

Chapter I: Introduction

Jean Rhys as a Postcolonial Feminist Writer

Wide Sargasso Sea certainly challenges cultural definitions and pinpoints double marginalized culture as a source of deep anxiety. Rhys negotiates with Bronte's text. As an already canonical text, the merging of Antoinette's fate into that of Bertha's is inevitable, but Rhys allows us to interpret the fate of Antoinette differently by giving open ending. Antoinette dreams of the fire and leaps to her death but the novel ends with her resolution to act rather than a description of her death or an exact repetition of Bronte's words. Thus the possibility of a different fate for Rhys's character is left intact, therefore, the novel shows that women are resisting in the double context, one in the family circle; and other in socio-political and psychological. The text can be said to have an influence on the earlier text and to extend its possibilities.

In spite of her dedication to mapping her perceptions and sharing these with the others who read her work, Rhys thought of herself, in her personal life, as someone who would always be misunderstood. This conception informed her bearing in the successive environments that she felt she always bordered. Rhys felt marginalized on several counts because she was living in a multiracial population marked by strong antagonism toward the lingering imperialist presence, and she was white. In addition to this, she was brought up in a late-Victorian culture shaped by powerfully masculine values, and she was a woman.

Despite the perspicacity with which all of her narratives record the lives of the disenfranchised and interrogate the conditions of subjectivity, even readers who have become Rhys enthusiasts tend to privilege her last novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which was

published almost three decades after the others.

It is not surprising that *Wide Sargasso Sea* would appeal to contemporary audiences, for positioning its self-aware to Charlotte Brontë's nineteenth-century narrative *Jane Eyre* which offers up a bouquet of post-structuralism delights. Rhys's most famous work depends upon and yet forever alters the prior text. It is never the same rereading after one experiences the critique of imperialism mounted by *Wide Sargasso Sea*. For Rhys's novel problematizes the hierarchies of "origin" and "secondary," "colonizer" and "colonized," "subject" and "object" in modes of analysis that resonate in the current critical climate. Yet the novels that Rhys wrote at mid-century make powerful and unforgettable claims as they evoke the primitive states of emotional life.

In comparison of Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* that Brontë employs this strategy in her choice of Bertha, the novel's anti-heroine, as a West Indian Creole woman. Brontë sets up a dichotomy whereby Jane's Englishness is enhanced by Bertha's Otherness. In Brontë's comparison of Bertha and Jane, she focuses on five main areas of difference: appearance, health, liberty, violence and sexuality. Rochester's comparison of the two women distinguishes the bestial Creole from the human Englishwoman. Jane herself depicts Bertha as an animal when she describes her attack on Rochester, saying, ". . . the lunatic sprang and grappled his throat viciously, and laid her teeth into his cheek" (JE 170). By portraying Bertha as sub-human, Brontë effectively diminishes the reader's pity for her as an imprisoned woman, instead making them view her as a beast with no entitlement to English ideals of liberty. Once Bertha is effectively dehumanized, she is cast into the role of impediment instead of victim; she is all that stands between Rochester and Jane's culturally sanctioned union.

Similarly, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette's Aunt Cora leaves the island because of her poor health and returns to England for a year. However, Cora's exposure to the West Indies has contaminated her. So, she fears that another English winter will kill her (WSS 31-33). Cora's sojourn in the West Indies has compromised her physical and moral high ground, so that she belongs in dangerous Jamaica rather than healthy England. Bertha's mania too can be seen as an indication of her moral inferiority manifested through her physical deterioration and discoloration. This interpretation seems especially salient when one compares descriptions of Bertha's failing health with Jane's thriving existence at Thornfield. Jane describes Bertha to Rochester, saying, "It was a discolored face – it was a savage face. I wish I could forget the roll of the red eyes and the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments!" (JE 117). Bertha's discoloration in her "blackened" and inflated lineaments implies colonial sickness and contamination.'

In *Jane Eyre*, Bronte constructs a connection between physical debility and moral weakness and expands the connection to the political arena, highlighting the way Bertha and Jane respond to oppression. Therefore, while Jane can assert her independence and throw off her oppressors, such as the Reed family, Antoinette cannot because her hybrid identity as a Creole excludes her from this history of inherited rights. In both texts, the reader encounters moments of liberty for Jane and moments of imprisonment for Bertha/Antoinette.

In the final chapter of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette recalls offering all she has to Rochester in exchange for her freedom and being denied. However, Jane never needs to ask Rochester to release her, and instead is described as a "resolute, wild, free thing that leaves without his knowledge (JE 357)". In both texts patterns of English freedom

arise as Rochester and Jane are both able to break away from unhappy situations in their lives. Rochester is able to escape his miserable marriage to Antoinette by locking her in a “cardboard world” (WSS 115) where he can “. . . wait – for the day when she is only a memory to be avoided, locked away, and like all memories a legend. Or a lie . . .” WSS 113). He is able to live the life of a bachelor, roaming Europe and taking mistresses, while disowning their marriage. Jane is similarly able to escape from her awkward and unhappy situation at Thornfield after her illegitimate marriage to Rochester is halted by sneaking away in the early morning unbeknownst to the house. Bertha, when referring to the character in *Jane Eyre* and Antoinette when referring to the character in *Wide Sargasso Sea* are examples of imprisonment evidenced in both texts. Therefore, the *Wide Sargasso Sea* is the parody of *Jane Eyre*.

Wide Sargasso Sea has generated heated debate among the literary critics, resisting easy categorization within the context of twentieth-century fiction. As a postcolonial work, the novel indicates England's exploitative colonial empire, aligning its sympathies with the plight of the black Caribbeans. However, Rhys's narrator remains a step removed from racial oppression, and struggles primarily against the dictates of patriarchy. For this reason, the character is a touchstone for feminist theorists. That *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a rewriting of a text long upheld as a triumph of feminist liberalism, complicates the feminist debate.

Jean Rhys is the author of many short stories and novels, of which perhaps *Wide Sargasso Sea* is best known. Rhys is known as a modernist writer, writing throughout the twentieth century, and is often paralleled with Joseph Conrad and T. S. Eliot. Like the modernist authors, Rhys' writing often centers on themes of "isolation, absence of society

or community, the sense of things falling apart, dependence and loss" (Carl 15). She uses poetic language, irony, and a concern for subjectivity and language to develop her themes of anxiety and loss. She often uses, like other modernist writers, a cosmopolitan, indeed metropolitan setting for her writing. "Wherever the setting, she seems to keep to consistent patterns of imagery; in *Wide Sargasso Sea* she contrasts the lush tropical sensuality with the cold English calculation" (Vicinus 125). Like Sylvia Plath, "she uses her life experiences; the pain, the rawness and the wounds as the material from which she writes her fiction" (Carl 3). In fact, many of her heroines have been made up of fragments of her own self. Many critics ask then why her heroines do nothing to get out of their situations. Walter Allen describes Antoinette, the heroine in *Wide Sargasso Sea* by saying, "she is a young woman . . . who is hopelessly and helplessly at sea in her relations with men, a passive victim doomed to destruction" (Carl 4). Much debate has centered on the idea of helpless victims in Rhys's writing.

Indeed, Rhys allows Antoinette to rise above her situation by seeking final revenge on Rochester and gaining back her independence, her sanity and her life. Rhys has recently gained popularity in the field of feminist literature:

In the seventies, when she was still alive, feminism as it was called centered on sexual oppression, which excluded Jean Rhys' literature. What the feminists of the seventies did not realize, is that Rhys was years ahead of them. While they centered solely on sexual oppression, Rhys questioned economic, racial, class, colonial and sexual oppression. (Carl 11-12).

It has only been through the eighties that she has become more widely recognized

as a valuable feminist writer has. Not only has she been recognized as a feminist writer, V. S. Naipaul suggests as, "She should be reread in terms of colonial origins" (Spivak 132). In fact, until her publication of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, her Caribbean origins went largely unmentioned. The publication of *Wide Sargasso Sea* coincided with the recognition of West Indies' literature being recognized as a valuable addition to worldly literature. With Naipaul's suggestion, "she has been largely included into the world of postcolonial literature, and her novels are reread through the theories. Rhys has a powerful connection to the language debate in postcolonial literature. Indeed, her novels use languages other than English" (Carl 80). Carl mentions in her book on Jean Rhys that "Rhys unpicks and mocks language by which the powerful control" (81).

Rhys is able to get past the clichés of the English language, and rejects much of the language of the empire, colonialism, class, bourgeois and morality by construction a new language. Her novels especially contain language that is largely fragmented, that weaves and follows associations and "circles back for certain events and phrases" (Carl 85). "Rhys also uses multiple voices in her writing; inner dialogue, indirect speech, letters and dreams. She also uses echoes of conversations, songs, poetry, and quotes from books, letters and prayers" (Vicinus 43). By using this type of narrative voice, she is able to reinvent, resist and transform language through her rejection of what already have the existences.

Wide Sargasso Sea is the story of the crazy first wife of Rochester from *Jane Eyre*. Rhys was haunted by the figure of the first Mrs. Rochester, this mad wife in *Jane Eyre*, whom we know only by Rochester's biased and racist descriptions of her. "She is defined for us purely as a foreigner, a victim, entirely defined by and in the power of

another, a man, her white English husband Rochester" (James 61). Rhys wanted to change this, to give Mrs. Rochester a voice. *Wide Sargasso Sea* breaks away from the nineteenth century tradition by taking the viewpoint of the other woman and by centering the narrative on this woman about whom we know little.

Anyone who has read *Jane Eyre* knows what the ending of *Wide Sargasso Sea* will be, thus we are more caught up in the pain and isolation which Antoinette feels, knowing what will be her demise. Rhys is actually able to take the outcast from *Jane Eyre* into a heroine by centering her novel on crazy Antoinette. Rhys has made a valuable contribution to post colonial literature. Especially in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, she shows that "the other" can become central and essential part of literature.

Most critics have tried to explain the cultural misunderstandings, social misconceptions, and stereotyped gender issues in *Wide Sargasso Sea* by approaching the novel through a postcolonial perspective, in which Antoinette has been claimed to represent the colonized, whereas Rochester has signified the colonizer, Great Britain. This is not only due to the gender difference and socially constructed hierarchical position of the female and the male in society, but also because Antoinette, as a Creole woman from Jamaica, marries the civilized British man, Rochester, whose country used to "own" part of the Caribbean as he also "owns" his wife later in the novel.

Thus, this research is in the base of double marginalization of colonizer. The patriarchal male voice of Rochester dominates the female identity of Antoinette by renaming her as "Bertha" which is a European name, and labeling her as "the lunatic" just because he cannot make sense of the cultural differences. It seems the relationship as a representation of what colonization has done to the colonized nations through the

domination of the British male discourse over the female Creole identity. Therefore, it seems the West Indian culture is actually a reference to the way the colonizer perceives and looks at the colonized. In this sense, Antoinette's double resistance is; the colonized and her madness; both for the chaos and the sense of displacement.

In the insistence throughout her oeuvre on the unassailability of her protagonists' union with unhappiness, Rhys offers finely honed portraits of individuals who are accompanied by a persistent sense of grievance that can never be assuaged. The aggrieved mood and Rhys's sense of life are closely linked, for it is when they are acknowledging the feeling of pain that her characters live their selfhood fully. Underscoring the power of her own melancholy, she establishes that she is committed to finding a way to give sadness a voice, to let it speak without compromise, in her most memorable creative work:

In her *Black Exercise Book*, one of several unpublished notebooks in which she kept memoirs, observations, first ideas, and preliminary drafts for some of her fiction and poetry, she recorded her encounter in adolescence with a family friend who introduced her to sexual life by narrating a series of increasingly explicit sadomasochistic adventures in which she functioned, in fantasy, as his sexual slave. (Thomas 65-6)

Jean Rhys spent most of her life in England after the age of seventeen, and the disappointment and misery she experienced mirrors Antoinette's suffering when she returns to the mother country. Like Antoinette, Rhys felt that she did not have a country or a residence that she could consider "home" and in her autobiography she often complains of England as cold and dark. In letters, Rhys mentions that the reason her

protagonist starts the fire in Thornfield Hall is a simple one: “She is cold—and fire is the only warmth she knows in England” (Thomas 6). Teresa O’Connor comments on Rhys’ vagabond lifestyle in England: “As soon as Rhys arrived in London she began what was to be a mode of living that persist almost her entire life—the taking of lodging in temporary, and often inhospitable, quarters” (Carl 72). During this time Rhys struggled with financial instability, love affairs that ended badly and estrangements from family which caused her to perceive England as a cruel and unforgiving place.

This view of England perhaps evoked nostalgia for Dominica, for though Rhys returned to the beloved island only once and experienced some disillusionment, Dominica still stood in stark contrast to England, as O’Connor points out:

In Rhys’ developing symbology, England provided the antithesis to “home,” an anti-home. If Dominica was light, England was dark; if Dominica was warm, England was cold; if in Dominica the male seduction was “mental” and paid for with chocolates, in England it approached prostitution; if Dominica was dominated by the rejecting figure of Rhys’ mother, England preferred an endless line of hostile landladies; and if Rhys’ island suggested an expansiveness of the soul, England offered finite closure, infinitely. (79)

The idea of England and Englishness first appears in *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a place of possible refuge and safety for Antoinette, but the novel soon depicts the country much like Jean Rhys describes it in her letters and autobiography: dark, cold, and hostile because England is for the colonial settler the “mother country,” it is natural for Antoinette to look to England as a possible home when she is shunned by

the people of the island.

However, just as Antoinette's relationship with her mother is devoid of warmth, England also rejects Antoinette as daughter. The following pages explore how Antoinette's relationship with her mother is symbolic of her relationship with England and how Antoinette's Caribbeanness contributes both to the divide between her, her mother, and the mother country.

The relationship that Antoinette has with her mother Annette is one without much dialogue or understanding, yet Antoinette fatalistically follows in her steps, marrying an Englishman, leaving the island, and succumbing to madness. Even before her mother suffers from madness she does not have an endearing relationship with Antoinette, favoring instead Pierre, her handicapped son. Antoinette reflects upon her mother's demeanor: "I hated this frown and once I touched her forehead trying to smooth it. But she pushed me away, not roughly but calmly, coldly, without a word, as if she decided once and for all that I was useless to her" (WSS 18). When her mother does become ill, Antoinette goes to see her, and is once again pushed away: "Why you bring this child to make trouble, trouble, trouble? Trouble enough without that" (WSS 48). It is not completely clear why Annette is unloving towards her daughter, but Antoinette feels that her mother is ashamed of her for her assimilation to the black Caribbean.

When Antoinette is trapped in the attic in Thornfield Hall, she refuses to acknowledge that she is in England, telling her keeper, Grace Poole, "I don't believe it . . . and I will never believe it" (WSS 165). The idea that Antoinette's mother country has renounced her "daughter" is too painful for Antoinette to bear; it is easier to deny that she has returned. Once again the idea of England as a menace appears in the form

of a dream, which is when Antoinette is most active. In the dream, she sets fire to the house and in so doing, reenacts the fire at Coulibri. At Coulibri the oppressed people, enraged at the former slave owners, use their power to burn the estates.

Similarly, Antoinette represents the oppressed slave who takes revenge on her English oppressors, England and Rochester. This position is one that she could not assert in Coulibri, where she was considered the colonizer. The fire, therefore, could be seen as an act of triumph on her part, rather than an act of self-destruction. The concentration here is on the idea of Antoinette taking revenge on her mother country. During her fantasy dream of England, mention that Antoinette merges island images with English ones and this characterizes her confusion involving her double culture.

Similarly, in the fire dream, Antoinette again sees images that merge her island and England into one, as if the two worlds to which she does not fully belong are both being destroyed. "I saw the chandelier and the red carpet downstairs and the bamboo and the tree ferns, the gold ferns and the silver, and the soft green velvet of the moss on the garden wall" (170).

Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* has been the object of several postcolonial and feminist critical readings. Taking those interpretations into account, this paper attempts to shift the focus to the psychological relevance of the socio-historical questions of slavery and female oppression for the two protagonists, Antoinette and Rochester. The apparent dichotomies male/female, black/white, sanity/madness, rationality/unconscious etc. are exasperated by the hero's "terrified consciousness" and result into the ghosts of womanhood, madness, blackness and magic through which he represents his wife. Antoinette's psychological evolution, on the other hand, is seen as a growing self-

division into those artificial polarities, until in the end she finally accepts her inner inescapable and positive complexity. Such complexity is here seen as the principal upshot of the novel, in which narrative blurs the boundaries and reveals the manifold nature of personalities and situations.

Culminating Jean Rhys's career, fusing together the themes of all her other novels and bringing them to their highest form, *Wide Sargasso Sea* is the perfect conclusion of a life of writing spent in the attempt to exteriorize and exorcise inner demons and struggles. Because of its hybridity, its medley of cultural references and moods, the extreme passions and fears it unfolds, *Wide Sargasso Sea* is Jean Rhys's most problematic novel, revealing the author's own psychological complexity and the inner conflict that tore her mind apart and that is variously reflected in all her heroines.

In this novel, in particular, the parallels between herself and her heroine are so extensive, including a special sensitivity, a troubled childhood and a painful struggle for identity and for a place in society, any society that they brought back to the author memories of a remote but still disturbing past. The story is divided into three parts, told respectively by Antoinette, Rochester and Antoinette again. The choice of dividing the point of view between the two main characters, giving each the opportunity to express her/his thoughts, gives the novel the additional value of presenting facts in a double perspective, showing Rhys's ability to understand and express different viewpoints.

Moreover, through the space given to the apparently negative character, it becomes apparent that Rochester himself is endowed with a complex and interesting personality, made up of those very same forces that divide the self of Antoinette. An exceptionally resonant novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea* tackles various fundamental themes

such as race and identity, gender and politics, at the same time as it gives voice to extremely varied ways of feeling and unresolved conflicting emotions.

In this novel the conflicts between blacks and whites, men and women, colonialists and colonised, can also be traced back to the tension between two fundamental, primary opposing forces: reason and emotion, rationality and the unconscious which have always been involved in an endless struggle, each trying to win over the other but neither ever succeeding. These forces are represented in the novel as emerging through a number of themes and images, including those mentioned above, so that questions of gender and female oppression, for example, are not just dealt, but also as representing more abstract issues. On the one side of the “battle-line”, then, there is reason, Europe and civilization, adult age, white skin, patriarchy and masculinity; on the other, passion, the Caribbean and the “exotic” colonies, childhood, black skin, matriarchy and femininity. The mind of Antoinette, which is fully occupied with the outer tensions represented in the novel is heightened in the light of their impact on the psyche of the protagonist. Thus the political and social struggles in *Wide Sargasso Sea* can be viewed both as influences on Antoinette and, also, as externalizations of the contrasts in her mind, great impediments in her restless search for identity. Therefore, as the female protagonist Antoinette has been doubly marginalized by colonialist and patriarchal ideologies, she resists to such repressive ideologies by means of her madness. Antoinette carries within herself two opposing worlds, but it would be more accurate to say that her mind is suspended between those two worlds, so, ultimately, it belongs to neither. Since most of the critical attention, as mentioned above, has been devoted to “external” problems, such as race, gender and colonial politics, this essay will concentrate on the

psychological relevance of those conflicts, examining the reasons for the internal division that torments the heroine. The interpretation of its solution, represented in the ending of the novel, depends on the assessment of this question.

Chapter II: Feminist Studies

Concept of Feminism

Feminism is a general term covering a range of ideologies and theories which pay special attention to women's right and women's position in any culture and society. It is a discourse that involves various movements, theories and philosophies which are concerned with the issues of gender difference, advocate equality for women and campaign for woman's right and interest. The term tends to be used for the women's movement which began in the late 18th century and perpetuates to campaign for complete political, social, and economic equality between man and women. In *Feminist Theory: A Reader* Paula Treichler and Cherris Kramaral define feminism as:

A movement seeking the reorganization of the world upon a basis of sex equality in all human relations; a movement which would reject every differentiation between individuals upon the ground of sex would abolish all sex privileges and sex burdens and would strive to set up the recognition of the common humanity of woman and man as the foundation of law and custom. (7)

Feminist writers are united by the idea that women's position in society is unequal to that of men and that society is structured in such a way as to benefit men to the political, social and economic detriment of women. However, feminist writers have used inequalities and have advocated different ways of readdressing inequalities and there are marked geographical and historical varieties in the nature of feminism.

Historically, feminist thought can be divided into two waves. The first wave began in about 1800 and lasted until the 1930s. It was largely concerned with gaining

equal rights between men and women. First wave feminism originally focused on the promotion of equal contract and property rights for women and the opposition to the chattel marriage and the ownership of married woman by their husband. However, by the end of 19th century activism primarily focused on gaining political power, particularly the right of woman suffrage. Yet, feminist such as Voltaire de Cleyre and Margaret Sanger were still active in campaigning for woman sexual, reproduction and economic rights at this time. In Britain, the suffragettes campaigned for the woman's right for vote.

The second wave feminism which began in late 1960s, has continued to fight for equality but has also developed a range of theories and approaches that stresses the difference between women and men and which draw attention to the specific needs of woman. Although the term 'feminism' was not used until the end of the 19th century, the emergence of recognizably feminist ideology can be traced to the late 19th century. The earliest form of feminism was concerned with equal rights for woman and man. This meant equal standing as citizens in public life and to some extent equal legal status within the home. These ideas emerged in response to the French Revolution and American war of independence, both of which advocated the values of liberty and equality. Feminists in France argued that revolutionary values of liberty, equality and fraternity should apply to all, while woman activist in America called for an extension of the principles of the American Declaration of Independence to women, including right to citizenship and property.

By the 1920s, feminist began to turn their attention from question of equality between women and men. For example, calling for improved welfare provision for mother and children. These factors would become stronger in the second wave of

feminism. Focal point of second wave feminism is the notion that the person is political: i.e., individual woman does not suffer oppression in isolation but as the result of wider social and political system.

A powerful strand of feminism is concerned with the way in which men have controlled and subordinated women's bodies. Feminist thinkers have argued that sexual and domestic violence are not isolated incidents but are controlled to the subordination of women by patriarchy. Notable feminist Andrea Dworkin wrote powerfully against pornography as a means by which patriarchy exploits women's bodies and incites violence against women. It grants them of their body right, including the importance of the right to choose motherhood.

It is in this regard that these feminists have often been criticized as Eurocentric by black women and women in developing world. For example, Indian critic Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak has criticized Anglo- American feminist theorists of making women of the developing world, the other by imposing western perspective on them. However, women from non-western cultures have taken up feminist ideas and accommodated them in their own situation. For example, black feminist developed the perspective which takes account of the fact that they are doubly marginalized by race and sex.

The African-American feminism argues that the problem faced by women of colors is different from that by women of western white community. Western feminists' assumption is that all of the same gender across classes and cultures are socially constituted as a homogenous group is criticized by the African-American feminists. They argue that the only focus upon gendered power and viewing women as a homogenous group shadows the differences between women. The African-American feminists

consider western feminism almost a failure for not speaking about the issue of women of colors on the one hand and making themselves higher and superior to colored women on the other.

Thus, western mainstream feminism does not speak about the double marginalization of the African- American women. African-American feminist thinkers argue that sexism, class oppression and racism are inextricably linked together. They believed that the liberation of African – American women entails freedom for all people, since it requires the end of racism, sexism and class oppression. The African-American feminists Alice Walker, Bell hooks, Toni Morrison, Maya Angelo and soon have explored the problems and issues of colored women in the racist, sexist and patriarchal society where they have been doubly marginalized. Even the white women oppress the women of color because they also considered women of color as inferior to them.

Although, there are different waves of feminism in western feminism which are activated for the vindication of right and equality but there too lack something because of its homogeneity and universalization and univocality. They cannot address the rest of the women or the women in Non-western world.

In the same vein Postcolonial feminists argue that oppression relating to the colonial experiences particularly social class and ethnic oppression has marginalized women in postcolonial societies. Postcolonial feminists are concerned with the ‘double colonization’ of third world women under the imperial conditions. They are ghettoized and secluded from the mainstream culture and suffered due to their western gaze as well. Because the western feminists create inseparable division between them, the non-western women suffer from a sense of isolation and have hard time to express their identity. They

are stuck between two trends of domination; patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and object formation. The postcolonial feminists accuse the mainstream feminists of being 'Eurocentric' in their attitude towards women in the countries of third world trying to impose western model of feminism, that is, not always appropriate to the particular condition of third world countries. Postcolonial feminists' today struggle to fight gender oppression within their own culture, models of society rather than those imposed by the western colonizer.

Third World Feminism

Owing to the homogenous and dangerous image created by the western feminism, third world feminism emerged in postcolonial scenario. In reality, the western feminism cannot address the problem of the third world women. So, western feminism creates the singular image of third world women, it produces the image that the third world women are ignorant, uneducated, poor, family-oriented, tradition bound, domestic and victimized through their self representation as educated, modern, free to make their own decisions.

The groups of feminist theorists who acquired their views and took part in feminist politics in so-called third world countries are called third world feminists. These third world feminists criticize western feminism in the ground that it is ethnocentric and does not take into account the different experiences of women from third world countries. Chandra Talpade Monanty and Sarojini Sahoo criticize feminism on the ground that it is ethnocentric and do not take into account the existence of feminism indigenous to third world countries. This discourse is strongly related to African-feminism and postcolonial feminism.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty defines third world geographically, the nation-states of Latin America, the Caribbean, Sub Sahara Africa, South and South East Asia, China, South Africa and Oceania constitutes the parameters of the non-European third world. In addition, Black Latin, Asian and indigenous people in U. S. A, Europe, Australia, some of whom have historic links with geographically defined third world. The use of the term “Third World Women” by western feminism has been widely critiqued. Mohanty uses the term interchangeably with “women of color” (7). She argues that:

What we seem to constitute women of color or third world women as a viable oppositional alliance is a common context of struggle rather than color or racial identification. Similarly, it is third world women’s oppositional political relation to sexist, racist and imperialistic structure that constitutes our political commonality. (7)

Mohanty argues that western feminism appropriates the production of the third world women’s singular monolithic subject ‘for a discursive colonization’ (51). Furthermore, western feminism articulated a discursive colonization through the production of third world differences, a historical something that apparently oppresses most of, not all of the women in these countries and it is in the production of this “Third World Difference” that western feminism appropriates and colonizes the fundamental complexities and conflicts which characterize, the lives of women of different classes, religions, cultures, races and castes in these countries.

Third world feminists criticize that western feminism fails to take account adequately for experiences of the third world women. Western feminist’s assumption that all the female are socially and culturally constructed as a homogenous group is criticized

by the third world feminists. Third world feminist tries to give response to the problem faced by third world women, are domestic violence, dowry murders, early marriages, mismatched arrange marriages, discrimination which are totally different from the problem of Western countries.

Parents take their daughter as a burden of their family. Early marriage is in practice in third world countries where girls get married at their teenage. Patriarchal society thinks that expenditure on education for daughter is waste of money and time as well. Instead of formal education from school, parents teach their daughter how to behave with her husband and other family members. They teach their daughter how to complete their household work after marriage. They send their daughter in the kitchen to learn cooking food, clean rooms and washing dishes etc. instead of sending school.

Mismatched arrange marriage is another problem which third world women have to face in their lives. They are not allowed to choose their life partner. Parents find out boy when they think their daughter is in her teenage and take decision about their daughter's marriage. Daughter can talk with her life partner only after her marriage. Even they cannot see the face of groom before marriage. Women are treated as only mute domestic animals that are to be saved, limited within the home and children, who in turn would give birth to children, cook food, do household work and remain ignorant, innocent and obedient.

“Double colonization” has often been used to refer to the ways in which women have simultaneously experienced the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy. It is argued that colonialism celebrates masculine achievement in a series of male-oriented myths while women are subject to representation in a colonial discourse in a way which

colludes with patriarchal value. The women in the third world postcolonial societies become victims of gender inequalities existing in both the indigenous and the colonial culture both often simultaneously oppress women during colonialism and in its wake.

Western feminism has an ethnocentric bias in presuming that the solutions white women of west have advocated in combating their oppression are equally applicable to all the women on the earth. As a result, issues of race have been neglected which has prevented feminist from thinking about the ways in which racism and patriarchy join each other. Besides, white women have not been able to visualize themselves as the potential oppressors of the black and Asian women, even when trying to be benevolent towards them.

Postcolonial critics argue that black and Asian women are barely made visible within western feminist criticism; if at all they are addressed, their representation remains highly problematic their representation orientalist and their social practices are taken to be barbarous from which the third world women need rescuing by their enlightened western sister. They give the example of western feminist horror concerning the arranged marriage of Asian women. In advocating an end to arranged marriage of Asian women because they are doomed, oppressive western feminists do not consider Asian women's views and assume instead that their enlightened outlook is the most oppressive and liberating. Many critics studied the difficulties of the black and Asian women faced in working with the popular discourse of feminism coming from the west. In the postcolonial third world societies British colonialism interrupted the indigenous familial and community structures and imposed its own models instead.

The women in the third world postcolonial societies, become victim of gender inequalities existing both in the indigenous and the colonial culture often simultaneously oppress them. Ketu H. Kartak argues:

In India, Mahatma Gandhi's fight against the British colonialism during the period around 1920-1930s, used specially gendered representation for building his kind of nationalism, but ultimately has least inclined to take up the cause of freeing Indian women from their patriarchal subordination to men. (42)

Several critics have hinted at a trend towards male chauvinism to many forms of nationalism. Such icons of the nation as mother India or mother Africa are used in nationalist representation to reconstruct the image of the passive female who depends upon the active males to protect her or restore her honor.

Uma Narayan, *In Dislocating Cultures*, takes aim at the related notion of nation, identity and tradition to show how western and third world scholars have misrepresented third world culture and feminists genders. *Dislocating Cultures* contributes a philosophical perspective on the area of ongoing interest such as nationalism, postcolonial studies and the cultural politics of debates over tradition and westernization in third world context. She says, "I am arguing that third world feminism is not a mindless mimicking of western agendas in one clear and simple sense that for instance, Indian feminism is clearly a response to issues specially confronting many Indian women"(13).

Such issues that feminist groups in India have politically engaged with the problems of dowry murders and dowry related harassment of women, issues related to

women's education, poverty, work, health and with other issues that affect women's lives. While women in western contexts might be unfamiliar with the violence against women connected to the contemporary functioning of the institution of dowry and arranged marriages. Marriage is an oppressive mechanism for many women.

Third world feminists find fault in culturally and socially created practice of patriarchal society and try to subvert them. They protest against the forces which relegate them to secondary position. Uma Narayan says; "Third world women's problems' are fundamentally the problems of third world women being victimized by traditional patriarchal cultural practices" (19). Many Indian women are burnt by their families for dowry. Therefore, dowry murder is another problem in Indian society. Dowry is a compensation paid to the groom's family for taking on the economic burden of wife whose contribution to the family income is negligible.

Uma Narayan says:

Demands for goods and cash nowadays seem to continue for several years after the marriage has taken place, the wife's harassment providing her within 'incentive' to pressure her parents to meet continuing dowry demands by her husband and laws. Families that are under pressure to provide large dowries for the marriage of their own daughter have additional incentives to 'exploit the daughter-in-laws'. (110)

In this way, husband and his family demands dowry from women's parents. If woman does not bring dowry consisting of gold, jewelry and household items etc., her husband could kill her. Narayan further argues, "Having expropriated as much money and material goods as they can from the women's parents. The husband and his family

murder the daughter-in-law to facilitate the son to remarry and secure yet another dowry” (111).

This shows there is no certainty of women’s better future. Life after bringing dowry in her husband’s house. Her husband’s family can murder the daughter-in-law to receive more dowries from another marriage. Fundamentally, the problems of third world women are the problems of traditional patriarchal cultural practices. Men of third world exploit women with the help of traditional patriarchal norms and values. Unchanging traditions are dangerous and horrific for them. These cause so many sufferings of women. According to patriarchal system, change is bad and traditions are good. They do not want to change their customs and age-old traditions. Third world feminists need to challenge the notion of traditions. They say that traditions are bad and change is good. They argue that traditions do not improve the lives of women and they need to be alert and attentive to all their various possibilities and to encourage widespread and critical dialogue on various aspects of social change.

Third world feminism’s goal is to make their voice heard and work toward the full participation and dignity of women along with men. Uma Narayan says that if women want to make their voice heard, they should not be afraid of patriarchal institution and should revolt against their domination and start writing too. She views writing as ‘a political gesture’s that challenges politics of domination. She views that feminists should struggle to end patriarchal domination. Resistance should be the main weapon against patriarchal treatment. Therefore, third world women need to dehierarchize, demythologize indigenous tradition which seek to label them into subordination and contest those conventions of system of values and knowledge that seem to tilt the scale in

favor of patriarchy. So, they criticized the mainstream western feminists' perspective for excluding from their analysis and agendas in their works.

In direct attack on Mohanty and Trinh as well as Bell Hooks, Sara Suleri argues:

Rather than extending an inquiry into the discursive possibilities representation by the intersection of gender and race, feminist intellectual like Hooks misuse their status as minority voices by enacting strategies of belligerence that at this time are more decisive than informative. (273)

Suleri claims that Mohanty's claim to authenticity only black can speak for a black only postcolonial sub continental feminist can adequately represent the lived experience of that culture points to the great difficulty posited by the authenticity of female racial voices in the great game which claims to be the first narrative of what the ethnically women deemed to want.

Gayatri Chakravarti Spivak's essays "French Feminism in an International Frame," in her study on cultural politics problematize the relationship between third world women and their representation via first world scholarship. She goes on to point out the problematic assumption that the system of knowledge can be generally applicable around the world. She also problematizes the position of the critic while recording her error in feeling of empowered as a well educated women in the west who could help the less privileged women of the third world.

In her next essay, "Can Subaltern Speak?" Spivak taking the help of the poststructuralist thinkers like Michael Foucault, she challenges the notion that human individuals are sovereign subjects with command over their consciousness. Spivak says:

For the 'true' subaltern group, whose identity is its difference, there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself; the intellectual's solution is not to abstain from representation. The problem is that the subject's itinerary has not been left traced so as to offer an object of seduction to the representing intellectual. How can we touch the consciousness of the people, even as we investigate their politics? Can the subaltern speak? (28-29)

These critics are victim of assumption that they can be reliable mediators for the unrepresented voice of the oppressed, through whom, the oppressed can clearly speak. Spivak made it clear that the muteness or silence of the women as "Subaltern" is created by the fact that even when they uttered words, they were still interpreted through conceptual and methodological device which were unable in rightly decoding their voice, hence the silence of the women as Subaltern is a failure of interpretation and not a failure of articulation.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, in the essay "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," especially focuses on western feminist discourse on woman in the third world and presents the critique pertaining to third world scholars writing about their own cultures, which employ identical analysis strategies. Mohanty focuses:

Western feminist writing on women in the Third World must be considered in the context of the global hegemony of western hegemony of western scholarship-that is, the production, publication, distribution and consumption of information and ideas. One such significant effect of

dominant "representations" of western feminism is its conflation with imperialism in the eyes of particular Third World women. (17-18)

Moreover, here he focuses upon the production of the third world woman as a singular monolithic subject in some recent feminist texts.

Oyeronke Oyewumi, in the essay, "Colonizing Bodies and Minds," she argues that the colonial state was patriarchal in many ways. Most obviously, colonial personnel were present in a professional capacity as nurses, the administrative branches, which embodied power and authority, excluded women by law. Furthermore, she tells the colonial service, which was formed for the purpose of governing subject peoples. She says:

A male institution in all its aspects its 'masculine' ideology, its military organization and process, its rituals of power and hierarchy, its strong boundaries between the sexes. It would have been unthinkable in the belief system of the time even to consider the part women might play, other than as nursing sisters, who had earlier become recognized for their important 'feminine' work. (5-6)

It is not surprising, therefore, that it was unthinkable for the colonial government to recognize female leaders among the peoples they colonized. If the women of the colonizer were so insignificant, then one could only imagine the position of the 'other' women, if their existence was acknowledged at all.

Sati was very dangerous system in country like India during the nineteenth century. In this system, the widow lies on her husband's funeral pyre before it is lit and is raised from it by a male relative of her husband. Spivak says:

The story of the mythic *Sati*, reversing narrate me of the rite, performs a similar function: the living husband avenges the wife's death, a transaction between great male gods fulfills the destruction of the female body and thus inscribes the earth as sacred geography. *Sati* with no significance other than the ritual burning of the helpless widow as sacrificial offering who can then be saved. (63)

Women were taken as a part of her husband's body. If her husband died, she would burn herself with her husband. Many Indian intellectuals and others assume that the practice of *Sati* corresponds to or is an imitation of the act of 'wifely nobility' depicted in the mythical story of *Sati*. The mythological figure of *Sati* is the wife of the god Shiva. It was also said that if a woman burnt herself with her husband, they could live together forever. This kind of religious, system was the main cause of woman's suffering in India.

Hence, the third world feminism insists on the heterogeneity of the lives of the third world women. This above form of feminist criticism has helped us to germinate the argument and justify Hosseini's articulation of two fold subjugation of women in Afgani male dominated society. It has collectively cooperated us to understand the psyche, lives, desire, feelings and their status in third world country, Afghanistan. The protagonists of the novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, are victimized doubly; one is because of the racial discrimination which is deeply rooted in Afghan society from the time immemorial and the rest one is owing to the devastating consequences created by the colonial power, Russian invasion over Afghanistan. There is an interest of both, America and Russia over Afghanistan. There is a direct intervention of Russian occupation; whereas America's intervention is latent. And the Afghanistan is the victim of it, particularly women. So, as

a theoretical tool, Third World Feminism is very appropriate to discuss this novel written in the context of Third World women.

Gender Based Identity

The word 'identity' is paradoxical in itself, meaning both sameness and distinctiveness, and its contradictions proliferate when it is applied to women (Gardiner 347). The complexity of the concept of identity depends on various elements based on what defines people's identities, such as their ethnicity, traditions, language, social and economic status as well as their gender. Although people might belong to the same group according to these elements, they differ from one another significantly when it comes to their gender not only because of their biological differences, but also their psychological situations and expectations. Carolyn G. Heilburn clarifies the gender differences in her book, *Reinventing Womanhood*:

All societies, from the earliest and most primitive today's, have ceremoniously taken the boy from the female domain and urged his identity as a male, as a responsible unfeminine individual, upon him. The girl undergoes no such ceremony, but she pays for serenity of passage with a lack of selfhood and of the will to autonomy that only the struggle for identity can confer. . . (Heilbrun 104)

Female identity may not undergo such ceremony but, is developed through social and parental expectations of the society, which will be different in each group. Mostly, these "socially constructed rules" are imposed on society through male discourse. A woman is expected to follow certain rules to become a proper wife and a mother in the future; if she does not fit into the social rules, she will lose her chance of finding a man to marry and

complete her duties as a proper woman in society. As it can be concluded here, a woman cannot form a self apart from a man: "A woman is not an adolescent at puberty in our society, because her search for identity does not take place then: rather it is a search for a husband in which she then engages". (Heilbrun178).

Antoinette, who has already failed to find who she is and where she belongs, hopes to find elements that could fully define her identity by marrying Rochester. Her identity is confirmed eventually after their marriage, although it is not what she has initially imagined: first she is called "Bertha," a European name, then she becomes the mad woman later in the novel, a different identity imposed on her by her husband just like her new name. This labeling or renaming is not only because she is a white Creole woman married to an English man, holding a lower social status, but also she is unable to conform to the social norms of a proper wife expected both from her own people and the Western society in post-colonial period and still exist in the society.

Identity, according to Erikson, cannot merely be formed based on the identity individuals construct for themselves. Identity is both established and developed through social relationships. Therefore, as Erikson explains, society decides how a proper woman and a man should behave, and accordingly, their identities are defined through the way society acknowledges them no matter how the individuals want to reflect themselves based on how they identify themselves. Gardiner interprets Erikson's theory on identity as follows: "The concept includes both a core configuration of personal character and one's consciousness of that configuration" (350). Accordingly, it can be concluded that identity is both self-realization and self-identification of the individuals as well as their consciousness and awareness of the social norms that shape their identities.

Antoinette seeks marriage for love, security, and as a way to identify herself with her husband, whereas Rochester agrees to marry her since he is only after her money, as assigned by his father, and of course, to fulfill his sexual desires.

According to Judith Gardiner's article "On Female Identity and Writing by Women," there are some terms related to a female identity theory that need to be developed in order to clarify the noteworthy differences between genders: "primary identity, gender identity, infantile identification, social role, the identity crisis and self concept," all of which are "components of adult identity that form early in childhood" (353). Gardiner defines primary identity as a "hypothesis about one's permanent essence or way of being," whereas a gender identity is "knowing to which sex one is socially assigned" (351). Gardiner claims that female infantile identifications are more complex than male ones because of the social roles that are imposed on them both from their own society and the others. When children grow up, they discover the social roles and group identifications, and how these socially constructed roles are "highly polarized by gender, with a broader variety of acceptable options available to boys than to girls" (353-4). When members from different groups encounter each other, they are more likely not to understand the different features that are attributed to what some qualities of a proper woman are. As a result, they tend to label each other based on their own values. That's why Antoinette finds Rochester cold since he was taught to hide his feelings in his own culture as a proper behavior whereas; for Rochester, Antoinette is too impulsive, and that, in his mind, is a sign for improper behavior, even madness.

The social and gender roles in a society have been established by the folk groups according to their own specific beliefs and cultural values. Personal experiences also play

a significant role for individuals when they encounter a different environment and people. These rules are not necessarily universal, but local or regional since they vary from one culture to the other:

Groups defined by gender and/or sexual orientation are appreciated as significant groups with their own lore, practices, and types of group-internal and group-external communication . . . Perceiving gender as a cultural construct has prompted the realization that gender roles and identities are themselves traditional forms of expressive communication, that is they are social, aesthetic accomplishments and forms of folklore in their own rights. (Green 407)

As Green explains, culturally or socially constructed rules are a means of communication because these rules define the characteristics of a group. Based on these characteristics, group members bond relations and connect in a group. Through this collective identification and socially constructed rules such as gender, other groups can communicate with each other. These rules might result in miscommunication at times because of the differences between groups and the different social rules they have, but even misperception is a way of understanding.

On the other hand, Judith Gardiner suggests that the social norms might vary depending on the type of the community. The prevalently accepted norms in a society might indicate that male figures are more dominant than women or vice versa, although not common. Folklore scholarship examines these differences in societies and show that there are different groups even in the same society, such as in Antoinette's. People are grouped based on their race, color, and social and economic situations in Jamaica, and

there is no specific indication that shows males are considered superior to females. He has the right to receive the fortune of the woman and take her away just like in Antoinette's situation. Gardiner defines these gender-oriented norms as follows:

In a male-dominated society, being a man means not being like a woman. As a result, the behavior considered appropriate to each gender becomes severely restricted and polarized. I have postulated that the primary identities of women remain relational throughout life, and girls form the gender identity that defines them as women easily, securely, and permanently. Since women do not, like men, experience gender as a problem, social attempts to make it a problem for them may cause confusion and anxiety. (Gardiner 359)

As Gardiner depicts, there is a clear-cut difference between being a man and a woman. As a result, the social roles that are attained by women and men from their folk groups differ significantly, and women are more likely to go through identity crisis because of the complexities of the female identity.

Antoinette is the "outsider," who "is excluded from the cultural patterns of bonding at the heart of the society, at its centers of power" (Heilbrun 37-8). Heilbrun continues to explain, "Generally speaking, outsiders are convinced of in a context of alternate or excluded cultures. The outsider is expected to have a culture of his or her own that women, as women, patently lack" (42). However, "one does not awaken to the awareness of being a female outsider, unless the condition of 'outsiderness' has, through other means, entered one's consciousness" (39). Therefore, Antoinette fails to find a self-identity because her identity has changed constantly by being renamed by others.

Chapter III: Resistance to Double Marginalization of Female in Jean Rhys's *Wide*

Sargasso Sea

Marginalization of Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Though Antoinette identifies more with island culture than European culture, she is not fully accepted by the former, as Christophine eventually explains to her new husband: "she is not beke like you, but she is beke, and not like us, either" (155). One particularly interesting relationship between Antoinette and Tia, a native black girl, demonstrates that the former has an ambivalent relationship with the Caribbean world. The girls are playmates, but they have an altercation at the river in which Tia calls her "white cockroach" and steals her clothes. Because of this theft Antoinette is forced to wear Tia's clothes, which the latter left behind. In donning these clothes, Antoinette metaphorically becomes Tia. However, when she returns home and puts on another dress, it rips, a way of expressing that her old identity no longer fits. Nothing fits Antoinette: her original dress has been stolen, and her new dress rips. This "new" dress, Tia's dress, is symbolic of Antoinette's desire to be like Tia.

Antoinette cannot find an identity to suit her, and this lack of belonging applies to her inability to assimilate to the Caribbean. In her book *Jean Rhys at "World's End,"*

Mary Lou Emery comments on this doubling:

When Antoinette emerges from the pool, she discovers that Tia has exchanged her dress for Antoinette's. In the black child's dress, Antoinette arrives home to meet a visitor from England, Mr. Mason, who eventually marries her mother and takes over their neglected estate. She has become Tia's double, by a forced exchange, and in that costume meets

the man who will forcefully exchange her in marriage to another white Englishman. (39)

Antoinette not only becomes Tia's double in this scenario but also when the estate is set on fire, for she simultaneously identifies with Tia and realizes that she is not like her:

Then, not so far off, I saw Tia and her mother and I ran to her, for she was all that was left of my life as it had been. We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, and bathed in the same river. As I ran, I thought, I will live with Tia and I will be like her. Not to leave Coulibri. Not to go. Not. When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it. I did not feel it either, only something wet, running down my face. I looked at her and I saw her face crumple up as she began to cry. We stared at each other, blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking glass. (41)

This idea of the looking glass, of a mirror, appears often in the novel. Of greater importance is the fact that Antoinette, the viewer, peers into the mirror and sees an object of desire. Antoinette desires to be accepted by the island people and is reluctant to say goodbye to her life in Coulibri, even though the people's hostility toward her is evident. The island is all that she knows, and she is desperate to identify with it through Tia, for Antoinette feels that they have shared the same experiences. She wants to be a part of something, so she clings to the hope of Tia and being like her.

This desire manifests itself most strikingly when Antoinette looks directly at

Tia as if she were looking into a mirror. Of course, her illusions are shattered when Tia throws the stone in her face, breaking the mirror image and jolting Antoinette to the realization that she does not belong and that she is not like Tia. The reality is that the racial boundaries are set: Antoinette is white, Tia is black; Antoinette represents the colonizer, Tia the colonized.

The image of a dress, like the one Tia steals from Antoinette, frequently appears as a symbolic image in the novel and usually signifies Antoinette's relationship and identification with England and the Caribbean. These further references to dresses emphasize the color white or red, an important detail which indicates that white represents England while red represents the Caribbean. The color that Antoinette wears shows where her devotion lies, and the reader will see a transition in part two and three from white (England) to red (Caribbean) to symbolize her triumph over the oppression that England epitomizes.

Beginning with the white dresses, Antoinette wears one white dress in her second dream that foreshadows her unhappy marriage to Rochester. In the dream Antoinette first tries to hold up her dress, but then she allows it to trail the earth: ". . . so I walk with difficulty, following a man who is with me and holding up the skirt of my dress. It is white and beautiful and I do not want to get it soiled . . . He smiles slyly. 'Not here, not yet' he says, and I follow him, weeping. Now, I do not try to hold up my dress, it trails in the dirt, my beautiful dress" (54).

However, the repeated image of the dress, rather than serving to compare the two women, actually highlights their differences, once again distancing Antoinette from a Caribbean identity. It is Rochester who takes notice of the dress: "Her coffee is delicious

but her language is horrible and she might hold her dress up. It must get very dirty, yards of it trailing on the floor", Antoinette replies: "You don't understand at all. They don't care about a dress getting dirty because it shows it isn't the only dress they have" (85).

In Antoinette's dream she is following the man who will reject her and take everything from her, and she tries hard not to dirty the white dress. When she does allow it to fall to the ground it is in terms of surrender and complete subordination to Rochester. Christophine, in contrast, is unmarried, independent and self-assured. She is not concerned when her dress gets soiled, for as she later says to Antoinette, "I keep my money. I don't give it to any worthless man" (110).

The dress images continue in part two when Rochester sees Antoinette's white dress lying on the floor which leaves him "breathless and savage with desire" (93). Antoinette longs to please him (England) and wants to have a double of the dress: "I was thinking, I'll have another made just like it," she promised happily: "Will you be pleased?" (94).

In part three, narrated by Antoinette in Thornfield Hall, she notices, "a girl coming out of her bedroom, wearing a white dress" (182). If we are to assume that this girl is Jane, then it is fitting that she wears white, for she is the English girl who in the Victorian novel is set up in opposition to Bertha (Antoinette). In Thornfield Hall, however, the dress that Antoinette reserves for her later action is not white, but red, which will be a significant diversion from the white images. With the color white symbolizing England, it is of course not a far leap to attribute white in terms of race. Antoinette is not without racist feelings, for she calls Tia a "cheating nigger" (24), Christophine a "black devil from Hell" (134) and an "ignorant, obstinate Negro woman"

(112). Critic Patrick Hogan remarks that the description of the man in Antoinette's dream has a face "black with hatred" while her dress is "white".

At this point, Antoinette is a little girl who struggles with loneliness and fear; she is aware that the family is hated by the other islanders and that she is also unloved by her mother, whom she feels sees her as a "white nigger" (26). While Annette is still tied to the generation of slavery, Antoinette must achieve a new identity for the white Creole, one that is harmonious with post emancipation Jamaica. This is murky territory for Antoinette, as she unsuccessfully attempts to form relationships with people like Tia and tries to please her disapproving mother and her new English stepfather.

Mr. Mason establishes his authority as an Englishman and evokes racist feelings in Antoinette by making her feel shy about admitting that Sandi Cosway is her cousin because he is black. Caught between shame and affinity with the black Caribbean, Antoinette cannot achieve any sense of identity, which leaves her vulnerable to making mistakes such as marrying Rochester. In the meantime, she lives in the convent, where her pain is momentarily eased by the gentle nuns. Here is where the first mention of red occurs since the fire at Coulibri, in relation to Antoinette's cross-stitch: "Underneath, I will write my name in fire red, Antoinette Mason, nee Cosway, Mount Calvary Convent, Spanish Town, Jamaica, 1839" (48).

This act is very significant because here, Antoinette is creating a text through her sewing. The act of sewing or weaving has always been an important element in literature, particularly in regard to women.

The depth of color, according to Antoinette, is expressly reserved for the island. This exchange takes place in part two, narrated mostly by Rochester, and it is in this

section that Antoinette often wears white. Though her love for the island and its tropical environment is apparent, it is also in this chapter that she begins to see England as a solution to her problems with Rochester. Antoinette pledges allegiance to England, not realizing that it is England, in the form of her English husband that is forcing her into the stereotypical role of the mad, drunken Creole found in *Jane Eyre*. She asks Rochester "Is it true 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." (73).

This question, of course, references the nightmare that Antoinette had of England when she was staying in the convent but also is pertinent to her emotional state. As her relationship with Rochester worsens, Antoinette enters a sleep-like state. She numbs herself by overindulging in rum, and eventually follows Rochester mechanically and indifferently to England. Rochester notices her eyes as "blank, lovely eyes" (125) and that her voice has "no warmth, no sweetness. The doll had a doll's voice, a breathless but curiously indifferent voice" (113). Antoinette thus fulfills the dream prophecy from: "I follow him, sick with fear but I make no effort to save myself; if anyone were to try to save me, I would refuse" (54). Antoinette is in her cold dark dream from which she will eventually wake, and it is important to note that the person who tries to save her, and whom she refuses, is Sandi Cosway, Antoinette's cousin, her friend, and possibly her lover.

However, as previously noted, this is the same Sandi Cosway that Antoinette denounces as a relative under the influence of Mr. Mason. As Sandra Drake mentions, "If she [Antoinette] had married Sandi Cosway, she would not have lost either of her names,

for she and he carry the same family name" (19). Instead, Antoinette has two English names, Bertha Mason, and her rejection of Sandi is another example of how she attempts to assimilate to English customs and deny her Creole past.

Antoinette's Caribbean Identity: "I Will Write My Name in Red"

Red, the color that represents the Caribbean in this novel, is the color of the dress that Antoinette has with her in the attic at Thornfield Hall. In England Antoinette miserably writes, "I am dying because it is so cold and dark," (183) another repetition in the text of England as a cold dark dream. In part three, Antoinette once again narrates, and when she sees her dress hanging in the press, her senses start to awaken. The description of the dress contains elements of the Caribbean:

As I turned the key I saw it hanging, the color of fire and sunset. The color of flamboyant flowers. 'If you are buried under a flamboyant tree, I said, 'your soul is lifted up when it flowers. Everyone wants that.' She shook her head but she did not move or touch me. The scent that came from the dress was very faint at first, and then it grew stronger. The smell of vetivert and frangipani, of cinnamon and dust and lime trees when they are flowering. The smell of the sun and the smell of the rain. (165)

The flamboyant tree recalls the orange tree that Rochester found when he is lost in the forest, and the flowers scattered around were those thought to be sacrifices to the zombie. When Antoinette smells the dress, she slowly begins to come back to life, for the scent of the Caribbean plants the seed of "something I must do" (168) which is to put Thornfield Hall to flame. Sandra Drake describes how this scene depicts Antoinette as a zombie that is reawakened and takes its revenge:

Frangipani, vetivert, cinnamon and lemon are all Caribbean salts which awake the zombie from its slumber, the red dress which Antoinette fears 'they' have taken from her - the act which she calls 'the last and worst thing', to change its smell - steal the freeing salts which confirm her identity- she sees transmute itself, to flame; and she identifies it, in the comment quoted, with the flamboyant tree. Antoinette converts Thornfield Hall itself into a flamboyant (flaming) tree; her own soul rises up as it 'blooms'. (108)

Earlier in the novel Antoinette mentions that there are two deaths, the real one and the one people know about. Antoinette's real death comes under the oppression of Rochester, symbol of English rule. She is colonized into a slave figure and thus enters a death-like sleep, a zombie state, just as her mother did. Upon closer inspection, the death is also the one imposed by Western literature through voicing the Other's history instead of allowing the other to tell her history.

Antoinette is not reduced to becoming the infamous madwoman, because when she sees the flame colored dress on the floor it inspires her to act, which she does first in the form of a dream. Antoinette does not realize that the ghost, of course, is herself. Her description as a ghost is another textual repetition. Shortly before their departure to England, Rochester remarks, "she was only a ghost. A ghost in the grey daylight. Nothing left but hopelessness" (186). A ghost is what she is reduced to in *Jane Eyre*, one which Antoinette does not recognize, which makes her at once self and other. But Antoinette will soon go beyond *Jane Eyre's* legend. The fire begins when she lights several candles in order to fill the white room with the color red:

It was a large room with a red carpet and red curtains. Everything else was white. I sat down on a couch and it seemed sad and cold and empty to me, like a church without an altar. I wished to see it clearly so I lit all the candles, and there were many . . . I looked round for the altar for with so many candles and so much red, the room reminded me of a church. Then I heard a clock ticking and it was made of gold. (169)

White for England, red for the Caribbean, when Antoinette sees the gold clock, her thoughts echo Christophine's about the English and that their main concern is money. She thus separates herself from English belief and aligns herself with Christophine's. As the room fills with red it becomes her Aunt Cora's room, reinforcing the idea that red and flame transport Antoinette back to her island. She knocks down the candles and the fire spreads: "I laughed when I saw the lovely color spreading so fast, but I did not stay to watch it. I went into the hall again with the tall candle in my hand. It was then that I saw her-the ghost. The woman with the streaming hair. She was surrounded by a gilt frame but I knew her" (169).

Antoinette comes face to face with her own reflection which she recognizes as 'the ghost'. She is surrounded by a gilt frame, which symbolizes many things. Gilder is a gold covering, which reminds the reader that gold is what the English revere, that 'gold is the idol they worship'. Secondly, Antoinette is an image that is framed, which conjures the idea of a picture that Antoinette once so admired and which are revisited later in the context of fire.

Finally, Antoinette as Bertha is framed within the context of the mad Creole in *Jane Eyre*; she is previously limited to and trapped inside Bronte's pages. In essence, she

is surrounded by Englishness. However, she peers into the glass and thinks, "but I knew her" (108). This time Antoinette is more; she is not only a ghost as Rochester previously stated. Her first glimmer of self- recognition is in stark contrast to several other moments in the novel that include mirrors. She sees Tia as an object in a mirror during the fire at Coulibri, yet is painfully aware that she is unlike her. She is unable to see herself at the convent because mirrors are forbidden. There are also no mirrors in the attic at Thornfield Hall, so Antoinette tries to remember:

There is no looking glass here and I don't know what I am like now. I remember watching myself brush my hair and how my eyes looked back at me. The girl I saw, was I yet not quite myself. Long ago when I was a child and very lonely I tried to kiss her. But the glass between us - hard, cold and misted over with my breath. Now they have taken everything away. What am I doing in this place and who am I? (162)

The idea of mirrors is significant in the text as mirrors are linked to identity and Antoinette's uncertainty about her own identity is shown through her interaction with mirrors. This is not a new concept, for the Lacanian view of "The Mirror Stage" indicates that the first perception one has of himself is a self-image through the recognition of the self in a mirror. The mirror provides the visual image, where one not only sees oneself but also what others see, which brings up another. It is easy to understand why Antoinette is conflicted if her identity involves the perception that others have of her; she is deemed a 'white cockroach' by the black inhabitants of the island, a 'white nigger' by whites, including her mother, and 'alien' by English European standards.

However, the mirror provides some sense of self, which is perhaps why

Antoinette's mother looked to the mirror with hope: "I got used to the solitary life, but my mother still planned and hoped - perhaps she had to hope every time she passed a looking glass" (18). The image in the glass is a symbol of hope, hope that is absent in situations where Antoinette is stripped of her identity, as in Rochester's malicious plan: "She'll not laugh in the sun again. She'll not dress up and smile and at herself in that damnable looking glass" (168). Rochester's plot mentions taking away the mirror, a tool which provides some sense of identity.

Antoinette never could fully identify with herself or with England, and her struggle as a white Creole in post emancipation Jamaica prevented a natural connection to the Caribbean. As a child, she saw her image yet did not know herself. But in the fire scene at Thornfield Hall, Antoinette does recognize herself in the gilt frame. The important red dress will be another detail in the novel that shows Antoinette's actions contradicting Rochester's words- she will 'dress up' and see herself in the glass. She not only sees herself but says she knows herself. Antoinette begins to distinguish her real self from the 'Other' that was constructed from English literature, a construct that took her life away. She begins to connect to her Caribbean identity, which is remarkably shown through the Caribbean images seen in the flames:

Then I turned around and I saw the sky. It was red and all my life was in it. I saw the grandfather clock and Aunt Cora's patchwork, all colors, I saw the orchids and the stephanotis and the jasmine and the tree of life in flames. I saw the chandelier and the red carpet downstairs and the bamboos and the tree ferns, the gold ferns and the silver and the soft green velvet of the moss and the picture of the Miller's Daughter. I heard the

parrot call as he did when he saw a stranger, *Qui est là? Qui est là?*
 And the man who hated me was calling too, Bertha! Bertha! The wind
 caught my hair and it streamed out like wings. It might bear me up, I
 thought, if I jumped to those hard stones. But when I looked over the
 edge I saw the pool at Coulibri. Tia was there. She beckoned to me and
 when I hesitated she laughed . . . And I heard a man's voice, Bertha!
 Bertha! . . . And the sky so red. Someone screamed and I thought, *Why did*
I scream? I called 'Tia!' and jumped and woke. (170)

There are several things happening in this passage. It is, of course, a repetition of the fire at Coulibri, only this time Antoinette is the colonized figure who takes revenge on her English oppressor. Antoinette has been enslaved, and therefore can more easily identify to the people of the island because this history is now shared. Mary Lou Emery explores this notion as Antoinette ignores Rochester's calls and instead leaps:

She rejects "the man's voice" and his name for her and chooses instead her black friend, rekindling their childhood ties through the wall of fire. She can make this choice, not because she has consolidated her character, but because she has lost and multiplied it, become enslaved, and thus joined the history of the blacks of the islands, learning from them traditional means of resistance. (49)

This connection is perhaps why Antoinette calls out to Tia and why she jumps to her childhood friend. Though Brathwaite asserts that "Tia was not and never could have been her friend" (43). Rhys' fiction, with Antoinette's experience as slave to Rochester, she can through a new historical understanding achieve a bond with the black

Caribbean. As she says to herself earlier, in viewing the landscape, "this is my place and this is where I belong and this is where I wish to stay" (108).

To return to the fire, the images within the fire are significant, for all of the images of the Caribbean landscape that are so important to Antoinette reappear, thus reuniting her with the comforting elements of her past. The English elements, such as the carpet and chandelier, merge with the Caribbean but seem to be swallowed up by them as the focus is on island symbols and not on English ones. Additionally, throughout the novel, the color red, flame and fire are associated with the Caribbean and red fire is the consuming factor.

Chapter IV: Conclusion

Resistance to Patriarchal and Colonial Domination in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

This study explores how scholarship contributes to our understanding and interpretation of complex issues in literary works, such as the theme of identity presented in literature, and other elements related to identification (ethnicity, race, gender, cultural values). This research is focused on Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which has been examined mostly through a postcolonial approach by scholars and literary critics through the patriarchal and postcolonial aspect. The novel has strictly been evaluated as a postcolonial novel, displaying how colonialism has damaged minority groups not only economically, but mentally and spiritually.

It has been widely acknowledged that the main characters of the novel symbolize both sides of a colonial relationship: Antoinette is claimed to be the colonized Creole woman, who ends up going insane, and Rochester, representing Great Britain, is the colonizer. This common presentation of the novel, however, limits other alternative approaches to raise new questions to re-evaluate the novel from different perspectives. The integration of folkloric approach in understanding cultural, racial, social, and gender-based differences has led to new research questions as well as a fresh interpretation of the novel, stripped off solid postcolonial assertions.

First of all, this research has significantly contributed to the theme of identity and cultural differences. The complexity of concept of identity is that it is limited to a postcolonial approach. The cultural, social, racial, and gender-based juxtapositions are mostly examined based on how colonialism affected individuals and led them to several misunderstandings and misconceptions about both self-identification and identifying

others. These factors not only reflect each group's own values, but also their expectations from other groups. Esoteric and exoteric factors evaluate the interaction whether they belong to the same group or not because each member also might have a different view of himself or herself.

Instead, individuals might even feel closer, inferior, or superior to another group based on their own personal values. Of course, these individuals are highly influenced by all the knowledge they have already attained (intentionally or unintentionally, but absolutely unofficially) from their own group.

Gender-based identity is as complex as identifying the national and individual identity. The basic problem that needs to be acknowledged is that the concept of gender is "socially assigned". Females and males are assigned to certain roles in different societies; not every society has the same values imposed on people. Most of the time, the male discourse might overlap the female voice, especially depending on the time period. Considering that this novel is the product of the twentieth century, the assertion of the male discourse can be predominantly seen compared to the female narrative in the novel.

On the other hand, it is obvious that both of Antoinette and Rochester have different expectations from each other as a 'proper' husband and wife; their views of the concept of 'what's socially appropriate' clash due to their own cultural values and teachings. These cultural differences can be clarified better through an approach rather than a postcolonial one because scholarship examines cultural differences from a broader spectrum rather than merely labeling the individuals as representatives of either the colonizer or the colonized.

In addition, it is not only studies societies as a whole, but it also analyzes the

individual experiences of the people, which shows that individuals cannot be generalized based on the common values of their groups; even the members of the same group might have their own beliefs. People can have different values; people cannot be classified only based on where they come from, what language they speak, what their gender is, or what color their skins are.

Nature has also been mostly used as a reference to a colonial territory through a postcolonial understanding. According to this belief, a place can stand for the nation of the colonized or the colonizer. However, it studies the meanings of the names of places, what they represent as well as how people define sense of place, instead of labeling them as the colonized or the colonizer based on their birthplace. Identification is closely related since individuals tend to identify themselves with their homes and their geographical contents. In the same way, they define other people based on the features of the place they come from. When people move to a place which is unfamiliar to them, they lose sense of security and belonging. Therefore, they may not associate themselves with the unknown geographical features, which also shape their (mis)understanding of the surrounding culture. This dilemma can lead the individuals to mis-communicate and misunderstand each other. They might even construct their own sense of reality in a similar way they identify others from different cultures. This constructed reality can usually be defined as “dream-like” for protagonist. When people cannot explain an event or perceive what particular elements stand for, they tend to describe them as if they did not exist.

At least Rhys sees to it that the woman from the colonies is not sacrificed as an insane animal for her sister's consolidation. It is rather than giving a voice to the Other,

actually reinforces the notion of the supremacy of Western tradition. Consider what she writes about works, which attempt to tell the Other's story. It is through the historical violence of colonization, a historical past that is unalterable, that the Other obtained its heterogeneity, for an Other can only be so when there is a self put up against it; it can only exist in the realm that names it Other.

Moreover, they [identities] emerge within the play of specific modalities of power, and thus are more the product of the marking of difference and exclusion, than they are the sign of an identical, naturally-constituted unity. Therefore, if one agrees that the self needs an Other to strengthen the self's sense of identity, then one can understand how through *Jane Eyre*, she immediately puts Antoinette in the position of Other, thus reaffirming the English self. The work strengthens the imperialist cause in that it replicates the discourse that it is trying to refute, but that the end result is the same - the mad Creole's suicide through fire that reinstates the triumph of British fiction. There is also the implication that little hope remains for the colonized subject to escape otherness. Antoinette trapped within the confines of the cardboard book and having to play out her role, the only difference being that at least the Creole is portrayed with more dignity.

Rochester, the Englishman, also becomes the Other. Certainly Antoinette feels otherness both in terms of the island and England, but in the beginning of part two she is in control. As I describe, it is she who must warn Rochester about the fire ants, the cooling weather, local customs. Rochester feels alien and unsure of himself in the island's wilderness and he must depend on his wife and the black inhabitants to direct him. He is painfully aware they do not respect him as an authority figure, and this

inability to assert control incites a rage which fuels his hatred of Antoinette. By placing him against the Caribbean backdrop, Rhys creates an interesting reversal by making Rochester the fictive Other in a Caribbean work.

Though Rochester attempts to seize control by bringing Antoinette back to British soil, that Antoinette's act of setting Thornfield Hall a flame does not reinforce the imperialist self but rather vindicates the oppressed Other. Antoinette does not merely play out her role by setting fire to the estate and killing her. By reconstructing Brontë's text *Jane Eyre*, Rhys unveils the issues related to the phenomenon of colonialism. In the character of Antoinette, she draws attention to the colonized people who are totally silenced, dehumanized and mistreated in the earlier colonial text.

As the novel tells us about the relation between the oppressor (Britain) and Oppressed(Jamaica), the heroine is the subject of domination and humiliation by the system of the patriarchal and colonial oppression which is prevalent in England and Jamaica . Antoinette resists against these oppressions even when she is confined to the attic of the Thornfield Hall, she struggles to restore her own identity. She is aware of the importance of her true name for her sense of her identity and for this she burns down Thornfield hall, Rochester's home, which is the symbol of destroying white male domination and exploitation in England, with its clear connections to the structures of colonialism. The aim of this paper is to show how Jean Rhys represents the idea of belonging nowhere, the result of replacement and, as a consequence how these these two ideas affect the protagonist Antoinette and provoke her resistance.

Though perhaps a small detail, it is important to note that does not really end with a suicide. Antoinette's fiery death is in the form of a dream; she is very much alive at

the end of the novel but intends to make a reality of her dream, which I explained earlier. It is a symbolic rewriting of the text in order to give a voice to the Other. One could theorize that Rhys did this purposefully to avoid giving Antoinette the same literal end that Bertha had, and this changes the role. Instead, she storms into view through 20th century Caribbean fiction, seen as Jane's unhappy double, to make us question our interpretation of the classic text and bring to light the anguish of forced silence, dislocation, and cultural difference.

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