

## I. Jean Rhys as Postcolonial Artist

The novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys is widely discussed in its postcolonial subject matter. *Wide Sargasso Sea* specially examines the prevalent concept of conventional, progressive history and subverts the notion of “Self” and “Other” by linking the notion of madness that is presented by Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*. The “Self” and “Other” are supposed to be the measuring rod to define the colonial and postcolonial relationship in regards to the concept of binarism that was formed to rule the world by showing the civilized and the uncivilized relationship of East and West by European colonists. The west was taken as “Self” and the Non-West was considered as “Other” and uncivilized in the process of the identity formation.

After reading the theory of postcolonialism and different text by colonial and postcolonial theorists, I was curious to know the relationship of colonizer and colonized (the “Self” and “Other” respectively). According to Ashcroft et.al, “the ‘Other’ is anyone who is separate from one’s self” (169). Then I was again contemplating the issues that if the ‘Self’ is the measurement to evaluate the ‘Other’ , why all colonized is labeled by the tag of “Other”? Who becomes the ‘Other’ if the colonized subject evaluates the colonizer? Is the binary opposition fixed ? The reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea* has attempted to solve my curiosity which was written in response to Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*. Rhys critically examines the situation faced by the diasporic character with the double standard i.e. Western and non Western (European and Caribbean). She also explores the cruelty and inhumanities of the natives and non natives equally by projecting different characters proving that not only European and whites are suppressor but the blacks and natives are not free whenever the situations come. As being the diasporic character , Antoinette straddles

between Caribbean and European cultural identities and Rochester also views the world of Jamaica differently.

This thesis deals with the formation of identity by using the postcolonial theory to critique about the condition of diasporic character. The Creole identity is questioned by in-between and displaced subjectivity of Antoinette in her relation with Rochester, the Englishman by underlining that it is constructed only through its relation to the other. Tyson writes that the colonizers and colonized create each other and their identity is always in a fluid: "Their relationship is mutually constitutive (they create each other) and dynamically unstable" (284) will remain as an imperative of this thesis. In the novel Rhys tries to explore the situation of the females (specially) by the voice of a female narrator as well as the character Antoinette and their situation by projecting the male character and narrator of *Diaspora* in relation with the black people of the former European colony.

The European colonizer suppressed the black people in Jamaica during British colonization and they remained as *Other* for black Jamaican. They did not have any right of expression, so they were silenced. But later they got freedom with the Emancipation act in 1833. After the emancipation, black people remained in the center and hatred over the white grew suddenly. The white people remained as a diasporic character within. So, a kind of hatred prevailed everywhere. As a diasporic character within, Antoinette feels a kind of humiliation.

The characters in the novel reconstruct their identity as they are influenced by the "World" that surrounds them as well as their own feelings, beliefs, memories or imagination. Subject's identity is reconstructed through a collage of names, stereotypes, body image, the imagination, memories, relationship, environment, and history. All of these elements are specifically analyzed in this thesis as guided by

Tyson's explanation of the individual identity formation. In this novel, the slavery is ending between the blacks and the whites, but its chaos is still operating through trauma in the characters. In the beginning of the novel, the characters are not mentally or physically capable of facing their lost selves, loved ones, innocence, or honor. The characters are traumatized by the Emancipation act of 1833 which led to the catastrophic division in the mutual relationship prevalent before the implementation of it.

From the postcolonial perspective, the research examines the trauma that creates the characters need to escape their previous identity but fail ultimately. This thesis gives one explanation of how the dislocation is embedded despite the attempt of identity take place regardless of the characters attempt to escape separate version of their identity. Postcolonial criticism is necessary to interpret the assertion of identity in relation to the people and nations that do not belong in Eurocentric view and have been overlooked by the history of colonizer.

Antoinette remained in in-between position in Jamaica, she belongs neither to the white community of Europeans nor black, the natives, which problematized her identity. Antoinette is influenced by the original homeland of the ideal past as being the daughter of a slave owner in the past but with the Emancipation act she is nowhere. In the post-emancipated Caribbean island, her former slave-holder family is detested by the natives as “white cockroaches”. She is also excluded by whites and says that the whites too did not count them as their own root. Critic Cappello in her paper “Postcolonial Discourse in *Wide Saragaso Sea*. . .” comments on the situation of Antoinette as “she experienced being Creole both in the Caribbean and in England, and she was personally aware of the conflicting culture she depicted in the figure of Antoinette who, being Creole, is accepted neither within the black community nor by

the white representatives of the colonial power” (2). Antoinette further clarifies her problematic identity of being white and living in Caribbean by asserting her voice: “They say when trouble comes close ranks, and so the white people did. But we were not in their ranks” (9). She is not accepted by the white community too. Cappello further views that “Antoinette is no longer described totally through the eyes of her husband (who is white and English), and she gains her centrality” (1).

Gayatri Spivak says that renamed of Antoinette by her husband Rochester as Bertha, the character of Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, forcefully is imperialism. In her essay “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism” views that: “Rhys suggests that so intimate a thing as personal and human identity might be determined by the politics of imperialism. Antoinette, as a white Creole child growing up in the time of emancipation in Jamaica, is caught between the English imperialist and the black native” (250). Spivak emphasizes Antoinette’s in-between identity, thereby, underlining her inability to locate her true subjective space.

Regarding the identity, Simon De Beauvoir discussed the issue of ‘Otherness.’ But the “Otherness” does not refer to only female as constructed other here; the Other is in fluid condition. Sometimes the Other is labeled to black and natives but that shift to the white later with the shift of “power”. The white people became powerless with the Emancipation act and their identity shift to “white niggers” and “cockroaches” and the black came in the center. Antoinette’s Creole identity is not accepted by the black community of Jamaica because the economic downfall has reduced the white Creole planters to the category of “white niggers”. Tia, a black friend of Antoinette, changed her name to “white nigger” when she calls “cheating nigger” after Tia steal her clothes. Tia exploded with ferocity that the natives black are exploited by the white people: “plenty white people in Jamaica...they did not look at us, nobody see them

come near us. Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger” (14). The white people in Jamaica victimized by the shift of power. Black people had a kind of enmity towards white since the colonial era and the moment.

After the Emancipation act, Antoinette wants to develop the friendly relation with other black characters and wants to assimilate with them but she is rejected by them. So, she has no option then to remain as a pendulum is pathetic. The relationship with the previously “Other” is questionable when the estate is set on fire and Antoinette tries to assimilate with black Tia. As a native black girl, Tia naturally belongs to the Caribbean location but Antoinette, despite her wish to belong to their home in Coulibiri is not accepted by the people of assertion. In wishing to be like Tia, she wishes to assimilate to the Caribbean. This wish of Antoinette vanished when looks at Tia. Her illusions are shattered when Tia throws the stone in her face Antoinette to the realization that she cannot locate her true subjective space. Antoinette treats Tia as the former slave but she has not experienced the post emancipation context that the power is shifted to the black community. Antoinette is displaced and dislocated again. Postcolonial critic Homi K. Bhabha has noted that "skin, as the key signifier of cultural and racial differences in the stereotype, is the most visible of fetishes, recognized as common knowledge in a range of cultural, political, and historical discourses, and plays a public part in the racial drama that is enacted every day in colonial societies" (15). She further argues that Hybridity is the reevaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of the discriminatory identity effect.

Benedict Anderson further problematizes the idea of identity with nationalism by viewing that “nations are imagined communities [. . .] cultural artifacts of a

particular kind based on the need for a narrative of identity [. . .] it is an act of communal imagination, informed by the search for decisive clues" (4). Tia's assumption and Antoinette's expectation contradict each other by imagining their different community but no acknowledgements of the community exactly what they say. So, it is in the unfolding of this troubled and troubling relationship that we might start to discern the ambivalent pre-history of the post independence condition.

The Creole identity of Antoinette is questioned when Tia steals the clothes and she is forced to wear Tia's clothes. In the appearance Antoinette becomes Tia when she wore her dress but her desire to be like Tia remained unfulfilled. However, even after the Emancipation act mother denies to be change as being the wife of a former slave owner. She orders to burn the clothes of Tia. Unfortunately, Antoinette is unable to get the dress which suits her. Christophine implies the situation that Annette is unable to change despite the fact of the Emancipation act which has given freedom to the slave and the black community of the Caribbean. The debate of dress continues latter part too. She is unable to fit into English community too. Like Tia's dress, the white dress too does not suit Antoinette makes it clear that though she is of English descent she is different.

Finally, Antoinette is unable to find her identity despite her vigorous attempt to be assimilated to the Caribbean. By the image of the mirror, she wanted to test her identity after she failed in her trial of assimilation. The situations have changed since the time when she used to be happy there. So, she questions her identity frequently by using the image of the mirror.

Rochester, as being the male character of the white community, too has the similar experiences of being in-between position in the Caribbean narrates the second part of the novel with bitter complication. Rochester too searches his identity in the

post emancipated Caribbean. As being the displaced character he does not own the place. He discloses the fact with Antoinette that he is a stranger in the new land. But Antoinette again interrupts by the fact that both of them disowned the place.

Desire, identity, breaking down the colonization of the text, heteroglossic structure, voices to the subaltern characters, bringing in the center to the insignificant characters, giving strong support with the blazing issues are some of the points that make Rhys text a postcolonial.

Postcolonial literature has dominated a big part of modern literature in many countries around the world. Postcolonialism is based on the impact of colonization on cultures and society. The term postcolonial was originally used by historians to describe the period after colonialism. In literary criticism, it has been used since the late 1970s to discuss the various cultural, political and linguistic effects of colonization. At the beginning, this term referred to “cultural interactions within colonial societies in literary circles” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 186). According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, the term postcolonial is used to cover "all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (186). Postcolonial theories and literature have developed “to accommodate the differences within the various culture, traditions as well as the desire to describe in a comparative way the featured shared across those traditions” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 186).

Rhys focuses on the problem of space and identity. Postcolonial theory and practices are concerned with place and displacement. Postcolonialism in literature refers to commonwealth literary studies. The question of identity remains a dominant discourse in which Rhys is representative figure. Rhys searches for myths and identities in a space which was not their own from the beginning. Many postcolonial

critics view that critics focus on the way he blurs generic distinction between factual verisimilitude and fictional reconstruction. She explores the major theme of Postcolonialism in his different works. The aspect of place and displacement are major issues of Postcolonialism. Here appears the special postcolonial crisis of identity and develops an effective identifying relationship between self and other. According to Ashcroft "a valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation resulting from migration, the experience of enslavement, transportation or voluntary removal for indentured labor" (9).

The alienation of vision and the crisis in self-image which this displacement produces is often found. Ashcroft describes that many usual "categories of social alienation such as master/slave, free/bonded, ruler/ruled are very important and widespread in postcolonial cultures" (Ashcroft 9).

Rhys gives voice to the people in the assertion of their identity and their history in priority. Inter-textual nature, narratives as well as explorations of personal, family, community and national identity became the key elements in her writings that made her postcolonial artist. National boundaries, increased sensibility to gender relation, the complex cultural effects and the glamorization of violence, cultural hegemony, mimicry, dislocation are the themes of her writing.

The nostalgia has remained a big issue in the novel after the Emancipation act implemented giving the right to the previously marginal "Other". Even after the Emancipation act, Annette was hopeful that they will be in their previous positions.

Towards the end of the novel Antoinette again questions her displaced identity with a dream. In her last dream, she saw her image in the form of a ghost. The ghost seems a symbolic representation of *Jane Eyre's* Bertha and Rhys is wired back to Jane Eyre. Her dislocated and displaced identity is intensified by recalling the past with



remembering her cruel husband and other facets. She has remained a stranger inside her house and outside the house in the black community. So, she recalls that the calling of parrot also symbolized the questioning the identity of the stranger. As a Bertha Mason, she was dislocated and displaced within. By the image of parrot she are traumatized by the past that parrot lost the life in search of identity. Symbolically the parrot and the Rochester is in the same position that it is fixed like the parrot he may lose his life too.

Antoinette's double displaced identity leads her to form a new one that is the revolutionary figure in the existed world: displaced by male patriarchy and displaced by post emancipation, she seems to say that Tia and other marginal had a problem and it was natural to raise voice against colonial suppression because of her frequent attempt to assert her identity with Tia. Her waking up refers to the situation that she has no way than to revolt against the discrimination.

Spivak observes the ending of novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* in relation to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and her attempt to reconcile within the Caribbean community and her failure to locate herself even in the Thorn Filed Hall after setting fire. Antoinette, by setting fire to the house and killing herself, actually puts herself in the position of the Other. Spivak views:

We can read this as having been brought into the England of Brontë's novel: "This cardboard house" – a book between cardboard covers – "where I walk at night is not England" (WSS, p. 148). In this fictive England, she must play out her role, act out the transformation of her "self" into that fictive Other, set fire to the house and kill herself, so that Jane Eyre can become the feminist individualist heroine of British fiction. I must read this as an allegory of the general epistemic violence

of imperialism, the construction of a self-immolating colonial subject for the glorification of the social mission of the colonizer. At least Rhys sees to it that the woman from the colonies is not sacrificed as an insane animal. (250-251)

Antoinette could not succeed to locate herself in both culture and it is an Imperial project by further argument that the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*:

Rewrites a canonical English text within the European novelistic tradition in the interest of the white Creole rather than the native. No perspective *critical* of imperialism can turn the Other into a self, because the project of imperialism has always already historically refracted what might have been the absolutely Other into a domesticated Other that consolidates the imperialist self. (253)

All in all, this research tries to prove that Rhys' *Wide Saragasso Sea* has attempted to depict the clear picture of the identity crisis of a dislocated character Antoinette and Rochester from the European and non European view that shapes the critical viewpoint. The identity is not permanent and it is always in a fluid. I agree with the idea of Gayatri Spivak that this text is rewriting or continuation of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* locating the story in the canonical British imperial text.

One of the major themes of Rhys's fiction is Emancipation act and its effect. She presents the post emancipation period and its effect on black and white community in relation to "Self" and "Other". Rhys focuses on emancipation and its effect on individuals, families, and entire societies. Drawing on Jamaican heritage Rhys tries to sketch the story of marginalized groups and individual which is neglected by the mainstream history. Rhys tries to blur the hierarchy between victors and vanquished, East and West. Canonical history portrays the history of the center.

The Emancipation act of 1833 is beautifully written in the canonical history as the great victory of the black community but it ignored the pain and suffering of the characters even from the side of whites. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, all character either from the side of black or white are equally traumatized. The scars left by act are deeply rooted in the mind of every characters. Annette, Antoinette, Tia and Rochester are equally affected by the Emancipation act. The traditional history generally believe that “ history is progressive, that the human species is improving over the course of time, advancing in its moral, cultural and technological accomplishments” (Tyson 283) but Rhys opposed this idea in the novel. There are multiple voices in her novel and all characters are treated equally. The females were marginalized in mainstream history but Rhys has given main role to the female and the story are presented from double narrative voices that is from the West and Non West.

The writer of Diaspora creates an imagined community which has its ties to an original homeland of the ideal past. Rhys blurs the hierarchy of East and West by distance of place and time. They remain outsiders despite their great effort to be included in the mainstream Jamaica. So, it is a good example of postcolonial text.

Post- colonialism is a widely discussed concept, especially after Indian independence in 1947. In literary field it reached its peak in 1980s. According to Lois Tyson’s explanation in his book *Critical Theory Today: A User Friendly Guide*, “during the nineteenth century Britain emerged as the largest Imperial power, and by the turn of the twentieth century the British empire ruled one quarter of the earth’s surface, including India, Australia , New Zealand ,Canada, Ireland [...] by 1980 Britain lost all but a few of its colonial holdings” (417). Tyson further says that Postcolonial Criticism defines formerly colonized people who were subjected to the political and cultural domination of another country or population.

The concept of Postcolonialism was widely discussed after 1970s. Some post-colonial critics believe that the proper beginning of this concept started with the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism*, a western construction of the Orient. Many postcolonial critics believe *Orientalism* paves the way for the study of Postcolonialism:

Which led to the development of what came to be called a colonialist discourse theory in the work of critics such as Spivak and Bhabha, the actual term 'post-colonial' was not employed in these early studies of the power of colonialist discourse to shape and form opinion and policy in the colonies and metropolis. Spivak, for example, first used the 'post-colonial' term in the collection of interviews and recollections published in 1990 called *The Post-Colonial Critic*. Although the study of the effects of colonial representation were central to the work of these critics, the term 'post-colonial' was first used to refer to cultural interactions within colonial societies in literary circles. (qtd. in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 186)

According to *Key Concept in Post-Colonial Studies*, colonial discourse theory was influenced by Post-Structuralist writers like- Said (Foucault), Homi Bhabha (Althusser and Lacan) and Gayatri Spivak (Derrida), led many critics concerned to focus on the material effects of the historical condition of colonialism, as well as on its discursive power, to insist on the hyphen to distinguish, post-colonial studies as a field from colonial discourse theory per se, which formed only one aspect of the many approaches and interest that the term 'post-colonial' sought to embrace and discuss (187).

The growing currency of term ‘post-colonial’ within the academy was consolidated by the publication of *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literature* (1989) by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. In the beginning, this term referred to “cultural interaction within the colonial societies in literary circles” (Ashcroft, Gareth, and Tiffin, 186). According to *Key Concept in Post-Colonial Studies*, the term Postcolonial is used “to signify the political, linguistic cultural experiences of societies that were former European colonies” (186).

As Leela Gandhi in *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* opines that the postcolonialism is academic project which question the past conflicting history with colonizer and colonized:

Postcolonialism can be seen as a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath. It is a disciplinary project devoted to the academic task of revisiting, remembering and crucially, interrogating the colonial past. The process of returning to the colonial scene discloses a relationship of reciprocal antagonism and desire between colonizer and colonized. (4)

It is in the unfolding of this troubled and troubling relationship that we might start to discern the ambivalent pre-history of the postcolonial condition. The term post-colonialism “has been primarily concerned to examine the processes and effects of, and reactions to European colonialism from the sixteenth century up to and including the neo-colonialism of the present day” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 188). In this sense postcolonialism is an analysis of binaries created by the European colonialism and the reaction of the oriental people towards the suppression and oppression of colonizer during the colonial period or after it. The binaries were created to make the non western or colonized people as essential “other” in many ways. According to *Key*

*Concept in Post-Colonial Studies* “the reactions of oppressed peoples will always be resistant may actually remove agency from these peoples” (189). It attempts to invert the perspectives of the western world that saw the 'rest' as the other, allowing the emergence of third-world intellectuals to utter on behalf of their own nation or people.

Since 1980s, postcolonialism or postcolonial literature has developed a body of writing that attempts to shift the dominant ways in which the relation between Western and non western people and their worlds are viewed. Anne McClintock furthermore argues that "post-colonial studies have set itself against this imperial idea of linear time" (254). It concentrates on the disengagement of the colonial condition, returning the voice and the right to the subaltern and the marginalized.

According to Tyson’s explanation, “postcolonial criticism is particularly effective at helping us see connections among all the domains of our experience- psychological, social, political, intellectual, and aesthetic- in ways that show as just how inseparable these categories are in our lived experience of ourselves and our world” (417). Tyson further says that “postcolonial theory offers the framework for examining the similarities among all critical theories that deal with human oppressions” (417). So the world is no longer controls in writing with canonicity.

Unlike the radical or even violent tendencies in the initial resistant movements against colonialism is latter demonstrated by means of literary works. The emergence of postcolonial literature in the past few years shows that literature has become a writing cure for the formerly colonized subjects to express their discontent and to regain what they have been deprived of in the years of colonization. Colonizer's literature in the past tried to create a hierarchy between colonizers and colonized. The literature of colonizer depicted the colonized subject as "other" and they put themselves as superior in many ways: "it also meant that the relation between the

colonizer and colonized was locked into a rigid hierarchy of difference deeply resistant to fair and equitable exchanges, whether economic, cultural or social "(Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 46). The colonizer's literature or "the ideology of race was also a crucial part of the construction and naturalization of an unequal form of intercultural relations" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 46). The colonized subjects were taken "genetically pre-determined to inferiority" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 47). Colonial literature tried to depict "colonization could be (re)presented as a virtuous and necessary 'civilizing' task involving education and paternalistic nurture" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 47).

Rudyard Kipling's concept in his famous admonition to America in 1899 "take up white man's burden" (qtd. in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 47) can be the best example of colonial literature but it is not that every literature written during the colonial period advocate for the colonial power. Postcolonial literature tries to create a balance or it tries to erase the prevalent hierarchy between self and other. Colonial literature tried to create an inescapable relationship between colonizers and colonized: "as parent/child, tree/branch etc." (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 49). In contrast postcolonial literature tries to create a ground for mutual respect for both in their literature. The writing cure, enables writers of different ethnicity or (pre) colonized background to document their personal experiences or the communal histories of their once colonized countries. The composition of postcolonial literary works thus functions as literary resistance. It is the media for literature writers or critical theorists to imagine and reconstruct the oppressed histories of their own or of their forefathers, and to express their opinions about the condition of the colonality or postcoloniality. Tiffin clarifies that the postcolonial literature "has involved a radical dis/mantling of

European codes and postcolonial subversion and appropriation of the dominant European discourses" (95).

The ultimate goal of Postcolonialism is combating the residual effects of colonialism on cultures and society. It is not simply concerned with freeing the past world, but learning how the world can move beyond this period together, towards a place of mutual respect. Postcolonial theorists create a space for multiple voices. This is especially true of those voices that have been previously silenced by dominant ideologies: subaltern. Edward Said in his book, *Orientalism* provides a clear picture of the ways of western imperialism. It seeks to change the ways people think, the way they behave, to produce a more just and equitable relation between the different peoples of the world.

According to French structural linguist Ferdinand de Saussure the "sign" has two aspects: signifier and signified. Saussure says that "signs have meaning not by a simple reference to real objects, but their opposition to other signs" (qtd. in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 23). So, he says that meaning comes from differences. Identity is like the "sign" which has two sides: signifier and signified of identity. The colonizer created a discourse representing the colonized subjects as inferior or uncivilized and circulated the idea that it was their necessary duty to make them civilized one. Edward said opposed this view borrowing the idea of Foucault's concept of knowledge and power. Foucault's discourse theory says that it is clearly the outcome of power exercise which creates knowledge and ultimately the truth about certain things. Postcolonial literature tries to dismantle the very idea of colonizer and resist the Eurocentric view about the non-Western people.

Quest for identity is another important feature of postcolonialism. Quest for identity refers to the situation where the colonized subject and subaltern characters try



to get their separate identity inside or outside the western world or beyond the Eurocentric colonial mentality. During the colonial period, the mainstream literature represented colonized subjects as second class human being and their relation were based on “us” and “them”. The colonized subjects were taken as the "other". Their concepts were biased that identity is the unchangeable and it is fixed so they had created the concept of binarism and supposed them as superior. The concept of binarism privileged the first term like colonizer/colonized, white /black, civilized/primitive, teacher/ pupil etc. The identities of the colonized subject were determined by the colonizer and they were represented as “white man’s burden” (qtd. in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 47). The identities of postcolonial people are re-created dismantling the true name of them, mocking their previous name as not civilized. The colonizers never seek the underlying significance of their name and simply distort the name of subaltern subjects. Identity is necessary for each and every subject to show their cultural uniqueness and their cultural differences.

A postcolonial literature tries to subvert the prevalent hierarchy. The colonized subject or subaltern characters try to reconstruct the prevalent stereotypical representation of the colonizer. They resist the Eurocentric view that identity is fixed and unchangeable. The colonizer stereotypically represented the colonized people as uncivilized but it is their biased mind that never sees the equal status of the colonized people. The Colonized subjects are made only mimic man when they were on the mission to colonization but they never get mutual respect as it is given to the colonizer and ultimately decides to search his own version of identity.

Therefore, identity is always constituted within representation. Lois Tyson, in his book, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* explains that:

Our individual identity is not merely product of society. Neither it is merely a product of our individual will and desire. Instead, individual identity and its cultural milieu inhabit, reflect, and define each other. Their relationship is mutually constitutive (they create each other) and dynamically unstable. (284)

Stuart Hall in "Cultural Identity and Diaspora "gives two definitions to the terms of cultural identity. First he defines: "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). The second definition of cultural identity 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). These two definitions make us believe that cultural identity is formed within, rather than in history, culture and power. Cultural identity does have certain characteristics like mutability, unstable, metaphoric and sometimes even contradictory. So, cultural identity is a production always constituted but not outside the representation rather within and is never complete. It is never certain and is always wrapped within masks of representation.

Postcolonial literature tries to show the feeling of the displaced subject whether they were voluntarily or forcefully displaced from their homeland into new regions where they feel lack of belongingness. Jeremy Hawthorn writes, "Displacement refers to the human ability to refer to things removed from the utterer's immediate situation, either in time or in space" (74). Diaspora is close term with displacement: "Diasporas, the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands in to new regions" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 68). In this state people feels a kind of pang where their identity is erased and feel lack of belongingness of

their culture and identity. In the new land, the people of the Diaspora are represented as other and they try to mimic the culture and the custom where they are living but they are not accepted by the western world fully. Colonial discourse creates the discourse that the colonized people are always inferior and they cannot reach the level of the colonizer despite their great effort. Homi K. Bhabha argues that to understand the power of colonial discourse, postcolonial literature needs "to be questioned [. . .] is the mode of representation of otherness" (68). It refers to otherness or the process of displacing somebody or something. It is the other consciousness or other ego in the construction of identity.

Dislocation is another important term in postcolonial criticism. According to, *A Key Concept in Post-Colonial Studies* By Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, Dislocation is:

A term for both the occasion of displacement that occurs as a result of imperial occupation and the experiences associated with this event.

The phenomenon may be a result of transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion and settlement, a consequence of willing or unwilling movement from a known to an unknown location. The term is used to describe the experience of those who have willingly moved from the imperial 'home' to the colonial margin, but it affects all those who, as a result of colonialism, have been placed in a location that, because of colonial hegemonic practices, needs, in a sense, to be 'reinvented' in language, in narratives and in myth. (73)

In this state, individuals feel that they neither belong in their own previous culture nor in the new regions. So a sense of loss arises in their mind. In the postcolonial

literature, writers try to represent this marginalized voice and of their pain and suffering what they are feeling in the new land.

Othering is a recurring term in postcolonial literature. This term is rooted in Freudian and post- Freudian analysis of the formation of subject. “ This term was coined by Gayatri Spivak for the process by which imperial discourse creates its ‘others’ ” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 171). According to *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies*, “the ‘Other’ is anyone who is separate from one’s self” (169). The colonized subject is presented as the ‘other’ in colonial discourse. The binary distinction is created to show the colonized subject as the ‘Other’. According to the Eurocentric view, this category is fixed and permanent for all the time but this concept is questioned by the postcolonial literature and speaks for the marginalized and subaltern, “of inferior rank” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 215). According to *Key Concept in Postcolonial Studies* this inferior/marginalized are subject to the hegemony of ruling classes and they are denied to access to the hegemonic power. Postcolonial literature tries to blur the binary distinction and tries to sketch the history, pain and suffering of the subaltern and marginalized, so it puts them in centre denying the Eurocentric concept as eternal “other”. The colonist literature denied the contribution made by subaltern and marginalized group even if their great effort. They worked for the betterment of the colonizer but they are presented stereotypically. Postcolonial literature advocates for the balance and equal status between colonizer and colonized based on mutual respect. Antonio Gramsci explains that the victory of subaltern group is possible only from revolutionary class adjustment. Rights of subaltern and marginalized are clearly shown in *Wide Sargasso Sea* . Female were double marginalized in colonialist literature but this novel has presented the female

character Antoinette as the central character and as subaltern figure whose contribution is neglected.

In the process or movement of cultural decolonization, the literary resistances of the postcolonial writers are to reclaim authority in the acts of narrating subaltern histories, presenting and re-mapping geographical boundaries, and rebuilding traumatic identities. Benita Parry, author of *Resistance Theory/Theorizing Resistance or Two Cheers For Nativism*, points out that "the project of postcolonial critique is designated as deconstructing and displacing the Eurocentric premises of discursive apparatus which constructed the third world not only of the west but also for the cultures so represented" (172). What Rhys attempts to overthrow in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is the fictional image that is planted on the subaltern characters. Antoinette's political and racial awakening, for instance, may be interpreted as the resistance to the colonial gaze, which the western hegemony fixes upon the subaltern or the represented subject. Parry Notes that a postcolonial construction of the past should be "an imaginative reworking of the process of message or an infinite wandering across cultures" (174). Rhys adopts Bronte's *Jane Eyre* to elaborate or rewrite the history.

For Ismail Qardi, "history is like the air we breathe, it enters (or interpolates) us unconsciously, and without our knowledge or attentive participation; it does the work through books, all books" (412). Edward Said, however, mentions that history, or the narrating of an alternative history, is the device for the postcolonial novelists to reconstruct their past and thus to question the colonial way of documenting the past. As Said writes, "appealing to the past is the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps" (30). Writers of postcolonial terrain write in the attempt to

question the historical value of colonization, and to reveal the unnoticed colonized subjects. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said argues about the deeply rooted connections between novels and imperialism. He suggests that the celebration of imperial expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth century novels is taken for granted. It is the mass in one way or other who flourishes on the pages and in the imagination of the readers than in reality. Said claims:

I'm not trying to say that novel – or the culture in the broad sense- 'caused' imperialism, but that the novel, as a cultural artifact of bourgeois society, and imperialism are unthinkable without each other. Of all the major literary form, the novel is the most structured; imperialism and the novel fortified each other to such a degree that it is impossible, I would argue, to read one without in some way dealing with the other. (70-71)

Said elaborates on the deeply bounded relationship between the art work and the imperial expansion. Writing of the novel in the postcolonial terrain is wishing to subvert not only the classical, but also the official history of western hegemony.

Literary resistance also attempts to re-map the geography of the once colonized territory, whether it is the land or the body, and the identity for the colonized. Although the production of identity is well known to critics who are familiar with the postcolonial theories or cultural studies, the definition of one's identity should not be conducted entirely in the hands of the colonizing other. As Parry argues:

Anti-colonialist writings did challenge, subvert, and undermine the ruling ideologies, and nowhere more so than in overthrowing the hierarchy of colonizer/colonized, the speech and stance of the

colonized refusing a position of subjugation and dispensing with the terms of the colonizer's definitions. (176)

Mimicry describes the ambivalent relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. As the colonial discourse encourages the colonized subject to mimic the colonizer by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits rather the result is a blurred copy of the colonizer that can be quite threatening. Mimicry has often been overt goal of imperial policy. Mimicry is the process the colonized subject is reproduced as almost the same but not exact. The imitation of the colonizing culture, behavior, manners and values by the colonized contains both mockery and certain menace. Homi K. Bhabha in her book, *The Location of Culture* writes: "Mimicry is at once resemblance of menace" (86). Mimicry is also potentially mockery. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette tries to mimic the native black culture, culture and custom but after all fails to assimilate with that culture. In this way, she becomes the character of mockery.

## II. Politics of Exclusion in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

“I feel very much a stranger here” (78), Rochester.

“Where shall I turn, divided to the vein?” Derek Walcott

“Her songs were not like Jamaican songs, and she was not like the other woman.” Antoinette

Rhys critically examines the situation faced by the diasporic characters with the double perspective i.e. western and non-western by exploring the cruelty and inhumanities of the natives and non natives equally with the projection of different characters proving that not only European and whites are suppressor but the blacks and natives are equal when they grasp the opportunity. Rhys depicts the two major character's mentality to describe the whole world regarding the discrimination. As being the diasporic character within, Antoinette straddles between Caribbean and European cultural identities. Antoinette's renaming seems an imperialist approach. Gayatri Spivak says that renamed by the Rochester forcefully is imperialism. In her essay “Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism” views that: “Rhys suggests that so intimate a thing as personal and human identity might be determined by the politics of imperialism. Antoinette, as a white Creole child growing up in the time of emancipation in Jamaica, is caught between the English imperialist and the black native” (250). Spivak emphasizes Antoinette's in-between identity, thereby, underlining her inability to locate her true subjective space. Her identity is problematic which seems a fluid one that caused her neither included and Excluded. The binary relationship was taken as the suppressor and oppressor permanently as if the whites were superior all the time and the blacks were oppressed all the time. But this situation changed dramatically After the *Emancipation Act* where black peoples remained in the center and hatred over the white grew suddenly. The white people



remained as a diasporic character within. So, a kind of hatred prevailed everywhere. There was dimensional shift after the act and domination started against white too. As a diasporic character within, Antoinette feels a kind of humiliation which was against human dignity. She says:

It was a song about a white cockroach. That's me. That's what they call all of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave traders. And I've heard English women call us white niggers. So between you I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all. (61)

Antoinette remained excluded character in Jamaica, she belongs neither to the white community of Europeans nor does black, the natives, which is problematized for her own identity. Antoinette is influenced by the original homeland of the ideal past. She was the daughter of a slave owner in the past but with the Emancipation act she is nowhere. In the post-emancipated Caribbean island, her former slave-holder family is detested by the natives as “white cockroaches”. She is also excluded by whites and says that the whites too did not count them as their own root. Antoinette she experienced being Creole both in the Caribbean and in England, and she was personally aware of the conflicting culture she depicts in the figure of Antoinette who, being Creole, is accepted neither within the black community nor by the white representatives of the colonial power. Antoinette says referring the painful inclusion and exclusion that: “They say when trouble comes close ranks, and so the white people did. But we were not in their ranks” (9). In this sense we can say Antoinette is no longer described totally through the eyes of her husband (who is white and English), and she gains her centrality too.

In this regard the “Otherness” does not refer to only female as constructed other, but the other is in the circle. Sometimes the other is labeled to black and natives but that shifts to the white later with the shift of “power”. The white people’s plantation ruined by the Emancipation act and their identity shift to “white niggers” and “cockroaches” and the black came in the center. Antoinette’s Creole identity is not accepted by the white community of Jamaica because the economic downfall has reduced the white Creole planters to the category of “white niggers”. For Tia, a black friend, Antoinette has changed to “white nigger” when she calls “cheating nigger”. Tia exploded with ferocity that the natives black are exploited by the white people: “plenty white people in Jamaica...they did not look at us, nobody see them come near us. Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger” (14).

Their complicated friendship becomes more intriguing when the estate is set on fire, for Antoinette simultaneously identifies with Tia and realizes that she is not like her:

Then, not so far off, I saw Tia and her mother and I ran to her, for she was all that was left of my life as it had been. We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, bathed in the same river. As I ran, I thought, I will live with Tia and I will be like her. Not to leave Coulibri. Not to go. Not. When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it. I did not feel it either, only something wet, running down my face. I looked at her and I saw her face crumple up as she began to cry. We stared at each other, blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking glass. (27)

Antoinette desires to be accepted by the native people even though the people's hostility toward her family is evident. The island is all that she knows, and she is desperate to identify with it through Tia, for Antoinette feels that they have shared the same experiences: eating same food, sleeping side by side and bathing in the same river. So she clings to the hope of being Tia's double. As a native girl, Tia naturally belongs to the Caribbean location; but Antoinette, despite her desperate wish to belong to their island home, is not accepted by the island people. In wishing to be like Tia, she wishes to assimilate to the Caribbean. This desperate wish of Antoinette manifests itself most strikingly when Antoinette looks directly at Tia as if she were looking into a mirror. Of course, her illusions are shattered when Tia throws the stone in her face jolting Antoinette to the realization that she cannot locate her true subjective space. As Tia is conditioned by the 'master-slave' discourse of her community, she rejects to be Antoinette's double, thereby, and underlining the latter's displaced identity.

It is obvious in the novel that Antoinette's relationship with Tia is complicated, and this relationship between a native and a Creole girl is of greater significance, for it serves to demonstrate the problematized Creole identity which exclude and include according to the context. The girls are playmates, but they have an altercation at the river in which Tia calls her "white nigger" and steals her clothes (14). Because of this theft Antoinette is forced to wear Tia's clothes. In donning these clothes, Antoinette metaphorically becomes Tia. Tia's dress is symbolic of Antoinette's desire to be like Tia. However, when she returns home, her mother orders to burn the dress, learning it belongs to Tia. But when Antoinette puts on another dress, it rips. Nothing fits Antoinette: her original dress has been stolen; Tia's

dress is burnt; and the new dress rips. Antoinette cannot find an identity to suit her, and this lack of belonging applies to her inability to assimilate to the Caribbean.

The mirror images in the novel serve to signify Antoinette's uncertainty about her own identity. She sees Tia as her own image in the mirror during the fire at Coulibri but becomes painfully aware that she is different. She is unable to see herself at the convent because mirrors are forbidden there. There are also no mirrors in the attic at Thornfield Hall; so Antoinette tries to remember:

There is no looking glass here and I don't know what I am like now. I remember watching myself brush my hair and how my eyes looked back at me. The girl I saw was myself yet not quite myself. Long ago when I was a child and very lonely I tried to kiss her. But the glass between us – hard, cold and misted over with my breath. Now they have taken everything away. What am I doing in this place and who am I? (107)

In the novel, mirrors are linked to the identity of the characters. Antoinette's problematized identity is demonstrated through her interaction with mirrors. Her inability to see herself in the mirror signifies her failure in asserting her identity and belongingness that is directly linked with the politics of inclusion and exclusion. The Lacanian view of "The Mirror Stage" indicates that the first perception one has of himself/herself is a self-image through the recognition of the self in a mirror. But Antoinette is unable to recognize her own self in the mirrors. She is not provided with the mirror at the convent in her childhood and also in the attic at the Thornfield Hall. She has also been unable to kiss her image in the mirror. All these evidences her identity crisis. However the mirror provided some sense of self to Antoinette's mother as she looked into the mirror with hope: "I got used to the solitary life, but my mother

still planned and hoped – perhaps she had to hope every time she passed a looking glass” (10).

The mirror image of herself that she faces in the form of a dream towards the end of the novel heightens Antoinette’s stripped identity. In her last dream, she sees her image in the form of a ghost: “I went into the hall again with the tall candle in my hand. It was then that I saw her - the ghost. The woman with streaming hair. She was surrounded by a gilt frame but I knew her. I dropped the candle I was carrying” (111-12). The ghost that Antoinette confronts is an image of herself that is disembodied, not really there. Faced with her mirror image, Antoinette fails to have a Lacanian experience. Instead of seeing an integrated and comforting image that consolidates her subjectivity, she panics and is thereafter confronted by a series of displaced identifications:

I heard the parrot call as he did when he saw a stranger, Qui est la?  
 Qui est la? and the man who hated me was calling too, Bertha! Bertha!  
 The wind caught my hair and it streamed out like wings. It might bear  
 me up, I thought, if I jumped to those hard stones. But when I looked  
 over the edge I saw the pool at Coulibri. Tia was there. She beckoned  
 to me and when I hesitated, she laughed. I heard her say, You  
 frightened? And I heard the man's voice, Bertha! Bertha! All this I saw  
 and heard in a fraction of a second. And the sky so red. Someone  
 screamed and I thought, Why did I scream? I called "Tia!" and jumped  
 and woke. (112)

In her final dream, Antoinette hears the parrot call as it used to in the presence of a stranger: "Qui est la? Qui est la?" which meant “who is there” (25). In the dream, the parrot's refrain suggests that it takes Antoinette for a stranger. She also hears “the

man”, a character corresponding to Rochester having no name, calling her as “Bertha”, the so-called madwoman in the attic in Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*. Previously, when Antoinette uses the obeah, a Caribbean black magic, in the form of the love potion that she gets from her nurse, Christophine, to entice her husband into the night of lovemaking, he dismisses the sexual encounter by accusing Antoinette of madness and calling her “Bertha” (88). By saying “Bertha,” the man is representing Antoinette, displacing her there in the symbolic attic of madness where he can retain control. Further, she sees Tia who stands for Antoinette's displacement across race lines. Finally, there occurs a grammatical displacement from first person to third as Antoinette shifts to an alienated third person position, “Someone screamed”.

Like the mirror images, the color symbols in the novel too underline Antoinette’s excluded and ambivalent subjectivity. In the novel, there are many references to color white and red, and the details given in the novel indicate that red represents the Caribbean while white represents England. Talking about white color, Antoinette wears one white dress in her second dream that foreshadows her unhappy marriage to an Englishman. In the dream, Antoinette first tries to hold up her dress, but then she allows it to trail the earth: “[. . .] so I walk with difficulty, following a man who is with me and holding up the skirt of my dress. It is white and beautiful and I do not want to get it soiled...He smiles slyly. ‘Not here, not yet’ he says, and I follow him weeping. Now I do not try to hold up my dress, it trails in the dirt, my beautiful dress” (36). In Antoinette’s dream she is following “the man”, and she tries hard not to dirty the white dress. When she does allow it to fall to the ground it is in terms of surrender and complete subordination to the man.

This image of the soiled dress is repeated in part two, for it is used to describe Christophine, whose dress trails the floor. It is Rochester who takes notice of the

dress: “Her coffee is delicious but her language is horrible and she might hold her dress up. It must get very dirty, yards of it trailing on the floor.” Then Antoinette replies: “They don’t care about a dress getting dirty because it shows it is not the only dress they have” (85). However, the repeated image of the dress, rather than serving to compare the two women, actually highlights their differences, once again distancing Antoinette from a Caribbean identity. While Antoinette is completely subordinated to “the man”, Christophine, in contrast, is independent and self-assured. She is not concerned when her dress gets soiled, for as she later says to Antoinette, “I keep my money. I don’t give it to no worthless man” (66).

The dress image continues when Rochester sees Antoinette’s white dress lying on the floor which makes him “breathless and savage with desire” (55). Antoinette wants to have a double of the dress in order to please her English husband: ““I was thinking, I’ll have another made just like it’, she promised happily. ‘Will you be pleased?’” (56). Of course, Antoinette cannot achieve this goal of pleasing her English husband, as is clear when Rochester later sees her wearing that dress and feels annoyance instead of desire: “She was wearing the white dress I had admired, but it had slipped untidily over one shoulder and seemed too big for her” (76). Like Tia’s dress, the white dress too does not suit Antoinette making it clear that though she is of English descent she is different. Her slipped off dress reminds us of her favorite childhood picture of an English girl she is striving to emulate, ““The Miller’s Daughter’, a lovely English girl with brown curls and blue eyes and a dress slipping off her shoulders” (21). But she is unable to identify with the English girl.

While the color white stands for England, red is used in the novel to describe the earth, which connects this color to the Caribbean. Antoinette points it out to her husband: “the earth is red here, do you notice?’ ‘It’s red in parts of England, too.’ ‘Oh

England, England,' she called back mockingly, and the sound went on like a warning I did not choose to hear" (42). Here Antoinette associates red color with the Caribbean earth in her conversation to her English husband who is not impressed by her observation. With the color red representing Caribbean location, Antoinette desires to identify with it through her cross-stitch: "Underneath, I will write my name in fire red, Antoinette Mason, née Cosway, Mount Calvary Convent, Spanish Town, Jamaica, 1839" (31). Antoinette is here creating a text through her sewing which demonstrates her hope of assimilating to the Caribbean. But she miserably fails in her attempt as evident in the last scene of the novel when she sets fire to Thornfield Hall.

Red is the color of the dress that Antoinette has with her in the attic at the Thorn field Hall. When she sees her red dress, her senses start to awaken: As I turned the key I saw it hanging, the color of fire and sunset. The color of flamboyant flowers . . . The scent that came from the dress was very faint at first, then it grew stronger. The smell of vetivert and frangipani, of cinnamon and dust and lime trees when they are flowering. The smell of the sun and the smell of the rain" (109). The description of the dress contains elements of the Caribbean, and it reminds her of something she "must do": "But I looked at the dress on the floor and it was as if fire had spread across the room. It was beautiful and it reminded me of something I must do" (110). Then Antoinette triumphantly converts Thornfield Hall itself into a flamboyant (flaming) tree: "I laughed when I saw the lovely colour spreading so fast" (111).

But her act of setting fire to Thornfield Hall fails to assert her Caribbean identity. In her discussion of *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a text critical of the version of colonialism that informs Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Gayatri Spivak contends that Antoinette, by setting fire to the house and killing herself, actually puts herself in the



position of the Other, thus reaffirming the English self of Jane Eyre. Spivak has a pessimistic view of *Wide Sargasso Sea's* ending:

We can read this as having been brought into the England of Bronte's novel: "This cardboard house" – a book between cardboard covers – "where I walk at night is not England" (*WSS*, p. 148). In this fictive England, she must play out her role, act out the transformation of her "self" into that fictive Other, set fire to the house and kill herself, so that Jane Eyre can become the feminist individualist heroine of British fiction. I must read this as an allegory of the general epistemic violence of imperialism, the construction of a self-immolating colonial subject for the glorification of the social mission of the colonizer. (251)

Spivak compares the cardboard house to the book covers of Bronte's novel. Spivak suggests that Rhys' novel strengthens the imperialist cause because in its replication of the discourse that it is trying to refute, the end result is the same, that is, the so-called mad Creole's suicide through fire that consolidates the imperialist self and reduces the Creole subjectivity into the category of the Other. There is also the implication that little hope remains for the Creole subject to escape otherness. This is shown through Spivak's description of Antoinette trapped within the confines of the cardboard book and having to "play out her role", but not the role of asserting her own identity, rather of affirming the English self. Though Rhys' novel attempts to tell the Other's story, that is, the story of the mad Creole in Bronte's novel, as Spivak argues, "No perspective *critical* of imperialism can turn the Other into a self, because the project of imperialism has always already historically refracted what might have been the absolutely Other into a domesticated Other that consolidates the imperialist self" (253).

Thus, though Rhys tries to provide the mad Creole in Bronte's novel with the voice, the Creole subjectivity of her protagonist remains fractured, for she is unable to locate her subjective space throughout the novel. Her final attempt to assert her subjectivity by setting fire to the house and killing herself too miserably fails as she happens to consolidate the English self of Jane Eyre in the process. But it is also noteworthy that the imperialist self is reaffirmed only through its relation to the Other. In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Stuart Hall makes the point that for identity to exist there must exist entities that are unlike the identical subject:

[. . .] identities are constructed through, not outside, difference. This entails the radically disturbing recognition that it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the 'positive' meaning of any term – and that its 'identity' – can be constructed. (5)

In Stuart's view, identity is constructed only through its relation to other. That means, the self needs an Other to strengthen the self's sense of identity. In this sense, the English self of Jane Eyre needs Other, that is, the mad Creole's self to affirm its sense of identity. Thus *Wide Sargasso Sea* complicates the idea of "Englishness" by underlining that it is constructed only through its relation to the Other.

Postcolonial critic Homi K. Bhabha has noted that "skin, as the key signifier of cultural and racial differences in the stereotype, is the most visible of fetishes, recognized as common knowledge in a range of cultural, political, and historical discourses, and plays a public part in the racial drama that is enacted every day in colonial societies" (15). This novel failed when tia throws a stone at her. Her throwing of a stone suggests us the failure to assimilate with and origin further argues

that hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption has played a vital role to exclusion and inclusion. Antoinette an innocent character tries to assimilate with the black Caribbean culture but the colonial identity through the repetition of the discriminatory identity effect.

The idea of monolithic identity is highly complex and ambivalent in postcolonial studies. As Benedict Anderson has pointed out "nations are imagined communities [...] cultural artifacts of a particular kind based on the need for a narrative of identity [...] it is an act of communal imagination, informed by the search for decisive clues" (4).

Rhys tries to sketch the story of marginalized groups and individual which is neglected by the mainstream history. Rhys tries to blur the hierarchy between victors and vanquished, East and West. There are multiple voices in his novel and all characters are treated equally. The females were marginalized in mainstream history but Rhys has given the main role to female character in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The story is presented from multiple narrative voices and in her novel almost every characters are presented as narrator. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is in the unfolding of this troubled and troubling relationship that we might start to discern the ambivalent pre-history of the postcolonial condition. The term post-colonialism “ has been primarily concerned to examine the processes and effects of, and reactions to European colonialism from the sixteenth century up to and including the neo-colonialism of the present day” (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 188). In this sense postcolonialism is an analysis of binaries created by the European colonialism and the reaction of the oriental people towards the suppression and oppression of colonizer during the colonial period or after it. The binaries were created to make the non western or colonized people as essential “other” in many ways. According to *Key Concept in Post-Colonial Studies*

“the reactions of oppressed peoples will always be resistant may actually remove agency from these peoples” (189). It attempts to invert the perspectives of the western world that saw the 'rest' as the other, allowing the emergence of third-world intellectuals to utter on behalf of their own nation or people.

According to Tyson's explanation, “postcolonial criticism is particularly effective at helping us see connections among all the domains of our experience- psychological, social, political, intellectual, and aesthetic- in ways that show as just how inseparable these categories are in our lived experience of ourselves and our world” (417).

The ultimate goal of Postcolonialism is combating the residual effects of colonialism on cultures and society. It is not simply concerned with freeing the past world, but learning how the world can move beyond this period together, towards a place of mutual respect. Postcolonial theorists create a space for multiple voices. This is especially true of those voices that have been previously silenced by dominant ideologies: subaltern. Edward Said in his book, *Orientalism* provides a clear picture of the ways of western imperialism. It seeks to change the ways people think, the way they behave, to produce a more just and equitable relation between the different peoples of the world.

According to French structural linguist Ferdinand de Saussure the "sign" has two aspects: signifier and signified. Saussure says that "signs have meaning not by a simple reference to real objects, but their opposition to other signs" (qtd. in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 23). So, he says that meaning comes from differences. Identity is like the "sign" which has two sides: signifier and signified of identity. The colonizer created a discourse representing the colonized subjects as inferior or uncivilized and circulated the idea that it was their necessary duty to make them civilized one. In

*Wide Sargasso Sea* the character gets their identity in relation to other. Antoinette searches her identity in reference to Tia and the black and white as a whole. The conflict is shifted. Edward said opposed this view borrowing the idea of Foucault's concept of knowledge and power. Foucault's discourse theory says that it is clearly the outcome of power exercise which creates knowledge and ultimately the truth about certain things. Postcolonial literature tries to dismantle the very idea of colonizer and resist the Eurocentric view about the non-Western people.

Quest for identity refers to the situation where the colonized subject and subaltern characters try to get their separate identity inside or outside the western world or beyond the Eurocentric colonial mentality. During the colonial period, the mainstream literature represented colonized subjects as second class human being and their relation were based on “us” and “them”. The colonized subjects were taken as the "other". Their concepts were biased that identity is the unchangeable and it is fixed so they had created the concept of binarism and supposed them as superior. The concept of binarism privileged the first term like colonized, white /black, civilized/ primitive, teacher/ pupil etc. The identities of the colonized subject were determined by the colonizer and they were represented as “white man’s burden” (qtd. in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 47) but *Wide Sargasso Sea* has diverse perspective regarding the concept of shifting identity. In *Wide Sargasso Sea* the mainstream character does not remain the same for all the time. The identities of postcolonial people are re-created dismantling the true name of them, mocking their previous name as not civilized. The colonizers never seek the underlying significance of their name and simply distort the name of subaltern subjects. Identity is necessary for each and every subject to show their cultural uniqueness and their cultural differences.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* tries to subvert the prevalent hierarchy. The colonized subject or subaltern characters try to reconstruct the prevalent stereotypical representation of the colonizer. They resist the Eurocentric view that identity is fixed and unchangeable. The colonizer stereotypically represented the colonized people as uncivilized but it is their biased mind that never see the equal status of the colonized people. Antoinette tries her best to be assimilated in the black culture but after all failed. The Colonized subjects are made only mimic man when they were on the mission to colonization but they never get mutual respect as it is given to colonizer and ultimately decides to search his own version of identity.

Therefore, identity is always constituted within representation. Lois Tyson, in his book, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* explains that-

Our individual identity is not merely product of society. Neither it is merely a product of our individual will and desire. Instead, individual identity and its cultural milieu inhabit, reflect, and define each other. Their relationship is mutually constitutive (they create each other) and dynamically unstable. (284)

Stuart Hall in "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" gives two definitions to the terms of cultural identity. First he defines: "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). The second definition of cultural identity 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).

These two definitions make us believe that cultural identity is formed within, rather than in history, culture and power. Cultural identity does have certain

characteristics like mutability, unstable, metaphoric and sometimes even contradictory. So, cultural identity is a production always constituted but not outside the representation rather within and is never complete. It is never certain and is always wrapped within masks of representation.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* tries to show the feeling of displaced subject whether they were voluntarily or forcefully displaced from their homeland into new regions where they feel lack of belongingness. Jeremy Hawthorn writes, "Displacement refers to the human ability to refer to things removed from the utterer's immediate situation, either in time or in space" (74). Antoinette's displacement were timely one the powerful slave owner. In past Diaspora was close term with displacement: "Diasporas, the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands in to new regions" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 68). In this state Antoinette feels a kind of pang where her identity is erased and feels lack of belongingness of their culture and identity. In the new land, the people of Diaspora are represented as other and they try to mimic the culture and the custom where they are living but they are not accepted by the western world fully. Discourses in *Wide Sargasso Sea* create the discourse that the colonized people are always inferior and they cannot reach the level of the colonizer despite their great effort. Homi K. Bhabha argues that to understand the power of colonial discourse, postcolonial literature needs "to be questioned [...] is the mode of representation of otherness" (68). It refers to otherness or the process of displacing somebody or something. It is the other consciousness or other ego in the construction of identity. Antoinette is excluded character she neither belongs neither in her own previous culture nor in the new regions. So a sense of loss arises in her mind. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, writers try to represent this marginalized voice and of their pain and suffering what they are feeling in the new land.

Edward Said, however, mentions that history, or the narrating of an alternative history, is the device for the postcolonial novelists to reconstruct their past and thus to question the colonial way of documenting the past. As Said writes, “appealing to the past is the commonest of strategies in interpretations of the present. What animates such appeals is not only disagreement about what happened in the past and what the past was, but whether it continues, albeit in different forms, perhaps” (30). *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Rhys writes in the attempt to question the historical value of colonization, and to reveal the unnoticed colonized subjects. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said argues about the deeply rooted connections between novels and imperialism. He suggests that the celebration of imperial expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth century novels is taken for granted. It is the mass in one way or other who flourishes on the pages and in the imagination of the readers than in reality. Said claims:

I'm not trying to say that novel – or the culture in the broad sense- 'caused' imperialism, but that the novel, as a cultural artifact of bourgeois society, and imperialism are unthinkable without each other. Of all the major literary form, the novel is the most structured; imperialism and the novel fortified each other to such a degree that it is impossible, I would argue, to read one without in some way dealing with the other. (70-71)

Said elaborates on the deeply bounded relationship between the artwork and the imperial expansion. Writing of the novel in the postcolonial terrain is wishing to subvert not only the classical, but also the official history of western hegemony. Literary resistance also attempts to re-map the geography of the once colonized territory, whether it is the land or the body, and the identity for the colonized.



Although the production of identity is well known to critics who are familiar with the postcolonial theories or cultural studies, the definition of one's identity should not be conducted entirely in the hands of the colonizing other. As Parry argues:

Anti-colonialist writings did challenge, subvert, and undermine the ruling ideologies, and nowhere more so than in overthrowing the hierarchy of colonizer/colonized, the speech and stance of the colonized refusing a position of subjugation and dispensing with the terms of the colonizer's definitions. (176)

Towards the end of the novel Antoinette again questions her displaced identity with a dream. In her last dream, she saw her image in the form of a ghost: "I went into the hall again with the tall candle in my hand. It was then that I saw her - the ghost. The woman with streaming hair. She was surrounded by a gilt frame but I knew her. I dropped the candle I was carrying and it caught the end of a table cloth" (111-12). The ghost seems a symbolic representation of Jane Eyre's Bertha and Rhys is wiring back to Jane Eyre. Her dislocated and displaced identity is intensified by recalling the past with remembering her cruel husband and other facets: "I heard the parrot call as he did when he saw a stranger, Qui est la? Qui est la? And the man who hated me was calling too, Bertha! Bertha!" (112). She has remained a stranger inside her house and outside the house in black community. So, she recalls that the calling of parrot also symbolized the questioning the identity of stranger. As a Bertha mason she was dislocated and displaced within. By the image of parrot she is traumatized by the past that parrot lost the life in search of identity. Symbolically the parrot and the Rochester is in the same position that it is fixed like the parrot he may losses his life too. The fragmented issue of identity seems closer to be solved by her assertion that says:

The wind caught my hair and it streamed out like wings. It might bear me up, I thought, if I jumped to those hard stones. But when I looked over the edge I saw the pool at Coulibri. Tia was there. She beckoned to me and when I hesitated, she laughed. I heard her say, You frightened? And I heard the man's voice, Bertha! Bertha! All this I saw and heard in a fraction of a second. And the sky so red. Someone screamed and I thought, Why did I scream? I called "Tia!" and jumped and woke. (112)

Her double displaced identity leads her to form a new one that is the revolutionary figure in the existed world: displaced by male patriarchy and displaced by post emancipation, She seems to say that Tia and other marginal had problem and it was natural to raise voice against colonial suppression because of her frequent attempt to assert her identity with Tia. Her waking up refers to the situation that she has no way than to revolt against the discrimination.

Spivak observes the ending of novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* in relation to Charlotte Brontes' *Jane Eyre* and her attempt to reconcile within the Caribbean community and her failure to locate herself even in the ThornField Hall after setting fire. Antoinette, by setting fire to the house and killing herself, actually puts herself in the position of other. Spivak views:

We can read this as having been brought into the England of Brontë's novel: "This cardboard house" – a book between cardboard covers – "where I walk at night is not England" (WSS, p. 148). In this fictive England, she must play out her role, act out the transformation of her "self" into that fictive Other, set fire to the house and kill herself, so that Jane Eyre can become the feminist individualist heroine of British

fiction. I must read this as an allegory of the general epistemic violence of imperialism, the construction of a self-immolating colonial subject for the glorification of the social mission of the colonizer. At least Rhys sees to it that the woman from the colonies is not sacrificed as an insane animal” (250-251)

Antoinette has not been success to locate herself in both culture and it is an Imperial project by further argument that the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*:

Rewrites a canonical English text within the European novelistic tradition in the interest of the white Creole rather than the native. No perspective *critical* of imperialism can turn the Other into a self, because the project of imperialism has always already historically refracted what might have been the absolutely Other into a domesticated Other that consolidates the imperialist self. (253)

All in all, Rhys' *Wide Saragasso Sea* has attempted to depict the clear picture of identity crisis of a dislocated character Antoinette and Rochester from the European and non European view that shapes the critical view point of exclusion and inclusion. I agree with the idea of Gayatri Spivak that this text is rewriting or continuation of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* locating the story in canonical British imperial text.

### III. The Process of Othering in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

After reading the theory about postcolonialism and the seminal text *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys, I was in confusion that whether the identity is fixed or changeable? How the politics of inclusion and exclusion co-exist in a historical and temporal frame? But my attempt in this thesis has some logical conclusion. The language of the text always remains a discursive practice and the theory of postcolonialism and the resistance of the colonized subject are the outcome of discursive practices. In the postcolonial theory we always find a antagonistic relationship between colonizer and colonizer and most of the literary text has depicted westerner as suppressor and oppressor while on the other hand the colonized subject as marginalized and oppressed. But Jean Rhys novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* question/critique the identity formation as it is not the matter of fixity, rather it is changeable, it is matter of fluidity. Rochester as the white man in the black community feels excluded: "I feel very much a stranger here" (78). It was my point of departure to the theory of postcolonialism.

Rhys critically examines the situation faced by the diasporic characters with the double perspective i.e. western and non-western by exploring the cruelty and inhumanities of the natives and non natives equally with the projection of different characters proving that not only European and whites are suppressor but the blacks and natives are equal when they grasp the opportunity. Rhys depicts the two major character's mentality to describe the whole world regarding the discrimination. As being the diasporic character within, Antoinette straddles between Caribbean and European cultural identities. How Antoinette's identity shifted from suppressor and oppressor to the marginal/subaltern character? Shift in Antoinette's have been described an imperialist approach seems contradictory. Gayatri Spivak says that

renamed by the Rochester forcefully is imperialism but it is not the matter how an imperialism can call the other as imperialist. In her essay “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism” views that: “Rhys suggests that so intimate a thing as personal and human identity might be determined by the politics of imperialism. Antoinette, as a white Creole child growing up in the time of emancipation in Jamaica, is caught between the English imperialist and the black native” (250). Spivak emphasizes Antoinette’s in-between identity, thereby, underlining her inability to locate her true subjective space, so it is one of the evidence that our identities is not the matter of fixity sometimes we include our self whenever the situation time and context favors, sometimes excluded when the context change. Her identity is a problematic which seems a fluid one that caused her neither included nor excluded. The binary relationship was taken as the suppressor and oppressor permanently as if the whites were superior all the time and the blacks were oppressed all the time. But this situation changed dramatically After the *Emancipation Act* where black peoples remained in the center and hatred over the white grew suddenly. The white people remained as a diasporic character within. So, a kind of hatred prevailed everywhere. There were dimensional shift after the act and domination started against white too. As a diasporic character within, Antoinette feels a kind of humiliation which was against human dignity.

Antoinette remained excluded character in Jamaica, she belongs neither to white community of Europeans nor does black, the natives, which is problematic for her own identity. It opposes the postcolonial theory which always describes the relationship of self and other. Antoinette is influenced by the original homeland of the ideal past. She was the daughter of slave owner in past but with the Emancipation act she is nowhere. In the post-emancipated Caribbean island, her former slave-holder

family is detested by the natives as “white cockroaches”. She is also excluded by whites and says that the whites too did not count them as their own root. Antoinette she experienced being Creole both in the Caribbean and in England, and she was personally aware of the conflicting culture she depicts in the figure of Antoinette who, being Creole, is accepted neither within the black community nor by the white representatives of the colonial power. Antoinette says referring the painful inclusion and exclusion that In this sense we can say Antoinette is no longer described totally through the eyes of her husband (who is white and English), and she gains her centrality too.

In this regard the “otherness” does not refer to only female as constructed other, but the other is in the circle. Sometimes the other is labeled to black and natives but that shifts to the white later with shift of “power”. The white people’s plantation ruined by the Emancipation act and their identity shift to “white niggers” and “cockroaches” and the black came in the center. Antoinette’s Creole identity is not accepted by the white community of Jamaica because the economic downfall has reduced the white Creole planters to the category of “white niggers”. For Tia, a black friend, Antoinette has changed to “white nigger” when she calls “cheating nigger”. Tia exploded with ferocity that the natives black are exploited by the white people. Their complicated friendship becomes more intriguing when the estate is set on fire, for Antoinette simultaneously identifies with Tia and realizes that she is not like her. Antoinette desires to be accepted by the native people even though the people’s hostility toward her family is evident. The island is all that she knows, and she is desperate to identify with it through Tia, for Antoinette feels that they have shared the same experiences: eating same food, sleeping side by side and bathing in same river. So she clings to the hope of being Tia’s double.

As a native girl, Tia naturally belongs to the Caribbean location; but Antoinette, despite her desperate wish to belong to their island home, is not accepted by the island people. In wishing to be like Tia, she wishes to assimilate to the Caribbean. This desperate wish of Antoinette manifests itself most strikingly when Antoinette looks directly at Tia as if she were looking into a mirror. Of course, her illusions are shattered when Tia throws the stone in her face jolting Antoinette to the realization that she cannot locate her true subjective space. As Tia is conditioned by the 'master-slave' discourse of her community, she rejects to be Antoinette's double, thereby, and underlining the latter's displaced identity.

It is obvious in the novel that Antoinette's relationship with Tia is complicated, and this relationship between a native and a Creole girl is of greater significance, for it serves to demonstrate the problematized Creole identity which excludes and include according to the context. The girls are playmates, but they have an altercation at the river in which Tia calls her "white nigger" and steals her clothes. Because of this theft Antoinette is forced to wear Tia's clothes. In donning these clothes, Antoinette metaphorically becomes Tia. Tia's dress is symbolic of Antoinette's desire to be like Tia. However, when she returns home, her mother orders to burn the dress, learning it belongs to Tia. But when Antoinette puts on another dress, it rips. Nothing fits Antoinette: her original dress has been stolen; Tia's dress is burnt; and the new dress rips. Antoinette cannot find an identity to suit her, and this lack of belonging applies to her inability to assimilate to the Caribbean.

So, I urge all the academician and researches to rethink about the shifting sense of postcolonialism. The theories developed during the struggling period of 1950' and literary movement of 1980's are quite different now. So, formation of

identity is politics of power game; with the shift of power the politics of exclusion and inclusion also changes.