Rochester comes up with a nickname for Antoinette, namely "Marionette" (WSS: 99). As Müller explains, this nickname symbolises Rochester's control over Antoinette and the way he is pulling the strings of the doll that he is turning her into (Müller 2007: 72). A marionette, as any other kind of a doll, is something that can be controlled and owned, which is what Rochester wishes Antoinette to become; in the end, he is only interested in owning Antoinette and not letting anyone else have her, even though he did not truly want her himself: "she'll have no lover, for I don't want her and she'll see no other ... She's mad but *mine, mine*" (WSS: 108, original emphasis). Even though Rochester detests Antoinette at this point, she has become a part of his identity to an extent that makes him unwilling to give her up. At this point, Rochester is able to differentiate his wife from the surrounding landscape, which enables him to remove her from it; this is a point I will discuss in more detail in chapter 4.

In *The Orchid House*, renaming is not as central a theme as in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, but instances of it are still present. A good example of this is an instance where the process takes a very different form, as the object of renaming is not, in fact, a person but a cause. Joan and Baptiste are working to unite the poor, unemployed masses of the island by founding an organisation that would help them. There is discussion on what this organisation should be called, and Joan and Baptiste have different ideas on what a

suitable name would be. They first decide on Joan's suggestion of calling it an "association" (*OH*: 148), but Baptiste convinces her to change the name into "The Unemployed Labourers Union" (*ibid.*), because he believes this name to be more meaningful and inspiring: "These people won't come miles into town for an association." (*OH*: 149). The word union can thus be said to bear more significance as a name than the word association, part of which can be seen to relate to the word union linking more closely to the concept of uniting, which is what Joan and Baptiste are trying to achieve. A name, then, has a profound effect on the way in which people perceive the holder of that name, both in the case of people and causes.

3.2 Name-calling

Various forms of offensive name-calling are used in both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Orchid House* as quite a versatile tool. One of the most significant uses for it is the portrayal of power relations between groups, as a majority of the name-calling in both novels has a connection to racial issues. A very pertinent example of this can be found in part one of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, when Antoinette accounts a fight she had with her childhood friend, Tia, who is a black girl; Antoinette calls Tia a "cheating nigger" (*WSS*: 8), which provokes Tia to reply: "Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger" (*WSS*: 8). The black people in their town were also in the habit of calling Antoinette and her family "white cockroaches" (*WSS*: 7). Both these names refer to the white Creole family having lost their wealth, which has left them in a state of in-betweenness; they are accepted by neither the white nor the black community of the island and are not able to identify with either of them. During the fight, Antoinette attempts to assert her power over Tia through name-calling based on traditional power relations between the black and white communities; her family having lost their standing in the white community, however, she no longer has that power to assert.

Being called these names naturally has a strong effect on Antoinette's cultural identity, both practical and reflective. In part two, she tells about these feelings to Rochester, when she explains to him the meaning of a song they had heard one of the servants singing: "It was a song about a white cockroach. That's me. ... And I've heard English women call us white niggers. 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" (WSS: 63). Being torn between these two opposites both resistant to accepting her, she finds it difficult to negotiate the positioning of her own identity. As I already explained in chapter 2, this is related to the complex hybridity of the white Creole identity, as they fall between the categories of coloniser and colonised. Antoinette has trouble deciding which category she would like to belong to, and even if she was able to decide, getting accepted into that category would be difficult, as she has become an outcast to both sides of the society.

Antoinette's in-betweenness is vividly portrayed in a scene in part one, when she is walking alone to the convent school she is attending, and on the way she is bullied by two children calling her names and mocking her: "There were two of them, a boy and a girl. The boy was about fourteen and tall and big for his age, he had a white skin, a dull ugly white covered with freckles ... The girl was very black and wore no head handkerchief" (WSS: 26). Antoinette's in-betweenness in this scene is portrayed by the fact that of the two children bullying her one is white and one is black; the two cultures thus seem to be united in their mocking of the in-betweeners. Antoinette's in-betweenness necessarily leaves a void in her practical identity as well as is problematic for her reflective identity, as she struggles to understand where her own values lie.

In *The Orchid House*, Stella and Andrew discuss the issue of white Creole in-betweenness when talking about Stella's mother-in-law, who extends her stereotypes on the English to Stella's family: "'Well, are we?'" he asked. "And are we even to be considered English?'" (OH: 93). Being white Creoles, then, they feel unsure of which culture to identify with and are not certain whether Englishness in fact is a part of their cultural identity. For them, however, the issue does not seem to be as central as for Antoinette. A significant issue in Antoinette's trouble to find her place stems from the

fact that the people she identifies with also struggle with hybridity and in-betweenness; her mother Annette, like Antoinette, has been rejected by the society, and Christophine is shunned by the black community of the island because, like Annette, she was from Martinique: “she was not like the other women ... they would have nothing to do with her” (WSS: 5-6). The local women would help Christophine from time to time out of fear, as they believed her to be an obeah woman. Christophine’s status in the eyes of the black community, then, is actually better than Annette’s, because through fear she has gained their respect. As I already mentioned in chapter 2, the sisters in *The Orchid House* have a more favourable position in their society than Antoinette does in hers, which makes negotiating their hybrid identities considerably easier.

The use of name-calling to assert power is also strongly visible in *The Orchid House*; in this case, however, the white population has not lost their power over the black population as clearly as in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, even though the family has lost a significant amount of their wealth. This is apparent in the passage where Joan and Baptiste visit the office of the local newspaper, *Island Bugle*, in order to get started on building their labour union. Joan’s uncle, Marse Rufus, even though not agreeing with their cause, treats Joan somewhat respectfully during their visit, but ends up calling Baptiste a “foolish Nigger” (OH: 153). Baptiste also tells Joan that, due to his oppositional political ideas, he has been called names such as “Nigger agitator and founi rouge [French Patois for a type of ant]” (OH: 151). Naturally, paying more respect to Joan is not completely attributable to her being white, but also to her being a woman as well as actually being related to Marse Rufus, who does recognise the respect many people on the island still have for her family. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, similar condescending attitude towards a black man can be found in the conversation between old Cosway, Antoinette’s father, and his illegitimate son Daniel, whom the father does not wish to acknowledge: when Daniel confronts him about this, he refuses to call him by his name, instead calling him “what’s-your-name” (WSS: 77). This kind of name-calling – as well as simultaneous non-naming – can be seen as a form of power assertion by the coloniser against the colonised.

A slightly less gruesome form of power assertion through naming is exemplified by Natalie, who arrives on the island with a male companion, whom she calls “Ha-ha” (*OH*: 200). Natalie is not one to take her male companions very seriously; the man is described as “Miss Natalie’s new handsome automaton” (*ibid.*), one of the many she is used to entertaining, and quite apparently this one was chosen to accompany her to Dominica based on the fact that he owns a plane they were able to use to travel there. Natalie speaks of him rather condescendingly, which does not seem to be a problem for him. Here then, the power assertion is not between races or populations but between sexes. For Natalie, men are simply a convenience that she uses and discards at will. As I mentioned in chapter 2, this is a rather masculine characteristic in Natalie that goes against the traditional gender roles. She is able to have this kind of freedom largely due to having inherited a sizeable sum of money from her late husband.

In ““Slipping into the ha-ha”: Bawdy humor and body politics in Jane Austen’s novels”, Jill Heydt-Stevenson (2000) discusses the symbolism of the word ha-ha in the work of Jane Austen, and much of what she says can also be connected to the way in which Allfrey uses the word. Heydt-Stevenson explains that the word ha-ha refers to “a “sunk fence” that prevented livestock from crossing from the park into the garden, while also allowing the viewer to maintain the fiction that the grounds were seamlessly connected” (Heydt-Stevenson 2000: 311). In Jane Austen’s work, the word is used as a form of “provocative metaphor for understanding the radical power of Austen’s comic irreverence” (Heydt-Stevenson 2000: 311), as in Austen’s time it was not suitable for women to portray sexuality. Although Allfrey’s novel is set in a much later time, the same kind of sexual inappropriateness can be seen in Natalie’s behaviour. She flouts the traditional power relations of the male-dominated society by behaving in a seemingly masculine manner.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Christophine uses another condescending term of Antoinette and Rochester, which takes us back to power assertion between races; she calls them “*béké*” (*WSS*: 70, original emphasis), which is a Patois word for a white person. Antoinette’s in-betweenness, once again, becomes apparent when Christophine tries to explain to

Rochester the difference between him and Antoinette: “She is not *béké*, like you, but she is *béké*, and not like us either” (WSS: 100, original emphasis). Even though the word *béké* here is used similarly to the word nigger in the text, and it certainly is a condescending term, I do not feel that it achieves quite the same effect as the word nigger, mainly because of the tone in which it is used; Christophine cares deeply for Antoinette and is not really attempting to subordinate her, but is merely addressing the differences between herself and Antoinette as well as Antoinette and Rochester.

In addition to the assertion of power, name-calling is also used for other purposes in both novels. In *The Orchid House*, the girls make up nasty names of Mr. Lilipoulala, the tobacco merchant who supplies their father with drugs. The girls already disliked Mr. Lilipoulala when they were children, but as they grow older, through understanding of what Mr. Lilipoulala actually represents, they begin to detest him even more. Stella voices her detestation by calling him a “monster” and an “evil creature” (OH: 80); these words show that Stella is convinced that Mr. Lilipoulala is the main cause of the suffering of her father and consequently her whole family. Similarly, Majolie, an obeah woman and the nurse of Master Andrew’s daughter Roxelane, gets called “a snarly old bitch” (OH: 86) by Andrew after Stella claims that Majolie hates her. Here, however, a connection can be drawn to the way in which the word *béké* is used in *Wide Sargasso Sea*; although this does sound quite harsh, what Andrew really is saying is merely that Majolie feels very protective of her former protégée, Cornélie, whose happiness she believes Stella might be a threat to. The meaning behind this name-calling, then, is not as severe as it might seem to the reader.

Name-calling, then, is used for various purposes in both texts. There is a difference between how name-calling is used between individuals and between groups. When name-calling is used between groups, or individuals as representatives of a certain group, it is mostly a question of power assertion, thus more closely related to one’s practical identity. With individuals, however, name-calling is also used in a more positive way as a tool for protection, creating relationships and expressing solidarity, that is, more closely related to one’s reflective identity and personal values. Instances of

these more affectionate nicknames can be found in both texts as tools for constructing character relationships. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Christophine calls Antoinette “*doudou*” (WSS: 70, original emphasis), which is a Patois term of endearment. There is thus a special bond between the former nanny and her protégée, as there also is in *The Orchid House*; Lally’s bond with the oldest daughter, Stella, is especially strong and reciprocal, which is exemplified by Stella calling Lally “*darling*” (OH: 57). In both novels, these protégées see their nannies more as members of the family than as servants, which also becomes apparent from the way they are addressed.

However, Lally seems to be very careful in her use of names; even though she has a close and mother-like relationship to the sisters, she always calls them “*Miss*” (for example OH: 3). As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, Lally is very conscious not to cross the cultural boundary or upset the power relationship she believes to exist between herself and her employers, even when the family members express their feelings that Lally indeed is a part of the family. This kind of caution, on the other hand, cannot be found in the character of Christophine in *Wide Sargasso Sea*; Christophine does not like Rochester and she knowingly confronts him towards the end of part two of the novel. Lassner also discusses the significance of these relationships in both of these novels; she believes that one of the reasons for the close connection between the nurses and their protégées is to enable them to voice criticism. Lassner says that although “Lally is nowhere as defiant as Christophine, they both occupy similar critical positions (Lassner 2004: 172). Even though they are servants, both women are able to criticise their protégées, who are their superiors. The nannies, then, represent defiant colonial subjects that are rising against the imperial power, although this defiance manifests very differently in the two characters.

3.3 Non-naming

Both Rhys and Allfrey leave a significant character unnamed in their text; Rhys’s male protagonist, who we identify as Mr. Rochester through references to *Jane Eyre*, is never

really called such, but whenever he himself is not narrating, he is simply referred to as “he” (and, naturally, “I” in the sections narrated by him): “At last I said, ‘Christophine, he does not love me, I think he hates me” (WSS: 67). *Jane Eyre’s* Rochester’s intertextual presence is like a “ghostly alter ego”, in Lykiard’s words (Lykiard 2000: 14), that is clearly implied even in the complete absence of naming. Müller argues that he is left unnamed in order to call “his identity into doubt” (Müller 2007: 70). The character’s namelessness strengthens the feeling of unease and foreignness in his surroundings, as he struggles to come to terms with the new situation he is facing in his life. He has been thrust out of his comfort zone, and the supporting ties of his practical identity have been cut. Müller also continues that leaving him unnamed helps in differentiating the character from its inspiration, Mr. Rochester from *Jane Eyre* (ibid.). It can thus be argued that this non-naming of such a significant character is the author’s way of taking power away from the colonial male and giving it to the postcolonial female, but, in the end, this does not seem to be the case; even though the male protagonist has been left without a name, he has not been left without a voice. In fact, almost the entire section two of the novel is narrated by Rochester. Thieme also argues for this point; he says that Rhys has opted out of simply reversing the roles of the two characters compared to the original setting of *Jane Eyre*, but instead has given voice to them both, making them both appear as “victims rather than exploiters” (Thieme 2001: 78).

Gayatri Spivak also discusses the victimisation of Rochester; in ‘Three women’s texts and a critique of imperialism’ (1985), she points out that the reason why Rochester travels to the Caribbean and marries Antoinette is because his father has decided to leave all his inheritance to his first son, thus making Rochester “a victim of the patriarchal inheritance law of entailment” (Spivak 1985: 251). This becomes apparent in the letter Rochester is planning to send to his father after the wedding: “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” (WSS: 39). He continues that, by marrying Antoinette for money and acceptability, he has sold his soul (ibid.). Thus, in addition to being cut off from his practical identity, Rochester is also forced to act

against his reflective identity and the values around which he has built his cultural identity.

Spivak talks about Rochester's non-naming as a symbol of "the *loss* of the patronymic" (Spivak 1985: 252, original emphasis); his non-naming is thus symbolic of his loss of status in his father's eyes as the inferior son. This image is strengthened in the passage where Rochester withdraws to his dressing-room to finish the letter to his father:

There was a crude bookshelf made of three shingles strung together over the desk and I looked at the books, Byron's poems, novels by Sir Walter Scott, *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, some shabby brown volumes, and on the last shelf, *Life and Letters of ... The rest was eaten away*.

(WSS: 43, final emphasis added)

Similarly to the name of the person whose life this book is about, Rochester's name has been eaten away, and he is left to desperately attempt to gain back his status. Due to this loss of identity, then, Rochester's situation is not actually very different from that of Antoinette. What differentiates them, however, is Rochester's ability to gain some control and assert his power over Antoinette. This power assertion can be seen in terms of both colonial as well as patriarchal control, as Rochester is able to gain this control both through being an Englishman as well as Antoinette's husband.

In contrast to *Wide Sargasso Sea*, in *The Orchid House*, the male protagonist is named, but only on few occasions. The first time his name is mentioned is when Lally relates a discussion between him, his wife and his wife's brother, Marse Rufus, shortly after the Master has returned from the war: "Well, John, I'm glad to see that you came through unscathed too, but you're a bit haggard," said Marse Rufus, picking up a cocktail and swallowing it down" (OH: 38). The Master's name is also mentioned at the very end of the novel, as Mamselle Bosquet, the sisters' governess, addresses him by his first name in order to try and persuade him to find courage to take an important step in his life: "John! It's your last chance! Everything is finished! Make the effort!" (OH: 228). This non-naming, then, is not as complete as Rochester's non-naming in *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

A significant point that must be made of the non-naming of these two male characters is that despite their seeming namelessness, the reader is still able to name them both: the Master due to the mentioning of his name at a few points in the novel and Rochester through the intertextual links to *Jane Eyre*. Madam, on the other hand, is never called by her name in the text and we do not learn her name through any other context, either. This non-naming in *The Orchid House* can largely be attributed to the fact that the text is narrated by Lally, who is an employee in the house, and as such would not have the authority to address her employers as anything but the Master or Madam. Here, then, a clear racial boundary is visible, as the only people using the Master's name are white people that are relatively close to him.

In addition, this lack of naming greatly contributes to the feeling we get from the text of especially the Master's anonymity and certain lack of identity; he returns from the war completely changed, making it difficult for his family to reconnect with him and thus leaving him a shadow in the house of women; Stella talks of the only time she remembers ever having a meaningful discussion with her father: "He talked to me of his youth ... He must always have been very proud ... but when it came to the war, he would say no more" (*OH*: 107). When the sisters' return to the island as adults, Lally also notes that Stella calls the Master "father, as if she saw him from a distance" as well as "a ghost" (*OH*: 54). A visit from a strange man who claims to be the Master's friend only strengthens the feeling that the daughters do not really know who their father is anymore (*OH*: 99). This man is also left unnamed in the text, which further divides the two separate lives of the Master.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, non-naming is also used in a similar manner as a tool for depicting the differences between two cultures; at the end of part two, Rochester meets a nameless boy who is upset because Rochester refuses to take him to England: "at this moment the nameless boy leaned his head against the clove tree and sobbed. Loud heartbreaking sobs. I could have strangled him with pleasure" (*WSS*: 111). The nameless boy here symbolises mimicry – which I introduced in chapter 2 – the indistinct colonial subject wishing to assimilate into the dominant English culture. Rochester's growing

hatred towards his surroundings in the Caribbean becomes clear in his urge to strangle the crying boy. At this point, Rochester is ready to break all ties to the island and return to his old life in England.

Similarly to Rochester, the Master is also victimised. Lassner, however, draws a parallel between not the Master and Rochester but the Master and Antoinette; both the Master and Antoinette (or Bertha at this point) are confined in solitude, suppressed by the colonial power, the difference here being that the Master does this of his own choice (Lassner 2004: 164). The suppressing power in the Master's case is represented by Mr. Lilipoulala and in Antoinette's case by Rochester. There is, however, a significant difference between these two cases of suppression. In Antoinette's case, Rochester represents the colonial power that suppresses the colonial subject, whereas in the case of the Master, Mr. Lilipoulala actually represents what Lassner calls "the demonized colonial subject" (Lassner 2004: 165) who, by poisoning the Master, anticipates the imminent ruin of the Empire. Despite being a white Creole, then, the Master is seen as representing the coloniser. The sisters, especially Stella, are determined to eliminate this threat against their father, but ultimately, the shock of change is enough to send the Master on his last journey before he is able to be cured.

After the Master's departure, Lally says of L'Aromatique that it was "empty of men. It was a house of women, like the Maison Rose in the old days" (*OH*: 229). However, even though the house had not been physically empty of men between the Master's return from the war and this moment, I am inclined to say that it is spiritually empty for most of the duration of the novel; even though the Master, in principle, is the head of the household, he tends to shy away from human contact, reality even, and thus the house is run by the women in it. A similar situation can be seen in Antoinette's childhood, as Coulibri too was a house empty of men until Annette remarries. However, a significant difference in these two seemingly similar settings is the mother's ability and willingness to take control of the situation. As I mentioned in chapter 2, in her youth, Madam was quite adamant in raising her daughters to be independent of men: "[Madam] would not have it thought that her daughters could not stand alone at any time, just as she stood

alone all those years when the Master was fighting in the war, and afterwards. She would not have it thought that they needed *men* to be supporting them and caring for them” (*OH*: 11-12, original emphasis). Faced with the absence of her husband Madam merely becomes stronger, whereas Annette becomes introverted, which leads to the loss of her identity.

In *The Orchid House*, matters change, to some extent, when the Master meets Joan’s son Ned. Having this male companion in the house of women encourages the Master to confide in Ned, and he is able to talk about things he has kept secret from everyone else thus far. Most of what is known of the Master, is learnt through Ned:

“Grandad is frightened of machines. Do you know what, Lally? If he hears a car it makes him tremble. Didn’t you know?”

“No, Master Ned. All these years and I’ve never known. What more did your granddad tell you?” (*OH*: 189)

It seems that the Master is only able to confide in Ned because he feels that, as the head of the household, he is not allowed to show such weakness to the women around him. Having this information, however, could have proven extremely useful for them in their attempts to make the Master feel comfortable in his surroundings and to reacquaint him with his practical identity. Additionally, Ned is not a part of the Master’s old life on the island, which can be seen as one factor contributing to his ease around Ned; as the Master’s ties to his practical identity in the island culture and surroundings have been severed, it is very difficult for him to identify with his family any longer.

3.4 Naming place

Another issue intimately related to the topic of postcolonialism is that of naming place. As Torres-Saillant puts it, within the colonial context, “the West has invariably reserved for itself and systematically deployed its formidable power to denote by renaming peoples, realities, and sites even if they already bore names of their own” (Torres-Saillant 2006: 87). There are numerous examples of Europeanised place names in the Caribbean; a few that are mentioned in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Orchid House* are

Spanish Town, Massacre, the Boiling Lake, and St Pierre. When discovering new places around the world, then, the European settlers named locations as they progressed regardless of whether said places had already been named by their previous inhabitants.

From the perspective of the coloniser, this renaming of places can be seen as a tool for coping with confronting a strange new landscape. In his introduction to Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson and Edward Said's *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (1990), Seamus Deane explains that the "naming or renaming of a place, the naming or renaming of a race, a region, a person, is, like all acts of primordial nomination, an act of possession" (Deane 1990: 18). Thus, by naming – or renaming – a place, the coloniser asserts power over it. This naturally also links to what I discussed earlier of the colonisers' tendency to rename slaves to assert power over them. In both cases, the object of renaming is robbed of its previous aspect and made into something different.

At the same time the act of naming functions as an act of drawing boundaries between what is known and what is unknown; as Paul Carter explains in *The Road to Botany Bay: An Exploration of Landscape and History* ([1987] 2010), the drawing of these boundaries serves "the symbolic function of making a place that speaks, a place with a history" (Carter [1987] 2010: 155). For the coloniser, the wild and strange landscape is made more familiar through the act of naming it with a familiar name, which makes the landscape a representation of the coloniser's identity. This, then, creates a boundary – a frontier – between the newly named coloniser's area and the hostile wilderness. Carter continues by pointing out that the "rhetorical significance of the frontier is that it empties the beyond of any cultural significance even before it is subdued" (Carter [1987] 2010: 158). What is inside the boundary is thus what is of significance to the coloniser; beyond this frontier created by the act of colonisation is the periphery, the other to the coloniser's self.

From the perspective of the colonised this process naturally takes a completely different form. When the colonisers, through renaming places that have already been named by the people that were there before the colonisers' arrival, assert their power over the

colonised population, they consequently take power away from them, resulting in a loss of cultural identity. Landscape is an integral part of one's cultural identity, especially practical identity, and names given to places are naturally an integral part of that landscape. Removing one thus necessarily affects the other. Renaming a place with a colonial name removes the significance that the previous culture has placed on that name, which is what Carter means by emptying cultural significance. This encroachment of the landscape is especially clear in the coloniser's creation of gardens, which, in Tiffin's words, are a representation of the coloniser's "ancestral homescapes" (Tiffin 2005: 200). The garden was thus a way for the coloniser to bring a piece of their own landscape into the wilderness of the colony.

In *The Orchid House*, the Old Master is a clear example of this kind of naming and renaming the strange landscape one is surrounded by as well as creating a homescape of his own; he is passionate about the orchid house he has created and just as passionate about the names he has given his plants:

He would scoop out bits of log and fill the hollows with charcoal, then bind these queer roots with coconut fibre. Hours and hours he would spend there making beautiful labels, and goodness the number of names one spray might have, written in his small script: *Cattaleya crispa purpurea* – *Bee orchis or golden shower* – *Madonna or Eucharist or Holy Ghost orchid...*
(OH: 42, original emphasis)

The Old Master spends just as much time naming his beloved plants as he does maintaining them. For him, this is a means for creating order and control into the chaos surrounding him as well as bringing with him his homescape into these new surroundings in the form of a garden. I will discuss this matter in more detail in chapter 4.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rochester shows a similar tendency for requiring familiar names for the strange places he encounters; in the beginning of part two, the first question he asks when arriving on their honeymoon island is the village's name (WSS: 36). He also makes a note of instances where he uses a different word for something than Antoinette does: "Ah yes, fireflies in Jamaica, here they call a firefly *La belle*" (WSS: 47). This keeping track of different kinds of names is a way for Rochester to retain a sense of

control over his surroundings, as he feels that the landscape he is surrounded by is alien, even hostile.

Torres-Saillant makes another important point about the renamed places in the Caribbean, namely that he believes that no effort should be made to attempt to change them: “I doubt that one could come upon a sensible way of evading the problematic heritage of the Columbian discourse without seeming to dissolve the Caribbean’s inescapable – albeit painful – ties to the West” (Torres-Saillant 2006: 203). The point Torres-Saillant makes here is that simply removing these names does not change the history that brought them about in the first place, and that, through the history of their culture in the Caribbean, these Europeanised names have, in fact, become a part of their cultural identity, just as the Europeanised names given by slave-owners, in the end, were accepted by the slaves as their own.

As I have pointed out in this chapter, the names of both people and places are of significance in the postcolonial context. This naturally ties together with another theme of great significance, namely that of landscape and place in itself. In the following chapter, I will discuss the use of landscape as a tool in the construction of cultural identity in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Orchid House*.

4 ‘Beautiful secrecy’: Landscape in the portrayal of cultural identity and emotion

[The] term “landscape” both denotes and connotes more than simply “land” or “earth”. An observer, an attitude to land, a point of view are implied, such that “landscape” is necessarily a product of a combination of relationships between living beings and their surroundings. In the case of human beings, “landscape” becomes a form of interaction between people and their place, in large part a symbolic order expressed through representation. (Tiffin 2005: 199)

Landscape and its utilisation to symbolise different aspects of the narrative is one of the most central themes of both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Orchid House*. Through the use of landscape, the two texts not only ground themselves to the authors’ Dominican background but to the context of postcolonial literary tradition, as well. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin note that place and displacement are important concepts in the study of postcolonial literature, where emphasis is placed on “an effective identifying relationship between self and place” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2002: 8). Place (and consequently landscape), then, is an important element in the construction of one’s cultural identity, as it helps to anchor one’s existence to a location, a home. Having a place to call home is an important building block in an individual’s practical identity, as being part of a society presumes a location specific to said society. Thus, cultural identity, as well as the sense of belonging, is intimately connected to the notion of place. Displacement, on the other hand, is a concept related to removal from said place, or home. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin define displacement as a state where the “valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by *dislocation*” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2002: 9, original emphasis). Displacement can be a result of various different aspects, for example voluntary or involuntary immigration (ibid.).

In both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Orchid House*, landscape is used as a tool for the portrayal of many different aspects of cultural identity as well as emotion. One such use

of landscape and nature imagery in the novels is to portray nostalgia, which is also closely linked with the concept of displacement; nostalgic feelings towards a place occur when one is removed from it, voluntarily or involuntarily. If landscape has become an integral part of a person's identity, the portrayal of these nostalgic elements can be seen as a representation of this identity. Another use for landscape imagery in both texts is the development of an individual's cultural identity and personal reflection of the aspects of said identity; the various characters in the novels identify with their surroundings in different ways and define different aspects of their cultural identities through their relationship to landscape. In addition to being used to portray the characteristics and changes within an individual's cultural identity, landscape is also used in constructing the relationships between these characters. In this chapter, I will focus on these different uses of landscape in the two texts. As in chapter 3, I have divided the themes into separate subsections, although there will again be some overlapping between them. I will begin by briefly discussing matters related to the nostalgic use of landscape, after which I will continue with the other themes relating more intimately to the notion of cultural identity.

4.1 Nostalgia

The feeling of nostalgia towards the Caribbean and its nature is very prominent in both novels, and landscape is the most significant tool used for the portrayal of these nostalgic elements. In *The Orchid House* it is very clear that the novel takes place in Dominica, as Allfrey uses plenty of actual place names from the island. Part one of *Wide Sargasso Sea* is set in Jamaica, whereas part two, like *The Orchid House*, is set in Dominica. Rhys does not straightforwardly name Dominica as the place of setting for part two, but instead it is merely named by Rochester as "one of the Windward Islands" (WSS: 36-37). We do also learn that the name of the village located near Granbois is Massacre (WSS: 36), which is the name of an actual town in Dominica.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, most of the nostalgic elements can be found in part one, which is an account of Antoinette's childhood memories. A good example of this is when she describes the garden of Coulibri, the house she grew up in:

Our garden was large and beautiful as that garden in the Bible – the tree of life grew there. But it had gone wild. The paths were overgrown and a smell of dead flowers mixed with the fresh living smell. Underneath the tree ferns, tall as forest tree ferns, the light was green. (WSS: 4)

She goes on to describe the shapes, colours and scents of the orchids growing in the garden in great detail. This kind of attention to detail in the depiction of landscape is present throughout *Wide Sargasso Sea* and is especially characteristic for nostalgic use of landscape. The same kind of attention to detail can also be found in *The Orchid House*. In both novels, these descriptions are not limited to what can be seen in the landscape, but they actually incorporate all five senses through sounds, smells, tastes and even textures:

Through the green jalousie-blinds of the downstairs dining-room we could see slits of sunlight and we could hear all the sounds and smell all the smells of the island. When the wind came from the bay we could smell the newly-landed cargo at the customs, or the strong fresh perfume of lime-oil and crated oranges waiting to be shipped to New York. (OH: 16)

A bamboo spout jutted from the cliff, the water coming from it was silver blue. She dismounted quickly, picked a large shamrock-shaped leaf to make a cup, and drank. ... It was cold, pure and sweet, a beautiful colour against the thick green leaf. (WSS: 40)

Smells seem to bear special significance in Allfrey's descriptions of the Dominican landscape; even the name of the estate the text focuses on – L'Aromatique (aromatic) – tells of the importance of smells to Allfrey's characters. Many other place names in both texts have similar connections to landscape; Antoinette and Rochester spend their honeymoon in Granbois (high woods), and Master Andrew in *The Orchid House* lives in Petit Cul-de-Sac (small cul-de-sac).

Ashcroft sees the use of different senses in the depiction of landscape as a particularly postcolonial implement; he points out that the overpowering inclination towards the visual is a characteristic of the Western culture, and thus using different senses in the expression of their creativity, the postcolonial authors are able to differentiate

themselves from their suppressors (Ashcroft 2001: 127). Incorporating all five senses into the reading experience gives the texts a feel of otherness that is central to postcolonial writing. The use of these other senses can also be seen as a form of empowerment for the suppressed colonial subject; a prominent example of this can be found in part three of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, when Antoinette has been locked up in the attic of Thornfield Hall, and all she has left of her old life is a red dress. On this dress she can smell the scents of the Caribbean:

The scent that came from the dress was very faint at first, then it grew stronger. The smell of vetiver and frangipani, of cinnamon and dust and lime trees when they are flowering. The smell of the sun and the smell of the rain.
(WSS: 120)

Rochester has thus been able to remove Antoinette from her landscape, but he has not been able to take away the scent of the Caribbean, which is her one way of still clinging to the remnants of her old identity in the attic.

Like Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the girls in *The Orchid House* also show great emotion and attachment to the land in their depiction of landscape. Stella is especially passionate about the Dominican nature and enjoys its beauty when she returns to the island that had remained in her dreams during her many years of absence:

Treading the black damp earth of the bridle-path, brushed by ferns and wild begonias, experiencing the fleet glimpse of a ramier flying from the forest floor through branches into the Prussian blue sky, it was impossible not to look and look and drink it in like one who had long been thirsty. *It is more beautiful than a dream, for in dreams you cannot smell this divine spiciness, you can't stand in a mist of aromatic warmth ... you cannot drown your eyes in a cobalt sea, a sea with the blinding gold of the sun for a boundary!*
(OH: 64, original emphasis)

Here Stella's nostalgic feelings and longing for the Dominican landscape become apparent, as she describes in great detail the familiar landscape that she is now able to return to. Nature and landscape are the first thing the girls see when they return to their home island and the first thing they have been wanting to see: "“I came back for this,” murmured Stella, savouring paradise, feeling for a few moments divinely happy, craving nothing more” (OH: 85). Landscape, then, is clearly an integral part of their cultural identity, and being removed from that landscape has left them feeling like a part of them

is missing; being reunited with that part of them thus becomes a tremendous source of joy.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the nostalgia and longing for the Caribbean also comes across most clearly in the descriptions of landscape: “I can remember every second of that morning, if I shut my eyes I can see the deep blue colour of the sky and the mango leaves, the pink and red hibiscus” (WSS: 74). When Antoinette remembers her homeland, what she remembers is the landscape. Allfrey also recognises this in Rhys’s writing; in 1967 she wrote a review of *Wide Sargasso Sea* in the *Star*, stating that she most enjoyed the sections set in Dominica because of their “exquisite nightmare of cruelty, mésalliance, and the beauty of natural surroundings” (Paravisini-Gebert 1996: 244). However, there is also another side to Antoinette’s reminiscing of the Caribbean landscape; she continues her memory by saying that “now I see everything still, fixed for ever like the colours in a stained-glass window” (WSS: 74). This stillness of her memory exemplifies what John Su has argued in ““Once I would have gone back... but not any longer”: Nostalgia and narrative ethics in *Wide Sargasso Sea*’ (2003); according to him, Rhys also uses nostalgia in order to portray the suffering of her protagonist. In her memories, Antoinette is wishing to “return to lost and nonexistent places” (Su 2003: 159). As she knows it is no longer possible to return to the place of her nostalgic daydreams, her memories have fixed the landscape to correspond with her most beautiful recollection of it.

4.2 Personal reflection

The construction of identity is perhaps the most significant use for landscape in both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Orchid House*; many of the main characters of both texts reflect on their selves through the landscape surrounding them, regardless of whether it is a positive or a negative reflection. This reflection extends to both personal characteristics as well as their development throughout the characters’ lives. In the

following section, I will focus on this use of landscape in personal reflection of characters in the two texts.

In his article ‘Landscape and character in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*’ (2007), Thomas Loe talks about *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a narrative that makes significant use of landscape in building the identities of its characters. He says that a distinguishing feature in the novel is that the “perceptions of landscape go far beyond the dimension of simply framing the spatial parameters of their narratives – they give us insight into their innermost cognitive processes that are crucial to their identity and their own understanding of their senses of self.” (Loe 2007: 50). Landscape, then, is not merely a tool for geographical grounding in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, but it is also rooted deep in the characters’ identities. These textual characteristics can also be extended to *The Orchid House*, where especially the sisters’ personalities are described and compared through the use of landscape.

Loe also states that, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, “we draw our conclusions about character motivation from ... the intensity of the characters’ relationships to the land”, and he continues to point out that “Antoinette’s grasp of landscape is almost always immediate and highly personal” (Loe 2007: 53). In the section of part two that is narrated by Antoinette, she verbalises this personal connection to the land: “The sky was dark blue through the dark green mango leaves, and I thought, ‘This is my place and this is where I belong and this is where I wish to stay.’” (WSS: 67). Antoinette feels that her home island is the only place where she can feel whole, as the landscape is such a vital part of her identity. What she says next, however, foreshadows her imminent departure from that landscape: “Then I thought, ‘What a beautiful tree, but it is too high up there for mangoes and it may never bear fruit,’ and I thought of lying alone in my bed with the soft silk cotton mattress and fine sheets, listening” (WSS: 67). A bit later talks more about the bed and the cold English house she sees to be in her future (WSS: 69). She identifies with the fruitless mango tree in her loneliness and foresees this same destiny to be in her future.

Through the use of landscape, we also learn about Antoinette's childhood, as she already has an intimate relationship with the surrounding nature growing up in Coulibri. In her childhood, Antoinette finds solace in nature when she feels the people in her life have turned against her:

I went to parts of Coulibri that I had not seen, where there was no road, no path, no track. And if the razor grass cut my legs and arms I would think 'It's better than people.' ... Watching the red and yellow flowers in the sun thinking of nothing, it was as if a door opened and I was somewhere else, something else. Not myself any longer. (WSS: 11)

Antoinette feels that the people around her are hostile towards her, and thus she prefers to turn to landscape for comfort instead of turning to family members or friends. Even at the house, the moss-covered softness of the garden wall was her place of safety: "When I was safely home I sat close to the old wall at the end of the garden. It was covered with green moss soft as velvet and I never wanted to move again" (WSS: 7). The same garden is where she hides and eavesdrops on the visitors who speak ill of her mother when "she was not listening and they did not guess I was" (WSS: 11).

In chapter 2, I discussed Hogan's ideas on Antoinette's cultural identity; he points out that all ties in Antoinette's practical identity are severed, leaving her alienated (Hogan 2000: 102). Due to her alienation, landscape has replaced society in Antoinette's practical identity; when she recollects her childhood in Coulibri, she says that she and her mother "were alone in the most beautiful place in the world" (WSS: 83). She also tells Rochester that the strangeness of landscape is what attracts her to it: "It has nothing to do with either of us. That is why you are afraid of it, because it is something else. I found that out long ago when I was a child. I loved it because I had nothing else to love" (WSS: 82). Unlike Rochester, then, Antoinette has chosen to embrace the wildness of the Caribbean landscape and make it an integral part of her identity. This is also one of the reasons why Rochester is able to cause Antoinette to lose her identity; she blames him for ruining the Caribbean landscape for her: "I loved this place and you have made it into a place I hate. I used to think that if everything else went out of my life I would still have this, and now you have spoilt it" (WSS: 95). Rochester, then, causes the

disintegration of Antoinette's practical identity, leaving her feeling lost and alone, which is what allows Bertha to take over in her reflective identity.

In *The Orchid House*, Baptiste also ruins landscape for Joan – albeit on a somewhat smaller scale than what Rochester does to Antoinette; Joan recollects her childhood memories of the Botanical Gardens when she revisits them in her adult years: ““This is the corner of the island where I was always happy,” Joan said. “I played here every afternoon with my sisters, and with Andrew.”” (OH: 146). Joan, then, found solace in the more controlled and tamed landscape of the garden, in contrast to Antoinette preferring the wild landscape of the island. When Baptiste explains to Joan that the government had cut down trees in the Botanical Gardens, she thinks that he “had spoiled the gardens for her” (OH: 148). Nevertheless, as the gardens were only a small fraction of her practical identity and had not replaced other parts of it, Joan recovers from her shock quite easily. In fact, experiencing this shock only makes her more determined in her political agenda.

Similarly to Antoinette, the sisters in *The Orchid House* also feel very much at home in the Caribbean landscape, as can be seen from Joan's recollection of her childhood memories of the garden. As Lassner puts it, the novel shows that “Dominica's colonial subjectivity has created identities that are felt by the colonizer and colonized as theirs, as that which they claim for themselves as having inherited and experienced that history” (Lassner 2004: 174). Being white Creoles, and thus settlers in Dominica, does not make the sisters any less Dominican; even though their ancestors come from England, they think of Dominica as their home and leaving Dominica as exile. As I already pointed out in chapter 2, it is important to remember that the coloniser, as well as the hybrid Creole, is as much a part of the postcolonial world as are the colonised. This belonging is very clearly visible in the sisters' attachment to the Caribbean landscape, as it is an integral part of their cultural identity.

In *The Orchid House*, there is a difference to the way in which the sisters experience the landscape around them. Joan comments on the differences between her and her sister

after seeing a sight that stirred her emotions, namely a tiny humming-bird drinking from a hibiscus flower outside the orchid house:

“For Stella,” she said, “it was the *hugeness* of beauty and force which drew her – the mountains, the great trees, the violent torrents. But for me it is these marvellous *small* things, their amazing vividness. I could give up all the grandeur in the world for a thing like that humming-bird. It was worth crossing an ocean or two to see just that.” (OH: 161, emphasis added)

Even though both these women have a tremendous love and respect for the landscape of their home island and see it as an integral part of their identity, they do perceive it in different ways; landscape is one of the most central tools used in the novel to portray these differences in identity. As Joan explains in the above excerpt, Stella’s love for the landscape manifests itself as passion and strong feelings towards the power and wildness of the nature surrounding her, or the hugeness of it, whereas Joan enjoys the minute details and subdued wonders that she encounters; in this respect, then, Stella’s experience of landscape falls closer to that of Antoinette than that of Joan, as Antoinette, too, identifies more with the wilder side of the Caribbean nature.

Natalie has adopted a very different view to landscape from her two sisters; although she, too, acknowledges the beauty of the nature surrounding her, she is quite indifferent towards it. In her practical identity people play a much larger role. When she and Lally walk through the forest to go visit Andrew, she only stops to take a look around her when she is forced to do so by Lally, who needs to sit down and rest during their walk:

We sat together on a fallen flamboyant log. That youngest girl took a sharp stick and started digging away at the soft rotten part, causing wood-ants to come pouring out. “To think,” she said, “that these marauders always choose the most beautiful trees to undermine. Just look at the devils!” (OH: 206)

For Natalie, everything, including the landscape, seems to be a curious game for her to be amused by. Her respect for it, however, does come across when she points out that she finds the log the two are sitting on beautiful. The clearest difference between Natalie’s and her sisters’ reaction to landscape, then, is the level of emotion portrayed; Natalie does not express her feelings towards the landscape as clearly as her sisters do, as it does not constitute as large a part of her cultural identity.

Not only differences in the identities of characters but also changes within the identity of a single character are portrayed with the use of landscape imagery in both novels. In the previous chapter, I discussed the changes that naming can have on one's identity; similarly, a change in landscape can affect the way a person sees oneself. In part two of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette considers her future life in England and what she thinks it will be like:

I will be a different person when I live in England and different things will happen to me. ... I must know more than I know already. For I know that house where I will be cold and not belonging, the bed I shall lie in has red curtains. ... In that bed I will dream the end of my dream. But my dream had nothing to do with England and I must not think like this, I must remember about chandeliers and dancing, about swans and roses and snow. (WSS: 68-69)

Antoinette acknowledges that living in different surroundings will affect the way she perceives herself; she also acknowledges that the England of her imagination is not what England is really like, and she is trying to force herself to see more than the negative in this change of landscape. Antoinette is thus attempting to assimilate the English landscape into her cultural identity alongside the Caribbean landscape. She, however, finds this task difficult, as the Caribbean landscape has such a vital role in her identity.

In part three, in which Antoinette is already in England and living in the attic of Thornfield Hall, she reflects on the reality by which she finds herself surrounded. At night, when the rest of the house is sleeping, she slips out of her attic room and wanders around the dark and empty house, which she believes is made out of cardboard and not a real house at all: "As I walk along the passages I wish I could see what is behind the cardboard. They tell me I am in England but I don't believe them. We lost our way to England" (WSS: 117). Antoinette finds it difficult to negotiate her new surroundings to the image of England she has constructed in her imagination. Müller calls this "a blind spot in her geography" (Müller 2007: 74). Antoinette contrasts the colourless cardboard reality she sees around her with the England she experienced when, at one time, she was let out of her attic room to walk out in the garden surrounding the manor: "That afternoon we went to England. There was grass and olive-green water and tall trees

looking into the water. This, I thought, is England. If I could be here I could be well again and the sound in my head would stop” (WSS: 119). Antoinette attributes her illness (or madness, as Rochester would call it) to the strangeness of her surroundings; being cut off from nature makes her feel lost and vulnerable, and she feels that the colours of a natural landscape would be able to cure her. Including this landscape of the English garden in her cultural identity is easier for Antoinette, because it is closer to the picture she has created of England in her mind and it thus corresponds better with her reflective identity.

Leaving her home island behind has changed Antoinette’s identity drastically; it is almost as if Antoinette had been left behind in the Caribbean, and when she reaches England, she had become Bertha. Here, then, we see a similar passage that I already discussed in chapter 3, where Antoinette, as a metaphorical slave, is removed from her previous identity and forced to adopt a new one. These different names (and identities) can, then, be seen to be linked to the different geographical locations (or landscapes) of her life. As I mentioned earlier in section 4.1, the only aspect of her previous, Caribbean, identity that she has left in the attic of Thornfield Hall is the red dress on which she can still smell the scents of the island: “I held the dress in my hand wondering if they had done the last and worst thing. If they had *changed* it when I wasn’t looking. If they had changed it and it wasn’t my dress at all – but how could they get the scent?” (WSS: 120, original emphasis). By this point, Antoinette is so unsure of her identity that she begins to suspect even the last remaining pieces of it. As the dress, and the scent in the dress, is a part of the cultural identity she has been severed from, Antoinette has trouble believing that it actually exists. A similar disbelief is present in Antoinette’s relationship with her mother after Antoinette has been forced to leave her childhood home in Coulibri. I will discuss this in more detail in section 4.3.

In *The Orchid House*, changes in landscape are used to portray the different phases of Stella’s life, as she moves from one location to another. Stella describes her life in the North-American countryside to Lally, who has never been outside Dominica and thus has never seen snow:

Oh Lally, it was a fair white world we looked out on! Everything was frosted over with feathery crystals. It was very lovely. And my life had changed colour three times: the green world of this island, the straight grey world of New York, and now the white world of Maine in winter.

(OH: 57)

Stella associates each of the places she has lived in with a different colour: green for Dominica, grey for New York and white for Maine. She also calls New York straight, which is in contrast with the erratic shapes of the Dominican wilderness. Although she does find positive in all the three worlds she has lived in, she does identify most with the bright landscape of Dominica, which she misses passionately during the cold winters in Maine:

[All] at once I imagined that I smelled real orange-blossom, and I got so dizzy with the smell of orange-blossom and coffee that I nearly smashed the windowglass frosted with snow-flowers, to escape. ... Then, Lally, right then and there I knew that I must come back for a little while, before too many winters smothered me.

(OH: 57)

Like Antoinette, Stella also feels trapped in the unfamiliar landscape she had migrated to, and feels that being able to return to a less menacing landscape would be able to cure her. However, unlike Antoinette, Stella actually does get the opportunity to go back to Dominica. If Antoinette had been given the same chance, she, too, would have felt more comfortable to return to the coldness of England. Joan also comments on this same coldness mentioned by both Stella and Antoinette; Joan prefers the whiteness of snow to the grey of a snowless winter: "It's the grey cold. One day I shall die of it." *(OH: 136)*. Joan, too, feels the colourless landscape of the world outside the Caribbean to be smothering.

In addition to contrasting the vivid colours of the Caribbean with the colourlessness of the rest of the world, Stella also differentiates strongly between the landscapes of Maine and New York. For her, the landscape of Maine is somewhat closer to Dominica than New York is, and thus she feels more comfortable there than she did in New York:

All the while, when I lived in New York City, I noticed the awful smoothness of things. I would touch walls with my hands in gloves, and I would feel so sad, so sad! I longed to have a cocoa-pod in my bare hands and turn it over and throw it far into the roughness of dead leaves and broken branches!

(OH: 55-56)

Stella dislikes the straightness and smoothness of a big city and prefers natural surroundings like the farm in Maine and especially the rough-edged wilderness of Dominica. Here, then, her conception of the Caribbean nature differs from that of Antoinette; as I mentioned earlier, Antoinette's recollections of her childhood speak of the comforting softness of nature, whereas Stella finds roughness to be the characteristic that she enjoys in the landscape of her childhood memories.

Stella's son, Hel, shares his mother's disposition to see the world in colours; when Lally asks him what he thinks of his new surroundings on the island, his first response is to describe the colours around him: "'Blue and yellow,'" he said, casting his eyes around" (*OH*: 60). Hel, however, also seems to associate darker colours with the Caribbean; he wonders at the sudden darkness in the middle of the day when a storm comes: "'It's night in the afternoon,'" said little Hel. He pulled my skirt. "Let's go out in the black rain.'" (*OH*: 107). As an outsider to the landscape, then, Hel is able to look at it more objectively and see both the colours as well as the darker side of it. On the other hand, Hel is not very successful in adapting to the landscape of his mother's home island. For him, the coldness of Maine is the landscape he identifies with, and although he enjoys visiting this new place, he feels overwhelmed by its heat and wildness; "'Yes, it's very nice here,'" said Hel politely (watching me [Lally]), "but I wanna go back.'" (*OH*: 127). He asks his mother to tell him bedtime stories "about the farm, and the snow" (*OH*: 126) to relieve his home-sickness. Hel's home-sickness even goes as far as to make him physically ill, which is what convinces his mother that they must return to Maine.

Hel's reluctance to stay in Dominica, and thus integrate this part of his mother's culture to his own, is a challenge to Stella's own cultural identity. This adds to Stella's feeling of in-betweenness, as she is torn between the world of her childhood in Dominica and the world of her new family in Maine. This is exemplified in Stella's reactions of jealousy when Joan tells her that Ned will be staying in Dominica when Joan herself goes back to England (*OH*: 135), as she does not want Hel to be alienated from a landscape that is an integral part of her own cultural identity. Hel's not belonging to the Caribbean landscape is also exemplified by Lally telling him that he is not allowed to

touch the flowers in the orchid house (*OH*: 78); this is symbolic of Hel being an outsider to the landscape and only being able to observe and not be a part of it.

Similar alienation from the Caribbean landscape can be seen in the character of the Master, although he has once been a part of the Dominican society and felt at home in his surroundings. As Lassner explains, the shock of the war has affected the Master's identity significantly, which has resulted in that, to him, the Dominican landscape is "devoid of meaning" (Lassner 2004: 162). He is no longer able to find comfort in his surroundings. This reaction to landscape is parallel to his reaction to his family; as Lassner also points out, he "is oblivious to the claims of all the women who love him" (Lassner 2004: 162). The Master does, however, attempt to reconcile his relationship with both the landscape and his family after he returns from the war, when he remembers a place they used to visit before he left:

As the Master laid down his knife and fork he said:

"It's very hot indoors. I remember a spot where we used to go when we wanted to get cool. I remember it very well: the nutmeg grove. I used to think of it when I was abroad. The tree trunks were like white pillars; a cathedral in mourning. Arches of dark green leaves throwing shadows... and the dried nutmeg kernels dropping softly... there was a wild rat's nest high up in the branches."

"I haven't been there since you went away," said Madam.

"Then let us go there this afternoon," said the Master. (*OH*: 43)

Here, the Master is attempting to come to terms with returning to the landscape of his past and to reconcile with his family. Nevertheless, the Master quickly withdraws into solitude and makes no further attempts at reconciliation before the very end of the novel, when he is forced to do so by his family. However, this passage does show that, at a previous point in his life, the Master too had a close relationship with the Caribbean landscape and that the landscape of his past is still vivid in his memories. Like Antoinette, he is not able to go back to that landscape, even though he is physically in the same place, as the landscape of his past no longer exists in the present.

For Rochester, the strange landscape mostly seems to be a source of profound confusion. He has trouble adjusting to his surroundings and finding his place in the wild Caribbean nature. Mostly this is due to him having trouble differentiating his feelings towards his

wife from his feelings towards the landscape, which I will discuss in more detail in section 4.3. His confusion comes across clearly in a passage in part two, where he has just read a letter sent by Daniel Cosway, Antoinette's half-brother, where he reveals to Rochester the questionable past of the Cosway family, and Rochester gets lost in the forest:

I must be within a few minutes of the path I thought, but after I had walked for what seemed a long time I found that the undergrowth and creepers caught at my legs and the trees closed over my head. I decided to go back to the clearing and start again, with the same result. It was getting dark. It was useless to tell myself that I was not far from the house. I was lost and afraid among these *enemy trees*, so certain of danger that when I heard footsteps and a shout I did not answer. (WSS: 64, emphasis added)

Rochester is alienated from the landscape to the extent that he feels that the landscape is hostile towards him. His feelings of cultural alienation manifest in getting physically lost in this hostile landscape, among the enemy trees, which makes him distrust his surroundings even more. For Rochester, however, the most significant reactions to landscape are closely related to his reactions and relationship to his wife Antoinette. This relationship, among others, is what I will be concentrating on in the following section.

4.3 Character relationships

Another important use of landscape imagery in both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Orchid House* is the establishment of character relationships; the characters' attitudes towards their surroundings help in determining their attitudes towards each other, as well. Similarities and differences in the identities and personalities of the different characters in each novel are exemplified by this use of landscape.

Loe argues that, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, these descriptions of landscape "have an intense sense of immediacy in terms of relationship to character" (Loe 2007: 53), especially so when considering the relationship between the two protagonists. Rochester's feelings

towards the landscape he is surrounded by are very clearly comparable to his feelings towards Antoinette; his attitude towards the Caribbean is, at first, quite positive if a bit cautious, and he is looking forward to his life together with his beautiful wife: “It was a beautiful place – wild, untouched, above all untouched, with an alien, disturbing, secret loveliness. And it kept its secret. I’d find myself thinking, ‘What I see is nothing – I want what it *hides* – that is not nothing.’” (WSS: 52, original emphasis). In this excerpt, Rochester is describing the landscape he sees around him, but he might as well be describing Antoinette; he associates her with the Caribbean – its beauty and mystery – and thus feels that understanding the secrets of the nature would help him understand the mystery that is his wife. For Rochester, then, the Caribbean landscape and his wife are interconnected within his cultural identity.

Antoinette becoming a manifestation of place in Rochester’s eyes links to what I discussed earlier in section 3.4; Rochester, as a representative of the culture of the coloniser, feels bewildered and threatened by the strangeness of the Caribbean landscape as well as this white Creole woman that he feels is an integral part of that landscape. By giving Antoinette her new name, Bertha, Rochester assumes control over her and the landscape surrounding her. After the process of renaming has begun taking its hold on Antoinette’s cultural identity, Rochester no longer feels threatened by his surroundings, but the insecurity has been replaced by hatred, as he begins to feel increasingly hostile towards his surroundings:

I hated the mountains and the hills, the rivers and the rain. I hated the sunsets of whatever colour, I hated its beauty and its magic and the secret I would never know. I hated its indifference and the cruelty which was part of its loveliness. Above all I hated her. For she belonged to the magic and the loveliness. She had left me thirsty and all my life would be thirst and longing for what I had lost before I found it. (WSS: 112)

Here Rochester recognises Antoinette’s connectedness to the landscape and his hatred towards both. As I pointed out earlier, he feels determined to remove his wife from that landscape in order to gain control over her and to make her into his possession.

Another example of Antoinette’s interconnectedness with the landscape in Rochester’s mind is when Rochester manifests his anger towards Antoinette by physically interacting

with the nature: “Then I passed an orchid with long sprays of golden-brown flowers. One of them touched my cheek and I remembered picking some for her one day. ‘They are like you,’ I told her. Now I stopped, broke a spray off and trampled it into the mud” (WSS: 60). Here, Rochester uses the landscape as a substitute for showing his feelings towards his wife, as he feels that they are one and the same. Slowly Rochester comes to realise that he does not belong in his surroundings; as he feels that Antoinette is so closely connected to the landscape he has grown to detest, it is difficult for him to differentiate between his feelings towards the landscape and those towards Antoinette. He attempts to solve this problem by beginning to change his perception of Antoinette towards the world he is more familiar with, that of England. Through turning Antoinette into Bertha and, in a way, removing the hostile landscape from her identity, Rochester would be able to feel more at home with her. This, however, has the negative effect of turning Antoinette against him.

Consequently, a clear juxtaposition in the relationship between Antoinette and Rochester can be seen in the way in which the two characters feel about the Caribbean and England. As Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik say in *Landscapes of Desire: Metaphors in Modern Women’s Fiction* (1990), the two characters’ not being able to understand each other is linked to them not being able to understand each other’s landscapes; the two countries “become irreconcilable opposites, with the greyness and coldness of the latter becoming predominant over the colour and warmth of” (Horner and Zlosnik 1990: 167) the Caribbean. Antoinette feels a very close connection to the Caribbean and feels at home in her surroundings, but she sees England as a distant dream, a fantasy land. For Rochester, however, England is the reality and the Caribbean is the dream:

‘Is it true,’ she said, ‘that England is like a dream? Because one of my friends who married an Englishman wrote and told me so. She said this place London is like a cold dark dream sometimes. I want to wake up.’

‘Well,’ I answered annoyed, ‘that is precisely how your beautiful island seems to me, quite unreal and like a dream.’ (WSS: 47)

Because their native landscapes differ so significantly, both characters have trouble in incorporating the other’s reality into their own. For Antoinette, incorporating these elements is especially hard because she has never actually been in England, and what

she is attempting to incorporate is merely her own fantasy of what England would be like.

As I already discussed in section 4.2, even colours are divided into opposites between England and the Caribbean, and this also becomes evident in the relationship between Antoinette and Rochester; as a child, when Antoinette is cross-stitching at the convent school, she chooses to colour her roses “green, blue and purple” and to write her name in “fire red” (WSS: 29). Horner and Zlosnik call these “Antoinette’s colours ... which Rochester comes to hate” (Horner and Zlosnik 1990: 168); Rochester lists these exact same colours in his first description of the Dominican landscape: “Everything is too much, I felt as I rode wearily after her. Too much blue, too much purple, too much green. The flowers too red, the mountains too high, the hills too near.” (WSS: 39). Rochester has trouble adjusting his perception to the vivid colours of the Caribbean, as his own practical identity is grounded in the implied greyness of England.

A similar juxtaposition can be found in *The Orchid House* between Dominica and America in the relationship between Stella and her husband Helmut. Helmut only appears in the novel in Stella’s stories, so we never actually hear his side. In Stella’s accounts of her life in Maine, however, there is a visible opposition between the wilderness of her own world in Dominica and the methodicalness of her husband’s world in Maine, which becomes apparent in the conversations between Stella and Lally, when Lally asks about the trees on their farm: ““Only useful trees,” she said. “Don’t you know, Lally, that in America everything has to be useful? Our trees were for cutting down” (OH: 56). Stella resents the industrialness of life in America, which contrasts with the carefree and down-to-earth existence of Dominica, where trees are respected for their beauty rather than their usefulness.

As I already mentioned in section 4.2, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette’s relationship with her mother is also closely associated with place, indeed a very specific place, as Antoinette believes her mother to be an integral part of the Coulibri estate. After the estate has burned down and Antoinette travels to see her mother, she does not feel at all

anxious to see her: “I remember the dull feeling as we drove along for I did not expect to see her. She was part of Coulibri, that had gone, so she had gone, I was certain of it” (WSS: 25). In *The Orchid House*, this kind of association also becomes apparent in the relationship between Stella and her son Hel. As was already discussed in section 4.2, Hel has trouble adjusting to his mother’s homeland, as he feels like he does not belong there. Just as Stella finds herself longing for the warmth of the Caribbean landscape while she is away from it, Hel longs for the snow and coldness of Maine while he is in the Caribbean. Here, however, the issue with associating a person with a landscape is reversed to what was seen in *Wide Sargasso Sea*; Stella wishes to be able to bring her son to her childhood landscape of Dominica but fails, as Hel is not able to adjust his cultural identity to incorporate these new surroundings.

As I mentioned in chapter 2, the Caribbean landscape – as well as its beauty and wildness – is often associated with feminine characteristics. As can be seen from the discussion above, in both these novels, female characters are more closely associated with the Caribbean landscape, whereas male characters are associated with either English or American landscape. Even the Master, who indeed is a white Creole, has become estranged from the landscape and cannot identify with it any longer. These feminine characteristics are also associated with a certain mysteriousness, or as Lally puts it in *The Orchid House*, the island’s “beautiful secrecy” (OH: 83). Madden also discusses this femininity of landscape in *Wide Sargasso Sea*; she points out that, for Rochester, due to his inability to differentiate between the Caribbean landscape and his wife, the “landscape becomes engendered through this close identification, and Antoinette becomes a manifestation of place” (Madden 1995: 166). The same femininity and wildness that is present in the landscape thus also manifests in Antoinette.

Although the wildness of nature is primarily associated with female characters in both novels, nature in connection to extreme emotions seems to be associated with both genders; extreme manifestations of nature, namely storms, are used to portray extreme manifestations of emotion in both novels. In *The Orchid House*, Stella uses a storm for her cover when she decides to get rid of the threat she believes is posed to her family by

Mr. Lilipoulala. Stella's hatred towards Mr. Lilipoulala has been able to fester and grow for years while she has been away from the island, and the storm during which he drowns seems to become a physical manifestation of her anger. Stella also refers to Mr. Lilipoulala's effect on her father as a manifestation of natural forces: "Why must we all live in the shadow of a sinister mood? Something that comes like a hurricane, only oftener?" (*OH*: 80). Here, then, the wildness of nature is associated with a male character. Similar use of storm is also present in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and here too the character manifesting these extreme emotions is male; towards the end of part two, when Rochester has decided to take Antoinette away from the island, he reflects on his feelings towards his wife and remarks: "I could not touch her. Excepting as the hurricane will touch that tree – and break it" (*WSS*: 108). Rochester himself feels that his feelings of hatred towards Antoinette resemble a natural force and that he wishes to use that force to crush Antoinette.

In addition to portraying these personal relationships between characters, landscape, or more precisely orchids, are used at quite a general level as a metaphor of hybridity as well as colonial power; for example Young explains that the term hybridity has been adopted to postcolonial literary criticism from the field of biology, where it is used to describe cross-overs between species (Young [1995] 2003: 6). Orchids are an example of such a hybrid species. Lassner states that, in *The Orchid House*, the orchid house is "a highly artificial environment designed to nurture hybrid blooms. As a colonial edifice, however, this orchid house nurtures the opposite: suffocation" (Lassner 2004: 161). Outside the orchid house, we can catch glimpses of the landscape ruined by colonial power. An example of this is the cut-down trees in the Botanical Gardens: "Joan gazed at the emerald grass which crept up to erase each evidence of massacre; she was visibly shocked. ... "The Government cut the trees down because the children stole fruit. And the children stole because they were hungry.'" (*OH*: 147). As Lassner points out, this is symbolic of the "decaying colonial power" (Lassner 2004: 163). Inside the orchid house, the family is able to control the nature and keep the island the way they want it, but outside it they have no control over the forces that are sending their precious island to ruins.

Tiffin discusses this same issue from a somewhat different point of view; she sees the garden as a metaphor for ruined colonial power (Tiffin 2005: 203). As I already mentioned in section 3.4, for the coloniser, the garden was a representation of the colonisers' "ancestral homescapes" (Tiffin 2005: 200), a way of capturing and controlling the exotic environment. For the coloniser, the garden was an attempt to recreate a biblical paradise, which, as Tiffin explains, has proven to be unsuccessful in both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Orchid House* (Tiffin 2005: 203). This idea, then, is closely connected to what was discussed in section 3.4; the Old Master has created the orchid house in order to control the landscape and make it correspond better with his ancestral homescape. This orchid house is the only controllable part left of the landscape and thus becomes even more important for the coloniser attempting to hold on to their cultural identity.

Similarly, in *Wide Sargasso Sea* we can see the ruined landscape caused by the decaying of the colonial power; in part one we learn about the garden at Coulibri that has gone wild as well as that "road repairing was now a thing of the past" (WSS: 3). Annette uses this degeneration of the landscape as an excuse when her daughter asks why they no longer get any visitors. The ruined landscape that leaves them isolated from the rest of the society, then, is symbolic of the loss of power the family experienced after the abolition of slavery. However, the symbolism portrayed with orchids in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is quite different from that in *The Orchid House*. The orchid house at L'Aromatique has helped the family in controlling their surroundings, but at Coulibri, the orchids in the garden have become wild and menacing:

Orchids flourished out of reach or for some reason not to be touched. One was snaky looking, another like an octopus with long thin brown tentacles bare of leaves hanging from a twisted root. Twice a year the octopus orchid flowered – then not an inch of tentacle showed. It was a bell-shaped mass of white, mauve, deep purples, wonderful to see. The scent was very sweet and strong. I never went near it. (WSS: 4-5)

At Coulibri, the Creole family has not succeeded in taming the wild Caribbean nature they are surrounded by, and these wild plants have taken over the garden. Tiffin also discusses this matter; she points out that there is a clear connection in the text between

the ruined garden and the abolition of slavery (Tiffin 2005: 204). Antoinette points out this issue when she describes the ruined garden in the beginning of the novel: “All Coulibri Estate had gone wild like the garden, gone to bush. No more slavery – why should *anybody* work?” (WSS: 5, original emphasis). Here, then, the ruined garden becomes a very clear metaphor of the ruined colonial power.

Tiffin also discusses the more general use of flower symbolism in Caribbean literature, which falls close to Lassner’s analysis; where Lassner talks about orchids, however, Tiffin mainly discusses “the rose and the daffodil” (Tiffin 2005: 202). The difference here, one could argue, is that roses and daffodils – being flowers cultivated in England – are quite clearly representations of the coloniser, whereas orchids are more clearly a representation of the exotic nature in the colony. Another revealing aspect is that, in both texts, the orchid, which is in fact a parasitic plant, has been chosen as the plant representing both the beauty and the wildness of the Caribbean landscape; the outside beauty of the plant – as well as the Caribbean landscape – hides a powerful force that cannot be controlled. The orchid representing the colonised is also clearly visible in the scene I already discussed earlier in this section where Rochester, being angry at Antoinette, tramples an orchid.

In addition to portraying the beauty and wildness of the Caribbean landscape, orchids, as well as other parasitic plants, can also be used to portray the strength of the landscape and the culture associated with it. Another example of the use of parasitic plants as a metaphor for the colonised can be found in *The Orchid House*, when Baptiste describes a bromeliad he saw on the island:

“What I saw was a tree that was not a tree... something taller than a tree, but it was a parasite, a bromeliad Old Master called it. ... A tree, old but still tender, had this great glossy spike towering above it, sapping it like a disease but growing to be even stronger and more beautiful than the tree itself. ... Very beautiful, Miss Joan, and very fine, for all that it lived without its own roots in the earth.” (OH: 178)

Baptiste talks about the plant being able to grow strong even without having its own roots in the earth, which is symbolic of both the colonised and the white Creoles, who

have managed to create a new life and new cultural identities in a landscape that is not originally their own.

As I have discussed in this chapter, landscape imagery is used in both novels as a tool to portray various aspects of cultural identity from nostalgia to character relationships. At a more general level, landscape is also used as a metaphor for decaying colonial power. Postcolonial authors can thus use landscape as a tool to differentiate themselves from the Western literary tradition. This shows the central nature of the theme in both novels, as many of the characters' cultural identities are defined through their connectedness to nature.

5 Conclusion

In this thesis I have discussed and analysed the ways in which Jean Rhys's novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Phyllis Shand Allfrey's novel *The Orchid House* use the concept of cultural identity in character construction through two main themes: names and landscape. These themes are used in both novels to portray various different aspects of cultural identity as well as changes within that identity. Both novels are set in the Caribbean and tell the stories of white Creole families. I have mainly concentrated my analysis on the novel's female protagonists: Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* as well as Stella, Joan and Natalie in *The Orchid House*. I have, however, also included relevant points of discussion on other characters, such as the male protagonists as well as the black nannies of both novels. Cultural identity is a concept of central interest in the field of postcolonial literary criticism. In the Caribbean, due to it being a region of contact, the presence of multiple, often conflicting cultures greatly affects one's cultural identity, as the person must live in constant negotiation of various aspects of both one's practical and reflective identity. The hybrid identities of the white Creole characters in both novels are manifested in the use of names as well as descriptions of landscape.

Names are used in various ways in both novels to portray cultural identity; this use of names includes both the names of characters as well as those of places. Under the theme of names, I discussed the concepts of naming, renaming and non-naming as well as name-calling, which are all central themes in the novels. The novels have several characters that have the same names – and often these characters are also quite similar in nature – and both novels use actual Caribbean place names, which exemplifies the interconnectedness between the two texts as well as grounds them in their geographical context. Even more importantly, however, the names carry symbolic meaning, as for example in the case of the sisters' puppy in *The Orchid House*, as they determine the puppy's name based on their father's state of mind when he is returning from the war.

Renaming is an especially central theme in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and the most significant example of it is Rochester renaming Antoinette as Bertha and causing the complete loss of her cultural identity. Although Antoinette attempts to fight against this renaming, eventually she gives in to her new identity, which also causes her to lose her grip on reality. This renaming is symbolically connected to the colonial practice of renaming slaves, and through becoming Bertha, Antoinette also becomes a metaphorical slave to Rochester. In *The Orchid House*, renaming takes quite a different form, as the object of renaming is, in fact, a cause rather than a person. In both instances, the new name given profoundly affects the way in which the holder of the name is perceived as well as the holder of the name itself.

Name-calling, in both novels, is mainly used to portray power relations between groups, and most name-calling is connected to racial issues. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette's cultural identity is greatly affected by people around her calling her and her family names such as "white nigger" (WSS: 8) and "white cockroaches" (WSS: 7). Antoinette's in-betweenness comes across clearly in this type of name-calling, as she is rejected by both the black and the white society of the island, leaving her alienated in between the two. Antoinette is also called "béké" (WSS: 70, original emphasis) by Christophine, but this can be seen as more of a description of her identity rather than actual name-calling, as Christophine does not intend to hurt Antoinette by calling her this. In *The Orchid House*, similar power assertion through name-calling is present, for example, when Baptiste is called names such as "foolish Nigger" (OH: 153). Another type of power assertion in *The Orchid House* is exemplified by Natalie calling her male companion by the name of "Ha-Ha" (OH: 200), which is an example of power assertion between sexes. Through this name-calling, Natalie deviates from the traditional female role by behaving in a seemingly masculine manner.

Power assertion between groups or representatives of groups is the most central use for name-calling in both texts, but name-calling between individuals can take a very different form. Name-calling between individuals is used in a more positive manner to express solidarity and attachment in character relationships. This is exemplified in both

novels in the relationship between the protagonists and their nannies, as words such as “*doudou* [Patois term of endearment]” (WSS: 70, original emphasis) and “darling” (OH: 57) are used. Even though the nannies are employees in the families, the relationship between them and their protégées has become so close that they are considered members of the family.

Non-naming is also an important theme present in the novels, as both texts leave a significant character unnamed. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the male protagonist is often called Rochester due to intertextual links to *Jane Eyre*, although the character is never actually named. In *The Orchid House*, the Master is only named on few occasions by his family and close friends, whereas Madam is left completely unnamed. This kind of non-naming affects the portrayal of the character’s cultural identity, as, especially in the case of the Master, it contributes to the feeling of lack of identity. For Rochester, non-naming also exemplifies his victimisation; due to being a second son, he is left without inheritance. Rochester, however, although left without a name, is not left without voice, and by the end of the novel he has been able to gain control over Antoinette and assert himself.

Another significant topic in postcolonial literary criticism is the concept of naming place. When discovering new areas, the colonisers often named and renamed places with Europeanised names, which can be seen as an act of possession as well as drawing boundaries between what is the colonisers area and what is in the periphery outside it; this process simultaneously removes cultural significance from the areas outside the coloniser’s influence, which results in the loss of cultural identity for the colonised peoples. The naming of place also naturally links to the theme of landscape, which is also used to portray different aspects of cultural identity in both novels, as cultural identity and the sense of belonging is closely connected to the notion of place, and displacement can be seen as a form of loss of identity.

In both novels, landscape imagery is used to portray various aspects of cultural identity. The most significant uses of landscape are the portrayal of nostalgia, the description and

development of cultural identity in individuals and personal reflection of identity as well as the construction of character relationships. The feeling of nostalgia is closely related to the notion of displacement, and landscape imagery is one of the most central tools for the portrayal of nostalgic elements in both novels. In the nostalgic depiction of landscape, a great attention to detail is characteristic for both novels; the texts also utilise all five senses in the description of landscape, which can be seen as a tool particularly characteristic for postcolonial literatures. The use of all five senses can be seen as a form of empowerment and a tool for creating a feel of otherness that is central for postcolonial writing.

In both novels, the protagonists reflect on their own cultural identities and well as the development of said identity through the landscape surrounding them. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette is extremely attached to the nature around her, and due to her alienation from the society, landscape has replaced people in her practical identity. Already in her childhood, Antoinette finds solace in nature when she feels that the people around her are hostile towards her. Being removed from the Caribbean landscape causes the disintegration of her cultural identity; her different names – Antoinette and Bertha – and identities linked to these names are closely identified with locations, namely the Caribbean and England respectively.

In *The Orchid House*, the sisters' cultural identities as well as differences between them are portrayed through the use of landscape imagery; Stella, the oldest of the sisters, prefers the wildness and roughness of the Caribbean landscape as well as its power, whereas Joan feels more at home in a more controlled form of nature represented by the garden and enjoys the small details of nature, such as a tiny hummingbird. For Natalie's cultural identity, on the other hand, people play a much larger role than nature, and she seems to be quite indifferent towards the landscape surrounding her. Changes within the sisters' cultural identities are also portrayed with the use of landscape; Stella is the clearest example of this, as she explains the changes in her life through the different colours of the landscapes she is surrounded by: green for Dominica, grey for New York, and white for Maine (*OH*: 57).

Landscape imagery is also present in the portrayal of the cultural identities of the male protagonists of both novels. In *The Orchid House*, the Master has been alienated from the Caribbean landscape due to the impact that the war had on his cultural identity, and because of this, he also has trouble identifying with his family. For Rochester, the Caribbean landscape causes confusion and alienation to the degree that he begins to feel that the landscape is hostile towards him. However, for Rochester, landscape imagery most clearly comes across in his relationship to his wife, Antoinette. In both novels, characters' attitudes towards landscape mirror their attitudes towards each other, and the relationship between Antoinette and Rochester is a clear example of this; Rochester associates Antoinette so closely with the Caribbean landscape that he has trouble differentiating between the two. This becomes especially clear when Rochester uses the landscape as a substitute for his anger towards Antoinette by trampling an orchid (WSS: 60). Rochester then gains control over Antoinette by removing her from that landscape.

The relationship between Antoinette and Rochester is also used as a tool to portray the juxtaposition between the colonised culture and the coloniser culture; Antoinette is seen as a representative of the Caribbean and thus the colonised peoples, whereas Rochester can be seen to represent England and the coloniser. A similar juxtaposition can also be found in *The Orchid House*, where Stella's cultural identity and attachment to the Caribbean landscape is contrasted with her husband's world in Maine. At a more general level, landscape is also used to portray power relations between the coloniser and the colonised and as symbolic for the disintegration of colonial power. The depiction of a ruined landscape can be seen as a metaphor for the imminent ruin of the coloniser's power in the colony. Specifically parasitic plants, such as orchids and bromeliads, are used to symbolise the empowerment of the colonised – and Creole – culture, as they are able to thrive in the region of contact even though it is not originally their own.

The themes of names and landscape can thus be seen to be of central interest in both novels, as they are used in various different ways to portray different aspects of cultural identity, especially that of a Caribbean white Creole. Creoleness is a complex state of hybridity, where an individual must negotiate different, often conflicting, cultures into

their cultural identity. Names and landscape can both be used to portray a sense of belonging, which is important to the construction of cultural identity. In *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Orchid House*, the complexity of the white Creole cultural identity is vividly portrayed, and, as becomes clear from my analysis, the two novels utilise similar tools for the portrayal of this cultural identity.

In my introduction, I explained the interconnectedness of these two novels through the notion of indebtedness. This indebtedness links the novels through their belonging to the Caribbean, more precisely Dominican, literary tradition. A clear intertextuality can thus be seen between the two novels, although it can be debated whether this connection is a conscious effort by the authors or merely a manifestation of the literary tradition to which they both belong. I also pointed out that critics in the field have been reluctant to see this intertextuality between the novels, and most have only allowed it a passing remark. I, however, feel that the tools used in the portrayal of cultural identities in these novels are similar to a degree that cannot be considered coincidence. The intertextuality, or indebtedness, here travels both ways, and both novels have gained from their connectedness to this Dominican literary tradition without said interconnectedness lessening the individual strength and literary value of either text.

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Finnish summary

Johdanto

Kulttuuri-identiteetti on yksi jälkikoloniaalisen kirjallisuudentutkimuksen keskeisimmistä teemoista. Karibian alueella jälkikoloniaalinen kulttuuri-identiteetti saa erityisen keskeisen roolin, sillä alueen väestö muodostuu eri puolilta maailmaa saapuneista hyvinkin erilaisten kulttuurien edustajista. Tämän vuoksi karibialainen kirjallisuusperinne liittyy luonnollisesti moniin muihin kirjallisuusperinteisiin ympäri maailmaa. Jean Rhysin teos *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) yhdistyy englantilaiseen kirjallisuusperinteeseen Charlotte Brontën *Jane Eyre* -teoksen kautta. *Wide Sargasso Sea* kertoo jamaikalais-syntyisestä valkoisesta kreolinaisesta Antoinette Coswaysta, joka erinäisten tapahtumien johdosta päättyy Bertha Masoniksi, Thornfield Hallin ullakolle lukituksi hulluksi naiseksi. Rhysin teoksesta on myös tullut yksi jälkikoloniaalisen kirjallisuusperinteen kulmakiviä.

Rhysin teoksesta löytyy intertekstuaalisia viittauksia Brontën teoksen lisäksi myös muihin teoksiin, mutta yllämainitun yhteyden huomattavuuden vuoksi nämä muut viittaukset ovat usein jääneet huomioimatta. Rhysin teos liittyy kiinteästi dominicalaiseen kirjallisuusperinteeseen, sillä intertekstuaalisia viittauksia löytyy myös toisen dominicalaisen kirjailijan teokseen, Phyllis Shand Allfreyn *The Orchid House* -romaaniiin (1953). Molemmat kirjailijat ovat siis kotoisin Dominicalta ja tunsivat toisensa asuessaan Englannissa. Tutkielmani tarkoituksena on tarkastella, miten teokset *Wide Sargasso Sea* ja *The Orchid House* käsittelevät kulttuuri-identiteettiä henkilöihahmojen luonnissa sekä millaisia yhtäläisyyksiä ja eroja näissä esiintyy. Tarkastelen tekstejä kahden keskeisen teeman kautta: nimet ja maisemakuvaukset. Molemmissa teoksissa näitä teemoja käytetään monipuolisesti identiteetin eri osa-alueiden kuvaamiseen. Tarkasteluni keskittyy pääasiassa teosten naispäähahmoihin,

mutta käsittelen soveltuvilta osin myös muita henkilöitä kuten kunkin teoksen miespäähahmoja sekä lastenhoitajia Christophinea ja Lallya.

Karibian alueen jälkikoloniaalinen kulttuuri-identiteetti

Kulttuuri-identiteetin käsite on hyvin monitahoinen, eikä sen määrittäminen kattavasti tämän tutkielman puitteissa ole mahdollista. Olen siis keskittynyt tarkastelussani sellaisiin kulttuuri-identiteetin piirteisiin, jotka ovat keskeisimpiä tutkimukseni kannalta. Kreolisuudella on erityisen voimakas vaikutus yksilön kulttuuri-identiteettiin, kun yksilö joutuu sovittamaan kulttuuri-identiteettiinsä monia, usein keskenään ristiriitaisia kulttuureja. Myös sukupuoli on tärkeä vaikutus kulttuuri-identiteetin muodostumisessa ja erityisesti siinä, miten yksilö sopeutuu yhteiskunnan tälle asettamiin odotuksiin.

Stuart Hallin mukaan kulttuuri-identiteetti koostuu kahdesta eri ulottuvuudesta: yhteisöllinen ulottuvuus, jonka avulla yksilö luo yhteenkuuluvuutta ympäröivään kulttuuriin ja yhteiskuntaan, sekä henkilökohtainen ulottuvuus, jonka avulla yksilö erottautuu muista (Hall [1990] 1998: 224-226). Asuinympäristö siis vaikuttaa kulttuuri-identiteetin kehitykseen muttei suoranaisesti määritä sitä. Yksilön kulttuuri-identiteetti on menneisyyden ja nykyisyyden välistä dialogia. Hall kertoo myös, että tärkeä osa kulttuuri-identiteettiä on se, miten edustamme sitä (Hall [1997] 2003: 3). Jälkikolonialismi voidaan nähdä kolonisoijan ja kolonisoidun välisenä valtataisteluna. Kuten Ania Loomba selittää, tällainen kahtiajako ei kuitenkaan ole riittävä kuvaamaan jälkikoloniaalisen yhteiskunnan sisältämää kulttuurien moninaisuutta (Loomba 1998: 105). Kuten Hall, myös Patrick Hogan jakaa kulttuuri-identiteetin käsitteen kahteen ulottuvuuteen; käytännön identiteetti sisältää yhteiskunnassa toimimiseen liittyvää tietoa ja kokemusta, kun taas reflektiivinen identiteetti sisältää henkilökohtaisen arvohierarkian (Hogan 2000: 9).

Myös maantieteellisellä sijainnilla on tärkeä rooli jälkikoloniaalisen kulttuuri-identiteetin muodostumisessa, varsinkin Karibian alueella. Hogan jakaa myös maantieteelliset alueet niiden jälkikoloniaalisen merkityksen mukaisesti kolonisoijan alkuperäiseen kotipaikkaan, kolonisoidun alkuperäiseen kotipaikkaan sekä kontaktialueeseen, jolla kulttuurien kohtaaminen tapahtuu (Hogan 2000: 4). Kontaktialueella asuminen vaikuttaa yksilön kulttuuri-identiteettiin, sillä hän joutuu rakentamaan uudenlaisen kulttuuri-identiteetin, joka sisältää osia sekä omasta alkuperäiskulttuurista että muista kontaktialueella olevista kulttuureista.

Hogan jakaa kontaktialueella tapahtuvan kulttuurien yhdentymisen eri vaiheisiin: Ortodoksisuudella tarkoitetaan yksinomaan oman alkuperäiskulttuurin perinteissä pidättäytymistä, kun taas assimilaatiossa yksilö sulautuu toiseen kulttuuriin. Synkretismillä tarkoitetaan usean eri kulttuurin sisällyttämistä yksilön kulttuuri-identiteettiin, ja vieraantuminen viittaa kulttuuri-identiteetin menettämiseen (Hogan 2000: 10-17). Nämä muutokset voivat olla tietoisia tai tiedostamattomia (Hogan 2000: 10-11). Erityisesti pinnallinen kolonisoijan kulttuurin jäljittely on saanut paljon huomiota jälkikoloniaalisen kirjallisuudentutkimuksen saralla. Homi Bhabha kertoo, että tällainen jäljittely on kolonisoiduille keino taistella kolonisoijan valtaa vastaan (Bhabha [1994] 1995: 120), mutta monet muut tutkijat eivät pidä ilmiötä yhtä positiivisena.

Kulttuurien sekoittumisesta kontaktialueella käytetään jälkikoloniaalisessa kirjallisuudentutkimuksessa yleisesti käsitettä hybriditeetti. Hallin mukaan hybriditeetti on jatkuvan muutoksen alla (Hall [1990] 1998: 235). Hybriditeetin muodostumiseen vaikuttavat monet seikat kuten menneet kokemukset, maantieteellinen sijainti, yksilön maailmankatsomus ja yhteiskunnallinen asema. *Wide Sargasso Sea* ja *The Orchid House* -teosten päähenkilöt ovat valkoisia kreoleja, mikä tarkoittaa, että heidän kulttuuri-identiteettiinsä vaikuttavat sekä paikalliset kulttuurit että kolonisoijien alkuperäiskulttuuri Englannissa. Näiden hyvin erilaisten elementtien sisällyttäminen yksilön kulttuuri-identiteettiin voi olla ongelmallista ja saattaa johtaa kulttuuri-identiteetin menettämiseen.

Käsittelen tutkielmassani pääasiassa naishahmoja, joten myös naisnäkökulman esittelemine on paikallaan. Maria Olausen esittelee kolme erilaista feminististä tutkimussuuntausta, jotka voidaan löytää *Wide Sargasso Sea* -teoksesta: liberaali feminismi käsittelee pääasiassa sukupuolten välistä tasa-arvoa, sosialistinen feminismi käsittelee naisten sortoa kapitalistisen valtarakenteen kautta, ja musta feminismi käsittelee mustan naisen kaksinkertaista alistamista (Olausen 1992: 1-28). Kuten Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths ja Helen Tiffin kertovat, feministinen kirjallisuudentutkimus käyttää monia samoja käsitteitä kuin jälkikoloniaalinen kirjallisuudentutkimus (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2002: 172-173). Erityisesti kolonisoidun naisen kaksinkertainen alistaminen on ollut keskeisessä asemassa jälkikoloniaalisessa kirjallisuudentutkimuksessa. Hogan kertoo myös, että kolonisoituun kulttuuriin liitetään usein naisellisia piirteitä, kun taas kolonisoijan kulttuuriin liitetään miesmäisiä piirteitä (Hogan 2000: 18). Phyllis Lassner kertoo, että kulttuurinen hybriditeetti antaa erityisesti naispuoliselle valkoiselle kreolille mahdollisuuden nähdä kolonisoijan kulttuuri ulkopuolisen silmin ja kritisoida sitä, vaikkakin kreolinaisen on toisinaan vaikeaa löytää omaa paikkaansa tuosta yhteiskunnasta (Lassner 2004: 11-12).

Nimet kulttuuri-identiteetin luonnissa ja menetyksessä

Nimet ja niiden käyttö on yksi keskeisimmistä teemoista *Wide Sargasso Sea* ja *The Orchid House* -teoksissa. Tässä osiossa käsittelemäni aiheeseen liittyvät teemat ovat nimeäminen, uudelleennimeäminen, nimeämättömyys sekä nimittely ja lopuksi vielä paikkojen nimeäminen. Kaikkia näitä käytetään molemmissa teksteissä välineinä henkilöahmojen kulttuuri-identiteetin luonnissa. Historiallisestikin nimeäminen on ollut oleellinen osa kolonisointiprosessia. Ashcroft, Griffiths ja Tiffin kertovat, että kolonisoijat osoittivat valtaansa kolonisoituun kulttuuriin nimeämällä uudelleen valtaamiaan alueita (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin [1998] 2001: 32). Jälkikoloniaaliset kirjailijat käyttävät nimeämistä välineenä perinteisten valtasuhteiden murtamisessa.

Sekä henkilöhahmojen että paikkojen nimillä on suuri merkitys molemmissa romaaneissa, ja niistä löytyy jopa samannimisiä henkilöhahmoja. Hyvä esimerkki tästä on Christophine, joka varsinkin *Wide Sargasso Seassa* on varsin keskeinen hahmo. Muita samannimisiä hahmoja ovat Baptiste ja Godfrey. Molemmissa romaaneissa mainitaan myös useita todellisia dominicalaisia ja karibialaisia paikannimiä, kuten Roseaun kasvitieteellinen puutarha (*OH*: 7) ja Massacre-niminen kylä (*WSS*: 36). Nämä paikannimet auttavat paikantamaan tekstit tapahtumaympäristöönsä.

Nimet kantavat näissä romaaneissa monenlaisia symbolisia merkityksiä. *The Orchid Housen* siskokset esimerkiksi päättävät nimetä hankkimansa koiranpennun sen perusteella, miten pahasti heidän isänsä on traumatisoitunut palatessaan kotiin sodasta (*OH*: 15). Molemmissa romaaneissa myös kyseenalaistetaan nimien soveltuvuutta niiden kantajilleen, ja eroavaisuuksia nimeämisperiaatteissa on havaittavissa mustan ja valkoisen väestön välillä. *The Orchid Housen* Lally on selkeästi omaksunut piirteitä valkoisen väestön nimeämisperiaateista, eikä hän tässä suhteessa halua samastua mustaan väestöön.

Uudelleennimeäminen on erityisen tärkeä teema *Wide Sargasso Seassa*. Selkein esimerkki tästä on, kun Rochester nimeää Antoinetten uudelleen Berthaksi. Sillä on kohtalokas vaikutus Antoinetten kulttuuri-identiteettiin. Vaikka Antoinette ei aluksi hyväksykään tätä uudelleennimeämistä, uusi identiteetti alkaa vähitellen vallata alaa ja ajaa häntä kulttuuri-identiteettinsä menetykseen. Uudelleennimeäminen symboloi historiallista koloniaalista perinnettä, jossa orjien omistaja nimeää orjansa uudelleen vahvistakseen valtaansa heihin. James Walvin kertoo, että orjatkin usein vähitellen oppivat hyväksymään uudet nimensä ja jopa suosimaan niitä (Walvin [1996] 2003: 52). Nimeämällä Antoinetten uudelleen Rochester siis symbolisesti orjuuttaa hänet.

Nimittely on myös tärkeässä roolissa molemmissa teksteissä. Näkyvin käyttötarkoitus nimittelylle kummassakin romaanissa on ryhmien välisten valtasuhteiden kuvaaminen, mutta nimittelyä käytetään myös muihin tarkoituksiin. Molemmista romaaneista löytyy useita esimerkkejä siitä, miten nimittelyä käytetään kuvaamaan mustan ja valkoisen

väestön välisiä valtasuhteita sekä sukupuolten välisiä valtasuhteita. Yksilöiden välillä positiivisemmän tyyppistä nimittelyä käytetään muun muassa hellyydenosoituksissa sekä muussa ihmissuhteiden ylläpidossa. Nimittely tuo hyvin myös esiin useiden henkilöhahmojen hybridi-identiteetin, sillä heistä käytettävät nimityksen usein osoittavat sen, etteivät he varsinaisesti kuulu mustaan eivätkä valkoiseen väestöön.

Myös nimeämättä jättäminen on tärkeässä asemassa molemmissa romaaneissa, sillä molemmissa jätetään tärkeä henkilöhahmo nimeämättä. *Wide Sargasso Sea* Rochester on tästä hyvä esimerkki, sillä Rochester-nimeä ei käytetä teoksessa kertaakaan, vaan kirjallisuudentutkijat ovat omaksuneet tämän nimen *Jane Eyre* -teokseen tehtyjen viittauksien vuoksi. Wolfgang Müller kertoo, että Rochesterin nimeämättömyys auttaa saattamaan hänen kulttuuri-identiteettinsä kyseenalaiseksi (Müller 2007: 70). John Thieme myös toteaa, että on oleellista muistaa, että myös Rochester voidaan teoksessa nähdä uhrina eikä vain hyväksikäyttäjänä (Thieme 2001: 78). Lähtökohtaisesti Rochesterin ja Antoinetten tilanteet eivät siis eroa suuresti toisistaan, mutta Antoinette jää alakynteen muun muassa Rochesterin otollisemman yhteiskunnallisen aseman vuoksi. *The Orchid House*ssa Madam jätetään kokonaan nimeämättä ja Master nimetään ainoastaan muutamassa kohtaa tekstiä. Molemmat hahmot, erityisesti Master, kuvataan tekstissä hyvin etäisenä, mihin nimeämättömyys myös osaltaan vaikuttaa. Master vetäytyy yksinäiseen piilopaikkaansa eikä osaa kohdata perhettään, josta hän on sodan myötä vieraantunut. Joanin poika Ned on ainoa henkilö, jonka kanssa Master kykenee kommunikoimaan, suurelta osin sen vuoksi, että Ned ei ole osa hänen aikaisempaa karibialaista kulttuuri-identiteettiään.

Paikkojen nimeäminen ja uudelleennimeäminen on tärkeä teema jälkikoloniaalisessa kirjallisuudentutkimuksessa. Paul Carterin mukaan paikkojen uudelleennimeäminen oli kolonisoijalle keino vetää rajoja kulttuurisesti merkityksellisen kolonisoijan alueen ja merkityksettömän kolonisoitujen alueen välille (Carter [1987] 2010: 158). Tämä on kolonisoijalle keino hallita uutta ja vierasta ympäristöä. Kolonisoitujen näkökulmasta tällä prosessilla on siis kulttuurista merkitystä tyhjentävä vaikutus. *The Orchid House*ssa siskosten isoisä, Old Master, on hyvä esimerkki tällaisesta nimeämisestä; Old Master

viettää paljon aikaa orkideatarhassaan, ja hän käyttää lähes yhtä paljon aikaa kasviensa nimeämiseen kuin niiden hoitamiseen (OH: 42). *Wide Sargasso Seassa* Rochesterilla on selkeä taipumus nimetä asioita, jotka ovat hänelle uusia ja tuntemattomia (esim. WSS: 47), mikä auttaa häntä hallitsemaan ympärillään tapahtuvaa muutosta.

Maisemakuvaukset kulttuuri-identiteetin ja tunteiden kuvauksissa

Maisemakuvauksia käytetään *Wide Sargasso Seassa* ja *The Orchid Housessa* hyvin monipuolisesti kuvaamaan tekstin eri osapuolia. Tässä kappaleessa käsittelemäni teemat ovat nostalgia, identiteetin peilaus ja ihmissuhteiden kuvaukset. Kaikkien näiden käsittelyssä käytetään molemmissa romaaneissa apuna maisemakuvauksia. Yhteys paikkaan on ollut keskeinen teema jälkikoloniaalisessa kirjallisuudentutkimuksessa, sillä paikka ja paikattomuus tai maanpako ovat tärkeitä kulttuuri-identiteettiin vaikuttavia tekijöitä. Yksilön kulttuuri-identiteetille, varsinkin sen käytännön puolelle, on tärkeää, että on paikka, jota voi kutsua kodiksi. Maisemakuvauksia käytetään kummassakin tekstissä monilla eri tavoilla kuvaamaan kulttuuri-identiteetin ja tunteenilmaisujen eri puolia.

Nostalgia on yksi keskeisistä maisemakuvauksen käyttötarkoituksista molemmissa romaaneissa. Nostalgia liittyy kiinteästi paikattomuuden tunteeseen, sillä nostalgisia maisemakuvauksia esiintyy juuri silloin, kun yksilö ei ole läsnä kyseisessä paikassa. *Wide Sargasso Seassa* valtaosa nostalgisista elementeistä löytyy romaanin ensimmäisestä osasta, jossa Antoinette muistelee lapsuuttaan ja perheen Coulibri-tilan puutarhaa (esim. WSS: 4). Antoinetten kuvaukset puutarhasta ovat hyvin yksityiskohtaisia, ja niissä käytetään hyväksi jokaista viittä aistia. Samankaltaista yksityiskohtaisuutta ja aistien käyttöä löytyy myös *The Orchid Housesta*. Kuten Antoinette *Wide Sargasso Seassa* myös siskokset *The Orchid Housessa* osoittavat selkeää kiintymystä ympäristöönsä maisemakuvauksissaan. Vanhin siskoksista, Stella, on erityisen selkeästi kiintynyt Karibian luontoon. Ashcroftin mukaan näköaistin suosiminen on tunnusomaista länsimaiselle kirjallisuuspärinteelle, jolloin kaikkien

aistien käyttöä voidaan jälkikoloniaalisessa kirjallisuudessa pitää keinona erottautua länsimaisesta kirjallisuusperinteestä (Ashcroft 2001: 127). Kaikkia aisteja käyttämällä saadaan aikaan jälkikoloniaaliselle kirjallisuusperinteelle tunnusomainen toiseuden tuntu.

Nostalgisten kuvausten lisäksi maisemakuvauksia käytetään kummassakin tekstissä hyväksi myös henkilöhahmojen kulttuuri-identiteettien määrittelemisessä ja niiden kehityksen kuvaamisessa. Maisemakuvauksista käy selville muun muassa, että Antoinette oli jo lapsuudessaan hyvin kiintynyt Karibian luontoon, ja että hän turvautui siihen kokiessaan ihmisten olevan häntä vastaan. Karibian luonto onkin korvannut yhteiskunnan Antoinetten käytännön identiteetissä, minkä vuoksi sieltä poistuminen aiheuttaa niin suuren kolauksen hänen kulttuuri-identiteetilleen. *The Orchid House*ssa maisemakuvauksilla määritetään muun muassa siskosten kulttuuri-identiteettien ja persoonallisuuksien välisiä eroja; Stella on erityisen kiintynyt Karibian luonnon mahtipontisuuteen, kun taas Joanin kiintymys kohdistuu pieniin yksityiskohtiin. Natalie puolestaan tuntuu olevan varsin välinpitämätön häntä ympäröivää luontoa kohtaan ja osoittaa paljon suurempaa kiinnostusta ihmisiin.

Muutokset yksilön kulttuuri-identiteetissä tulevat niin ikään esiin maisemakuvauksissa. Esimerkiksi Antoinetten kulttuuri-identiteetti muuttuu huomattavasti hänen siirtyessään Karibialta Englantiin. Antoinetten kaksi erillistä identiteettiä, Antoinette ja Bertha, ovat siis kumpikin sidoksissa tiettyyn ympäristöön. Hän kokee englantilaisen elinympäristönsä tukahduttavaksi. Stellan kulttuuri-identiteetin kehityksestä kertoo se, että hän kuvailee eri elinympäristöjään eri väreillä: Dominican vihreys, New Yorkin harmaus ja Mainen valkeus (*OH*: 57). Joan puhuu myös Englannin tukahduttavasta harmaudesta (*OH*: 136). Kirkkaat värit yhdistetään kummassakin tekstissä Karibian luontoon, kun taas värittömyys yhdistetään Karibian ulkopuoliseen maailmaan, Yhdysvaltoihin ja Englantiin. Myös erilaisiin tekstuureihin kiinnitetään huomiota; Stella kertoo kokeneensa New Yorkin sileyden ahdistavana ja pitävänsä enemmän Dominican luonnon karkeudesta (*OH*: 55-56), kun taas Antoinette kertoo kokevansa karibialaisen luonnon pehmeiden sen lohdullisimpana ominaisuutena (*WSS*: 7).

Kumpikin romaani käyttää maisemakuvauksia ja luontoa hyväkseen myös henkilöhahmojen välisten ihmissuhteiden määrittämisessä. Henkilöhahmojen suhtautuminen heitä ympäröivään luontoon heijastaa heidän suhtautumistaan muihin henkilöihin. *Wide Sargasso Seassa* tämä tulee erityisen selkeästi esiin Antoinetten ja Rochesterin välillä. Heidän välisessä suhteessaan Antoinette rinnastuu Karibian luontoon, kun taas Rochester nähdään osana Englantia. Rochesterilla on vaikeuksia erottaa Antoinette ja Karibian luonto toisistaan, koska luonnolla on niin kiinteä yhteys Antoinetten kulttuuri-identiteettiin. Rochester kokee molemmat vieraana ja jopa uhkaavana. Hän myös käyttää luontoa korvikkeena osoittaessaan tunteitaan Antoinetta kohtaan esimerkiksi tallomalla kukan, joka muistutti häntä Antoinetesta (WSS: 60). Samankaltainen vastakkainasettelu esiintyy myös *The Orchid Housessa* Stellan ja hänen miehensä Helmutin välillä. Stella kertoo paheksuvansa yhdysvaltalaisen yhteiskunnan hyödyllisyyden tavoittelua (OH: 56), joka eroaa suuresti dominicalaisesta yhteiskunnasta, jossa luontoa pidetään itseisarvona.

Henkilökohtaisten ominaisuuksien ja suhteiden kuvaamisen lisäksi luontoa ja erityisesti orkideoita käytetään myös yleisemmällä tasolla vertauskuvana hybriditeetistä ja koloniaalisesta vallasta. Lassner kuvailee orkideaa hybridisenä kasvina, jota romaanien henkilöt yrittävät varjella, mutta joka kuitenkin kuvastaa myös koloniaalisen vallan rappioitumista (Lassner 2004: 161). Tiffin kertoo erityisesti puutarhan toimivan symbolina epäonnistuneesta yrityksestä taltuttaa siirtokunnan kesyttämätöntä luontoa (Tiffin 2005: 203). Oleellisin käyttötarkoitus orkideoille sekä muille loiskasveille kummassakin romaanissa on vertauskuva hybridi-identiteetille; Baptiste kuvailee *The Orchid Housessa* loiskasvia, joka on kasvanut kauniiksi ja voimakkaaksi siitä huolimatta, ettei sillä ole omia juuria maassa (OH: 178), mikä voidaan nähdä vertauskuvana kreoliväestöstä, joka on onnistunut luomaan kodin paikassa, josta he eivät alunperin ole kotoisin.

Lopuksi

Kummassakin romaanissa käytetään siis teemoja nimet ja maisemakuvaukset hyvin monipuolisesti kuvaamaan jälkikoloniaalisen kulttuuri-identiteetin eri osapuolia. Näillä teemoilla luodaan teoksissa kuuluvuuden tunnetta, joka on keskeistä kulttuuri-identiteetin rakentumiselle. *Wide Sargasso Sea* ja *The Orchid House* -teoksissa kuvataan elävästi valkoisen kreolin kulttuuri-identiteetin monitahoisuutta, ja kuten tarkastelustani käy ilmi, niissä käytetään hyvin samankaltaisia välineitä tämän kulttuuri-identiteetin esittämiseen. Teokset liittyvät toisiinsa dominicalaisen kirjallisuusperinteen kautta, mutta niiden välinen yhteys on mielestäni niin tiivis, ettei sitä voida selittää yksinomaan samankaltaisella kulttuurisella taustalla. Teosten välinen intertekstuaalisuus on kahdensuuntaista ja rikastuttaa molempia teoksia vähentämättä kuitenkaan niiden omaleimaisuutta tai kirjallista arvoa.