

Tribhuvan University  
Faculty of the Humanities and Social Sciences  
Central Department of English

Identity Crisis in Diasporic Writing: Critical Reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and  
*Breath, Eyes, Memory*

A Dissertation Submitted to the Central Department of English in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Philosophy in English

By  
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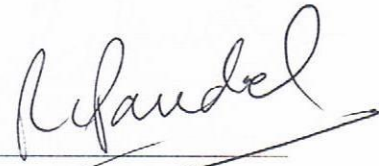
Tribhuvan University

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Letter of Recommendation

Yashoda Chaulagain has completed her dissertation entitled "Identity Crisis in Diasporic Writing: Critical Reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Breath, Eyes, Memory*" under my supervision. She carried out her research from May 2014 to December 2016. I hereby recommend that her dissertation be submitted for viva voce.



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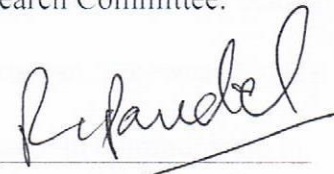
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Approval Letter

This dissertation entitled "Identity Crisis in Diasporic Writing: Critical Reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Breath, Eyes, Memory*", submitted by Yashoda Chaulagain to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in English has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

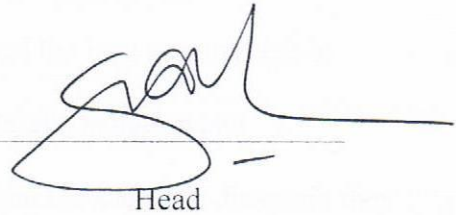
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## Abstract

The present study explores the question of diaspora and identity crisis of Caribbean during the post-colonial era reflected in the novels *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Breath, Eyes, Memory* by Jean Rhys and Edwidge Danticat respectively. In an appreciation of the major issue that how the diaspora personality of Caribbean community face the identity crisis, the study shed lights on how the diasporic sensibility revolves between the spatial and temporal location. Both writers portray the characters Antoinette and Sophie, struggling in contact land to get homeliness and identity. Antoinette suffers from a split identity and searches for a place of belonging with her mixed heritage which is both Caribbean and European. Likewise, Sophie struggles in America, a host country lacking proper language to communicate in English speaking community. She is diaspora in New York, lives in-between the place, Haiti and Brooklyn, America searching belonging. She is not satisfied having material possession in the country - America, rather she longs for homeland, Haiti.

The writers portray the characters Antoinette and Sophie who undergo identity crisis and they live their lives in trauma in the island and the host country due to diaspora. Both of these characters have a sense of nostalgia, isolation and displacement. This sense of not belonging somewhere makes their life diasporic they have suffered from. Moreover, the main purpose of this research is to investigate how diaspora people have sense of longing for their homeland as shown in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. In both novels, writers have constructed Sophie and Antoinette struggling for (imaginary) homeland and the novel exposes the unsuccessful attempts to recover the unhomeliness despite having home due to their hybrid identity.

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Yashoda Chaulagain

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## Chapter I

### (Dis)Locating the Characters: Antoinette and Sophie

The novels *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys and *Breath, Eyes, Memories* by Edwidge Danticat are shaped with colonial and cultural dislocation offering the hybrid characters a sense of homelessness or what Bhabha calls "unhomeliness". Set in Jamaican culture in 1830's, the main character -- the Creole heiress, Antoinette Cosway of the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, is trapped in-between Europe and new world reflecting the tension between master and slave.

In such dual situation seeking an alternative way to live and perceive a new identity becomes a tool to continue the life. She is the daughter of former slave owners and now lives with her mother. Moreover, her marriage to English man who does not take her as a life partner is taken as a source where the ambivalent hybrid-- Antoinette suffers dislocation and homelessness. Being a daughter of white slave owners, she has a kind of affiliation to white; however, she is hated and unwanted by white community because of her family's financial status. On the other hand, in black community her cultural identity is greatly affected by people around her calling her 'white cockroaches' what Antoinette says, "They hated us. They called us white cockroaches" (13). Antoinette's in-betweenness comes across clearly in this type of name, as she is rejected by both the black and white society of the Island. Leaving her alienated in between the culture, she is called "beke" (70) by Christophine, her black servant. This is supposed to be a description of her identity rather than mere name. She is thrown between the culture being neither European nor Caribbean. She drifts somewhere on the border of belonging to both white European and Caribbean location.

It becomes challenge for Antoinette to shape her identity due to sense of alienation and dilemma. She is rejected and alienated within Jamaican community. She is neither accepted by white settlers nor by black slaves as she is part of the same Island. She is closed to both but neither of them belongs to her. She is both insider and outsider at the same time. It can be said that a person who does not have a given identity based in a nation or community, but is somewhere between two opposing cultural spheres, is forced to shape a new identity. Antoinette is also facing the similar problem of discrimination. She is fed up with discriminatory behaviors frequently shown to her by both communities what Bhabha calls "discriminatory identity"(112) based on the binary opposition of unequal power relation between master and slave. Being part of both communities, and not belonging to anywhere, she experiences multiple identities, cultures and nations. Her multiple selves leads to a form of hybridity, an ambivalent state of mind where cannot find a specific place or home, but mixed feelings over the fact that nothing is stable rather everything is fleeting here and there. The torture experienced when one has to be ambivalent and in-between as well of ignorant of where he or she is going to is a matter of anxiety, mental discomfort and panic.

Consequently, Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* lives life in predicament in the Island where she was born. In Caribbean, she becomes alone, in England; she is hated by her English husband (Edward Rochester from *Jane Eyre*) facing the problem of social displacement and cultural exclusion. Living an isolated life and feeling desperately in Jamaican society she narrates the story revealing her social status on the eyes of blacks and whites. She says, "They say when trouble comes close ranks, and so the white people did. But we were not in their ranks" (1). Antoinette's middle class family status makes her confused which way to go and not having a clear



direction to follow. Her status is remained as Creole White not becoming white as well as black but somewhere in-between Europe and the Caribbean.

Now, Antoinette lacks home, she suffers alienation and dislocation. Owing to the fact that Antoinette's house in Coulibri Estate has been burnt down by angry mob, she becomes homeless and she has shifted to Spanish Town with Aunt Cora.

Generally, a home is a place where we belong, a place we can call our own, somewhere we are always appreciated. Our emotion is directly attached with it. This is a place that gives us shelter stability and comfort, but also offers us "means of orientation" (210) says John McLeod in his book *Beginning Colonialism*. He further states, "It tells us where we originated from and where we belong" (210). Here, he means home is defined as our origin and our identity in terms of belonging. Home is a place that gives us feelings of identity and belonging. In the similar sense Antoinette's physical home in Jamaica has gone, she becomes homeless and lost identity of being Caribbean with this object. She is not fully European, either; her identity is in-between the worlds.

White Creole identity is a matter of curse for Antoinette and her family. Tia, one day accuses Antoinette and her family of not being like real white people. She becomes tensed and narrates, "They hated us. They called us white cockroaches. Let sleeping dogs lie one day a little girl followed me singing, "Go away white cockroach, go away, go away. I walked fast, but she walked faster. 'White cockroach, go away go away. Nobody want you. Go away'" (13). Insulting refrains 'Go away white cockroach; Nobody want you' become lodged in Antoinette's mind and resurface in her adult life. Blacks hate them; whites do not take them as they are white. But, they are in between the place neither here nor there, neither totally English nor totally

black. Jamaican islander society is in hierarchy, white ex-colonizer or ex-slave but white Creoles are in-between the places.

Being dejected and fed up with the European treatments, and criticism of black people, she finally tries to find comfort in wilderness in Coulibri. The uncertainty of being and locating oneself for the hybrid lingering in-between the place, or the unknown spaces cannot be labeled or categorized. Talking about in-betweenness and identity categories, Murdoch H. Adlal writes, "colonial history to reveal an alternative set of burgeoning identities whose inscriptions lie in-between those fixed, earlier notions of being and belonging that were the heritage of the colonial encounter"(75). Adlal argues that colonial history is the encounter of two cultures and heritages, it is also the notion of being and belonging of both groups, colonizer and colonized. In this way one's self is always avoided by the relatives and people in the host society. The social status, geographical location and alleged state of mind motivate one to alienate from the world around. Thus the quote clarifies that the self is divided in-between in the diaspora searching a fixed identity. Antoinette in the similar way facing the problem of identity crisis not being part of any of the dominant groups; neither she is physically a part of Europe nor she can adjust in black community in West Indies rather she becomes a hybrid both in a social and physical sense.

Her middle position, Creole identity that is acquired in Caribbean, living long time with black people is similar to Hall's attempts of defining Creolization. He says, "Creoles were of course white European born in the colonies or those Europeans who had lived so long in the colonial setting that they acquired native characteristics"(29). It shows the Creole people have multiple selves, who have white race and black

characteristics, black and white identities at the same time. Talking about home and identity are the central issue in postcolonial writing.

Moreover, deep sense of dissatisfaction with native black's behavior and mixed culture in the Island White Creoles wish to escape from the present situation. They are preparing for returning ancestral home but they do not know what will happen in their life ahead. For example in the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* Antoinette dreams about her future life in England, she narrates, "I was walking in the forest. Not alone someone who hated me was with me, out of sight, I could hear heavy footsteps coming closer and though I struggled and screamed I could not move. I woke crying" (15-16). Antoinette's nightmare predicts her victimization by her English husband, Rochester, the day residue that seeds it is the distaste felt toward her by her mother, Annette, the presence who stands above her as the powerful, archetypal object. Her husband Rochester is means of dislocation of culture and geographical and tropical trauma for her. According to her dream, Antoinette will choose the demonstration of hate and the inspiring of hate, as her only avenue for being acknowledged by the husband to whom she is emotionally bound.

Talking about Caribbean postcolonial cultural identity, place can be considered to be of particular importance due to the hybrid nature of the region. Thus cultural identity is based on different region "the region of contact, which is indigenous to neither side but hosts the contact between these two different cultures" (Hogan 4) This region of contact is where the cultural and social mixing of the two cultures take place which then creates new kind of "contact cultures" (6). This process can be called Creolization it was obvious during the postcolonialism. In this way the descendants of English settlers in the Caribbean have infused parts of both the English culture and the indigenous culture of the colonized into their cultural identity.

Therefore, Creole populations in creating a unique cultural identity separate from the both cultures. In terms of geographical region, the Caribbean differs from many other postcolonial areas. For former slave owners this contact zone becomes postcolonial geography what Ashcroft and others write, "Any culture affected by colonization can be seen as part of postcolonial geography"(1). Here Caribbean Island is also postcolonial geography for White Creoles who were born and brought up in the Island. The place where they spent long time being natives becomes diasporic land for them. This can be seen in the character of diasporic writings. Rhys's character Antoinette and Danticat's Sophie suffers colonial sensibilities. Both of them face the problem of displacement and become diaspora in host country.

Arguing about diaspora and transnationalism, Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, in their book --*Theorizing Diaspora* write:

while Diaspora may be accurately described as transnationalism, it is not synonymous with transnationalism may be defined as the flow of people, ideas, capitals, across national territories in a way that undermines nationalist and nationalisms as discrete categories of identification economic organization and political constitution (8).

Diaspora refers to the movement of people from one nation state to another. It even addresses the migration and displacements of subjects similar to Danticat's character – Sophie who is supposed to face the problem of displacement when she moves New York from Haiti. She is a local as well as global; she is not everywhere but nowhere.

When Sophie arrives in New York, she is forced to “learn English quickly”. She says, "Otherwise, the American students would make fun of me, even worse, beat me" (20). Martine makes Sophie read aloud from her English composition books in order to encourage her to understand English quickly. Firstly, Sophie feels difficult

and boring to read and understand English in new place and surrounding. She narrates the situation as; “words sounded like rocks falling in a stream” (25). She does not seem to notice her speaking connecting French to English. For Sophie and other immigrants of Haiti English and French both are the hybrid languages so they are unable to choose between two. In talking about language, it is often a central question in post colonial studies. In the time of colonization; colonizers normally imposed the dominance of their native language onto the people they colonized. In this process, some post colonial writers and activists advocate a complete return to the use of indigenous languages is like what Bill Ashcroft and et.al says, “abrogation and accommodation” (38). During colonization people do not have fixed language to speak in the colonies shown in Danticat's novel. In her novel, she has presented Sophie and Martin speaking French and English simultaneously as Ashcroft's views, “language is adopted as a tool and utilized to express widely differing cultural experiences” (39). The characters are seen as they are the victim of different cultures and languages. When they are in Haiti they use French language as a communication tool, later in America they must speak English to be an authentic American. Now their identity is not fixed, it is vanishing somewhere else neither in Haiti nor in New York rather in between being a hybrid. However, as an immigrant of Haiti they try to assimilate new culture and identity in Brooklyn.

In the same way, the novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* shares some of the tenets of diasporic writing reflecting the theme of hybridity, dislocation and multiple identities. The main character - Sophie aged twelve is frequently tortured due to the recurring rape images done to her mother. She has horrible trauma of her mother's rape. She cannot ignore her past history. It is that feeling that makes her diasporic and hybrid in the New York. Sophie's trip to Haiti to attend her mother's funeral was tied with

innocence and love. Her attempt of assimilating English language throws her to live hybrid life. Like other immigrants she never fully feels an American or Haitian. She grew up in Haiti, but her mother forces her to assimilate and learn the language and way of American life quickly. By dislocating from her home land she is searching "the horizon of identity" (Ashcroft 124).

Sophie is isolated in New York; in the Haitian – American world she inhabits, there is no one she can talk to about her problems and her mother's behavior, especially anyone who speaks Creole or French. For her, life becomes what Pramod Nayar calls "exile". In this connection, Pramod K Nayar defines diaspora as; "Diaspora is simply the displacement of a community culture into another geographical and cultural region. [...] Diaspora culture is the effect of migration, immigration and exile" (187). As Nayar's definition of diaspora, Sophie's isolated life in New York is the outcome of migration. She is there to educate herself, to fulfill dream of her mother and family but because of geographical dislocation she becomes homesick finds herself losing identity of being Haitian. She seems to be thrown into in-betweenness, either in Haiti or in New York rather in between the border.

Not knowing much about the place and people, Sophie is confined in the room alone having nostalgia of past beautiful moments in Haiti and its culture with her surrogate mother Tante Atie. She could not be separated by them rather she could not reconcile with her mother Martine. Generally postcolonial writers represent forceful migration and diaspora that connecting to identity of one's. Danticate by asserting Sophie as her fictional character tries to show her own situation in America. In this connection, Patrick Samway relates the writer's life with her character, Sophie and says, "Living in two worlds at once, one physically (the United States) and the other through mental imaging and recall (Haiti), which reverse themselves when she travels

to Haiti, Danticate's natural artistic impulse is to look to private and public Haitian sources, as found in folklore, proverbs, and the ordinary events of everyday life". (78-79). Samway claims that Danticate life of being an American for a long time, remembering Haiti, creating the scenes and culture of Haiti proves that she is still Haitian writer. She has got hyphenated identity, Haitian-American. Haiti and Haitians are still engraved in her conscience and the dream of returning homeland motivates her to create such story that reflects two worlds and immigrants suffering from cultural dislocation. In her fiction, she has created the character Sophie who represents two world; physical and mental, New York and Haiti respectively.

She feels homeless and diasporic even she suffers Martine's evils, Haitian communities and victimization. When she arrives in New York at the age of twelve, she along with her mother is taken to a Haitian restaurant to celebrate. Sophie in the diasporic restaurant finds the inn's atmosphere a diasporic one. The psychological burden that Sophie has carried since her mother's past reflected in the act of Martine's testing, phobias and anxieties that have left Sophie terrified, hybrid and diasporic. In the same context, Bed Prasad Giri asserts diaspora as, "the diasporic mind constitutes its own unique place . . . under the conditions of a traumatic history" (221). The concept of diaspora is connected to some kind of traumatic uprooting, being shifted as a black immigrant from Caribbean to New York, Sophie, newly arrived immigrant in America, and suffers from homesickness. The remembrances of mother and her surrogate mother --Atie, grandma Ife are the thoughts making her dispersed and dislocated caused trauma.

In the same way, these two novels are the projection of diasporic writings thereby highlighting the issues of migration, in-betweenness, unhomeliness, displacements, alienation, multiple sensibilities of the self. The characters in the

novels are designed in such a way that they are both victims as well as those who enjoy globalized selfhood where identity is crisscrossed by a number of factors thereby making them feel that they are both insider and outsider, self and other, subject and object etc.

Rhy's character-- Antoinette's movement from Carribean to Europe is marked by the tension of belongings and not--belongings, she is puzzled between the two poles probably imagining the homelands that exist between the two. She is neither a typical Carribean nor an English girl. In the similar manner, Dandicat's character -- Sophie is again the one who cannot feel being at home. In fact home is the place where one shares feeling and emotion and get relief. However, Sophie is left homeless. She does not have feeling of freedom and selfhood with the material houses, so she is suffering from dislocation and fractured identities.

Talking about dispersed identities, James Clifford in *Diasporas* writes, "dispersed people once separated from homelands by vast oceans political barriers, increasingly finds themselves in border relation with the world country thanks to a to - -fro made possible by modern technologies of transport, communication and labor migration"(304). It clarifies that dispersed people are those who are left somewhere far from the native land. The diasporic characters suffer from the pain of leaving their native land as they are mistreated in the new world.

As shown in the novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, the writer projects the uneasiness of Sophie. Upon their return to New York, Martine and Sophie begin the healing process. Sophie's second flight out of Haiti, having reconciled with Martine, recalls her first flight out of Haiti at age twelve, en route to her mother. Martine's madness at the time of her first departure is reflected in the physical illness of this second departure. Martine becomes sick when she comes back to Haiti because of her



past memory. In this context, Meg Wesling opines, “Martine’s is a personal trauma that is also a form of state violence and it is telling that her only recourse is to flee, thus setting into motion the diasporic trajectory of the novel” (665). Martin's trauma is because of state violence so she has to flee for new land and new environment. Her migration from Caribbean to New York makes her diasporic and leaves her living life losing her identity getting new one.

Crossing the border makes the one hybrid character. Both writers Rhys and Danticat show the fluid cultural dislocation and identity of the postcolonial characters in foreign land. In the contemporary postcolonial period, the unequal and uneven forces of cultures are a fabric of cultural representation involve in political and social authority within the world order. Culture is a fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their actions. Such action then takes the form of social structure, the actually existing network of social relations.

Culture and social structure are two different things in the same sphere. One of the famous anthropologist E.B. Tylor defines culture is a “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”(Tylor 1). Tylor’s definition of culture evokes the object of the culture is to make refresh to the morals, customs and manners of the life of subordinate social stratum. In this sense, cultural identity can be both constructed and real at the same time. The reality consists in people’s returning outward, to causally significant features of the social world.

Thus, discussing on the concept of cultural identity, it is the matter of displacing one from the existing culture and forcing for past life to return. This development of cultural identity in individuals and personal reflect and construct the identity that can reconcile in host society. In addition to this idea Hall further opines,

“Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture” (237). Hall clarifies that there is always a politics of identity, and positions, which is unstable rather it is created by the transcendental law of origin. As shown in the novels, Antoinette and Sophie are panic in new strange world getting new identity. For instance, Sophie becomes black American as well as Haitian in New York with her mother. On the other hand, Antoinette gets the identity of White Creole between two cultures; black and white. In this way, both Caribbean literary writers expose the complex cultural identity having diaspora in contact land. Moreover, they create the characters losing their identity physically and mentally. Both of them present the characters complex series of flights, returns and reconciliation, reinforcing of physically moving is an important counterpart to the characters emotional states.

Continuing with an argument of culture and identities Mike Featherstone regards nations as communities and says that person's identities are partly controlled and designed by the place:

In this way a nation can be considered as an imagined community because it provides a quasi-religious sense of belonging and fellowship which is attached to those who are taken to share particular symbolic place the place is symbolic in that it can be a geographic clay bounded space which is sediment with symbolic sentiments ; the configuration of the landscape , building and people have been invested with collective memories which have sufficient emotional power to generate a sense of community. (346)

Mike’s strong view of nation as a community for an immigrant provides an information that sense of belonging and fellowship may be canonized with certain

places, where emblematic status of an immigrant views as national monument and uses to represent a form of symbolic bonding which overrides and embodies the various local affiliations people possess.

Landscape can be used as a tool for the portrayal of many aspects of cultural identity as well as emotion. The representation in the novels is to portray nostalgia, which is also closely linked with the concept of displacement. In this context, Tiffin says that the landscape helps one to feel that she/he belongs to somewhere and someone. Tiffin asserts, “The term landscape both denotes and connotes more than simply land or earth. An observer, an attitude to land a point of view is implied such that landscape is necessarily a product of a combination of relationship between living beings and their surrounding”(Tiffin 199). The land is powerful to make people feel whole and complete. It is the means of creating one’s identity in new surroundings. For instance in *Wide Sargasso Sea* Antoinette could not tolerate her husband's criticism on Caribbean Island and says about the place where she wishes to stay. She says, “But I loved this place and you have made it into a place I hate, I used to think that if everything else went out of my life I would still have this, and now you have spoilt it” (88). She thinks wherever she goes and stays but she remembers the place where she was born. She feels that her home island is the only place where she can feel whole, as the landscape is such a vital part of her identity.

Furthermore, physically she can be detached from the place but spiritually she cannot forget it because she has a cultural binding with the Caribbean landscapes. She will have memory and love of the soil because she is native islander. In this connection Stephane Dufoix in his book *Diasporas* writes; “People who leave the country are still connected to it in spite of distance” (81). According to Dufoix the people who are living diasporic life always miss the past. They become homeless,

identity less and remember the national/origin land of the past. Rhys's heroine Antoinette has also problem that she has moved to England after getting married. Her husband forcefully makes her to forget Caribbean Island where she has spent long time with black people and she has an emotional attachment with it. It shows her West Indies identity is much stronger than English.

On these grounds we can argue that Antoinette's nostalgia and longing for the Caribbean identity comes across most clearly when she is imprisoned in The Thorn Field Hall, England. Coulibri and Granbois are described in rich and careful detail whereas England is vague and depressing, a prison for Antoinette which was her homeland (ancestral home). Negative images of England begin long before the time Antoinette experiences her traumatic confinement. She is exiled in her own homeland due to her Creole identity. She feels a very close connection to the Caribbean and takes at home in her surrounding, however, she sees England as a distant dream, a fantasy land. For her England is like an unpleasant dream. She exclaims, "That England is like a dream? [...] she said this place London is like a cold dark dream sometimes" (47). In the similar way Rochester answers; "That is precisely how your beautiful island seems to me, quite unreal and like a dream" (48). For Antoinette England is like a cold dream but for Rochester Caribbean is quite unreal and like a dream or for both, both places are same or vice-versa. For both characters it's very difficult to incorporate other's reality in their own.

The fear of Antoinette about London is come to in reality when she reaches there. In England she feels that she has pulled towards her lost homeland being mainly English heredity. But she has never experienced it and only carries with her a mental image of the world. Now Antoinette realizes that her identity is fleeting. On the way of London Antoinette finds, the ship has lost. She has seen the connection of

ship with her identity. In this diasporic displacement Bed Prasad Giri further says, "The fact that diasporic displacements propel our uprooted bodies across the world's variously entrenched borders does not mean that our minds will follow suit" (221). The diasporic person's identity is in constant change, and can create a strong relationship to the new place. But it does not mean that bodily uprooted person can forget about the old identity. Rhys's heroine, Antoinette is also in dilemma and creating space in between place of residence and the place of origin.

In talking about homeland and problem of identity of the people in host country, the color also becomes an overpowering force that can bind someone to his/her motherland. In *Breath, Eyes, Memory* the color becomes an overpowering force that binds Sophie to her mother, and disturbs her individual identity. Sophie's rejection of this kind of control is reiterated at the moment the daffodil becomes literally detached from the mother's day card. The Daffodil in mother's day card further complicates the relationship between Sophie, her aunt Atie, who has raised Sophie from birth to around the Twelve years. Atie says Sophie about her color because Sophie's belongings are all yellow. She says, "Everything you own is yellow, wildflower yellow, like dandelions, sunflowers" (7). Martine, Sophie's mother, loves daffodil it means colder climates. After forcing the daffodil back into its place on the card, Tante Atie informs Sophie of her mother's love for daffodil because they grew in a place they are not supposed to. According to Tante Atie:

They were really European flowers, French buds and stems, meant for colder climates. A long time ago, a French woman had brought them to Croix-des-Rosets and planted them there. A strain of daffodils had grown that could withstand the heat, but they were the color of

pumpkins and golden summer squash, as though they had acquired a bronze tinge from the skin of the natives who had adopted them. (8)

Atie's evocation of existence of daffodil revises the nation of rootedness and relocates it within the space of migratory movements.

In this way, these both books are written in the colonial/ post colonial context where characters are represented facing identity crisis in their diasporic world. Both literary works written in the context of imperialism/ post colonial Caribbean sketch the problem of people of the then society in general and characters who represents Haiti and Jamaica in particular. The narrators of the stories of Rhys and Danticat's texts are the replica of their own life. They have shown the bitter reality of displacement as they had. So they have created the characters like, Sophie and Antoinette who are facing the problems of displacement and identity crisis because of the detachment with mother. The lack of reconciliation and love and caring between mother and daughter signifies that there seems to be lacking home in the life of both narrators of stories; *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Breath, Eyes, Memory*.

My dissertation here aims at showing what happens to people when they are intentionally or forcefully moved to the new world and they become homeless. They will certainly suffer isolation, imitation, fractured identities and homelessness. They are under the tremendous pressure to find out who they really are. In this context what provides the motivation for this research is the question of how people of different races and cultures in the subsequent novels interact in the spaces of the other locations and face the problem of identity crisis. Talking about the notion of an original identity, it is necessary to see the hierarchy of 'us' and 'them' or 'alterity', Homi Bhabha and other postcolonial theorists offer the possibility of hybridity and displacement in facing problem of identity crisis.

This suggests that two female Caribbean writers, Jean Rhys and Edwidge Danticat are caught by cultural dislocation and diaspora in their host country due reason they face the identity crisis. The movement of the people during the colonialism is common, so most of the literary writers, who have shifted one place to another either for longing for home or bright future, have faced cultural displacement during the post colonial period. In this context, Angelika Bammer sees displacement as "one of the most formative experiences" and defines it as, "the separation people from their native culture either through physical dislocation (as refugees, immigrants, migrants, exiles or expatriates) or the colonizing imposition of a foreign culture" (xi). This concept stands, particularly in post colonial studies, similar to exile, forced immigration, and diaspora.

In addition, displacement as a concept adds the dimensions to the way we interpret works produced about displaced people, particularly from the point of view of identity crisis and nationalism. Displaced people feel that they are forced to forget their homes to take up temporary residence in an unknown territory being migrants against their host population. They are either displaced by force or interest but they lack the home and feel difficulties in communicating. So, they seek their permanent home and language in host country. In this connection, Bammer further quotes, "The experience of displacement, both cause and effect of our contingent existences, forces upon us a heightened awareness of our simultaneously necessary and fragile connectedness" (xvi). The quest of permanent home and existence frequently haunts in their mind that their connection with host country is weak. Bammer even talks about 'home' and 'Community' in arrive country. She says, "The two middle sections, "(Re) locating 'Home' and 'Community' and 'Natives', Empires, and the contingencies of Race", are framed by the acknowledgement of contingency in both its broadest and

most literal sense" (xvi). Bammer argues that for colonizers it becomes threat to assimilate natives and their culture when they are not ready to relocate new home and community in the Empires. They should adopt language, cultures and even they must adjust in the society with indigenous people. This shows not only colonized people feel displaced rather colonizer too feel the same. For both party Home and Community become the diaporic.

In connecting diaspora to post colonialism, Bed Prasad Giri says diasporic person dependent on "contradictory sentiments of belonging to a prior homeland as well as desiring host – society integration or assimilation"(229). It refers to the way that the diaspora loyalties are split between host and home to get identity through integration and assimilation. What Radhakrishna has said, "the diasporic self acquires a different historicity and a different sense of duration within its new location that is neither home nor not – home. Rather than glorify the immigrant moment as a mode of perennial liminality, the diasporic self seeks to reterritorialize itself and thereby acquire a name"(324). The diasporic self is fragmented it gains non name rather it becomes ethnic self. This fractured identity of people in arrive country problematizes the authority and authenticity to which the cultural identity acquire.

Even there is something to be gained in naming the diasporic self or subject as the ethnic self. The term diaspora indicates a desire to historicize the moment of departure as a moment of pure rupture both from the root and the place of residence. In this connection, Stuart Hall further says, "cultural Identity" in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective "one true self", hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed "selves", which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common"(234). This concept of cultural identity played a vital role in post colonial struggles of the people. Here cultural identity is acquired from shared



culture in a group of an immigrants and natives in arrive country. It is imposed self of someone who is different in the society. Hence, cultural identity can be seen from the communal perspective, where individuals locate themselves in a shared culture. On the other hand, it can be observed from the personal perspective, where individuals differentiate themselves from others around them. This is the states that make someone alone and different, feelings of displacement, and in-betweenness situation what both novels *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys and *Breath, Eyes, Memory* by Edwidge Danticate represent.

In above mentioned context, *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Breath, Eyes, memory* explore the idea of diaspora and identity crisis of main characters in different lands and their fluid existence- they live in-between the space. Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* becomes White Creole and she is forced to live a hybrid life lacking true sense of home where she was born. However, Sophie in *Breath, Eyes, Memory* displaces from her homeland and captures the memory of native land through nostalgia. Due to not understanding English language properly she could not adjust herself in host society rather she finds fractured and in between the place. This research attempts to justify that the life of an immigrant in arrive country becomes diaspora and wonders here and there to get fixed identity. However, they cannot acquire the stable identity, the inability to articulate their assertive self makes them outsider from the host society as a result they move in – between the place, foreign land and homeland.

On the basis of the theoretical compass of diaspora and identity crisis this project attempts to make a close and discursive analysis of the impacts of colonialism in different sectors. The concept of colonization procreated through diaspora, cultural displacement, racial otherness and identity crisis conquered one's identity. Such cultural displacement has been helpful to replace the colonizer group, make them

homeless and quest of identity. To show diaspora and in-betweenness situation of colonizer and colonized during postcolonial era in terms of the analysis of *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Rhys and *Breath, Eyes, Memory* by Danticat the theoretical frame of most prominent postcolonial critic Homi K. Bhabah's idea of hybridity, and postcolonial identity has been applied to interpret the in-betweenness and loss of identity in diasporic world. Moreover, theoretical orientation of Angelica Bammer will be implied to explore how displacement forces one to be homeless. The analysis focused on diaspora literature and its impact in creating one's identity in new land. To talk about diaspora and cultural postcolonial identity of an immigrant during the period some postcolonial critics like, Jana Evans Braziel, Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall and others will stimulate the critical insight of the thesis.

This proposed research analyzes the ways in which *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Breath, Eyes, Memory* use the concept of identity crisis in character construction and how the characters are facing the problem of cultural dislocation in their diasporic world. This research delimits on the diaspora theory and its impact on the migrated people in different countries, either by political upheaval or fulfill their dream. This research furthermore describes the situation of Identity Crisis of the people due to diaspora in foreign land. On the basis of theoretical accomplish of this research, Homi K. Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Jana Evans, James Clifford, Paul Gilroy, and others have been used. Similarly, this project does not talk more about post colonialism rather it particularizes on diaspora and its effect on one's subjectivity. First chapter of this research has focused on identity crisis of Caribbean characters created in the novels *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and *Breath, Eyes, Memory*, from various aspects such as; cultural dislocation, mimicry, displacement and diaspora. In Chapter two, it deals with the displaced diasporic identity of Caribbean white Creole within the Island, where she

was born and ancestral homeland, England. In chapter three the attempts have been made to signify the Haitian people's diasporic trauma and search of self in America. Moreover, the fourth chapter of this research has made the comparisons and contrast of two Caribbean literary writers their attempt of creating new identity in diaspora with the reference of characters presentation in their novels. Finally, in chapter five of the project concludes the entire idea of this research.

## Chapter II

### Displaced Diasporic Identity of Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

People migrating from one place to another live their life between native land of their roots/origin and the land where they migrate i.e. land of their adoption for existence. Jean Rhys *Wide Sargasso Sea* narrates the story of Antoinette's suffering to get identity in Caribbean island as well as English. Her journey of life Jamaica, Caribbean to Thorn Field Hall, England is the place where the cultural dilemmas, emotional dislocations, and spatial problem can be found. Rhys heroine Antoinette suffers much in Caribbean island because most of the Caribbean blacks hate and elitist white ex-slave owners neglect her. So she feels alone within her home land because of middle class ex-slave owners, Creole identity.

Jean Rhys, most prominent post-colonial writer of Caribbean, presents the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* that captures the pathos of a society undergoing deep and bitter change. She shows the conflict through the relationship of the white Creole heiress Antoinette Cosway and her English unnamed husband. The tension grows between white plantation owners and newly liberated black slaves. Therefore, having white heritage and Jamaican born, the main character, Antoinette has felt dispersed in Caribbean island. In this sense, she is not accepted by both groups, neither in Caribbean nor in England. Living in her native land, Jamaica she has to feel isolated and displaced from the society. Her creole identity is the crucial factor of victimization. Not only Antoinette, her mother Annette also feels helplessly imprisoned at Coulibri Estate after the death of her husband. She has come from Martinique, Dominica with family and maid Christophine. In Martinique they used to follow the Roman Catholicism whereas all Jamaican follow the protestant so they are regarded as foreigners in the same island.

However, *Wide Sargasso Sea* impedes the characters geographical transition from one place to others and represents the barrier in understanding between the cultural values and attitudes of two different cultures, i.e. English and Creole and Creole and black. In fact, most of the Creole characters in *wide Sargasso Sea* face the problem of isolation, displacement and identity crisis.

White Creole identity becomes the barrier between two and among the cultures in Caribbean. Therefore, Antoinette and Annette like many other Caribbean Creole family, are described as diasporic with displacement, relocation, temporary settlement, and resettlement. The practice of being true citizen in their own country determines the social identities and cultural displacement. In this way, this chapter explores how hybridized term 'Creole' makes someone an outsider in the land where they had spent long time and diasporic within their native land and land of contact. How white people who are born in England deny them as they are white? How Rhys novel portrays the social construction of Englishness and Creoleness in both islands? Many challenges have been faced by white Creole people to get permanent settlement and identity; they become foreigner in Native Island and stranger in England.

Rhys heroine Antoinette Cosway's displacement and identity crisis are the result of her being continually denied own refusal to accept certain parts of her identity. She is a part of a white European culture that she is inherited from her family and the Caribbean culture she was born into. She both fears and admires the Caribbean culture and sense of identity that her black friend and servants have. Antoinette admires to wanting to be the similar to Tia and looks up to Christophine as a kind of maternal figure. She appropriates a Caribbean identity into her own identity, but the black friend and other Caribbean she encounters do not accept her, rather they see her as a threat.

Antoinette further explores her Caribbean identity through her friendship with Tia. She claims she wants to be like Tia and sees a kind of strength and confidence in Tia that Antoinette lacks. In Caribbean island she assimilates the black culture with her friend Tia. Antoinette is a part of the black society where she shares experiences, superstitions, and beliefs with her only one friend Tia. She says:

Soon Tia was my friend and I met her nearly every morning at the turn of the road to the river. Sometime we left the bathing pool at midday, sometimes we stayed till late afternoon. Then Tia would light fire. We boiled green bananas in an old iron pot and ate them with our finger out of a calabash, and after we had eaten she slept at once I could not sleep, but I wasn't quite awake as I lay in the shade looking at the pool – deep and dark green under the trees, brown green if it had rained but a bright sparkling green in the sun. (13)

Antoinette's attempt to assimilate black culture with her friend is to identify herself as black friend Tia. However, she sees different colors looking at the pool. She sees deep and dark green, brown green, and bright sparkling green variant colors in nature. In this way, she finds her stages of life in different colors. She is not pure one in a particular community. Her white heritage is mixed into black upbringing and culture. Her life is amazed in between the place getting new white Creole identity. This identity forces her to live a hybrid life in ambivalent.

Antoinette's ambivalent life is continued in Jamaica living in the border of two cultures. Instead of crossing a physical border, and having to deal with the questions of belonging from a traditional immigrant perspective, Antoinette is forming her identity through the crossing from one system of power to another. She is third

generation immigrants, now sharing a creole background, which is even intensifying the questions of identity and belonging because of the problem that she is identifying herself as either white or black. In this context, Bhabha argues, “The discourse of mimicry is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference” (86). According to Bhabha mimicry in discourse which is created in-between the culture; colonizer and colonized. It is constructed and produced around ambivalence. It creates ambivalent to the people who are living in-between the culture. Having Creole identity Antoinette tries to be pure black by adopting black culture fully but her white heritage and belonging in colonized group creates her distinct in the Island.

Similarly, mimicking black culture to be an authentic Caribbean, Antoinette is obliged to follow the life style of blacks in the society. Intentionally or not she has to copy something in Island to make her life easier. So, in the course of adopting culture and rules of the society Antoinette wears Tia’s dirty and old dress. There is seen reverse in roles of two; this symbolizes the ability to acquire identities. In this connection, Antoinette talks about wearing Tia’s dress on, “she has left me hers and I put it on at last and walked home in the blazing sun feeling sick hating her” (14). On these grounds, we can analyze that Antoinette is attempting to take on a Caribbean identity and reject her English identity. However, when Tia throws a rock at Antoinette, she seems to be rejected by blacks in the island. Antoinette is thrown out from the Caribbean society and losing the Caribbean identity she grew up. Antoinette reveals this bitter reality of her life by narrating her encounter with Tia, she narrates:

We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, 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 started at each other, blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking glass. (27)

The quote is implying that Tia is represented the Caribbean half of Antoinette's identity. Tia is an image of what Antoinette would like to be: a black woman, not a white Creole who is accepted by neither white nor black communities. Unlike Tia Antoinette will never have a racial identity to call her own. Antoinette becomes wounded child who has become an assailant in reaction to repeated experiences of neglect and loss. Likewise, Mardorassian says, "Antoinette tries to be as black, but black defines her as other" (1083). Antoinette's attempt of accepting black Caribbean identity abandon her being true Islander rather it forces her to create a more white Creole identity as she moves to Spanish Town.

Before moving to Spanish Town with Aunt Cora she has seen that her home was burnt down and brother died. Being alone in Convent school she remembers her mother and brother and she says, "She was part of Coulibri that had gone, so she had gone, I was certain of it. But when we reached the tidy pretty little house where she lived now I jumped out of the carriage and ran as fast as I could across the lawn" (28). Antoinette's longing for mother's love is similar to her quest of getting true identity. Her life in Convent school is not satisfactory because of her not accepting Creole identity is her true identity. Her mother is symbolized that she is a part of motherland if her mother is not there obviously her native/home land is also lost. The Coulibri Estate is burnt down as her existence of becoming Caribbean also burnt down. She



becomes stranger and new one in Convent school; she is not accepted as she is also part of Spanish Town in Jamaica.

She finds that she is refused in Convent because of different culture and place. She finds the place is full of brightness and dark, sun shine and shadow. She further says, "Everything was brightness or dark. The walls the blazing colors of the flowers in the garden the nuns habits were bright but their veils, the crucifix hanging from their waists the shadow of the trees, were black" (34). Antoinette's in-betweenness in this sense is portrayed by the fact that of the two colors; bright and shadow; the two cultures thus seem to be united in her identity. Her in-between position necessarily leaves a void in her practical identity as well as is problematic for her reflective identity, as her struggle to understand where her belonging lies. In the island Antoinette feels awkward and stranger in Spanish Town among the strangers who do not wish to share the things with her. Here Antoinette's position is against Bhabha's argument of "Identities are possible only in differential relations and displacement" (27). Unlike Bhabha's view Antoinette here is facing the problems of identity crisis in different place.

Antoinette Cosway is not only displaced in terms of place rather she displaced culturally, religiously and emotionally. Within Jamaica, Coulibri State she has to face the problems of displacement by the native blacks and elite whites. Having white Creole and ex-slave owners' identity she is totally excluded from the society and becomes diaspora. In this context, in her book *Post-colonial Theory*, Leela Gandhi defines diaspora as; "The nation of in-betweenness conjured up by the term hybridity is further elaborated through the accompanying concept of diaspora" (131). Gandhi's argument shows the hybrid term of Creolization itself is a means of losing identity of one's self. In this manner, Antoinette and Annette have faced the problem of

displacement and cultural exclusion in Couilbri Estate due to their Creole identity. Thus Annette finds herself and her family as maroon: she says, “Now we are marooned” (10). She finds white Creole’s social status as a maroon, totally cut off from the Jamaican society. In connecting white Creoles position in the Caribbean society Elaine Savory opines, “After her horse is poisoned, Antoinette’s mother thinks of her family as marooned: she means that they are cut off from human society” (136). Savory means Antoinette and her mother are totally detached from the black natives and white colonizers. So her mother seeks the past Martinique, Dominican culture. On the other hand, as being middle class representative of colonizing forces Antoinette's psychology and place of birth identify her as a Jamaican, but her European genes foster the resentment of native black islanders. She is emotionally and technically a native of Jamaican. She has a limited family history in the Caribbean. So, she is essentially a transplanted European and no length of residence in the West Indies. Therefore, she has made Other in the same island where she was born.

Similarly, Pramod K Nayar in his book *Post-colonial Literature* argues, “you might lose a home but never again one or you might set up a new home in a space which will continue to treat you as a foreigner” (193). Nayar’s assertion of language ‘foreigner’ shows post-colonial era is very difficult for the people either they are native or they are colonizer. They are forced to live life in isolation being alone even in their home land because of hybrid identity. Here, Antoinette loses her white community before long time settlement in Caribbean. But Caribbean black ex-slave, do not accept white Creole as they are also part of the Caribbean. They hate them, and after emancipation ex-white colonizer also neglect them. Now they are in-between the culture and place. Antoinette is facing the problem of displacement and losing her

existence of being white Creole but she has deep attachment with the island. Her Jamaican attachment can be seen in her words, “The scent was very sowed strong. I never went near it” (11). Her speculation of word, ‘sweet’ and strong show the scent of root is very strong, which cannot be disconnected of her anywhere she goes. However, she is not able to get the essence of Caribbean culture.

Moreover, the construction of identity is perhaps significant with the connection of the past history and trauma. Rhys reflects the colonial diasporic dislocation and dispersion through the invisible traces of a traumatic or troubled past of Antoinette. She after relocating in England with her husband remembers past life in Caribbean blacks and her mother. Her identity of being Islander is connected with her mother’s identity. So, Antoinette remembers her mother’s dressing and bare feet and says, “Looking at the tapestry one day I recognized my mother dressed in an evening gown but with bare feet. She looked away from me, over my head just as she used to do” (106). This is her past memory about her mother and motherland and Jamaican culture of dressing. Now she is exiled in England and it is impossible to her to return in Caribbean island. She traumatizes that it is not her island rather it looks as if it is a jail for her. Therefore, Antoinette’s present situation is like her mother in Jamaica, where she walks with bare feet wearing evening gown searching a fixed identity. On these grounds, Homi K. Bhabha exclaims:

The ‘beyond’ is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past... Beginnings and endings may be the sustaining myths of the middle years; but in the *fin de siècle*, we find ourselves in the moment-of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion.(1)

Bhabha's assertion about the modern world, writer and their literature related to hybridity and in-between-ness is similar to Rhys heroine Antoinette's life in Jamaica. Modern writers live beyond a new horizon. They neither move towards past and nor can celebrate present. They just try to create new identity in between the space. And then the movement from past to present help produce complex identity to them, they are not totally belonged to anywhere, either. Jean Rhys here is creating a character who is facing the problem of homelessness in present world where she assimilates the culture and life style being outsider. On the other hand, when she is in England, the original homeland where her ancestors used to celebrate to live cannot take her own. Now her position is in between the world, England and Caribbean as well as between the history, past and present.

As modern writers are caught by diaphora and hybridity, Rhys also is not deprived from that situation. So her writing *Wide Sargasso Sea* also reflects the complex life of character in West Indies as well as England. Rhys character Antoinette also victims of the two worlds, she is in dilemma when she is in Caribbean, and she longs for English identity so that she could get recognition of particular country. However, when she is in England with her husband she feels lacking and longs for Caribbean land and upbringing. Ehen she wishes to get back to the Island through imagination. She remembers her past is connected to Jamaica where she had happy moments with Caribbean. But at the moment she has a past memory of the place she says, "The smell of vertivert and Frangipani, of cinnamon and dust and lime trees when they are flowering. The smell of the sun and the smell of the rain" (109). Her emotion is connected to the island having white heritage she has developed the new relation with Caribbean so it becomes motherland or root for her.

Antoinette's love of root is similar to Vijaya Mishra's consensus view, "The nation-state sees in diaporas reflections of its own past, its traumatic moments, and its memories of settlement" (6). The nation can be seen in diasporas reflection of its past memory. It is related to the one's traumatic moments in foreign land and exposition of relocation. In this similar way, Antoinette is not happy in new settlement in England; she has not any idea that she has been exiled by English husband. Due to this, she has a trauma of her past. Antoinette remembers her past activities in Caribbean with black friend Tia of calling different name to each other. She remembers her in-betweenness and hybrid life by name calling. The concept of name-calling can be carried out a question of power assertion between the black ex-slaves and ex-colonizers. When Antoinette accounts a fight she had with her childhood friend Tia, who is a black girl; Antoinette calls her a "Cheating nigger" (14), which provokes Tia to reply, "Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger" (14). This reveals the complexity between the white Creole and the black community. Both these names refer to the white Creole family having lost their wealth, which has left them in a state of in-betweenness; they are accepted by neither the white nor the black community of the island and are not to identify with either of them.

Hence, Antoinette becomes the character who has been living the life of ambivalence. This life leads her to be displaced in Jamaican society. Konzett in her essay; "Anzid Yeziarska, Zora Neale Hurston, Jean Rhys, and the Aesthetics of Dislocations" has said, "This demotion of Antoinette's family from the white race to lower rank of "white nigger" marks only one of a series of dislocations in Rhys novel" (135). Konzett's views about Antoinette's family history seems to be very critical because black community charges them 'white nigger' not rich enough as in the past. Now they become middle class white Creole, who has adopted the native

language, costume and way of living, life, is in miserable condition. This Creole identity throws in the border line; she is not accepted by her husband as she is pure white as a result she is imprisoned in English territory.

Rhys has depicted that Cosway family has been insulted by group of black as well as elite white in Jamaica because they are actually not from the Island. In this way, the group of ex-slave has burnt their house and killed Pierre. The angry mob says, "Look at black Englishman!" "Look the white niggers!" "Look the damn white nigger!" (25). Cosway family is insulted in Caribbean land by black. So, they are facing social exclusion, they displaced from the culture, now they become identity less. Antoinette's family here loses the identity of being Caribbean rather it becomes white family for the moment. Antoinette being Caribbean born becomes the citizen of the Island technically but her white race becomes the barrier of getting Jamaican identity. In this connection Boyarin and Boyarin says, "Diasporic cultural identity teaches us that cultures are not preserved by being protected from "mixing" but probably can only continue to exist as a product of such mixing. Cultures, as well as identities, are constantly being remade"(323, qtd. in Clifford). This is true of all cultures, diasporic white Creole flats bare because of the impossibility of natural association between black ex- slaves and white aristocrats. Antoinette experiences being Creole both in the Caribbean and England, and she is personally aware of the conflicting culture. Antoinette now being in her birth place becomes 'Other' and living diasporic life. She lives in the island, imitates the island culture and belief but islanders do not tolerate her. So, she has pulled to live pathetic life in the Caribbean. She is facing identity crisis in the island being unwanted by both groups.

The Creole identity is negatively defined in the text. They are described as inferior compared to the English. It is seen after Antoinette's mother marries to Mr. Mason, an English man. Antoinette is forced to love her step farther notice that things are not all as the English people think they are. After Antoinette's mother's marriage with Mason she refused Creole habits and replaces by English one. It is seen Antoinette's first step of moving in English culture. Her movements of back and forth Caribbean to English can be seen in her articulation of food. She says, "We ate English food now, beef and mutton, pies and puddings. I was glad to be like an English girl but I missed the taste of Christophine's cooking" (21). As having white heritage, she becomes happy when she is in the surrounding of white people and their culture. But suddenly, she realizes that she has missed something that is black culture and surrounding as well as Christophine's taste of cooking. She forgets her island for the moment and tries to be English girl but her memory of island makes her again to attach herself with the society. She suddenly realizes that she has left something back that is Caribbean upbringing and culture. Giving flavor to the point Hall writes, "It is always either over or under mined, either an excess or a supplement. There is always something 'left over'" (240). According to Hall the diasporic culture whether excess or supplement, people left something back and remember past at present.

Similarly, Rhys displays Antoinette's husband not taking her a true white woman after getting married. Rochester senses her doubts about the marriage immediately and he is constantly reminding himself of the differences between them, of how she is not like him. For him, Antoinette seems to be a great mystery; she belongs to nowhere rather she must be crazy. It is Antoinette's hybridity and ambivalence that confuse him. By taking her other in white community he defines her as; "Long, sad, dark alien eyes Creole of pure English decent she may be, but they are

not English or European either”(39). Creole characters identify as very poor and in-between the place. In Caribbean island Antoinette belongs to colonizer community, in England she belongs to colonized community. So, in this case, she is both “colonizer and colonized” (Mardorossian, 86). Antoinette is defined half Caribbean and half English. So she suffers too much to get recognition, who she is. In this connection Halloran further says:

Rochester recognizes as a cultural identity only within a European setting; he therefore regards Antoinette’s white Creole identity as uncanny, familiar but not quite real to him. His wife’s lineage is never as much in question in the novel as is the visual spectacle of her physical appearance from Antoinette’s ‘dark’ locks to her ‘dark’ eyes – because he believes that “darkness” is the opposite of an abstract Englishness he can only articulate through negation. (101)

Antoinette’s dark alien eyes is symbol of hatred by the white people who born in England. The difference between Rochester and Antoinette is, he is born in England but Antoinette is in Caribbean, in the black community, which English people hate most therefore, he hates Antoinette, too. Rochester’s hatred increases when he has to spend three weeks in West Indies, in bed because of fever. The place Caribbean island is unknown/strange for him, which he hates much but he is going to marry with white Creole girl Antoinette who gets born in that island. As colonizer group representative, Rochester also hates the native people, their culture, and language too. He becomes sick because of environmental change.

Rochester takes Antoinette as Other distinct from the white community. He takes her in between the space and finds her Creole identity. By taking Mary Lou Emery argument about white Creole character she examines Antoinette Cosway/Mason is



white Creole and double dose who has a Caribbean experience and white race. She says, "In some ways white Creole experiences a double dose of a quintessential aspect of Caribbean experience" (165). She further quotes Hellen Tiffin, "The white Creole is as a double outsider, condemned to self-consciousness, a sense of inescapable difference and even deformity in two societies by whose judgments she always condemns herself" (qtd.in Emery, 166). Tiffins assert that white Creole identity is like a double outsider who cannot be accepted by both societies as a result Creole identity develops sense of difference and always develops the psyche of inferiority. They consider cultural outsider, marginality which divides the psyche, makes it other to itself. Moreover, Antoinette is victimized within her psyche of Othering and inferiority.

However, Antoinette's husband has an extreme hatred towards the Caribbean native language. Rhys black character, Christophine represents the Caribbean native language in the novel who is surrogate mother to Antoinette. Christophine's own placement in Jamaica is problematic as she is from Martinique, which makes her as outsider in a black community. Christophine, surrogate mother, teaches language, customs, and culture of the island to Antoinette. As a newcomer Rochester cannot understand their intimacy and speaking in French Patois. He says, "The two women stood in the doorway of the hut gesticulating, talking not English the debased French patois they use in this island" (39). The two women talk in French Patios but Rochester does not understand because it is Martinique language which only Christophine use because she is originally from Dominica, former colony of French, not from Jamaica.

Rhys representation of Creole identity of characters has been seen; in one hand problematic on the other familiarity. White Creole identity and black Creole identity

have been shown differently in her novel. Antoinette with the help of Caribbean Creole becomes native islander. If she does not have Christophine, a Surrogate mother, she would not have understood the Caribbean culture and life style. But her understanding about Caribbean Creole becomes cursed for her life; it leads her in-between the place. She becomes hybrid character in the novel. Her husband does not like her because she has much more intimation with black culture and native language. And again she has a belief on black occultism called Voodoo/obeah, which Christophine practices. In this connection, Russell further asserts, "Since Antoinette and Christophine would be familiar with Caribbean Creole in a much more intimate manner than the husband, the inclusion of additional Caribbean Creole expressions in Antoinette's narratives serves to further divide Antoinette and her husband" (92-93). Russell's views are grounded on the problem of creating differences between Antoinette and her husband. She claims that the closeness between Christophine and Antoinette hurts too much to him. Even her Caribbean Creole language speaking with Christophine and lack of understanding by her husband is the reason of creating distance between English and Caribbean.

Christophine is one of the important character because of whom differentiate has been seen in Antoinette and her husband. Antoinette loves her because she loves native culture, her husband hate her because he hates the natives, West Indies culture, Rochester shows his frustration of place to her and calls her "Pheena pheena !" (93). His dominated word 'pheena' might be influenced by his thinking of superiority. He tries to impose his power to native women giving another name. The reduction of Christophine's name to Pheena mirrors the husband's demeaning word play with Antoinette's names. He reduces Antoinette's name to Bertha and also calls her a

Marionette. By doing this he appears to be trying to marginalize her as she is Caribbean white Creole.

Likewise, Rochester insults the natives of the Island, Christophine and negatively comments about her coffee, “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 of the floor” (50). His insulting refrain about Christophine shows his nature of White settler. Moreover, he still wants to impose his power over native islanders in Caribbean because he looks as if he is representative of imperialism. In this connection, Virinder Kalra and others examine, “The concept of Creolization and the idea of a linguistic continuum both evolve from the study of interactions, such as that between African and European people’s in the Caribbean” (75). Christophine’s horrible language is necessary in Caribbean island to communicate each other. The arguments about linguistic upside down causes Creolization and necessity of language to communicate each other signifies the means of domination to the blacks in Caribbean or any other islands.

Rochester’s strategies of denial stage are supposed to be seen in his narrative of unbearable truth about Antoinette’s past. In honeymoon island, Granbois, Rochester finds the house awkward and rundown. He finds a refuge in that place and he has developed the feelings of alienation. Rochester being alone has said, “Under the open window a small writing - desk with paper, pens and ink. ‘A refuge’ I was thinking” (44). The trip away from Spanish Town and the honeymoon to a remote Windward Island reflects a movement away from the more colonial and civilized areas of the West Indies. Now, Rochester becomes an alien outsider, outnumbered by a community that is indifferent and hostile. Place and displacement are the important concept in the study of postcolonial literature. In this context, Ashcroft, Giffiths and

Tiffin say that the place is "an effective identifying relationship between self and place" (2002: 8). The construction of cultural identity in terms of place is to anchor one's existence to a location, a home.

Furthermore, the sense of belonging is intimately connected to the notion of place that can cause displacement. For instance, Antoinette's husband in *Coulibri*, finds himself a stranger and displaced, he says, "The windows of the huts were shut, the door opened into silence and dimness" (39). He finds nature everywhere. He further, searches traces of England in the strange world around him. He compares the red tropical land to parts of England. He exclaims, "It's red in parts of England too" (42). He tries to find out other traces of England in Granboi's house in one bookshelf he finds, "Byron's poems, novels by Sir Walter Scott, confessions of an Opium Eater, some shabby brown volumes, and on the last shelf, life and letters of ..." (44). Rochester some extent becomes happy by looking English books. His seeks of root, English culture still incompletes in West Indies. However, he is not happy in the island as he feels that he is removed from said place or home. In the same way, Ashcroft and others further add, "valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation"(9). Displacement is possible in the movement of the people, too. It lacks valid and active sense of belonging of the people.

Rochester experiences a slight identity crisis while in the West Indies and devastatingly manipulates Antoinette's identity. Rochester's move from England to the West Indies is a journey away his place of power into a land that is foreign and ostracizing because of his English identity. Rochester's feelings of displacement is continued in the island and takes a white girl as English girl when Antoinette hands him a drink of water, he imagines that "Looking up smiling, she might have been any a pretty English girl" (42). He does not find girl pure English descent and natives'

familiar to other English girl rather he tries to imagine her as any energetic English girl not a Caribbean, either. Rochester has developed the negative attitude towards the place and people, the place and woman are stranger for him. Therefore, he says, “Too much blue, too much purple, too much green. The flowers too red, the mountains too high, the hills too near. And the woman is stranger” (41). For him everything is new neither place nor person are familiar to him. Now he is going to relocate in new place. For him, everything is strange in Dominican landscape.

Similarly, Rochester has trouble adjusting his perception to the vivid colors of the Caribbean, as his own identity is grounded in the implied greyness of England. In this context, Pramod K. Nayar asserts, “Dislocation from is followed by a relocation to” (189). When someone has left the original place, becomes isolated then he/she must settle in new place. Even h/she should move towards relocation. Nayar further says, “Rochester’s marriage to Antoinette/Bertha and his life in Jamaica are described almost entirely in racist and colonial tropes” (243). Rochester’s intention of marriage with Caribbean born girl seems to impose his power upon her. So, time and again he tries to find out Englishness in Antoinette’s characters. He once says, “If I saw an expression of doubt or curiosity it was on a black face not a white one” (45). When he dances with Antoinette no one concentrate on his dance and she is not excited rather she becomes sad by remembering her past, childhood life with Tia and mother in Jamaica. Because of her sense of isolation, displacement and anger, she could not accompany with him. She is fragmented in Granbois with her husband what Maritza Stanchich says “Antoinette is fragmented” (455).

White Creole identity significantly makes Antoinette’s fragmented so now she is shadowed by disorientating memory of place and space. She has an invisible trace of traumatic past, therefore Antoinette always appears alone. She has a hope that she

would get love and caring from her husband but her husband only impose his power upon her and he tries to make her an English doll by giving new name Bertha. She is not happy with English name so she says with anger that; “my name is not Bertha; why do you call me Bertha?” ‘Because it is a name I’m particularly fond of. I think of you as Bertha’ (81). Antoinette’s anger is meaningless here, she has given name by her husband forcefully as imperialist dominates the natives during the colonization and natives should change their name so that it would be easy to colonizer to call. The act of naming and renaming is just an underestimate and neglect to the natives.

Rochester’s calling Antoinette another name is his way of taking control over her entire identity, just as he assumed legal control over her fortune when he married her. Similarly, Stuart Hall questions about identity as, "is a quite different practice entailed – not the rediscovery but the production of Identity? Not an identity grounded in the archeology, but in the retelling of the past?" (235). Native people's rediscovery of their name is the production of their subjectivity. Rhys's character, here loses her will to fight with her husband, she becomes a metaphorical slave to him.

To furnish the notion of identity Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her essay “Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism” explains, “In the figure of Antoinette, whom in *Wide Sargasso Sea* Rochester violently renames Bertha, Rhys suggests that so intimate a thing as personal and human identity might be determined by the politics of imperialism” (242). According to Spivak Antoinette’s new name Bertha seems to be the outcome of the political imperialism during the colonization period. Rochester renames her because first of all he is male and secondly, he belongs to imperialist/colonizer community. So, he only appreciates of Antoinette is her external beauty “I wonder why I never realized how beautiful she was” (47). His desire for her, the lust of possession does not imply a true feeling of love for her. In

his monologue, he admits that he does not love her “I did not love her. I was thirsting for her, but that is not love [...] she was a stranger to me, a stranger who did not think or feel as I did” (54). This dialogue of Rochester shows his European point of view of thinking inferior to non-European. He seems to be unable to understand and acknowledge the ties of his wife with the black culture and community. He is not supposed to have understood Antoinette’s complex Creole personality.

Rhys portrays the characters of Rochester and Antoinette to describe and define wider race relations typical West Indies where Europeans born or living there, educated to convince of England as home are culturally marks and excludes as inferior colonials. They are representatives of two cultural worlds incapable of reciprocal understanding. Moreover, Rochester refuges Antoinette as a beloved wife and as a person because of her black attachment. Thus, if at a certain point Rochester seems in some way to appreciate colors, shapes and smells of Jamaica, at the end of the story he hates the place:

I hated the mountains and the hills, the rivers and the rain. I hated the sunsets of water colour. I hated its beauty and its magic and the secret I would never know. I hated its indifference and the cruelty which was part of its loveliness. Above all I hated her. For she belonged to the magic and the loveliness. She had left me thirsty and all my life would be thirst and longing for what I had lost before I found it. (103)

This passage spoken by Rochester is seen his sudden decision to render his Creole wife lifeless and mad to force the hatred out of his eyes. His hatred of the natural landscape stems from his inability to read it. His use of language “mountains, and the hills, the river and the rain” signify his controllable distance. His wife’s beauty, like that of her home, threatens to bewitch and entangle Rochester.

Somewhat Rochester recognizes Antoinette's connectedness to the landscapes and his hatred towards both. He feels determined to remove his wife from that landscape in order to gain control over her and make her into his possession. To support this point Laura E. Ciolkows has said, "In his narrative, Rochester sets out the proper relationship between English self and ethnic other by establishing and defending the moral and physical differences that are enlisted as the signifiers of English national identity" (343). Laura asserts that by hating the West Indies physically and emotionally he establishes the hierarchy like, self, other, colonizer/colonized and so on.

This hierarchy is the signifiers of the English identity. In contrast to Rochester, Antoinette loves the place very much; she asserts about the Grambois that it is heaven for her. She exclaims, "This is my place and this is where I belong and this is where I wish to stay" (65). Antoinette loves the place which Rochester hates. She loves it because when she was there she does not know anything but she knows the place. It is her native place, she has an emotional attachment, but forcefully she has to leave it with her husband for England that is the strangest place for Antoinette. For her England is imaginary homeland about it she has heard that "quite unreal and like a dream" (47). Antoinette feels a very close connection to the Caribbean and feels at home in her surrounding, but she sees England as a distant dream, a fantasy land. For Rochester, however, England is the reality and the Island is the dream. Because their native landscapes differ so significantly, both characters have trouble incorporating the other's identity into their own. Simon During in her essay "postmodernism or post-colonialism Today" evokes, "National identity is based on both language (the home of culture) and soil" (70). Her assertions about national identity which can be seen through language, culture and love of place are similar to Antoinette's narrative.



She loves the place/soil of West Indies; she practices the Caribbean, especially Jamaican culture and speaks dialects of Caribbean island.

Despite having white race Antoinette enjoys adapting islander's language and culture. Later it becomes barrier and she is thrown in between the culture due to her Creole language. In this connection, Ngugi Wa Thionng'o in his text *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* has said, "Language as communication and as culture are then products of each other ... language carries culture". (15) The Creole language that Caribbean people speak in Island and other places represents them as they are not pure white rather they are hybrid. Being in betweenness in the island because of White Creole identity, Antoinette and her mother have got married with English to escape from the insulted life in Jamaica. But, unfortunately, both the English men deceive them by recognizing that they are middle class white Creole. As a result Antoinette's mother has to leave her daughter alone. So, Antoinette lives whole life in isolation, frustration searching mother's love in husband. But husband exiles her in Thorn Field Hall, where she lives in trouble remembering the past life.

In her past life, her mother also left her, once she says that her mother never asks her where she is. She says, "My mother never asked me where I had been or what I had done" (14). In England she becomes alone similar in Jamaica without mother's love and caring. She is displaced from her native island where she used to be white Creole. Now she realizes her trauma of social exclusion in Caribbean is better than English life in Thorn Field Hall, England. In this context, Pramod K. Nayar argues, "The mother stands for roots and origins, motherland is of course the point of identification the source of identity" (139). According to Nayar, mother is reflections of, motherland which is linked with the identity of the people. Antoinette's identity is

also related to her mother and linked with Caribbean islands. Therefore in England, she is facing the problem of identity crisis and displacement. This leads her towards her lack of belonging, which is emphasized in the narrative by her movement, going on 'roots' rather than growing 'routes'. The position of in-betweenness, living between two cultures, is uncomfortable and confusing for her.

A major theme of the diasporic discourse is its supposed complexities and ambivalences due to the tensions between localities and spatio - temporal dualities. So, for the people of the world the concept of identity is precariously lodged within an episteme of real or imagined displacements and self-imposed sense of exile.

Therefore, though, the accounts of diasporic as a category of sociological and political thought understandably differ, there is a common shifting and unfinished history of diasporic displacement and setting. It is associated to shed ethnic identity people who live in host land assimilate local norms which can produce strong nostalgic as well as separatist tendencies. For instance in *Wide Sargasso Sea* Antoinette has a feelings of diasporic displacement because of her dual identity. Her Creole identity which because of historical formation makes her a taboo whole life. In England, she has been exiled by her husband in reality. But in Caribbean she has developed a type of exile because of cultural displacement. Her race, cultural upbringing and Creole language make her a diasporic character.

In Antoinette's room in her husband's England house, her privacy and her identity have been taken from her, symbolized by the removal of the doors to her bedroom and the lack of looking glass. She narrates her present situation in the attic, "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 myself yet not quite myself" (107). Antoinette's identity here is fledged; she is

trapped inside the room. She has left her own territory, now she does not know where she is but she finds herself in that room where she does not find looking glass and door. It means she becomes alone and identity less. Furthermore, James Clifford has talked about diaspora women who are caught between two worlds, native and arrive. He illustrates, "Diaspora women are caught between patriarchies, ambiguous pasts, and fortunes. They connect and disconnect, forget and remember, in complex, strategic ways. They lived experiences of diasporic women thus involve painful difficulty in mediating discrepant worlds" (314). Clifford says about dualities in women world, they have caught between ambiguous past, native home and future life with husband. They try to connect each-other but cannot because they should live their life in pain. They never be connected in two world at the same time, they should leave first place. For them both worlds become the same or vice-versa.

Rhys's heroine here does not seem to be connected in new world rather she time and gain differentiates the place by remembering her past life in Caribbean. She compares her present room with past, Coulibri Estate, Jamaica, house's room. She adds, "Long ago when I was child and very lonely I tried to kiss her. But the glass was 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? (107). Rhys representation of both mirrors and rooms offer critical reflection of psychological states in a female protagonist. Antoinette's small bed room at Granbois has a large looking-glass where as her husband's English room she could not get looking glass. So, she does not know how she looks like and she feels her erasing existence as Antoinette. Without the name, she does not know what to call herself; without a face, she becomes a ghost. She remembers past, when she was a child, she tried to kiss her reflected image, uniting the two halves of her split cultural identity. But Antoinette's

lifelong desire to close this gap to become a visible, accepted member of any community is separated by the glass.

Antoinette becomes mad in England remembering her past and living in the attic, she has got a trauma. So, time and again she dreams about her Native Island and black friend Tia. When she dreams at the end of the story she finds herself with friend Tia. She sees Couilbri, hard stones and swimming pool there. In her dream, “Someone screamed and I thought, why did I scream? I called Tia! And jumped and woke” (112). Dream can be defined as outcome of repressed desire of someone. In Antoinette’s case, she has dreamed about her native place, it means she has deep desire of returning. Sigmund Freud describes about the dream that it is a fantasy and revelation of hidden, unfulfilled desire. He says, “Repressed wishes of this sort and their derivatives are only allowed to come to expression in a much distorted form. When scientific work had succeeded in elucidating this factor dream distortion” (714). Freud here is distinguishing the reality, fact and fantasy. The dream is only fantasy of unfulfilled desire which cannot be proved in real life. Rhys exposition of Antoinette also seems to be living in fantasy. She is far away from her native land, returning back is impossible because there is no one waiting in Island for her. She had traumatic life of Caribbean but still, she has a memory about past. Therefore, she has just tried to fulfill her desire of returning back her island through dream.

Consequently, Antoinette’s displaced identity and marginal consciousness reveal modernist subjectivity, not as a retreat into the self, but as a response to a social crisis. Therefore, it is seen Antoinette’s transformation of power in the breakdown of distinctions between public and private lives. Through these relationships Rhys explores ideas of isolation and identity, both personal and cultural. The character, Antoinette frequently encounters crisis of identity, which are tied to inability to

reconcile her identity of 'white' with her identity of Caribbean. Despite being disadvantaged by her race, class and ethnicity, gender, Antoinette is able to feel a connection to her land deep within herself, and this is perhaps the way in which she escapes the torment of social isolation. But in English island also she seems to be victimized by her husband in attic room where she finds a different environment, a cold. Antoinette explains about the Thorn Field Hall as, "when I woke it was a different sea. Colder it was that night, I think, that we changed course and lost our way to England. This cardboard house where I walk at night is not England" (107). Antoinette becomes confused about the place whether it is England or not. She is exiled now and place becomes curse for her. She imagines England is as beautiful as Caribbean island but she does not find it rather it is beyond her fantasy and it is not hostile land for her, either.

The connotation of color has vividly been projected in the novel. Rhys has stated the description of color through Antoinette. The 'red' color is a symbol of Caribbean people, it is also associated with the movements of the people and have split identity. Antoinette, in the last part of the novel, is imprisoned by her husband where she feels homesick and through nostalgia she gets relief. She finds her identity in 'red' color in the attic. She is connected to her red dress that exposes her as Caribbean woman so she identifies herself as black natives of Island. Now by removing of her red dress and having new identity of mad woman she is lost somewhere. In this way, she asks about her dress to her servant, "Have you hidden my red dress too? If I'd been wearing that he'd have known me" (109). Her red dress is symbol of Caribbean root, culture through which her relatives can recognize her. Red color is significant for her; it is the symbol of Caribbean island. She further adds about the red color; "I let the dress fall on the floor, and locked from the fire to the

dress and from the dress to the fire” (110). Antoinette’s attachment to red color is a reminder of her past, believing she can smell the Caribbean landscape in its two folds; by touching and by looking the color. The color symbolizes the passion and destruction of Antoinette’s life. Similarly, Antoinette again finds a red color in English house, too. She says:

It was a large room with a red carpet and red curtains. Everything else was white. I sat down on a couch to look at it 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. (111)

Except carpet and curtains all things are white in Thorn Field Hall, it denotes living in English surrounding Antoinette is still connecting with Caribbean island and its culture. She is occupied by black surrounding, though physically she is in England with her white heritage. Thus she is enforced to be in between the place and culture falling in white Creole identity. By remembering red color’s dress and church she is reminding her past moment in Caribbean island. Red dress is culture in one hand and on the other hand, church symbolizes Convent school in Spanish Town. In Convent school she has written her name and identity in red color, “I will write my name in fire red. Antoinette Mason, nee Cosway, Mount Calvary convent, Spanish Town, Jamaica 1839” (31). It shows her fluid identity in Jamaica. The fire-red name is a dream condensation of the fire at Couilbri that traumatized her and the fire at Thorn Field makes her victimized. The image of fire red symbolizes her imprisonment in England and her name in fire red denotes her name the identity of one who is always perishing, and she predicts the inescapable repetition of losses and pain.

However, Antoinette's madness that other condemn is that of the person who refuses the choice of self-deception. Rhys focus on the tension between past and present complicates Hall's idea of 'being' and 'becoming'. Hall says, "Cultural identity in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being' (236). Redefining homeland becomes a matter of redefining identity. For instance, Antoinette lives between the world of past and present. She wants to escape from her present by firing the English great house; she is uncomfortable with her present. By doing so, she is rejecting her English identity and accepting Caribbean identity. Likewise, she remembers her past, root culture, childhood and land. In this sense, she has faced the problem of diasporic displacement. Antoinette was happy in her childhood though Caribbean people hate her saying she is white Creole. In England with her husband, she is also neglected as being white Caribbean so, she is not happy in white society, she discomfords in new surrounding therefore, she wants to return back in West Indies, the place familiar for her. In this context, Franz Fanon in his essay "The fact of Blackness" exclaims, "I shouted a greeting to the world and the world slashed away my joy. I was told to stay within bounds, to go back where I belonged" (112). Fanon's view shows that people who live in diasporic world seek the past joyful moments of their past. They want to go back 'home' but this diasporic displacement slashes their joy rather they have to stay within the boundary of 'host' where they are going to fulfill their expectation of life. But diasporic world for them becomes a far cry.

So, we come to the conclusion that while portraying the theme of diasporic displacement and Creole identity of Caribbean white Creole, Rhys evokes not only displacement of the characters alone rather she is critical in her approach; she presents diasporic displacements as a modern fluidity. Modern people are living

diasporic life at present in every corner people are facing the problem of displacement. People cannot stay in single place, they migrate each to other place by force or with their need. But they should create different identity in new place for that they should adapt culture, life style, and language. But ultimately, they have no home, no identity and no language at all. They become identity less due to that they do not have more things to remember except native upbringing, land and culture. They live in host country seeking root, culture, language and life style. In this context, Arjun Appadurai exclaims; “The past is now not a land to return to in a simple politics of memory” (29). He says it is impossible to return back in ‘home’ in reality rather it becomes imaginary land where they can go through the memory.

Both white and black Creoles in *Wide Sargasso Sea* tampers with the notion of a monolithic and linear history which is fundamental to Eurocentric ways of thinking, the narrative establishes a distinction between the effects of these different groups silencing of their past. Rhys protagonist Antoinette Cosway/Mason has faced the problem of diasporic displacement because of her Creole identity. In the time of colonization, whites were representative of colonizing group. After long time of living in island, they adapt language, culture, religion and so on as does Antoinette too. After the Emancipation of the black slaves in Caribbean island, the status of white colonizer diminishes. Then the second generation of white colonizer remains in middle class white Creole who becomes the means of hatred. Now white Creole is considered neither Caribbean nor English rather they remain in between the space. Rhys powerful character Antoinette is also victimized in-between the place. Antoinette does not have fixed identity but she gets white Creole identity, neither here nor there. In Jamaica she has faced the problem of social exclusion and cultural dislocation. In England, she has spent the life of diasporic displacement by



remembering about West Indies, its culture, life style and friends. At last Rhys exposes the character who tries to overcome from this problem of displacement and identity crisis to permanent settlement with the help of candle.

### Chapter III

#### Haitian Diaspora and National Identity in *Breath, Eyes, Memory*

A renowned figure in the representation of Caribbean-American Diaspora, Edwidge Danticat presents Sophie in the process of her migration from a remote village of La Nouvelle Dame Marie and Croix-des-Resets to New York, Brooklyn in the novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory*. Danticat's novel shows the issues of migrations, gender, sexuality and history which are deeply connected to the theme of diaspora during postcolonial period. The novel objectifies anguish and a predicament most people experience in foreign land.

Danticat's novel tells the story of a young Haitian immigrant Sophie Caco who leaves Haiti to go and join her mother in New York. She undergoes a massive anxiety as she suffers dislocation, sense of unhomeliness and lack of emotional security. The transplantation of Sophie in the USA into a new culture and new language leads to a sense of dislocation. Sophie's mother has migrated to USA because of her sexual assault in Haiti by Macoutes. Haiti is a place where women are oppressed by political regimes and rigid patriarchal values; it is also a place that testifies to the strength of Haitian women hood. In this sense, Sophie is aware of her isolation in new land both as a black woman and as a Haitian immigrant. Danticat's reinterpretation of narrative complicates the Sophie's use of languages i.e. English, French and Creole to articulate her translational experience. The complexity of her experiences both an outsider and an insider to Haitian and American culture, allows for a continuous renegotiation of identity.

The novel follows the exploits of Sophie in her battles to carve an identity out of disparate language and cultures, such as Creole, French and English in Brooklyn, New-York. The love for native land, culture, language and people is deeply engraved

in the life of Caribbean-American diasporic characters; they have assimilated themselves with American life style, values and people. Her writing is a means to give voice to the voiceless-poverty stricken people of Haiti and the diasporic Haitian in particular but whole Caribbean in general. She is also an example of those immigrants of Caribbean who have left their countries due to shame, desperation, or in order to save their lives.

Because of colonialism and domination, Haitian people become helpless and orphan. Especially women are raped and conceived child of Macoutes due to that they feel ashamed to live in the society. Therefore, they must leave their native country and have to migrate in another one. In this sense, most of the Haitians have migrated to New York, Brooklyn, where they create their own community and identity -- what Salman Rushdie calls "imaginary homelands" of Haitian through amidst the foreign land, people and culture. Moreover, Danticat's explanation of Haitian characters in new land carries the Haitian diaspora and Caribbean Identity. The problem is not only related to Martine and Sophie but it is related to all Caribbean slaves who want to escape from the troublesome past life exposes the harsh reality hidden behind the curtain. By creating new black Creole community, and following Haitian culture in Brooklyn, the Haitians in America living a diasporic life suffering from psychological torture. Haitian's diasporic identity is connected to national identity because they are identified as; "four HS" got AIDS- Heroin addicts, Hemophiliacs, Homosexuals, and Haitians" (20) and "boat people and stinking Haitians" (25) in America. Hence, this chapter explores how Sophie assimilates the new culture and language in host country and why characters become insecure and isolated there.

*Breath, Eyes, Memory* recounts the difficult process of coming of age in diaspora; the protagonist of the novel has irritable relations with her mother as a result

she is in exile from her homeland. Sophie's dislocation from the homeland begins when she has got plane ticket for the New York. Everyone in the village is happy as she is finally leaving for America far-away from Haitian Trauma and chaotic life. For Haitian people it is good thing to go foreign land to earn something. It is an opportunity for those who are traumatized in their homeland because the impact of post colonialism. Haitians move to another country to live comfortable life. Sophie surprises that all Haitian women are happy for her as she is going in New York. She says "this is very good news," said the accompanying voice. "It is the best thing that is ever going to happen to you." (4). She is congratulated by the people patting her shoulder that she is the luckiest person who has got plane ticket for America and going to reunite with her mother. However, Sophie is feeling bad as she is going away from her homeland.

For Haitian people shifting foreign land is relieve from the horror of slavery and colonization. However, Sophie's pain, suffering and feeling of displacement and cultural dislocation occur when she reaches in New York. By arriving New York Sophie must assume the full weight of her mother, aunt, and grandmother's dream. Martine explains to Sophie that in America, education is the only way she will find respect. She says, "you are going to work hard here"... and no one is going to break your heart because you cannot read or write. You have a chance to become the kind of women Atie and I have always wanted to be. If you make something of yourself in life, we will all succeed. You can raise our heads". (17). The exhortation of Martin's that Sophie becomes "the kind of women that Atie and I have always wanted to be" as a twist on the usual pressure put on immigrant children to become the success that your father and I always wanted to be.

Even so Sophie reaches in America not by her wish rather by force to fulfill her family's destiny of becoming doctor. Martine has sent plane ticket to her daughter for her better future and to get rid of her traumatic past, the dictatorial regime of Francois Duvalier back in Haiti. In this sense, Promod K. Nayar asserts about the diasporic life of immigrants in America either forcefully or as their wish. He asserts, "Diaspora can be the voluntary or forced movement of people's from their homelands into new geographical and cultural context, they negotiate two cultures: their own and the new one. This diasporic culture is necessarily mixed and an amalgamation of two cultures" (189). As a definition given by Nayar diasporic life either forced or voluntary where people should negotiate two cultures, their own native and the new host one. So, the diasporic culture is the creation of combining two cultures. People reaching host country are sure to assimilate new culture for their safety and survival. Thus hybridity is a chance as well as a challenge.

The novel furthermore, resists closure and suggests a strategy of continual transformation as a necessary and historically contingent ethic of survival. This continual remaking of self-invokes, "two temporalities, that of oppression, memory and enforced identity, and that of emergence after the 'break', the counter memory, and heterogeneous difference" (Radhakrishna, 211). According to Radhakrishna one can create identity is possible with the combination of memory of past and enforced identity of present. In host country, an immigrant can form the identity being different and living life in-between the place. In the one hand, Sophie narrates story of displacement, loss and memory through which we know that she has got enforced identity. On the other hand, she tells Martine's flee to US because of the state violence, where they are considered as difference and strangers. For Sophie Haitian

culture and history is rupture produced by material and political events so the self becomes plural and contradictory.

Martine leads her life in between the space, Haiti and America respectively by decorating her living room in Caribbean way. She uses the red color every corner of the room in decorating it, which is the symbol of Caribbean root. Martine has used red plastic cover, red sofa and curtain in her living room. Sophie narrates, “The table cloth was shielded with a red plastic cover, the same blush red as the sofa in the living room” (17). Red color is the identity of Caribbean people, normally Caribbean women use red color dress, they use in room and even house. In this sense, Martine is living in-between the culture; she lives an ambivalent life in America.

Bhabha argues about mimicry and ambivalent life of the people in colonial and post-colonial era are unavoidable. In the name of civilizing mission white people colonize many more countries, at that time to communicate each other they adapt language, to survive, they adapt their culture. Again white people impose natives their language, life-style and culture as well. The people who live diasporic life in foreign land also have to mimic the new culture; Bhabha writes:

It is from this area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double that my instances of colonial imitation come. What they all share is a discursive process by which the excess or slippage produced by the *ambivalenc* of mimicry (almost the same, but not quite) does not merely ‘rupture’ the discourse, but become transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a ‘partial’ presence. (86)

According to Bhabha in the case of diaspora, people who are in host country have been treated as colonized people by the new society and culture. Therefore, either with their interest or by force migrated people mimic the new culture, way of life and language to make their life easy. Unfortunately, they cannot forget their homeland and original culture and life style. So they are made involuntary in-between the position. They should live ambivalent life in new land. For example in the novel Sophie is not happy to adapt new language and way of life but her mother says her to do so otherwise American people dominate them as colonizer dominates.

Language is a tool for the people which help to communicate two unknown persons in new land. So, common language is necessary to use when someone goes in new place either to visit or to stay. In this case, Sophie's life also caught between her inherited Afro-Caribbean experience and her life in New York because of her language. She is troubled by the twin poles of experiences, each of which appears to fit her in different identities. Sophie speaks of Caribbean Creole, when she is in Haiti. In America she speaks the same language but American people hate French or Creole. So, Martine forces Sophie to learn English speaking. Therefore her English becomes a metaphor for her negotiation of the new world. Sophie gains a foothold by finding French words that are semantically the same but pronounced differently. She says, "Words that looked almost the same in French but were pronounced differently in English alien, race, enemy, date, present. These and other words gave me a context for the rest that I did not understand" (25). Sophie has a confusion about the words whether English or French. She feels difficult in speaking English and using appropriate words.

In the beginning Sophie speaks French more than English in New York but later on when she adopts English language she becomes good English speaker. She

further assumes, “I answered swiftly when my mother asked me a question in English. Not that I ever had a chance to show it off at school, but I become an English speaker” (25). Sophie despite speaking French at school becomes an English speaker, attests to the subtle magnitude of this change. By this situation we come to know that Sophie’s life in New York is hybrid life where she speaks English as well as French Creole. Creole language itself hybrid, Creolisation means hybridization of language so speaking by using different language leads Sophie a hybrid immigrant.

The concept of hybridity, a central term within postcolonial criticism, has in recent years grown in importance and popularity; it is used to understand and interpret what it means to be a migrant, not belong to one place only, to be a hybrid. These hybrids live “border lives on the margins of different nations, in-between contrary homelands” (McLeod 217). Instead of talking about ‘home’ and ‘belonging’ and national identity and rootedness, it can be reflected on the in-between position of the people. In the same manner, Virinder Kalra and others exclaim, “hybridity is an evocative term for the formation of identity; it is used to describe innovations of language (Creole, patois, pidgin, travellers, argot etc); it is code for creativity and for translation” (71). This shows speaking in Creole is giving configuration to new identity and coding for creativity and translation. Sophie’s Creole is also similar to Kalra’s view of innovations of new language to describe and identify themselves and their land about the people.

In addition to the connection of one’s identity with homeland and host society an immigrant who reaches in new land mimics culture, language and lifestyle to get easy life there. By connecting this idea with Sophie’s life in the novel, she after getting New York realizes that her French Creole becomes meaningless and she becomes linguistically marooned in the existing society. In this connection, Sharron



Eve Sarthou persuades, “In Breath, Eyes, Memory, when Sophie leaves Atie she is speaking Creole and surrounded by people who speak the same language or speak French. When she arrives in New York, she is linguistically marooned” (114). Sophie, linguistically cut off from the English society because she doesn’t speak English either. She has not learnt English before coming in America. Sarthou further writes:

Danticat explains how similar scenes take place in the lives of Haitian children of immigrants. They are left behind in Haiti and no one bothers to explain to them what is going on in their families, partly, perhaps, because of a desire to shield children from even more uncertainty. Unfortunately, when these children are summoned, even loving surrogate parents don’t seem to think about preparing the child for leaving. (114)

It is the tragic thing to Haitian children of immigrants that they have not taught English properly before leaving Haiti. They are not prepared for new land, new society, and culture by their surrogate parents. Sophie has also faced the same problem of not knowing English before going New York with her mother Martine. No one thinks about teaching her any English before she moves towards new country. Therefore she could not speak English properly to communicate with English speaker in host society.

However, Sophie’s access to French Creole brands her as an authentic Haitian. When she returns back to the island, with her infant daughter, the van driver notes approvingly that she has not forgotten her mother tongue like many other immigrants. Language ties Sophie to the past, even as it attests to her continued engagement with her motherland and surrogate mother, Atie. While returning Haiti in the way van driver says, “I find your Creole flawless.” She replies this is not my first trip to La

Nouvelle Dame Marie I was born here ... people who have been away from Haiti fewer years than you, they return and pretend they speak no Creole. Perhaps they can't. Is it so easy to forget? Some people need to forget, he said. I need to remember" (36). Sophie's speaking of Creole in Haiti and English in US show the novel reveals the dislocations of diaspora: caught between desires, the people who have been away from Haiti can neither stay away nor return to Haiti as home. Sophie's desire of home and homeland, loves for Tante Atie and Grandma Ife do not let her forget her original, islander language in America. Therefore in US even she speaks fluent English in public place, and college but at home she speaks Creole and French with her mother and husband.

Throughout the novel, language affects a form of symbolic kinship. Joseph's knowledge of Louisiana Creole symbolizes his common ground with Sophie and his wider attempts to understand and speaks her language. Not only Joseph and Sophie speak Creole in new land rather Martine, Marc, and other Haitians who are immigrated to New York also speak Creole they have hot political discussion in restaurant about Haiti by using Creole and French. Haitian people who are living in US, Emotionally, spiritually and linguistically connected with their homeland Haiti. In this context, Jana Evan Braziel and Anita Mannur explain that the concept of diaspora reflects in diasporic community in relation of its zone. They argue, "the migratory spaces traversed by migrants or refugees in a few decades mark diasporic zones that deterritorialize and reterritorialize the increasingly blurred borders of nations and nation – states" (17). An immigrant or refugees who have been living in foreign country far away from homeland for a long time create the world diasporic. They have created an influence with contact society. In the novel, characters normally go in Haitian restaurant to eat Haitian food and they have discussion on different

matter related to their present life and past. Danticat presents not only Haitian migrants who feel dislocated in other country and face cultural dilemmas, the immigrants from any culture feel the same in the other dominant cultures. For example, Joseph second male character of the novel, feels dislocated from his home country that is Louisiana.

Danticat's novel is narrated in English, she has used French Creole in italics, and paraphrased that the meaning cannot be intuited from context. Her uses of language in novel signify that it locates the novel firmly in Haiti, balancing the stories wider political and social message with the particulars of Haiti and Haitian diaspora. It also represents Sophie's constant reminder of her own dependence on mediating as a translator and narrator between two worlds. Danticat has used more French Creole in her novel which is symbol of love of homeland one that has lived in foreign land as an immigrant life. For example Sophie speaks French Creole as well as she narrates other character's language in the novel. Similarly, Sophie says about Martine and Marc both speak French Creole in US. Once she says, "As I lay in dark, I heard my mother talking on the phone. Yes, she said in Creole... on byen? Are you alright?" (19). Above mentioned French Creole words and phrases are representative tools of the Caribbean island. Danticat's writing, we now come to see that it merely gestures back on to the real where each generation is a palimpsest of the language of their ancestors. This existence can be the weapon of a post-colonial reality. Specifically, what initiates Danticat's subversion in writing is her ability to successfully translate Caribbean oral culture into textual presence. In this connection, once in her interview Danticat says about her writing:

I've never really written in Creole or in French. When I say to people, if I'd gone to Spain as a child I'd probably be writing in Spanish, I

mean it. I would love to explore how this functions in the lives and works for other writers. When I'm writing I know that my characters are not speaking English, but the writing comes out in English with some Creole flavor. (Pulitano 49)

Her arguments about language imply that she has not intentionally used English and French Creole in her novel; she has used it to represent the characters who speak English as well as Creole at the same time. Her own life also reflects in her writing, by living America, being American she has written the novel about Haitian people and diaspora in foreign land. As a literary writer she has used both languages simultaneously in writing which signifies her, she is living diasporic life in America.

Being an immigrant of Haiti, Martine does not actually like American way of life so she teaches her daughter not to believe anyone because New York is new land for them. She says, "She is not going to be running wild like those American girls...she will have a boyfriend when she is eighteen" (22). She further says, "You keep away from those American boys" (25). This shows the fear of an immigrant in new surroundings. By suggesting her daughter not to follow new culture in arrive country she is still not ready to reconcile herself with host society. Here, her thoughts expose that she prefers a hybrid life wondering homeland and living in host country. Leading life in-betweenness Martin again makes aware her daughter "This was New York, after all. You could not trust anybody" (26). Danticat imagines a hybridized identity that is privileged and protected by its hyphenated identity, one which makes it possible for the subject to speak freely and safely both inside and outside Haiti. Martine lives the Haitian-American life in American soil. She is now American green card holder, she lives, works in New York but follows the Haitian culture. She also teaches her daughter not to follow American way of life, do not trust American

people, either. It means she lives hybrid life in host country. She creates differences between two worlds; homeland, Haiti and host land, America.

However, Sophie becomes alone at home when Martine goes for work, she does not have any idea what to do so far she is in new place. Hence, she becomes homesick and has nostalgia of past Haitian life with her aunt. Sophie being isolated from the homeland, feels lonely on her cot. She narrates, “I asked her to stay with me for a little while. I was tired of being alone and I was missing home” (13). Sophie emotionally, spiritually and physically attaches with her home land and the people whom she left earlier. Her frustration is related to land shifting and physical movement from Haiti to New York.

Sophie has left Haiti for New York to unite her mother but, she does not find her mother loving and caring her as Tante Atie. So, being tired of her lonely life she differentiates her mother and Tante Atie as:

New eyes seemed to be looking back at me. A new face all-together.  
Someone who had aged in one day, as though she has been through a  
time machine, rather than an airplane. Welcome to New York, this face  
seemed to be saying. Accept your new life. I greeted the challenge, like  
one greets a new day. As my mother’s daughter and Tante Atie’s child.  
(19)

Sophie is not cemented with her biological mother in New York. She is seen detached from her and new place. For Sophie her mother is strangers as other people in new land. She could not be familiar with new place and people through mother rather she becomes alone. Sophie’s entrance into the role of abject in her mother’s life remains a tangible result of her removal from the loving care of her another mother, Tante Atie. In this context, Opal Palmer Adisa in “Up close and personal: Edwidge

Danticat on Haitian Identity and the writer's life" talks about Danticat's interview where Danticat has said about her motherland, "we loved our country. Of course my family knew our history. We learned it in school from the time we were quite young. People talked about the revolution like it happened the day before. We were proud of that" (347). Danticat loves her country, Haiti, her character Sophie also loves the land where she was born. Sophie has seen the revolution of the country but still she loves it. She is proud of being black Haitian so she loves culture and tradition of her land.

By using various flavors of food in her novel, Danticat represents Haitian food in America as well as in Haiti through the character Sophie. In Haiti, before leaving the place for New York Sophie narrates, "she put the last touches on a large tray of sweet potato pudding that filled the whole house with its molasses scent"(3). She further says, "Others were cooking large cassava cakes in flat pans over charcoal pits" (9). "Moracin is best Haitian food in America" (21). The nature of cooking food in Haiti symbolizes there is something good going to happen in future but the food in America symbolizes that the immigrated people are remembering the past and living at present. In America 'moracin' is hybridized food for Haitian, its taste is different than Haiti, because it finds here in restaurant. Normally people who migrate to other countries try to connect themselves with their homeland through continuing the past culture. Here, Sophie seems to be continuing it by cooking food. Sophie says about her cooking, "I cooked all her favorite meals and had them ready for her when she got home. I even used the mortar and pestle to crush onions and spices to add those special flavors she liked" (31). Sophie tries to maintain good relation with her mother by cooking Haitian food in New York. She tries to maintain an adhesive relation with host community in one hand, and continuing her past Island culture of cooking food, obeying elders, on the other. In addition to, Edwidge Danticat once in her interview

says about the food that it is very central cultural and political things. She says, “Food loses all its culture and symbolic significance in that setting” (52). According to her, food is symbol of nation and its culture and politics. The definition of food differs from place to place, for Haiti it is very central because of lacking of food people die. It is political and cultural because the class and status of the people is determined by food. It is political because in Haiti people who are in power can use power upon others is called big eaters ‘or’ fat cats. Therefore food for Haitian people in America is cultural root and memory of history. If they forget to cook and eat Haitian food, they will forget the political history, culture and root of origin.

In this connection, Sophie narrates about Marc nature of loving Haitian life style and food in host country. He goes for Haitian food in Haitian restaurant though it is in far distance. Sophie further says, “That night, Marc drove us to a restaurant called Miracin’s in Asbury Park, New Jersey. The restaurant was at the back of an alley, squeezed between a motel and a dry cleaner” (21). There is seen irony in Marc’s character that his search for authenticity is only those, like him, who are rich and free who can afford to find, compare, and patronize far flung pieces of local color squeezed into back alleys and catering to the working poor. In this sense, Marc reveals his desire of returning back his homeland through his mother’s taste of food. Sophie asserts, “Marc is one of those men who will never recover from not eating his monman’s cooking... if he could get her out of her grave to make him dinner, he would do it. My mother was the best” (21).

Marc praises and remembers his mother’s cooking in host country but assimilates the new way of life. His praise for his mother’s cooking versus his very American cognoscente attest Marc’s character embodies the paradox of a successful immigrant trying to reconcile a romantic affiliation with his home country with a

loyalty to the new country which has given him that success. In this connection, Homik K. Bhabha analyzes ambivalence which is possible from mimicry - a difference that is not same. He analyzes, "The ambivalence of colonial authority repeatedly turns from mimicry – a difference that is almost nothing but not quite – to menace – a difference that is almost total but not quite" (91). According to Bhabha mimicry is the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline, which appropriates the other as at visualizes power.

However, ambivalence ferments a difference which cohere the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies, surveillance and possess an imminent threat to both normalized knowledge and disciplinary powers. Danticat's construction of character Marc also exposes the life of acculturation, and his mind is indirectly colonized by the diasporic discourse is its supposed complexities and ambivalence due to the tensions between localities and spatio-temporal dualities. For the large group of people around the world the concept of identity is precariously lodged within an episteme of real or imagined displacements and self-imposed sense of exile. In this sense, an inevitable concern with the idea of homeland, the concept of diaspora has also been extended to refer to the mixed or hyphenated identities of persons or ethnic communities and of texts that express and explore this condition living and writing abroad are affected at multiple levels by both cultures.

Providing the reader with pictures of the life of expatriates, Danticat explores the ideas of culture and personal isolations and identities through her various characters, whose cultural isolation result in the personal. It contents theme of conflict in relationship of mother and daughter, especially between mother and motherland. Through the conflicting relationship between mother and motherland of daughter she explores the idea of isolation and identity, both personal and cultural. The characters



frequently feel the identity crisis which is tied to their inability to reconcile their American identity with their Caribbean identity. Her characters are seen in cultural isolation, which seems to be linked with personal isolation. Therefore, her characters try to avoid their isolation with frequent visits of their homeland.

Diaspora and identity crisis of an immigrant is not only seen because of displacement and cultural exclusion but it can be seen on the religious ground. In the context of diaspora, religion has always remained central to paradigmatic definitions, although nowadays the topic of religion seems to have moved into the background. A renewed focus on both sides diasporic practice – the mobile as well as rooted will bring the meaning of religion back to the fore. To emphasize the meaning of religion is a factor in forming diasporic social organization, as well as in shaping and maintaining diasporic identities. For instance in *Breath, Eyes, Memory* characters continue their religious faith in new land by frequent visits of southern Harlem Church, where they can hear the Negro spiritual. In this sense, Martin says, “when I just came to this country, I got it into my head that I needed some religion. I used to go to this old southern church in Harlem where all they sang was Negro spirituals” (86). Music plays a vital role to get freedom to the Negro people in Caribbean and Latin America. It becomes the way of resisting brutal slavery in the past. But in the period of post colonialism black people take it the way of remembering past history, and it just a weapon of linking them to their homeland.

Furthermore, for Martine Negro spiritual becomes the tool to forget her trouble past history of Haiti and cover lonely life in new land. Meanwhile, Paul Gilroy has examined about the black music as:

Whether sacred or profane, the use of music provides the most important locations in which these rituals take place. The church and

its secular equivalents nurtured a cast of performers capable of dramatizing them and the identity-giving model of democracy/community that has become the valuable inter-subjective resource that I call the ethics of antiphony. (200)

According to Gilroy whether sacred or profane the music locates the identity of the people where they are from. It helps the people to be freed from their rigid inheritance, and isolation rather it becomes valuable subject to recognize the people in the world. In the similar way, Negro spirituals, ethical song of black people, this provides happiness and freedom to the black in America. But, this music is not pure rather hybrid American style. Similarly, Joseph, who is musician throughout the novel defines Negro spirituals as; “they like prayers, hymns that the slaves used to sing. Some were happy, some sad, but must had to do with freedom, going to another world. Sometimes that other world meant home, Africa. Other times, it meant heaven, like it says in the Bible. More often it meant freedom” (86). For black people music is like prayers, hymns and weapon of linking themselves with their existence that is home, Africa. Sometimes, it becomes the key of freedom from rigid hierarchical society, it becomes means of happiness. On this point to add theoretical ground, Gilroy further analyzes that black music links those people who are far away from their homeland for a long time. He writes:

Dislocation from their original conditions of existence, the sound tracks of this African-American broadcast fed a new metaphysics of blackness elaborated and enacted in Europe and elsewhere within the underground, alternative, public spaces constituted around an expressive culture that was dominated by music. (83)

Playing black music seems to be celebrating black cultural identity in foreign land. The sound of music elaborates and enacts the whole Europe and America to look at black people and their culture, which are intact and immortal. The concept of black culture via music as a homogenization of the good, patriotic attributes of a nation for the sake of exclusiveness and creation and preservation of an identity.

The tension between past and present complicates Hall's idea of 'being' and 'becoming' of migrated people. For instance, Martine and Sophie both characters live between the world of past and present. Although they attempt to escape from the past memory of testing denouncing their inheritance cultural roots, they show deep connection to their roots by following some Haitian culture in America. They are uncomfortable with their past as well as present. In this connection Stuart Hall argues, "cultural identity in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture" (236). According to him, identity is subject to continue play of history, place, time, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere recovery of the past, identities are names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past. Hall's definition of culture identities of immigrants seems that we can properly understand the traumatic character of the colonial experience out of which are constituted the identities like; Indianness, caribbeanness, Africanness, and Blackness. As Hall's idea of cultural identities Danticat's characters Joseph and Martine both try becoming an American but searching 'being' there. Therefore, in searching of cultural identity they practice music in New York. Martine sings a song, which is heart wrenching for all immigrants in America. She sings, "Sometimes I feel like a motherless child". A long ways from home" (86). She further says, "I want that sung

at my funeral” (86). Martine’s song signifies her tormented mind of being departure from her homeland and mother. She is not a single immigrant who feels homelessness and departure from mother and her love rather there are uncountable migrated people in New York who feel the same.

Naturally, for Sophie music becomes the soothing lullaby. Sophie says, “The saxophone was like a soothing Lullaby” (27). The identities of black people are linked with music. So, they define themselves in America that they are African-American, as well as Caribbean/Haitian – American. Joseph’s saxophone practice lulls Sophie to sleep, he becomes at once her lover and a father rocking her to bed. But even as it helps Sophie heals. Sophie further says about Joseph’s devotion of slave song, “ He liked to play slave songs, Negro spirituals, both on the saxophone and his piano, slowing them down or speeding them up by different tempos...trying to find link between negro spirituals and Latin and island music” (28). The nation of cultural purity exists as America claims herself to be multicultural country.

As a consequence, in American cities, restaurants, and subways there is always a reason to be offended by someone who is not white. Every other citizen from country other than America and every man/woman who does not belong to ‘white’ class are to be watched out and not believed. African descendants are portrayed as robbers and cheating Negro slaves. In this situation for continuation of past/root memory Joseph plays the saxophone and piano and sings a slave song and Negro spirituals. Gilroy opines about the black thing which is difficult to understand to other. He asserts, “The first option typically identifies music with tradition and cultural continuity. Its conservatism is sometimes distinguished by the radical nature its affirmative political rhetoric and by its land able concern with the memory of the past” (100). Gilroy’s argument implies that the black people in America are living

their life with music and tradition, which is process of cultural continuation. Therefore, their playing of music and past memory has a deep connection, which cannot be separated from their new identity. Blacks either from Caribbean or from other continent, creating new culture in America by practicing musical instrument, or by continuing the past culture as Martine does.

*Breath, Eyes Memory* explores the complexities of Haiti's current transnational space through the female characters that must come to term with the complex consequences of emigration and exile. It formulates ideas of home by articulating home within a dual domestic space grounded in both Haitian and American soil. Regardless the representation of the characters, Danticat at the same time, makes the reader aware of the tensions and isolations between the political/public discourses of home as the day to day lived experiences of a nation's people. The problematic ways she has presented here is the Haitian female body which becomes the text and suppressed voice of female. Sophie and Martine supposed to be tormented by political terror of past as well as Haitian national heritage of testing.

Alongside women's storytelling and Haitian history pursue Martine and Sophie into the Haitian diaspora when Martine begins testing Sophie. For her testing a symptoms of an indirectly remembered history realizes itself in the continued trauma of rape which is testing's inevitable culmination. Although she attempts to escape to the US, she is followed by the memory of her brutal rape, violent nightmares torment her. Martine is "living memory from the past" (22) that has followed her. With the Haitian trauma reasserting itself in New York, when Martine discovers that Sophie is seeing Joseph, she begins to test Sophie crossing the distance between Haiti and US, testing depends on women's material bodies to be remembered to Haitian in

American space. Martine follows the rigid culture of 'test' female virginity. To give flavor to this point, Virinder Kalra and others have described women as; "women become both the creators of the ties that binds as well as the carriers of culture" (52). By following the pace of testing to Sophie in America she proves that she still wants to return back her own root; she is fond of going back in her past life. Hence, she becomes creators as well as carriers of Haitian culture in diasporic America.

Being tormented and sad by her mother's behavior Sophie narrates about her testing, "she tapped the belt against her palm, her lifelines becoming redder. She took my hand with surprised gentleness, and fed me upstairs to my bedroom. There, she made me lie on my bed and she tested me" (32). Martine's action shows that she is trying to enforce the boundaries between Haiti and US. Her attempt of doing this action is her presentation of Haitian Identity. It shows an ambivalent sign of the dangers in both remembering and forgetting past. Similarly, Kalra further opines; "there is a deeper assumption in the role of women as 'cultural carriers' that of cultural homogeneity between men and women, and therefore a perception of a shared common culture which is to be transmitted" (57). Kalra asserts that women are cultural carrier since they are able to share two cultures simultaneously. As a cultural carrier Martine in the novel, finally tests the Sophie in America where she is living remembering her past rape and testing together. Testing is the novel's attempt to document Haiti's violent history. It is a cultural practice that passes from Grandma Ife to Martine and from Martine to Sophie. Sophie narrates about her mother that, "I did it because my mother had done it to me" (67). The mechanics of testing nonetheless suggest the violation of rape. She does it to continue the legacy of black. Meanwhile, the novel begins to confront the great burden that past places on human relations. Sophie's first meeting with her mother in New York denotes mother,

daughter, attacker, pain, body violation, absence and rape. To support this point Lucia M. Suarez in her article “Breath, Eyes, memory: Rape, Memory and Denunciation” has said:

The novel informs a larger, international community of the atrocities that occur under dictatorships and other repressive regimes. It highlights how these atrocities spread to become present in the so called “developed nations” and how no nation or community escapes the emotional and psychological consequences of rape. It inspires social awareness of the dimensions of a history of violence in Haiti and its diaspora and invites active human rights work to change that history. (119)

According to Suarez the crime committed against Martine is further engraved as other forms of illness and physical changes themselves onto her body. Mother and motherland are similar in many ways because mother’s story is directly or indirectly linked with motherland’s history. In the case of Haiti, the tormented history of motherland is reflected through depressed mind and tortured body of Martine.

Martine’s past furthermore, troubles her in new world forcing her living life in diaspora. It is obvious an immigrant goes back to h/her homeland and culture through the imagination and dreams. Here, Martin’s nightmare is pulled her to remember her past history. Directly or indirectly Martin’s journey from Haiti to New York is due to her rape. Therefore, Martine has violent nightmares frequently, when she has a dream she screams too much. Sophie narrates her mother’s nightmare’s and says, “later that night, I heard that same voice screaming as though someone was trying to kill her. I rushed over but my mother was alone thrashing against the sheets. I shook her and finally woke her up. When she saw me, she quickly covered her face with her hands

and turned away” (19). Martine’s dream hints to Sophie of the tragic truth of her own origins. The juxtaposition of Sophie’s absent father and Martine’s recurrent nightmare, and of Atie’s euphemistic stories with Martine’s mute horror, contains Sophie is in trap identity.

Marine’s diasporic life in America is the cause of postcolonial trauma of rape. In this connection, Donette A. Francis asserts:

Martine flees to the US in an attempt to escape the trauma of bodily violation. Leaving her island and her past behind. History suggests, and Martine knows, that reporting this crime would yield no tangible result. That Martine has to leave her island is in itself an act of violence committed by the state. (Francis, 80)

Martin’s forceful leaving movement seems to be the reason of violating her emotionally, physically, and spiritually. She has left Haiti as a result she has forced to live her life in new land being diaspora. She has to forget her mother and motherland rather spend her life in isolation these all actions are connected to colonial legacy of Haitians. Her violation is resemblance of state violation.

Usually Sophie and Martin both continually experiences national unbelonging the integration deficit the experiences in the host country is rivaled by her lack of desire to return her home country. Although one can easily interpret this denial of host and home countries as indicative of Martine’s disclaims of both nation-states, a more accurate conclusion is that she faces a complex impasse. But the possibility of Martine’s returning to her home community is not diminished for the same reason as immigrant women work there rather the bitter experience that she has got. Her unwillingness of returning home is broken by Sophie because she has returned home by her daughter Brigitte. In addition, Bhabha asserts, "Each unhomely house marks a



deeper historical displacement, because each is half- way between the two poles of a defined social opposition: neither black nor white, neither slave nor free"(129). Here house embodies exactly the same type of in-between condition of the migrated people.

Being unhomed is not the being homeless rather it is just a feelings of not having a permanent home and identity where someone is living. Cultural identity crisis has made someone a psychological refugee in an arrive country. Sophie finds herself and her mother's feeling of not belonging anywhere. She even realizes the complexities in her mother's room as her life when she returns to Haiti. She analyzes four posters, mahogany wardrobe with giant hibiscus and mirror which has a wide reflection and so on which is the symbolically linked with her mother's fleeting life Haiti to New York. According to Sophie, for Martine, the island is a site of terrible memories, which she cannot visit without becoming physically ill. There is strong correlation of Vijaya Mishra's view on this point, he alludes about the diaspora of people who are living far from homeland. He says, "Diasporas remind nation-states in particular about their own past, about their own earlier migration patterns, about their traumatic moments, about their memories, their own repressed pain and wounds, about their own prior and prioritized enjoyment of the nation" (19). As Mishra's views about diasporic life in foreign land that people remind nation-states their past, memories and repressed pain and wounds of leaving home country. But unlike his views Martine has trauma of past history, pain and repressed wounds of rape.

Furthermore, Sophie has good memory of home country, so finally she returns to Haiti. Sophie's return is a kind of homecoming it also represents her attempt to address her own troubles by returning directly to the source and site of her mother's pain. Martine's love of soil is related to Gilroy's views of rootedness and

displacement. Paul Gilroy defines, “we do, however, need an enhanced understanding of “consumption” that can illuminate its inner workings and the relationships between rootedness and displacements, locality and dissemination that lend them vitality in this counter cultural setting” (105). Gilroy argues in counter culture setting an immigrant impinges the fantasy of root and feelings of displacement in new society. In the similar manner, Martine has left homeland to live better life in America. But in New York she feels displacement but indirectly she is connected with her homeland. Therefore she wants her burial in her homeland though she has removal trauma of life, she can no longer reside at home before. She states, “I want to go back there only to be buried” (69). Her experience is unique in that the political causes, although overwhelmingly present in her life, are positioned at the periphery, and her psychological and individual state is positioned at the center.

Situating Sophie’s experience in a much broader genealogy, the novel represents Sophie’s attempts to achieve this reconciliation with acceptance of her mother. She says, “I knew my hurt and hers were links in a long chain and if she hurt me, it was because she was hurt too” (80). Sophie finds that the women in her family have been the source of her pain as well as of her strength; she has sought out a context in which she can see her situation objectively. In this sense, Clare Counihan exclaims, “Beyond the failure of closure... Haitian mothering can at best be an object of ambivalent desire, one with which the novel does not quite come to terms” (50). Danticat has presented the ambivalent desire of Haitian women who want to escape from it. The ambivalent is about the reach of Haitian memories and national identity. The bond between Haitian mothers and daughters that will allow diasporic daughters to remain Haitian and to remember Haiti’s history even beyond the boundaries of national geography is a matter of tension.

Danticat has addressed flowers generally and daffodils specifically as terms of colonialist imposition and as forms of postcolonial resistance. She, by showing daffodil as botanical tropes, addresses the violence of colonialism and the postcolonial experience of diaspora, migration and transnationalism. Sophie's diasporic life is interconnected with migrated flower daffodil. It is seen when Sophie contemplates the daffodil on the mother's day card which she had made for her aunt Atie. Sophie describes the flower as dangling, "A flattened and drying daffodil was dangling off the little card that I had made my aunt Atie for mother's Day. I pressed my palm over the flower and squashed it against the plain being cardboard" (2). The daffodil, hanging loosely off the card, is representative of unfixed and undetermined identities of the migrated people in new sphere. Moreover, daffodil is developed the means that affirms Martine's diasporic state of being both inside and outside her native land as Jana Evans Braziel has explained about Sophie's shifting movement and connection of daffodil in dried yellow color. She explains:

Sophie remains noticeably separate from the group of children, recalling Sophie's movements in making the card, pressing and squashing the children are "crushing dried yellow leaves". Migrations and movements, Danticat's opening passage suggests are often painful-pressing, squashing and crushing lives in motion. "[...] Tante Atie's announcement to Sophie that she will be sent to New York to live with her mother, who migrated to the US years earlier. (Braziel, 120)

Daffodil has positive connotations and affectionate affiliations in Danticat's novel. Sophie's mother loves daffodil while yellow is Sophie's favorite color. The position of daffodil in the card denotes that Sophie's life is sure to be painful in new place. Likewise, her movement from Haiti to New York is likely to be difficult. She is also

bound to feel the displacement and identity crisis in arrive society due to desire of returning home.

The concept of rootedness has been defined within the discourse of authenticity and national identity. In this sense, James Clifford posts, “Tribal groups have, of course, never been simply ‘local’ they have always been rooted and routed in particular landscapes, regional and interregional networks” (310). The underlying argument of Clifford is in favor of the adopted daffodil represents a nation of rootedness that embraces transnational identities. It informs of Sophie’s lack of belonging in route, which is emphasized in the narrative by her movement, going on ‘routes’ rather than growing ‘roots’. Here movement connotes the inevitability of adopting characteristics of the received land where one now resides, as one holds on to a biological and cultural identity. Thus, daffodil signifies an inability to speak the constricted homogeneous language of nation-state within migratory experiences.

In the same way, Danticat represents the essence of daffodils that they are diasporic, the flowers form lateral, rhizomic roots; Sophie transfers at least in part-her love from Tante Atie prepares, from Haiti to the US. Tante Atie prepares Sophie for this emotional and geographical transference in taking “the card from her pillow” and placing “it on the night table, next to the plane ticket”. Atie insists Sophie that the card should be given to Martine, “even though the daffodil was gone” (8). Daffodil is adapted flower in Haiti from France similar to surrogate mother Tante Atie. If daffodil is gone, Sophie is also going to be alone without Tante Atie in New York. On the other hand, to remove daffodil from the card means, Sophie has left her love, and emotion to her Tante Atie in Haiti and she is going to shift with her biological mother. Love of daffodil shows, love of surrogates mother than biological mother of Haitian children. In this context, Braziel further says:

The daffodil missing since the card was first given to Tante Atie, remains in Haiti remains with all that Sophie has left behind; for Atie, the daffodil is a surrogate bloom to replace Sophie's absence, just as the doll stood in for Sophie in Martine's Brooklyn apartment before her daughter finally joined her in New York. (122)

Sophie has lost everything which is connected to Haiti, flower, Tante Atie, culture, food and so on. And now she is forced into migration, up-root and then re-root in new soil, in new ground such as daffodils are also migrated. Sophie's migration is to a new country, yet toward her mother.

The woman Sophie leaves behind, Tante Atie, is a surrogate mother of her, indeed, she feels closer to her than to her biological mother. Therefore, for Sophie her mother is strangers whom she has seen through the picture, "I only knew my mother from the picture on the night table by Tante Atie's pillow. She waved from inside the frame with a wide grin on her face and a large flower in her hair. She witnessed everything that went in the bougainvillea, each step, each stumble, each hey and kiss" (2). During Sophie's youth her mother is inaccessible to her and she knows her only from photographs. She doesn't see her mother as a loving and caring person but as a figure of power and dominance someone trying to hunt and control her as foreign place for settlement. Moreover, Jana Evans Braziel talks about Sophie's unfamiliar and unknown recognition of her mother which objectified image as opposed to a person. Braziel explains:

For Sophie her mother is not associated with motherland, but rather with diaspora; her mother is also associated with a small objectified image as opposed to a person. The dissociation that Sophie experiences

is that of Haitian diaspora in the US, where she will join her mother but abandon her Tante Atie and Grandma Ife. (126)

According to Braziel, Martine is associated with diaspora in US, to whom Sophie is going to meet but, on the other hand, she is leaving loving Tante Atie and Grandma Ife, whom she loves more than Martine.

Thus Atie, the adopted mother is viewed as the true mother, while Martine is presented at the periphery of the relationship between Atie and Sophie. Martine is on the outside of her native land and Atie remains inside her native land, the relationship between Atie and Sophie references a narrative of national belonging. Furthermore within the novel, and within Sophie's numerous dreams, daffodil mark Sophie's transition from Atie to Martine, from Crois-des Rostes to Brooklyn. Because Atie and Sophie loved daffodils, Atie wants Sophie to wear the saffron dress for her journey to US. Sophie says, "She bent and picked up a white box from the heap of things that she had bought. Inside was a saffron dress with a large white collar and baby daffodils embroidered all over it" (11). Atie has made saffron dress to Sophie with embroidered daffodils mark temporal, spatial or geographical, and psychological shifts in Sophie's life-from past childhood; through adolescence and toward young adulthood; from Haiti to New York; from Atie to Martine. White color symbolizes the crucial understanding for Sophie that her conflicted feelings about mother and migration.

The novel *Breath Eyes, Memory* also evokes the greater sense of a national self and a great appreciation and passion for the land. The nation of departure and return in the novel is not about the loss of identity outside the boundaries of home, nor is it an affirmation of an essentialized Haitian identity post-travel and relocation. But her novel is clearly about the problems of displacement and loss both outside and inside the dual space of home, and the complex friction between a collective Haitian

identity and an individual one not grounded in Haitian soil. Danticat's characters demonstrate, aphasia is not productive it is actually punishing. If Haiti is to overcome the repeated periods of violence, then Haitians must tell their stories, reveal the trauma, and exercise the ghosts of their collective violent past. To get rid of the past trauma for the last half century, Haitians have been coming to the US. In this connection R.Radhakrishna has Justified diaspora as; "the diaspora as the radical non-name of a non-place empowers the intellectual to seek transcendence through exile and an epiphanic escape from the pressures of history" (322). Radhakrishna's views of diaspora holds possibilities of virtual realities of a historical consciousness. It is difficult for migrated people to get fixed identity in new surrounding so they are obliged to live their life being diaspora. The situation force them to be in-betweenness position, either they can enjoy in host country or can return back home country.

The loss of a homeland- the wrenching knowledge of inalienable homelessness and unhomeliness, the awareness that home and all its assaults follow the feeling subject into the clean, empty space of escape. At the end, the search for a workable diasporic identity may be dependent on trying to force a continuity between the desire for a permanent history and the desire for unscathed subjectivity, but on holding those two impossibilities together and recognizing them. Danticat's character Sophie Caco finally, reveals the Haitian tortured history and connected identity of Haitian immigrant in America through her narrative.

## Chapter IV

### Cultural Dislocation and Multiple Selves: Antoinette and Sophie

The diasporic writers Ewidge Danticat and Jean Rhys present their literary texts *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Breath, Eyes, Memory* with the themes of adolescent alienation, migration, traumatic uprooting from a childhood in the Caribbean, i.e. for Danticat's Sophie, in Haiti and Rhys Antoinette, in Jamaica, and challenges of establishing new relations in the US and England respectively. Both girls are leaving their childhood Caribbean homes for a new life in new land. One-- i.e. Sophie has made a personal decision to embark on an education and career, the other--i.e. Antoinette is taken by the force, sentenced for life to a lunatic's dungeon in her husband's mansion.

The girls Sophie, Antoinette designed as protagonists have fraction relations with their mothers; both are in exile from their homelands; both are haunted by paternal origins – Sophie is the fatherless daughter of a raped mother and Antoinette knows her father but he is no more alive. Both girls experience the dream of being chased, captured and confined and both girls explore their identifications and dis-identifications with, mother, motherland, and diaspora through nightmare and trauma. The transplanted moment of the girls in both novels suggests different points of engagement in the postcolonial problematic of identity in diaspora. In postcolonial period it is common to shift each to other place for Caribbean which caused people cultural dislocation and loss of identity.

Rhys and Danticat are dominantly affected by post colonialism and diaspora so they have created the characters in their novel that represent their own life. Being postcolonial Caribbean writers both are the representative of the Caribbean people who had suffered from colonialism while there was British and French Imperialism.



As a result the people from Caribbean continent shift either in US or in England, either with force or with their interest to fulfill their personal motives. Most of the sufferers are women so basically women move to other country to get rid of the trauma of rape and cultural exclusion. More women shift to new land to hide the shame as Antoinette gets married to Rochester to be an English girl again and Sophie's mother, Martine is shifted to US to hide her rape. Before their departure from Caribbean, both girls Sophie and Antoinette wrestle with their identities to the point of madness. Antoinette is not happy with her husband when she knows that she has to leave Caribbean and shift to England, she bites her husband's arm. Antoinette's husband narrates, "I felt her teeth in my arm I dropped the bottle" (89). When she sinks her teeth into Rochester's arm, she behaves as if she is the stereotypical image of the wild Caribbean woman who does not want to go away from the island. Likewise, Sophie, when she knows the plane ticket has been sent for her "I could not eat the bowl of food that Tante Atie laid in front of me" (4). When Sophie sees the plane ticket send by her mother, she could not eat food in Haiti –because she does not want to leave Haiti, where she spent 12 years.

In this manner, both characters, Antoinette and Sophie do not desire to go new land. Both character's life is remarkable; the quality of the love they receive at home as children is the same. For both Antoinette and Sophie, the factor most deciding their fate is a self-esteem deeply rooted in their upbringings. Both have their Surrogate mothers who help them in upbringing. Sophie has Tante Atie, Antoinette has Christophine, with whom they have deep love and attachment than their biological mother. For them surrogate mother is much more important and lovelier than biological one, so for them surrogate mother is like a motherland. By leaving mother, and mother land both girls are going to have diasporic life in host country.

Though brought up during widely disparate eras on different island, both girls share numerous experiences. Such as; maternal rejection, strong bonds with a painful separation from surrogate mother and motherland, sense of isolation, repetition of maternal life patterns and mental breakdowns. In the specific way Sophie's life is unified whereas Antoinette's life is fragmented. Sophie grows up with a loving, supporting concerned Tante Atie. In contrast, Antoinette doesn't have the privilege of mourning the loss of her mother at the onset the puberty because she never had her mother's full attention to begin with. Sophie has gone New York to reunite with her mother, Martine. But Antoinette moves England forcefully with her English husband far away from her mother Annette. Sophie has stable home in Haiti but Antoinette watches her home burn to the ground in a fire set by maroons that takes the life of her brother and pitches her mother permanently into madness.

By the same token both novelists Rhys and Danticate have gone through the same problem of dislocation, cultural exclusion, diaspora and identity crisis. Jean Rhys was born in Dominica to a Welsh father and a white Creole mother, who descended from a generation of plantation owners. However, in her early teen years she moved to England and started her literary career in her thirties. Rhys with her multicultural identity was always drawn towards the Caribbean and often created novels that rendered as post colonial. She has created a character quite similar to her own, Antionette Cosway, a woman of both Caribbean and English descent.

However, Edwidge Danticat often feels that her entity in a foreign land is a social construction of feelings, consciousness, and memory of past, longings, dreams and virtual elements. She was born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. When she was two years old, her parents immigrated to New York. She was left alone with her uncle and aunt. Her formal education in Haiti was in French, she spoke Haitian Creole at home. Later

she moved America at the age of twelve to join her parents. As an immigrant teenager, Edwidge could not adjust in her new surrounding and she felt discomfort in Brooklyne. Then she is compelled to live diasporic life in United States. Normally, the writers who are living diasporic life analyze as well as criticize that particular environment and the world around them becomes uncomfortable place where they cannot be a part of it, they always have a sense of belonging and not belonging. As a famous young women writer of Caribbean island, Danticat is a sort of representative figure for the Diasporas who does not fully understand what it means to straddle the line between two cultures. She is caught between two worlds, New York and Haiti. She examines the conditions of the diasporic people in her novel.

Dreams, nightmares and fantasies play an important role for both Sophie and Antoinette as extensions of past and future relatives. Both girls dream symbolizes that they are going to suffer from cultural dislocation and diaspora in future. Sophie is going to be traumatized by her mother in New York on the other hand Antoinette is also going to be exiled by her English husband. Their dreams also frame Antoinette and Sophie conflicted feelings about mother, mother land and diaspora. Sophie's first dream recounted in *Breath, Eyes, Memory* is also a nightmare of flight, and like Antoinette's dreams pursuit the shadows of a feared impending isolation or annihilation. Sophie says:

I sometimes saw my mother in my dreams. She would chase me through a field of wild flowers as tall as the sky. When she caught me, she would try to squeeze me into the small frame so I could be in the picture with her. I would scream and scream until my voice gave out, then Tante Atie would come and save me from her grasp. (2)

Sophie's dream about mother seems to be showing the future trauma of cultural dislocation and critical violence. Sophie's dream evokes her restless thoughts before her migration to New York, making transition transplantation-from one place to another. For her migration is invitation of future diaspora and cultural trauma in new place.

In contemporary postcolonial studies, the varieties of culture and people's awareness of adopting it explore the way in which the culture of 'home' is both recreated in diaspora and transformed through its encounter with a host environment illustrates the construction of diasporic identities. In this way, one of the famous postcolonial critic, Homi K. Bhabha defines culture as:

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational.

It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement ... it is translational because such spatial histories of displacement... make the question of low culture signified by culture, rather complex issue.

(Bhabha 438)

For Bhabha culture is strategy of survival where cultural authority resides not in a series of fixed and determined diverse objects but in the process of how these objects come to be known and so come into being.

In cultural identities range of separate and distinct systems of behavior, attitudes and values are linked. Hence, Bhabha's views seem to contend that cultural differences enhance to create different identities because cultural displacement makes the question of culture signifiers. The cultural diversity is spirit of multiculturalism, cultural exchange and share, and culture of root. It studies the formation of cultural

totalities by emphasizing our awareness of the homogenizing effects of cultural symbols and icons. In this connection, Stuart Hall opines the cultural identities in two different ways of thinking. He defines:

Cultural identity is defined in terms of its one shared culture, a cot of collective “one true self” hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’ which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as “one people”. With stable, unchanging and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history. (234)

Hall’s argument about cultural identity impedes that the identity is a shared culture, and a sort of collective true self. It focuses on communal feeling and a sense of us or collective identity.

The collective identities share common historical experiences and shared cultural codes. Therefore, cultural identity is a formation of particular social and cultural necessities which has a long history ancestry. In this sense, cultural identity is a product of history, culture and power. Rhys and Danticat, both concern with the problems of identity as they beset the hyphen-Caribbean, as they are between two cultures. They reflect characters, which focus on their sense of cultural dislocation and their complex relationship with foreign geography and environment.

Despite of searching good life Sophie and Antoinette’s life reveal the lost of identity entirely with their adopted homeland. Sophie’s adolescent identity crisis begins when she reaches in New York with her mother. It’s a private ritual surely shared by every teenager in the world with access to cultural practices. By the time

Antoinette reaches adolescence, however, the fate of her adult identity already lies in shards- with her husband in Thorn Field Hall where no looking glass and door. Rhys heroine Antoinette is seen all alone throughout the story, she doesn't have collective identity rather she just represents white Creole identity in Caribbean. Her identity is not fixed as Caribbean culture. We know this through her naming, first, Antoinette Cosway, later on, 'Mason' and after marriage Bertha or Marionette. So, she looks as if she is victim of fluid identity. Her father used to be plantation owner, after his death white settler's identity also gone. Antoinette's life seems to be fragmented and she has been faced identity crisis which is the outcome of Rhys own experience of colonization.

The unstable culture always brings psychic trauma and its consequences to the people in Caribbean as Antoinette and Annette. The angry mob fired the Coulibri state of Annette as a result she becomes mad. Due to her madness Antoinette becomes alone and tries to break free from the Creole identity but never overcomes. Later on, she becomes victim of psychic trauma of displacement and cultural dislocation as Sophie and Martine face in US.

Moreover, having white race Rhys heroine is insulted by black people and white English born people. She is totally excluded from the culture in existing society that she has internalized to be true Islanders. On the other hand, Sophie as being black becomes unfamiliar to white society in New York. She is sexually assaulted by her own mother, and tradition of testing. Both characters have their past trauma; Antoinette has the trauma of the death of her brother, Pierre. She narrates, "The garden at Coulibri overgrown and smelling of dead flowers" (11). She observes people may be sapped of their vitality; literal, physical expiration is not the only death

one can endure. In the same fire, her brother also died which causes her a death of the spirit, of spontaneity, of genuine responsiveness to the events of one's life.

Danticat's heroine Sophie also has a psychic trauma of sexual raped, which is cultural practice of testing in Haiti. Martine tests Sophie in New York as well then after Sophie becomes alone and she loses her consciousness. She narrates, "I was feeling alone and lost, like there was no longer any reason for me to live. "[...] I took the pestle to bed with me and held it against my chest" (34). Sophie begins to be isolated and depressed when Martine tests her. She has extreme transformation follows an intense flow of blood, a woman escapes her torment by undergoing a change of identity, ability and expectation. Finally to get free from that trauma she gets married with Joseph but, unfortunately, she could not escape from that pain rather she doubles when she sleeps with her husband. Both characters undergo through the psychic trauma given by state and cultural practice. In this connection, Robert Lifton has asserted that extreme trauma creates a second self which radically affects the sense of self. He opines:

Extreme trauma creates a second self [...] in extreme involvements, as in extreme trauma, one's sense of self is radically altered. And is a traumatized self that is created. Of course it's not a totally new self, it's what one brought into the trauma as affected significantly and painfully, confusedly, but in a very primal way, by that trauma. (74, qtd in Claire Stocks)

When someone has got a trauma of something, it cannot be recovered until and unless that traumatized self is reintegrated. As this definition of trauma Antoinette and Sophie both remember about the horrible past when they see the same types of situation in outer world. In this sense, Sophie exclaims, 'I hated the tests, it is the most

horrible thing that ever happened to me. When my husband with me now, it gives me such nightmare that I have to bite my tongue to do it again” (62). Sophie’s trauma of past testing reflects when she is with her husband.

Danticat has given clear picture of tormented land of Haiti by creating character of Martine, Sophie’s mother. Sophie narrates the story about her mother that Martine always abuses her daughter. She neglects her and creates distance because she has similar kind of nightmares almost every night. Martine has rape trauma, and Sophie is the result of that rape so because of tropical trauma given by the state, she could not love her daughter. Sophie and Martine’s birthplace is a land has a great historical contradiction. It’s a poorest country in the western hemisphere because of violent, and political instability. Danticat presents her characters are acting as Haitian women who are virtually absent as recorders of history and as actors in that history. Women are silenced inside the Haiti because of two centuries of violence and poverty.

But outside the Haiti by the cultural dislocation and disruption resulting from migration, Martine is raped at sixteen years old, which result in her pregnancy and the subsequent birth of Sophie. Traumatized, Martine leaves Haiti for the US to escape the memory and the living reminder of this violation done by state. The shame and trauma of these kinds of sexual abuses, concealed in Caco women bodies, haunt and become the nightmare that is passed on through generations. In this connection, Simone A James Alexander has described:

Martine’s choice to save herself begins the repositioning of the emphasis from child to mother, and demands equal protection for mothers and for women under the law. Expelled by the state through her forced migration and exile, Martine in turn rejects the state’s



designation of women as “mothers of the nation” in her refusal to become a mother. (382)

According to Alexander, Martine is not only Sophie’s mother rather she is mother of all Haitians though does not partake in mothering. Martin’s thought of saving herself by migrating from Haiti to new land emphasizes her from child to mother and protection for mothers and women under the law. But her forceful migration in second world makes her reject the mother and motherland.

Furthermore, trauma is a very peculiar kind of wound. It presents a unique set of challenges to understanding. Further because traumatic events often happen due to social forces as well as in the social world, trauma has an inherently political, historical and ethical dimension. Rhys heroine Antoinette and Danticat’s heroine Sophie and Martine suffer from past trauma of cultural, political and historical. Antoinette having a white race living in black Caribbean society faces the problem of cultural dislocation and later on she is exiled in Thorn field Hall buy her English husband, where she sees ‘ghost’ it means she is living in her past memory. On the other hand Martine is living in her past, political trauma done by state. Trauma must be understood in terms of absence- the absence of something that failed to become located in time or place rather than as a positive presence. This absence at the heart of the traumatic event lends it its constitutive ghostly quality. Because of this absence, people who have suffered traumatic experiences can become so possessed by them that they frequently describe themselves as living ‘ghosts’. The living ‘ghosts’ is itself a diaspora of the people who are living far away from their homeland.

As Antoinette and Martine live in foreign land with ghost, Sophie narrates her mother’s ghost as, Martine says, “I know that sounds bad, but that is the only way I can do it. There are ghosts there that I can’t face, things that are still very painful for

me “(30). Martine is disconnected from reality, despite her efforts to live in the present. The ghosts are not a part of the past they are monsters in her present that further diminish the person she is person she could be. Obviously, Martine herself painful and remembers past trauma of rape in Haiti. She describes herself as she is living like a ‘ghosts’. For her ‘ghost’ is means of trauma as well as tool of shifting in second world or host country. On the other hand for Antoinette England is a ghost, where she lives in isolation and exile. She says, “I didn’t see anything but I thought I felt something. “That is the ghost” (108). For her ‘ghost’ is image of diaspora in host country. She deceives to follow her Caribbean life style but unfortunately she could not do so. So she feels her life is ghost like, diaspora in English soil.

Jean Rhys depicts dislocation mostly as a single rather than collective fate and thus her heroine can no longer find any shelter in group or collective identity. On the other hand, Danticat depicts dislocation mostly in collective identity of black in US. sDanticat has presented Sophie and Martine who have faced the problem of cultural dislocation because of migrating to New York. The main cause of migrating for them is state violence. In this sense Donette A. Francis exclaims:

Danticat’s *Breath, Eyes, Memory* serves as a timely intervention into this dominant narrative. In the novel, danticat’s invocation of the Cacos followed by Martine’s rape by Tonton Macoutes in the 1970s demonstrates a long and continuous social history of rape in twentieth century Haiti. (79)

Danticat highlights the problems of whole Haitian women in the 70s era. Martine represents all Haitian women who are suffered from state violence since they have left their island for another country taking shelter.

Martine's diaspora is not single rather it's a collective identity of black women who migrate in New York either by force or by their wish. Sophie migrates to US to meet her mother and get success in further education. Similarly, Martine has migrated to support her family and to escape from the trauma of rape. Therefore Danticat's characters transformation is self-chosen not imposed by other.

In contrast to Danticat, Rhys character, Antoinette's transformation is imposed by black society of Jamaica first, then her English husband, Rochester. In this context Jean Rhys presents English husband, who is cruel and means of imperialism de-centering of Antoinette from both, white and black community. He says about Antoinette before exiling her in England "she'll loosen her black hair and laugh and coax and flatter (a mad girl. She'll not care who she loves). She'll moan and cry who give herself as no sane woman would or-could.... A Lunatic who always knows the time. But never does" (99). Now Antoinette becomes Rochester's marionette. He does not love Antoinette but wants to control her, at least makes her his mad woman. He thinks of her as a shameless, crazy whore and he aims to hurt her by taking her away from the island, which she loves. He has already arranged their trip to England but Antoinette does not have any idea about their departure from Caribbean. Finally, Rochester makes Antoinette to leave the island and her surrogate black mammy Christophine.

Both novels deal about the Caribbean Creole language and Creole identity in foreign land. Danticat's character Sophie speaks French Creole in host country, where she doesn't find other creole speaker. Whereas Antoinette speaks English Creole and adopted Caribbean black culture because she is born in Caribbean Island but she is originally from white settler's family, England. In this sense, both novels suggest that social demarcations between English and Creole cultural identities are artificial

because they ultimately depend on the geographically accident of a given person's or character's place of birth. Because of lack of English language Sophie becomes linguistically marooned whereas Antoinette becomes culturally marooned. Because of not access in speaking English in host country Sophie is in New York only "in bone and flesh" (19). Due to English white Creole identity Antoinette cut off from the Caribbean black culture and society. Even she becomes 'ghost' in Thorn field Hall, in (England) white community.

For Danticat's characters, language is a choice either they speak French or English who chooses to speak all the language of one's heritage in order to retain the possibility of translating and mediating those cultures. Danticat's Sophie and Rhys Christophine both speak Caribbean Creole. But speak French, patois and English too. Their expression of Caribbean Creole shows they are from African back ground and culture. Danticat's use of word 'o' libre and Rhys use of word 'mash up' both words signify the expression of Caribbean Creole. Both texts imagine a complex spectrum of black Creole identities-Jamaican, as well as Haitian.

Both writers portray black identity as a broad spectrum that encompassed regional and diasporic identities because they do not see nationality as a hereditary condition. Meanwhile, Murdoch, H. Adlai in his article, "A legacy of trauma: Caribbean slavery, race, class, and contemporary identity in *Abeng*" has said, "The principles of language grafting, synthesis and transformation that give birth to creoles are also signs of regional complexities of cross-cultural communication and exchange that disturb the accepted singularities of a slave driven Caribbean cultural identity"(68). Jamaica was home to more slave, and Caribbean has cross-cultural communication so to communicate each other in the slave's community within the slaves and the colonizer group, people have used Creole language. Therefore, sharing

language each other between black slave and white colonizers create the cultural identity and in-betweenness position of the people who are living in the same community.

In figuring either a colonizer or slave and other groups the term 'Creole' is linked to displacements of place and culture. Such as Antoinette is excluded from the existing black society in Caribbean due to her white heritage nonetheless she practices black culture and carries social norms and values. So, she becomes in between the place, neither Caribbean nor English. She is considered a white ethnic in Caribbean black society.

The literary texts by Rhys and Danticat portray a unified white / black Creole society within any of its Caribbean setting; the Jamaica of Antoinette's childhood, Trinidad as the destination for Annette's and Mr. Mason's honeymoon trip, or even Antoinette's and Rochester stay in her family's estate in the windward island. Likewise, Croix-des-Rosets, Haiti is Sophie's birth place, La Nouvelle Dame Marie is Martine's birth place, Sophie and Atie live in Croix-des-Rosets, and finally Sophie shifts to New York with her mother. Both characters Sophie and Antoinette suffer too much in foreign land because of displacement. For Danticat and Rhys colorization is the process of 'acculturation' of black to white norms and white to black but also a reciprocal and enriching inter-acculturation is stopped. Both writers have used language as a powerful deconstructive tool for contesting the domains of nature and culture.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Breath, Eyes, Memory's*- portrayal of the white creoles and black creoles dramatized mutual and creative inter-culturation between white and black creoles, too. Rhys's Antoinette Cosway must navigate her way through these treacherous landscapes of Creole and English identity. Whereas, Danticat's Sophie

lives an ambivalence life in New York. Both characters live a diasporic life in foreign land, where they have faced the problem of cultural dislocation and identity crisis.

Sophie lives New York following black Haitian culture and searching Haitian taste of food. But Antoinette lives life in exile by remembering past Jamaican childhood with Tia, and her mother Annette as well as surrogate mother Christophine.

Danticat presents the novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* to show the clear picture of Haiti's culture, history and society. Moreover her narratives suggest that what Haitians inside and outside of Haiti consider a Haitian-hyphen-American hybrid identity that can easily back and forth through national and cultural and linguistic borders. Meanwhile, Rhys narratives imply the creole identity and cultural displacement in Caribbean island and England. Having white Creole identity Antoinette has been excluded from Caribbean cultural sphere. She is insulted by them getting name "White nigger"—in Jamaica, on the other hand she is dominated by her husband in England by giving name 'Bertha' she has not fixed identity rather her identity is lost and becomes White Creole. As a result she gets trauma in foreign/English land. Sophie has trauma of cultural practices of testing, likewise, Martine has trauma of rape. Both novels represent the experience of writers themselves. Danticat shifts New York with her parents when she was 12 years, as Sophie shifts. Rhys has lived her life in exile in English land as Antoinette does. Thus, both works of writing deal cultural dislocation and trauma of the past in foreign land facing identity crisis.

## Conclusion

### Diasporic Sensibilities and Dilemma of Dislocation

After leaving the native land the migrants are left homeless. Emotionally they become weak and they carry on their struggles to find who they are. To exist well in the new world, they imitate culture life style in host society. Yet they cannot ignore the native land and culture. In addition, diasporic characters cannot be satisfied in the new land regardless of material possession they acquire. These characters are in-between, diasporic and homeless. For them it is difficult to get the selfhood despite the material prosperity. As the diasporic characters suffer identity crisis, they are both outsider and insider at the same time.

In this research, I have analyzed the ways in which Jean Rhys's novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Edwidge Danticat's novel *Breath, Eyes, memory* use the concept of identity and belonging in character construction through two themes: the complexity of racial identity and madness and death. Rhys novel is set in Caribbean Island and England reflecting the story of white Creole family being outsider in the native land. Whereas Danticat's novel is mostly set in New York doing back and forth in Caribbean Island, Haiti, telling an immigrants story of displacement and ambivalent. Due to their cultural identity Rhys's Antoinette and Danticat's Sophie displace from the prior community. In the Caribbean, owing to it being a region of contact, the presence of multiple, often conflicting cultures greatly affects one's cultural identity, as the person must live in constant negotiation of various aspects of both one's practical and reflective identity. The feelings of ambivalent and social exclusion in the host society have been manifested by the characters in both novels.

Rhys has portrayed Antoinette Caribbean born white daughter of ex- slave owners continuously excluding from the black community in the Island being white

Creole. However, for her Caribbean is homeland the place where she has shared the experiences and internalized the common culture with black friend Tia and surrogate mother Christophine. For her England is dream and fantasy from where her family actually migrated to the Island being colonizer. So she frequently tries to accept and avoid the Caribbean identity. Time and again, when she tries to identify herself as Caribbean she faces the trauma of being outsider in the society. Later on, to escape from this trauma she is married to English, she is exiled in England by her husband getting new name 'Bertha'. Then she realizes that Caribbean is her true homeland, now she is diaspora in England. The movement of Antoinette back and forth, Jamaica and Thorn Field Hall leads her a diasporic character being in-between the place not getting fixed home and identity. Finally she is made mad by English man placing her white Creole, who has white race and black upbringing. Now she is forced to struggle for permanent home and identity.

On the other hand, Edwidge Danticat's novel *Breath, Eyes, Memory* exposes that 12 years old Sophie Caco narrates the story of Haitian women in particular and whole Caribbean in general. This novel talks about the immigrated life of black women in New York. Because of distinct culture, way of life, language and race she has to face the problem of displacement, in-betweens, and identity crisis. She has born in Croix- des- Rosets, Haiti where she lives with her aunt Atie as a surrogate mother. Then she shifts to New York to meet her mother and get academic success. In New York she faces various problems of being French Creole. She finds French and English words similar but pronunciation are different so she becomes outsider. When she meets her mother Martine she finds Martine has recurring dream about rape and she is the part of that event and horrible past of her mother. She lives the life of an immigrant being diaspora and having ambivalent life. She is also a hybrid immigrant



who lives in host country following native culture. Her spirit of not resembling white way of life and culture in the contact zone throws her in the position of identity crisis.

In this way, it is found that characters in foreign land suffer a lot regarding their identity, settlements, isolation, alienation, dislocation and anxiety. Using Homi K Bhabaha's theory of hybridity and Stuart Hall's theory of cultural identity as a base for analyzing Antoinette and Sophie as a characters and the problems they face in the novels provide of understanding their predicament. They move here and there without knowing where they are going to. They live in their imaginary homelands. In the same way, characters in the stories move Caribbean to America and England, where they bounce back and forth in their mentality and sometimes return back to their native land. The novelists expose characters confusing in their life time and again that is to bring a sense of instability in the novel. This instability creates the displacement and diaspora in the host country that can cause identity crisis. Thus the culture of diasporic characters does not remain integral. And their culture develops both in home country and respective host society. So they develop a sense of exile, loss, the pain of separation and cultural exclusion. They just remain in between the place either here or there, they neither belong to root nor route.

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