I. Introduction

Subaltern Women's Plight

By subaltern women's plight, it refers to the experiences and the predicament of those women who are under subaltern category. These women remained unheard within their own patriarchal culture and were doubly unheard under a colonial regime. Their plights were just represented and manipulated as a part of the colonizer's social mission. Here, the questions arise as, who are subaltern women? What does the term "subaltern" itself stand for? Lets, first of all discuss about subalternity itself in short.

The term "subaltern" as M.H. Abrahams mentions, is a British word for someone of inferior rank. It combines the Latin terms for "under" (sub) and the other "alter". Abrahams, further mentions that subaltern has become a standard way to designate the colonial subject that has been constructed by European discourse and internalized by colonial people who employ this discourse. Now, subaltern has become a recurrent topic of debate and to an extent, a subaltern subject, writing in European language, can manage to serve as an agent of resistance against, rather than of compliance with, the very discourse that has created its subordinate identity.

Postcolonial Marxists such as Aijaz Ahmad have suggested that Homi Bhabha and other westernized theorists are hardly in best position to speak for the colonized and neo-colonized masses. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, one of the third post-colonial theorist has drawn the attention to that large majority of colonized that has left no mark upon history. This is because it could not or it was not allowed to make itself heard before. According to Hans Bertens, of all the postcolonial theorists, Spivak has most consistently focused on what in post colonial studies has come to be called the subaltern. She employs the term "subaltern" which she derives from Antonio

Gramsci, to describe the lower layers of colonial and postcolonial society: the day laborers and so on. She is well aware that the categorization by way of class too, tend to make difference invisible and the colonized subaltern is irretrievably heterogeneous. One result of this attentiveness of difference is Spivak's focus on female subaltern, a very large and of course differentiated category among the colonized that she argues, has traditionally been doubly marginalized. Most prominently, Spivak presents the voice of difference among the major postcolonial theorists. Indeed, in spite of their poststructuralist sources of inspiration, even Said and Bhabha virtually ignore the question of difference. It is evident that Said's analysis of western representation of East has been charged with gender blindness and the scholars have argued that female representations are different from male ones. Bhabha too, makes no difference between men and women in theorizing of the interaction between colonizer and colonized. On the top of all, Said and Bhabha also, largely, ignore cultural difference. Spivak however, tries to be attentive to difference or heterogeneity, even within feminism.

Spivak's focus is on the problem of representation. She argues that in the context of colonial production of culture, subaltern has no history and cannot speak. Her focus is especially the representation of subaltern women and their plight in the context of colonial production. In her essay, 1988, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Spivak in the wider context of the critique of poststructuralist appropriations of the colonial subject, makes a remarkable discussion on the problems involved with representation. She argues that subaltern cannot speak themselves. They have got to be represented. What is going on is that subaltern's voice getting overshadowed by the investigator's voice. As a result, the subaltern subjectivity or the voice of the object ignorant subaltern is erased. As Spivak comes up with fully feminist agenda,

she posits women in the role of the subaltern women questioning the male constructed voice of women within patriarchal society. There can be no unrepresentable subaltern group. The subaltern has got to appropriate language and other strategies of the elites the way post-colonialism appropriates language and theoretical strategies of the west.

Representation is not always factual. Most of the time, it is fictional. There may be manipulations and misrepresentations and sometimes even gaps formed that are needed to be fulfilled. The colonial historiography have always represented the socio-cultural situation of the Third World in other way in accordance of their social mission and forward their imperialistic mission in the name of civilization misrepresenting the colonized places as barbaric and uncivilized ones. Same thing happens in the context of the representation of the subaltern women who are doubly under shadow both in the patriarchal structured cultural context as well as colonial regime. “Between patriarchy and imperialism, the subject constitution and the object formation”, in Spivak’s words, “the figure of women disappears . . .”(102). In her another widely read essay, “Three Women’s Text and the Critique of Imperialism”, Spivak discusses about the role of literature in the colonial production of cultural representation. She insists that the “role of literature in the production of cultural representation should not be ignored” (269). Analyzing Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) and the way in which it presents the white creole (white creoles were inferior people in those days after emancipation act of slaves) Bertha Manson-Rochester’s wife in terms of cultural representation, Spivak further insists that it should not be possible to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism, which is understood as England’s social mission. These two obvious facts are not to be disregarded in the reading of the nineteenth - century British

literature. These facts attest to the continuing success of the imperialist project, displaced and dispersed into more modern forms.

There are enough evidences that whether it is in the East or in the West, women are denied of their positions from which they can speak on their own as both spaces are patriarchies in which women are always turned into the object of male's desires. Moreover, in the context of colonial regime, native or subaltern women are more deeply in shadow. These women living in the colonized spaces are doubly or even triply marginalized. That is to say, these subaltern women are inferior in rank as repressed by both the patriarchal socio-cultural situation as well as the colonial regime. They were disadvantaged not only of gender but also of race, social class, religion, caste, sexuality, and regional status. In this sense, it can be concluded that colonialism appears to be hazardous to females than males of the colonized spaces. To tell the truth, between patriarchy and the western individualism, subaltern women subjectivity gets ignored. Both the colonial context and native cultural context reduce women into the mere object of males desire, they have no access or the strategy to make themselves heard and the European imperialist social mission takes advantage through representation which is the very plight of subaltern women.

Wide Sargasso Sea

Wide Sargasso Sea is a creative response to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, a nineteenth century classic, which has always been one of English Literature's greatest and most popular love stories. The story of *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a prequel to Bronte's classic *Jane Eyre*. It tells what happened before the events of that novel, explaining in some detail the history behind the mad West Indian wife that Rochester keeps locked away in the attic. The novel as a whole is Jean Rhys's answer to *Jane Eyre*, Bronte's book that had long haunted her, mostly for the story it did not tell that of the

madwoman in the attic, Rochester's terrible secret. Antoinette (Bertha in *Jane Eyre*) is Rhys's imagining of that locked-up woman, who in the end burns up the house and herself. In fact, in *Wide Sargasso Sea* Rhys negotiates with Bronte's text. As an already canonical text, the merging of Antoinette's fate into that of Bertha is inevitable, but Rhys allows us to interpret the fate of Antoinette differently by having the ending open. Antoinette dreams of the fire and leap to her death, but the novel ends with her resolution to act rather than a description of her death or an exact repetition of Bronte's words. Thus, the possibility of a different fate for Rhys's character is left intact. To tell the truth, this more recent text can be said to have an influence on the earlier text(Bronte's text) and extends its possibilities through reverse perspective that collaborates with the postcolonial response exposing the predicament of the Jamaican white creole woman, Antoinette whose plight has been unheard or not mentioned in Bronte's *Jane Eyre*.

The postcolonial spaces or the third world spaces is considered as a distant and exploited culture under western eyes, however, the third world culture consists of rich, intact literary heritages waiting to be recovered, interpreted and curricularized. The operation of worlding as "third world" enables to criticize the western imperialistic mission on the part of cultural representation. Moreover, the rewriting or revisiting of the third world literary texts collaborates the reverse perspective, the creative response of the colonial margin to the metropolitan centre. In other words, the reworking enables the colonial margin to demonstrate their resistance against the metropolitan centre and deconstruct the colonial historiography. The desire to rewrite the master narratives of Western discourse is a common colonial practice, with texts like *The Tempest, Robinson Crusoe and Great Expectations* etc… This telling of a story from another point of view can be seen as an extension of the deconstructive

project to explore the gaps and silences in a text. Since writing has long been recognized as one of the strongest forms of cultural control, the rewriting of central narratives of colonial superiority is a liberating act for those from the former colonies. In *Wide Sargasso Sea* also the revisiting and reworking of the gothic element in *Jane Eyre* collaborates with another aspect of rewriting , the response of the colonial margin to the metropolitan centre. Edward Said, in "Culture and Imperialism" suggests that classic realist fiction develops in Europe in the nineteenth because the power to narrate, or block other narratives from forming and emerging is a way of asserting cultural superiority. Rhys was annoyed when she read *Jane Eyre* because she thought that is the only one side – the English side and she chose to write the prequel rather than sequel, to *Jane Eyre* to interpret the colonial underpinning of Rochester's thought and actions, seeing from the perspective of white creoles who have been displaced from colonizers. The implication is that creoles are classified as inferior in the new society (the society after the emancipation of the slaves, that uneasy time when racial relations in the Caribbean were at their most strained).

Commenting on the role of European literature in the production of cultural representation to demonstrate their cultural superiority Spivak, in her "Three Women's Texts and the Critique Of Imperialism" views: "It should not be possible to read the nineteenth century British literature without remembering that imperialism, understood as England's social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to English"(269). So, by exposing the other side, the story of Bertha, the first Mrs. Rochester, *Wide Sargasso Sea* presents not only a brilliant deconstruction of Bronte's legacy, but also a damning history of colonialism in the Caribbean island. Therefore, Rhys's text is a highly sophisticated example of coming to terms with European perceptions of the Caribbean creole community.

Charlotte Bronte and Jean Rhys composed their novels in different centuries and came from very different backgrounds. However, despite these disparities the narrative trajectory and the use of symbolism in both the novels can be compared. Jean Rhys's 1966 novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a creative response to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, a nineteenth century classic, which has always been one of English Literature's greatest and most popular love stories. *Jane Eyre* is a story of true love that encounters many obstacles and problems, but surmounts these troubles to fulfill destiny. The main source of trouble is Rochester's insane first wife, Bertha Mason, a lunatic Creole who is locked in the attic of his country house, Thornfield Hall. *Wide Sargasso Sea* was widely and favorably reviewed when it first appeared and several perceptions and interpretations were posed to the readers. The novel anticipated the twentieth century preoccupations in the Gothic imagination. *Jane Eyre* is of course itself a gothic text, with its mad creole locked away but haunting the lives of her tormented husband and the innocent Jane.

In *Jane Eyre*, however, the narrative trajectory is clearly defined, through a series of mysteries that are resolved in turn: the demonic figure is identified and Rochester’s attempt at bigamy thwarted as he is about to marry Jane; Jane’s suffering and poverty are rewarded when she is revealed to have inherited her uncle’s money to have congenial relations. Jane’s obsessive anxiety about Rochester’s fate subsides when she discovers him, crippled and blinded widower, after his mad wife set fire to Thornfield and leapt from the battlements. The death of Antoinette/Bertha becomes the turning point for Jane and Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. From the destruction of Thornfield and Rochester's disfigurement through his selfless actions in rescuing others from the fire, he is able to redeem himself and find contentment. After he has

suffered and felt pain, mentally and physically, and lost his arrogance and pride, he finally realizes his true self.

The gothic imagination expresses itself quietly differently in *Wide Sargasso Sea*: the emphasis is not on the solution of mysteries but on the recognition of those mysteries. What haunts the reader in the text is the knowledge of what will happen to Antoinette, and the sense that secretes are hidden because people do not want to see what they see, or know what they know. The narrative insecurity of the novel in fact teases the readers imagination; the living dead here, the Zombis and reverants, are not the victims of vampires but of the colonialism. Any way, just as the development of its plot, The Sargasso Sea, ('Sargasso' being the weed that gives that part of the North Atlantic its name), is almost still but at its centre has a mass of swirling currents, an image suggestive of Antoinette's character, and of the turmoil of her imprisonment and the method of her escape.

Jane Eyre is a bildingsroman, a novel of personal development, loosely based on Bronte's own experiences, and drawing upon her extensive knowledge of folklore, her vivid imagination and her influences, including the Romantics (Rochester has been described as a 'Byronic hero') and Shakespeare. The novel is a masterpiece that arose from Bronte's intention to create a love story interwoven with her own experiences, even though her own life did not have such a fairy-tale-like ending. As Valerie Grosvenor Myer asserts in her critical essay “Jane Eyre” published in *Charlotte Bronte: Truculent Spirit*, “*Jane Eyre* is uniquely memorable in its detail and its plot” (113). Further, quoting the views of several critics like Richard Case who sees *Jane Eyre* as ‘feminist tract, an argument for the social betterment of governesses and equal rights for women’ in the same essay Grosvenor Myer provides her comments and writes:

> Charlotte shows no sign, in *Jane Eyre*, of wanting to have enough money not to have to be governesses or village school mistresses(even lower socially, in Jane's opinion). Jane's accession to an unearned fortune, made off the backs of slaves in the west Indies and therefore as tained as Bertha's, is an admission of despair on Charlotte's part, and deeply reactionary. It signals recognition (as does the fairy-tale 'Puss in Boots')that hard work and thrift are not enough in themselves for upward mobility; only magic, fairy gold , win on pools, can raise the lowly to eminence. (113)

Similarly, commenting on how Bertha is represented in *Jane Eyre*, in her another essay "Female Inner Space and Moral Madness", Grosvenor Myer asserts that modern criticism increasingly sees Bertha as scapegoat. She writes, "Jane's remarkable description combines rich suggestiveness with lack of specificity: there is an undertone, somewhere, that bertha is negroid, with her thick black lips and blackened 'savage' face" (142).

Further, she quotes the views of some critics who had offered their views regarding Bertha Manson in *Jane Eyre* and concludes that "she has been interpreted as the embodiment of sexuality, but critics are not sure whether she represents is male or female" (143). Similarly, there are several other critics also who perceive Bertha in various ways. Gilbert and Gubar in their Feminist revision of literary history, "The Mad Women in the Attic" argue that Bertha represents Jane's rage, a dopel-ganger who attacks with knives and teeth, who destroys a house with fire, maims her husband and destroys herself. For them, Jane's rage is Charlotte's anger and it is Charlotte's fuel, while Virginia Woolf asserts that it has deformed her art. These three critics have profoundly influenced in the reading of *Jane Eyre*. However, they have ignored the

aspects which would interest postcolonial critics. They have dealt the novel only through the English side and ignored the other side. Jean Rhys had given poor Bertha a novel to herself that could deconstruct the colonial history and offer the postcolonial response to Bertha's madness through the reverse perspective.

Wide Sargasso Sea depicts the period after emancipation when the Jamaican slave society became a Crown colony with the legal castes of slavery being replaced by the more complicated divisions of a class-race-color system of stratification..The old slaves came to form the landless rural proletariat while the white Creoles occupied the other cultural pole of the elite. Post-slavery was, according to Edward Brathwaite, the time when 'Creolization,' i.e. the process of 'acculturation' of black to white norms but also of a reciprocal and enriching 'interculturation', was stopped. The white Creoles' lack of co-operation with and degrading of the black labor-force defeated the possibility of an alliance between the two as well as the completion of the creative process of Creolization. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is in fact the unspeakable story of human beings claimings, without pity, to own each other, in slavery, marriage or parenthood. Since, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, revisions that pitiful story of subaltern women suppressed women whose subjectivity had been misrepresented under colonial regime, it has been chosen to study the plight of subaltern women in this research.

Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* has elicited much response and criticism from the critics positioning their interpretations of the novel in relation to the theories of postmodernism, post-colonialism and feminism. The history of Rhys criticism is characterized by a succession of polarizations that cannot be explained solely as a result of the complexities of her work and that testify to the disparity of diachronic as well as synchronic reading processes. As Molly Hite mentions, for example, the

conflict in the 70s between “mainstream” critics who praised Rhys's skill at distancing herself from her characters, and feminist critics who read Rhys's work as a straight projection of her life and an authentic reflection of women's social and psychic realities (quoted from “Double (De)Colonization And The Feminist Criticism Of *Wide Sargasso Sea*” by Carine Melkon Mardorossian). Another polarization that also originated in the 70s separated Rhys's Caribbean from her (Western) feminist critics until well into the 80s. West Indian critics were the first to draw attention to the specific Caribbean cultural and historical influences that shape the world of her fiction and to acknowledge the difference the “West-Indians” of her writing makes. Feminists, on the other hand, often obscured the Caribbean politico-historical dimension of her novels by treating it either as the background against which the female protagonist's oppression by and resistance to patriarchy were set or as the scene of an imperial/colonial duality which was then subsumed into a metaphor for the male/female relationship. The feminist interpretations failed to see how Rhys's interrogation of the mechanisms of imperial domination extant in Bronte's text necessarily affected their analysis of gender in *Wide Sargasso* Sea in the beginning.. By subordinating the text's racial to its sexual politics, they ironically reproduced the same kind of erasure that Rhys had initially set out to correct and that Spivak so powerfully exposed in her 1985 essay:

> In this fictive England, [Bronte's Bertha] 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 . . . At least Rhys sees to it that the woman from the colonies is not sacrificed as an insane animal for her sister's consolidation. (Spivak 1985, 270)

It took the challenge of women of color, Jewish women, lesbians, working class women and their allies to demonstrate the limitations of the second wave feminist politics and criticism. The interpretation of feminist novels as the struggle of a heroine against oppressive patriarchal forces was soon scrutinized and criticized for positing a distinctive and essential female condition and ignoring the varied circumstances of women's oppression. Such First World and Eurocentric bias was particularly salient in 1970s feminist readings of *Wide Sargasso Sea* that represented Rhys's West Indian protagonist as facing the same sexist constraints and ideologies as the heroine of Bronte's imperial narrative. Therefore, Antoinette Cosway and *Jane Eyre* were seen as two sides of the same coin: both victims of the workings of a homogeneous system of sexual domination. By the mid-80s, however, the recognition that race, ethnicity, class, and nationality functioned as interlocking systems of oppression and formed a 'matrix of domination' that disrupted the monolithic category of Woman these readings postulated. A new paradigm examining the articulation of gender along the axes of race, class, and nationality emerged and effectively displaced previous interpretations of the Antoinette/Rochester dyad in *Wide Sargasso Sea.* Critics on both sides of the Atlantic now recognize and explore the interrelations of sex and nationalities in Rhys's writing. They no longer establish a metaphorical hierarchy between the colonial and sexual themes but are generally attentive to these categories' interactions and to the way each transforms the analysis of the other.

Hence, in reality, Rhys Bertha becomes the focus of unbearable cultural tensions and the book is therefore a critique of the way of colonialism devastates the values and traditions of the culture it invades. Researching upon the third world women's literatures, Barbara Fister writes, "The novel led to Rhys's rediscovery and

the recognition that she is a Caribbean novelist whose themes of isolation, self disgust and displacement reflect not only modernist disenchantment but the postcolonial experience”(323). Similarly, Carine Melkon Mardorossian writes, “*Wide Sargasso Sea* exposes the dominant imperial and patriarchal ideologies and denaturalizes the mechanisms by which they construct their black others” (79). Further, Observing a “doubled reader” relationship that is not only made aware of herself as the “self-authorizing reader” of Charlotte Bronte, Caroline Rody writes, “Experiencing this transformation of our interior canon, readers cannot help but be conscious that this is all due to the act of another reader, like ourselves” (302).

To tell the truth, Rhys's revision has done more than just given a poor ‘ghost’ [*Jane Eyre*'s slighted and silent white Creole] ‘a life’; it also gives her a place in history as a Creole, a figure who is implicated in the colonialist/imperialist ventures as a descendant of white or racially mixed European settlers and slave owners. Thus, while by giving a voice to Bertha, Rhys's novel offers a correction of *Jane Eyre*, its complex delineation of the West Indian social and racial relations also forecloses a facile celebration of an insulated voice's recovery. The racial and social divisions foregrounded in the novel ironically do to Rhys's Antoinette what the latter did to Bronte's Jane, i.e. show her as constituted within and by the processes of colonization and imperialism. To conclude, Rhys’s revision has foregrounded the third world women’s experience, subaltern women’s plight by giving a voice to Bertha to expose her experience through her linguistic as well as literary theoretical strategies.

II. Theoretical Tools

Subalternity:

The term "subaltern"has been adopted to postcolonial studies from the academic works of the subaltern group of historians who aimed to promote a systematic discussion of subaltern themes in South Asian studies. In theory, the term subaltern as Ranjit Guha announces in his editorial of *Subaltern Studies I* (1982) is used as "as a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way"(*VII*). He includes rural gentry, impoverished landlords, rich peasants and the upper middle peasants into the category of subaltern classes. He admits that they "could under certain circumstances act for the elite . . . " (8). He claims that Subaltern Studies will study the history, politics economics and sociology of subalternity "as well as the attitudes, ideologies and belief systems – in short, the culture informing that condition"(*VII*). Subaltern Studies is conspicuous towards the contemporary history and culture as the historiography of the nationalism had long been marginalized by elitism –colonialist elitism, and the bourgeois elitism, both the product of colonialism. Hence' the purpose of the subaltern studies project was to redress the imbalance created in the academics work by a tendency to focus on elite culture, in south Asian historiography with the recognition that subaltern cannot be understood except in binary relationship with domination. Subaltern Studies has committed itself "to rectify the elitist bias characteristics of much research and academic work in particular area" (*VII*).

Since, the history of the ruling class is realized as the history of the state and the dominant group, Gramsci was interested in the historiography of the subaltern classes. For him, subaltern "refer to those group in the society who are subject to

hegemony to the ruling classes" (215). He has argued that the history of subaltern group is necessarily fragmented, episodic, as they were always the subject to the activities of the ruling groups. Obviously, they have less access to the means by which they can control their own representation and to culture and social institutions. Only permanent victory can break that pattern of subordination which cannot be achieved immediately. Here, Gramsci is concerned with the intellectual's role in subaltern's political and cultural movement against the hegemony of ruling class. Since, the subaltern people do not have the means and strategy to get access to the hegemony; it is the role of the intellectuals to show them the way. The intellectual should mobilize even the subaltern people. Only then they can become the revolutionary figures who can strive against hegemony for their independence.

Guha claims that the difference between the elite and the subaltern lies in the nature of political mobilization. Elite mobilization was achieved vertically through the adoption of the British parliamentary institution, while the subaltern classes through traditional organization of kinship and territoriality as class associations. The strategy of the political mobilization demonstrates the link between the colonialism and bourgeois nationalism. The bourgeois nationalist adopted the legacies of colonialism. To some extent, they are the successors of the colonial regime. The elite historiography also claims "that the Indian nationalism was primarily an idealist venture in which the indigenous elite led the people from subjugation to freedom" (2). It is clear that the elite historiography ignores the roles that subaltern classes played during anti-imperialist movement. Likewise, the national narratives or the bourgeois nationalist's fails to speak on behalf of the people as the postcolonial nationalist project imposes on elitism. Clearly, in a way this kind of project is undertaken with western bias. Consequently, the subaltern issues and themes as quoted by R.

Radhakrishnan in his book *Diasporic Meditations* "do not figure out in the nationalist equation . . ." (147). Referring to Partha Chatterjee, he argues that nationalism is problematic as "it sustains and continues the baleful legacies of Euro centrism and Orientalism" (194).

Despite the fact that colonialism perpetuated inhuman violence and injustice on people, the colonialist historiography claims the colonialism was based on peoples consent. In fact, it endows colonialism with hegemony in the name of peoples' accent. Hence, undoubtedly, "the incubus known as Raj was dominance without hegemony" (xvii, selected subaltern studies). Guha in his essay "Dominance without Historiography" asserts that colonialism involved dominance without hegemony. It proceeded on with the help of coercion rather than assent of the people. The people resisted against the colonialism. The colonial historiography however, simply overlooks their resistance, always busy in proving the British rule as based on peoples assent and undermines the injustices inflicted upon the people. Above all, there are some native historiographers also who fall prey to the discourse of colonialism and it is so called elite project. All these factors are responsible behind the emergence of colonialism as a project of imperialism that involved the assent of the ruled.

Guha asserts that colonialism was a rule without hegemony, the hegemony either created out of coercion or simply the imagination of the colonialist historiographers while they wrote Indian history. In fact, they had written only a little portion of history. The South Asian history was just one stage in the colonial career of the colonialist historiography. After the independence, the bourgeois nationalism became the successor of the colonial legacy. Like colonialism, bourgeois nationalism also adopts the coercion. Therefore, the bourgeois nationalism is also dominance without hegemony. Guha therefore states: "In short, the price of blindness about the

structure of colonial regime as a dominance without hegemony has been, for us, a total want of insight into the character of the successor regime (elite nationalism) too as dominance without hegemony" (307). The bourgeois nationalist historiography, here, emerges as deceitful as it "has made such anti-imperialist mobilization into the ground for bourgeois claims to hegemony. . . (XVIII- XIX).

Subaltern Studies aspires to "rewrite the nation outside the state centered national discourse that replicates colonial power knowledge in a world of globalization" (20). Subaltern Studies therefore has brought a paradigmatic shift in the perspective through revision of the elite historiographies. Consequently, its product is that the subaltern people are now identified as the agency of change. Subaltern Studies as a new kind of history, "consists of dispersed moments and fragments which subaltern historians seek in ethnographic colonialism" (20). This kind of historiography, of course, "constitutes subversive politics because it exposes form of power/knowledge that oppress subaltern people and also because it provides liberating alternatives" (20). In the process of inquiring colonialism, and aftermath, the historians and the postcolonial critics stand together against colonial modernity to secure a better future for subaltern people, learning to hear them, allowing them to speak, talking back to powers that marginalize them, documenting their past. The historians should aspire to create a liberated imagined community. Unlike magical realists they should not make themselves free from the shackles of chronological-linear time. It is not necessary that Subaltern Studies must always talk of Indian historiography. In recent years, Subaltern Studies school has expanded to include work on other regions and has inspired Subaltern Studies initiatives in other historical and geographical contexts also. In a way it has acquired a global phenomenon. As a postcolonial cultural critique, Subaltern Studies aspires "to restore the integrity of

indigenous historians that appear naturally in non-linear, oral, symbolic, vernacular and dramatic forms" (20). Subaltern Studies now tends to take resort to cultural as well literary modes to inquire into history. As Priamvada Gopal states in his article, "Reading Subaltern History", "History like literature, has the capability to produce past positivist knowledge which would not teach an "experience from its living contexts, denuding it of a range of significances" (140). The first emancipation act that the Subaltern Studies project performs in our understanding of tribes, castes or other groups as Veena Das writes in her article "Subaltern as Perspective" is "to restore to them their historical being" (314). David Ludden states that subaltern studies has become an original right for a new kind of history from below, a people's history free from national complaints" (12).

Spivak in her seminal essay "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" gives a deconstructive reading to the activities of subaltern group concerning subaltern consciousness up to their third volume. She tries to assess their work and while assessing, she comes to realize that it somehow resembles deconstruction which puts the binary oppositions like elite/subaltern under erasure. Their project in her view is rather a positivist one as it aspires to investigate, discover and establish a subaltern or peasant consciousness. Spivak however, thinks that "consciousness, here is not consciousness- in general but a historicized political species, subaltern consciousness" (338). In fact, "Deconstructing Historiography" made an influential contribution to subaltern and postcolonial studies. For scholars caught between the desire to deconstruct the concepts such as "the individual subject" as a political imperative to recover the histories of actual subjects-social and historical agents capable of initiating or undertaking action-who had been marginalized by history, Spivak offered a helpful way out. Acknowledging a certain commitment to

represent the subaltern, she advocated a "strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest. Dipesh Chakrabarty in his essay "Invitation to a dialogue" announces:

> The central aim of Subaltern Studies is to understand the consciousness that informed and still informs political actions taken by subaltern classes on their own, independently of any elite initiatives. It is only by giving this consciousness a central place in historical analysis that we see subaltern as the maker of the history s/he lives out. (374)

Guha's view clarifies that the alleged peasant consciousness is a strategy they have got to adopt for establishing subaltern people as an autonomous domain having their own history. Spivak finally suggests Subaltern Studies Group to follow "reading against grain" approach because it "would get the group off the dangerous hook of claiming to establish the truth knowledge of the subaltern and his consciousness" (356). Guha's "The Prose of Counter Insurgency" shows tribal revolts as the subaltern rebellion which is totally different from nationalism. For Guha, it is important to understand the rebellion as motivated and conscious. Similarly, in David Ludden's words "subaltern studies entered in the academic scene by asserting the complete autonomy of lower class insurgency" (10).

Nonetheless, subaltern consciousness has been always critical point of subalternity. Jim Masselos, as quoted by David Ludden thinks that the essentialist notion of the peasant consciousness is a stereotype of resistant subaltern people" (22). However, the peasants or subaltern groups tend to resist the elite domination. Even when they took part in the anti-imperialist movements like non-co-operation, disobedience and quit-India under the elite leadership of the political parties, they resisted the bourgeois nationalist as well as indigenous elite leaders by disobeying

their orders. They would take part in the movements in their own traditional ways. This tendency shows their assertion of freedom and self-identity. Yet, we should not only forget the "defiance" as Gautam Bhadra says, "is not only characteristic behaviors of the subaltern classes"(63), but also "submissive" to authority, is equally important feature of their behaviors. The defiance and the submissiveness constitute the subaltern mentality. In reality, subaltern consciousness is always in rife with this serious conflict. Likewise their history, their consciousness too tends to be fragmented as well as complex one. After all they are subject to the elite hegemony.

Subaltern and Literature

While launching the project of subaltern studies, the members of Subaltern Studies Group had not thought about literature as such. Their aim was not to prove a certain theoretical strategy to analyze the literary works which they headed for was to make an empirical study of the culture of those people who have no assess to hegemonic power. The Subaltern Studies in their first three volumes, attempted to establish the peasants as an autonomous domain. As Priamvada Gopal remarks "Subaltern studies was transformed from a somewhat provincial, albeit intervention, "area studies" enterprise into cutting edge "theoretical one with the publication of the volume, *Selected Subaltern Studies* edited by Ranjit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak with the forward by Edward Said"(146). Spivak rendered Subaltern Studies with the linguistic as well as literary mode. In her seminal essay "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography" she announces that Subaltern Studies is concerned with representation of consciousness or culture of the subaltern classes more than the change as whole. Actually, Spivak's primary focus was to present woman as subaltern or the subaltern women as subaltern group. Spivak can be said to be the first postcolonial theorist with fully feminist agenda. She found literature, a good

platform and utilized it to render feministic mode to Subaltern Studies. In her translation as well as deconstructive reading of "Mahasweta Devi's Stanadayini" (Subaltern Studies V), Spivak reinforces literary as well as feminist modes of Subaltern Studies Similarly, in her essay "Three women's Texts and a critique of imperialism", Spivak criticizes the role of literature in the cultural representation of British imperialism that emphasizes that the role of literature in the socio political as well as cultural representation of any location should not be ignored. Of course, the literature related to colonial agency have produced enough misrepresentations and manipulations, however, literature has the capacity to produce positivist knowledge.

Edward Said, while writing forward to "Selected Subaltern Studies", had declared that Subaltern Studies consisted of the fragments of postcolonial histories. Meanwhile, he had also recommended that Subaltern Studies should also include writers and poets like Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Salman Rushdie, Faiz Ahmad Faiz and Mahmud Darwich. This also reinforced the literary mode to Subaltern Studies. In her essay, "Deconstructing Historiography", Spivak confines Subaltern Studies within the Representation of the culture of the subaltern people. Later on, the writers like Ghosh, Susie Tharu contributed their writings to Subaltern Studies. Said prompts us to question western representations of the east. Bhabha asks us to submit the actual encounter between west and east –in his case India-to the closest scrutiny. And Subaltern Studies is also concerned with the cultural representation of subaltern people. In this sense, there is close affinity between post colonialism as well Subaltern Studies. Both of them represent suppressed and marginalized groups.

Post colonial literary writings deal with the issues like Diaspora, cultural encounter, hybridity etc… involved with the third world people. It speaks mainly on behalf of the third world people whether they are in their own nation of living in other

metropolitan location as immigrants. Likewise, subaltern speaks for the subaltern people. The Subaltern Studies is motivated by the desire to save the subaltern people and their culture from misrepresentation. Thus, the culture of indigenous people emerges as the convergence for subalternity and postcolonial literatures. With the help of the technique like magic realism, the postcolonial literature tries to demonstrate various aspects of the indigenous culture disrupted by colonialism and aftermath. The Subaltern Studies as a postcolonial critique aspires to inquire elite historiographies including colonial historiography. It tries to deconstruct the colonial historiography and aspires to establish subaltern historiography. In fact, both the post colonialism and subaltern have adopted the appropriate language and the theoretical strategies derived from poststructuralist linguistic model to speak on behalf of the marginalized groups. Indeed, both of them are interrelated discourse that can speak on behalf of the many sided and the complex tissue of human predicament through language and literature.

Subaltern Women

When Subaltern Studies Group emerged, it had not taken up the issues concerning woman so distinctively up to the last three volumes. Only with the publication of *Subaltern Studies IV*, the Subaltern Studies Group came to be attentive towards women issues. Of course, there were few essays that slightly touched the women issues. However, only with the inclusion of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in *Subaltern Studies IV,* Subaltern Studies entered in the new domain as feminism. Spivak came with fully feminist agenda. Pointing out the vulnerable points of Subaltern Studies, she clarified that subaltern as a discourse to speak on behalf of the marginalized groups has not paid attention to women as doubly colonized both by the patriarchy and colonization. She is amazed at “its indifference to the subjectivity, not

to mention the indispensable presence of the woman as the crucial instrument" (358). She aspires to restore the significance of the concept-metaphor women in the context of Subaltern Studies to which the core members of the Subaltern Studies Group had ignored. Her feminist agenda includes the complicity of female writers with imperialism.

The Subaltern people also took part in the anti-imperialist insurgency as the members of indigenous elite class and the members of the bourgeois nationalist did. However, their contribution was simply overlooked by the colonialist and bourgeois nationalist historiography. Likewise, the subaltern women despite their potentiality and contribution remained unheard the way the subaltern insurgents despite their active participation on the anti-imperialist insurgencies. Spivak therefore admits that "woman is neglected syntagm of the semiosis of insurgency" (359). In other words she aspires to show the complicity between the subject and object investigation: the subaltern studies group and subalternity. This complicity leads the historians and the theorists to ignore the simple exclusion of the subaltern as female (sexed) subject . . . (359).

In her witty commentary "A Literary Representation of the Subaltern: Mahasweta Devi's Stanadyini", she argues that woman subjectivity and their voice are denied upon male's desire. Whether a woman is looked from above merely as the sexual object or from below as the goddess, she is reduced into the object of the male's desire. In the essay, she has pointed the parallelism between Jashoda the subaltern and Jashoda the divine. The icon of Jashoda the divine is in fact, used to dissimulate the exploitation inflicted on Jashoda the subaltern. On the one hand, she has been turned into an object of males desires. On the other hand, especially as she feeds their children with her milk, she has been turned to an object of worship.

Further, she has been equally linked with the mother country, Here in whatever way she is perceived, male's desire is obvious in the demonstration of her subjectivity. So, she often gets reduced to an object of male's desire. The male perception always wants a woman to be a sacrificial being who can be the expectable of his desires. In truth, the gaze from below is only male's strategy to hide the traces of oppression he inflicts on his female counterpart through his gaze from above. Spivak states: "Through a programmed confounding of the two kinds of gaze, the goddess can be used to dissimulate women's oppression" (129).

Spivak's another influential and controversial essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" makes a remarkable discussion of the feminist problems involved with representation of women issues. She argues that the subaltern people cannot speak themselves. They have got to be represented and there is problem in representation. In the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and their voice is overshadowed by the voice of the investigator and interpreter. The subaltern female is even more deeply in shadow. The elite intellectual represent the subaltern voice filtered through their elitist perspective. Here, her focus does not mean that she speaks for or has the intention of speaking for the female subaltern. Rather, she is motivated by the desire to save the female subaltern from misrepresentation. In the essay that takes the issue with the branches of post-structuralism, Spivak examines the nineteenth century British colonizers over what she calls "widow sacrifice": the burning of widows on the funeral pyre of their deceased husbands. Spivak concludes that neither party allowed women the potential victims of this practice to speak.

The British text construct a position for the woman in which she is made to represent western individualism and by implication a superior western civilization that emphasizes modern freedom, while the Indian ones represent her as choosing her duty

and tradition. Although both parties claim that they have them on their side, the women themselves remained unheard. Both the white men and the brown deny her subjectivity. The white men reduce the native women into an object/creature to be protected. In that conflict between the two perspectives of the white and brown, women subjectivity gets ignored or lost. Moreover, the Hindu males claim that Hindu mythology works as a camouflage that helps the Hindu males to suppress the heinous subordination they impose upon their female counterparts. She equally criticizes the white males for trying to call the custom as barbaric ritual. Actually, they too are not concerned about brown women. In fact, they are demonstrating their hegemony by proving the Indian males impotent and barbaric through their misrepresentation.

Whether it is the east or west, the women are denied of the position from which they can speak on their own as both spaces are patriarchies in which women are turned into the object of the male's desire. As Spivak states "there is no space from which the sexed subaltern subject can speak" (103). "Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and the object formation, the figure of woman disappears. . ." (102). Colonialism appears to be hazardous to females than to males of the colonized spaces. Analyzing the problems of the category of the subaltern by focusing on the female subaltern, Spivak views that in the context of colonial production,the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow. She claims that the woman is doubly subalternized in the colonized patriarchal spaces.

After examining the case of Bhuvaneshwari's suicide, she concludes that "the subaltern cannot speak" (104). The critics have attempted to interpret this statement on various ways. Mostly, it has been interpreted as the lack of means and strategy on the part of subaltern to speak on their own. The problem is that they have got only the dominant language at their disposal. Therefore, it is necessary for them to appropriate

this dominant language or voice if they really want to be heard. Again the problem is that it will be the voice mediated by the elitist voice or language the way postcolonial discourse as Spivak thinks is mediated by colonialism. In this sense, subaltern subject resembles the position of postcolonial discourse itself. Similarly, Ranjit Guha in his essay "Chandra's Death" attempts to demonstrate the nature of women's subordination within patriarchy. Likewise, Susie Tharu, Teaswini Niranjana, Kamala Visweswaran have carried on the women issues in the subsequent volumes. Kamala Visweswaran says: "Women are not accepted as proper subjects, but it does register and seek to certain their agency" (124). She however believes "that it is at the point of erasure where the emergence of the subaltern is possible" (124). Here, she counters Spivak's argument that subaltern cannot speak. She argues that we recognize the effect where the gendered subaltern is felt, woman as subaltern, subaltern women. Her strategy of presenting the women in such a way clarifies her position in the colonial as well as patriarchal society where woman's voices and deeds always remained unheard.

Feminism and Post-Colonialism

Feminism is of crucial interest to postcolonial discourse. Both feminist and postcolonial discourse seeks to reinstate the marginalized in the face of the dominant. Both patriarchy and imperial forms of domination can be seen to extert analogues form of domination over those they render subordinate. So the experiences of woman in patriarchy and those of colonized subjects can be paralleled into a number of respects and both feminist and postcolonial politics oppose such dominance. However, there have been vigorous debates on a number of colonized societies over whether gender or colonial oppression is more important political factor in women's lives. This has sometimes led to division between western feminists and the political

activists from impoverished and oppressed countries, or alternatively, the two are intricably entwined, in which case the condition of colonial dominance effects in material ways, the position of women within their societies. Consequently, feminist critics like Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Sarah Suleri began to argue that western feminism which had assumed that gender overrode cultural differences to create a universal category of the womanly or the feminine was operating from hidden, universalist assumptions with a middle-class, Eurocentric bias. They challenged the western feminism for its basis in liberal humanist thinking, and its assumptions of a shared marginality centered in gender.

No doubt, European women too experienced the discrimination in the masculine world of the Empire. Moreover, as mentioned by Ellek Bohemer, up until the late 1970s, at least, feminist analyses of power placed emphasis on a common experience of oppression, however, to the extent the important cultural differences and differential experiences of powerlessness, were often ignored. Consequently, Third World culture was assumed as packed with the stereotypes as less liberated, less advanced, or mired in tradition and superstition, resurfaced. Hence, the Third World women, native or subaltern women under colonial regime were doubly or triply marginalized. They were disadvantaged and repressed not only of gender. Besides gender, they were excluded and suppressed also of race, social class, and, in some cases, religion, caste, sexuality, and regional status. Even after independence, far from being eradicated, the grim irony of the independence period was that the pressures of national liberation reinforced many of these forms of exclusion. The feminization of colonized men under empire had produced a kind of defensive reflex, an aggressive masculinity in the men who led the opposition to colonialism. So, the nationalist movements encouraged their members, who were mostly male, to assert

themselves as agents of their own history as self-fashioning and in control. Women were not so encouraged. They were marginalized both by nationalist political activity and by the rhetoric of nationalist address. The mainstream (western) feminism was therefore charged with failing to account for or deal adequately with the experiences of the Third World women.

Postcolonial feminism is often perceived as an academic construction inextricable allied with the rise of postcolonial literary studies in the western academy. Postcolonial feminist studies clearly indicates the relational identity of the field, suggesting that it exists as a discursive configuration in dialogue with dominant First World academic construction even when it is in tension with them. The implications of the tensions are many. A feminist position within post colonialism must confront the dilemma of seeming divisive while the projects of decolonization and nation building are still under way. Outside postcolonial perspective, within the framework of the mainstream feminism, postcolonial perspective that focus on race and ethnicity may be perceived as forces that fragment the global feminist alliance. In fact, Postcolonial feminism is a dynamic discursive field. Deepika Bhari remarks “it interrogates the premises of post colonialism as much as those of feminism, supplementing them with its own particular concerns and perspectives, while in turn being subject to criticism and revision by them” (202). Further she states that internal critique within the field is no less in evidence, with consistent interrogation of tokenization and the usurpation of subaltern perspectives. Hence, characterized by debate, dialogue and diversity, postcolonial feminism consistently calls for sustained and instructive examination of major premises, methods and tensions.

Representation, Third World woman, essentialism and identity are the concepts for many of the debates and discussions arising from feminist perspective

within postcolonial literary studies. Of all the postcolonial theorists, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has consistently focused on what in postcolonial studies has come to be called the subaltern with her feminist agenda. Her concern is the problem with the representation of the Third World or the subaltern women by the western mainstream texts or theories. Since, colonized women almost by definition went unheard within their own patriarchal culture they were doubly unheard under a colonial regime. Spivak's feminist agenda includes the complicity of female writers with imperialism. In her essay,"Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" she remarks "It should not be possible to read nineteenth century British fiction without remembering that imperialism" (269). In the essay, she attempts to examine the operation of the 'worlding' of what is today "Third World" by what has become a cultural text of feminism.

Further in her widely discussed essay, "Can the Subaltern speak ?", Spivak uncovers the instances of doubly oppressed native women who, caught between the domination of native patriarchy and a foreign masculinist imperialist ideology, intervened by unemphatic, ad hoc, subaltern rewritings of the social text of sati suicide. From the discourse of "sati" Spivak derives large statement on woman's subject constitution/object formation in which the subaltern woman is conceived as a homogeneous and coherent category while she believes in the voices of differences and heterogeneity. In fact, Spivak's alternative narrative of colonialism through a series of brilliant upheavals of the texts which exposes the fabrication and exclusions in the writing of the archive is directed at challenging the authority of the received historical record and restoring the affaced signs of native consciousness. She says that if in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow. This focus does not

mean that she speaks or has the desire to speak for the female subaltern. Rather, she is motivated by the desire to save the female subaltern from misrepresentation.

As Chandra Talpade Mohanty argues in her critique of western feminism writings on "Third World Women", discourses of representation should not be confused with material realities. In her article "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse" he challenges the mainstream feminism asking the question "When an assumption of women as an oppressed group is situated in the context of Western feminist writing about "Third World Feminism?" Further, she remarks, "This average Third World woman leads an essentially trauncted life based on her feminine gender and being Third world (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition bound, domestic, family-oriented victimized, etc…)" (261). Further, she states "this is in contrast to the complicit self-representation of western women as educated, modern, as having control over their bodies as sexualities and the freedom to make their decisions" (261). Thus there is distinction between western feminist re-representation of women in the Third World, and the western feminist self representation. There is difference between the plight of the western educated or graduated women and the Third World oppressed women. Sisterhood cannot be assumed on the basis of the gender, it must be formed in concrete, historical and political practice and analysis as well.

Moreover, representation is always fictional or partial because it must imaginatively construct its constituency and because it can inadvertently usurp the space of those who are incapable of representing themselves. Postcolonial feminist critics protest the use of essentialist strategies by identity based group being to succumb to naturalization of essential categories or when they are used to describe a group as a undifferentiated totality. These critics argue that the overlap between

patriarchal, economic and racial oppression has always been difficult to negotiate, and the differences between the political priorities of First World and Third World women have persisted to the present. They argue that colonialism operated very differently for women and for men, and the double colonization that resulted when women were subject both to general discrimination as colonial subjects and specific discrimination needs to be taken into account in the analysis of any colonial oppression. Even post-independence practices of anti-colonial nationalism are not free from this kind of gender bias, and constructions of the traditional or pre-colonial are often heavily inflicted by contemporary masculinist bias that falsify represents 'native' women as quietest and subordinate. Hence to analyze the postcolonial Third World text it is necessary to proceed with the assumption of the voice of differences. As Mohanty states, experience must be historically interpreted and theorized if it is to become the basis of feminist solidarity and struggle.

Post-colonialism

Post-colonialism has already been established as a distinct field of study in the western as well as the eastern academia. As M.H.Abrahms mentions, post-colonialism critically analyses the history, culture, literature and the modes of discourse that are specific to the former colonies of England, Spain, France and other imperial powers. It has focused especially on the Third World countries in Africa, Caribbean islands, Asia and south America. Further, it sometimes encompasses also the aspects of British literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries viewed through a perspective the reveals that extent to which the social and economic life represented in literature was tactfully underwritten by colonial exploitation. Similarly, post colonial criticism draws attention to issues of cultural difference in literary texts and is one of the critical approaches that have been considered as focusing on specific

issues, including the issues of gender, of class and of sexual orientation. Therefore, the rereading and rewriting of the European historical and fictional record are vital tasks under postcolonial studies.

As we already know, post-colonialism deals with colonial onslaught and its impacts on both groups: colonizers and colonized natives. Indeed, the European colonizers preceded their imperialist mission through power and knowledge. The colonizers political and economic hegemonies were accompanied by their project of knowing others. For their mission, they implemented colonial educational system and made the natives to eternalize their (colonizers) values. The colonial education system not only changed the native peoples' perception but also disrupted the indigenous culture. In fact, the ideology which the colonizers made concerning things and people beyond their understanding in the colonized spaces turned into knowledge. Texts played a great role in establishing and reinforcing the knowledge created by the colonizers. These texts included the themes and stereotypes of the colonized spaces during colonialism as well as even after decolonization.

Many critics claim that the ex-colonized spaces are still culturally colonized despite their political independence. Edward Said's *Orientalism* appeared in 1978 which is still regarded as the point of departure in post colonialism. Then appeared Bhabha's *Location of Culture* (1993) followed by other writings exploring postcolonial issues. However, the term, "post-colonialism" was not in use until Spivak used in her work *The Postcolonial Critic* (1991). The term "post-colonialism" is still in controversy. Some postcolonial critics and theorists believe that by post-colonialism it means a theoretical discussion on the situation after decolonization whereas others claim that it deals with colonialism and its impacts right from the very beginning of the colonial onslaught. According to Ashcroft, Bill et al, ". . . it does not

mean post-independence or after colonialism, for this would be falsely ascribe an end to the colonial process. Post-colonialism begins from the very first moment of colonial contact. It is a discourse of oppositionality which coloniality brings into being . . . "(117).

Rather, it would be wise to talk about a few tendencies and characteristics found in various postcolonial texts. Post-colonialism derives its theoretical strategies and characteristics from post-structuralism especially from Derridian deconstruction and Foucauldian discourse theory. Like, post-structuralism, post-colonialism rejects the coercive binarisms like west/east, man/woman and so on. It challenges, the western canonical texts so that it can make room for indigenous cultural values and their worldviews as ignored by the western mainstream cultural values. It deals with the third world people's traumatic experiences like cultural disruption, hybridity, diaspora, migration and so forth.

In fact, in the beginning it focused upon challenging colonial ideologies imposed to the natives. It was preoccupied with the issues concerning identity and cultural roots of the indigenous people. Cultural nationalism, therefore, came into light. The postcolonial writers concentrated in trying to establish the identity of the natives by highlighting their native culture. They sought to construct the indigenous nationalism based on native culture and myth. For instance, the writers like Chinua Achebe tried to construct cultural nationalism by exploiting Nigerian myths and rituals. Likewise, Subaltern Studies Group, in their first three volumes, conducted researches on the culture of subaltern people. They were trying to construct a new nationalism made of indigenous culture of the peasants. As a result, they brought subalternity into post-colonialism. Later on, postcolonial writers, with the rise of postmodernism and post-structuralism, realized that the terms like cultural

nationalism and indigenous culture are essentialist and coercive. Therefore, they shifted their focus to the issues of cultural displacement.

As we are well aware, colonial onslaught disrupted the indigenous culture. As a result it brought about hybridity, the dangling people torn between the native culture and the imperial culture. This cultural displacement reached its peak in diaspora. Bhabha argues that colonialism not only disrupted the native culture but also the colonial culture. Referring to the in-between condition of the colonized subjects, Bhabha has developed the concept of mimicry. He argues that the colonized people challenge and devalue the imperialist truths as wrong or impure through mimicry when they use the imperialist language to express their indigenous experiences.

Slowly and gradually cultural nationalism entered into globalization, transnationalism and multiculturalism. The writers like Rushdie, Okri, and Marquez are marching on this path. They construct the ambivalent space to make room for the indigenous culture by rejecting the imperialist culture. Likewise, they massively exploit diasporic as well multicultural experiences. They achieve all these through the application of magical realism in their works. Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Rushdie's *Midnight Children*, and Okri's *The Famished Road* are the few examples of magical realist texts that are successful to achieve what postcolonial writing are supposed to achieve. Now postcolonial writers have realized that it is impossible to restore the pure indigenous culture. So they are trying to establish a bit less hostile relationship between native culture and the imperialist culture. Further, they agree that colonization has changed both colonizers and the colonized. It has brought about cultural ambivalence which shows the possibility of the simultaneous existence of both worldviews. In addition, it appropriates the imperialist language

and theoretical strategies to establish the identity of the third world people and their culture.

Yet, post-colonialism has its limits as well. There is every possibility that it can be assimilated in to the so-called mainstream of western canonical values and theories. Undoubtly, it basically deals with the natives resistance to and complicity with their masters. However, very often it develops complicity with the imperialist values and world views. As John Marx writes, "the mainstreaming of postcolonial literature confirms that such writing is equipped to represent the local cultures that imperialism has wrought as well as those it strove to demolish" (95).

On the other hand, it has been severely opposed by Marxist thinkers. Both Marxist and feminist critics have argued that there can be no such thing as a generalized encounter between colonizer and colonized. To them a theory that addresses the colonial situation without paying serious attention to the differences between men and women and between social classes cannot do justice to the heterogeneity of the colonial encounter. Aijaz Ahmad is the most vociferous among the critics. He considers post-colonialism as a branch of post-structuralism. He claims that it is rootless, irresponsible and perverse as post-structuralism. He thinks that it is the byproduct of capitalism. It is a "coffee talk" of the privileged bourgeois writers like Rushdie, Spivak and Bhabha. Sometimes, even Spivak, third postcolonial theorist expresses her anger at the way it is going into more and more essentialist and coercive. She calls it "fundamentalist post-colonialism". In her widely debated essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" she analyses the relation between the knowing subject and the ignorant object and concludes that the former can manipulate according to his desire. The investigator speaks about the subaltern and there can be no unrepresentable subaltern group. There is always the problem of representation.

Therefore, subaltern has got to appropriate language and other strategies of the elites the way post-colonialism appropriates language and the theoretical strategies of the west. This shows that subalternity emerges as the symbol of post-colonialism. In other words, subalternity can be assumed as the internal critique within the field of postcolonial studies itself. Moreover, Subaltern Studies has been identified as postcolonial criticism by the writers like Said, Spivak, and Gyanendra Pandey. As Gyan Prakash writes, Subaltern studies are "developing into a vigorous postcolonial critique . . ." (146). He tries to explain how Subaltern Studies has turned into postcolonial critique in these terms:

> The Subaltern Studies' relocation of subalternity in the operation of dominant discourses leads it necessarily to the critique of modern west. For if the marginalization of "other' sources of knowledge and agency occurred in the functioning of colonialism and its derivative, nationalism, then the weapon of critique must turn against Europe and the modes of knowledge it instituted. It is in this context that there emerges a certain convergence between Subaltern Studies and postcolonial critiques originating in literary and cultural studies. (1483)

With its multicultural and global take offs, Subaltern Studies is bending more and more towards post-colonialism. Furthermore the problematic two storey structure of consciousness has been justified because of its alignment with post-colonialism. Now critics can interpret it as an inevitable part of colonialism for colonialism created the two opposites modes of being: colonizer/colonized, civilized/uncivilized, West/East and so forth.

Hybridity

Hybridity is one of the most popular terms in postcolonial writings. It is one of the most disputed terms in postcolonial studies. It is a product of colonialism. 'Hybridity' commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. Hybridization takes many forms including cultural, political and linguistic. Pidgin and Creole are linguistic examples. Within languages there can also be evidence of 'linguistic cross breeding' and the use of loan words from either the language of the colonizer or the colonized. The colonizer's language cannot escape and one sees the many loan words in the English language today**.** As we are well aware, colonial onslaught disrupted the native culture and this led to the hybridization of the culture of the colonized space. As mentioned by Ashcroft.et al "colonialism inevitably leads to hybridization of culture" (129).

In fact, the colonial educational policy is responsible to bring about hybridity. The colonizers needed the mediators and so they planned to teach them English language and culture. However, they were well aware of the fact that the natives should not be taught much. Rather, they should be taught just enough to be the middlemen between them and the colonizers. They feared that if the natives learned much, they would challenge them back. So they designed the educational policy which would make the native people just the mediators and nothing more. It produced the dangling people with black skin white masks as observed by Franz Fanon. Homi Bhabha, in his piece entitled 'Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences' stresses the interdependence of colonizer and colonized. He argues that all cultural systems and statements are constructed in what he calls the 'Third Space of Enunciation'. He thinks that such black people with white adopted culture are rather ambivalent. Bhabha further discusses about "mimicry", "in-between" and

"ambivalence" in his essay, "Of Mimicry and Men: The Ambivalence of Discourse". According to Bhabha, when the colonized people learn their masters' language and the culture, they simultaneously imitate their masters' language. Indeed, their imitation consists of mockery as well. He brings forth the idea of mimicry, "the effect of hybridity" (120). Bhabha claims that "in the very practice of domination, the language of the master becomes hybrid" (33). He asserts that colonial text, itself tends to be deconstructive. He clarifies that, mimicry masks those moments of civil disobedience within the discipline of civility: the signs of resistance. Then the words of masters become site of hybridity, the warlike subaltern sign of the native . . ." (121).

However, critics especially Marxist and socialist are suspicious of Bhabha's argument. They argue that if the colonial text itself was enough able to devastate the project of colonialism, there would be no need of the resistance at all. They regard such argument to be solipsistic and perverse. Nevertheless, this kind of in-between position has gained a generous space in the contemporary postcolonial writing. Undoubtly, whenever we discuss about the postcolonial theories or texts, we analyze the aspects of the disrupted cultures and hybrid cultures. The postcolonial text according to Ashcroft et. al, "is always a complex and hybridized formation" (110). The world view of the native people is always ambivalent in such texts.

In the beginning, the hybridity was supposed to have occurred only in the case of the culture of the colonized people. And the postcolonial writers in the beginning attempted to show the disintegration resulted by the colonial onslaught. They were worried for the disruption of the purity or the normal pattern of the existence of the colonized people as resulted by the hybridization of their culture. As Elleke Bohemer writes: "This colonial bereavement has many times been described in terms of

orphanhood or urchinhood, bastardly, metaphors underscoring the loss of communal moorings, the destruction of an essential umbilical cord with history" (190). Now the concept has been extended to encompass the colonizers culture as well. In other words, the colonization brought about cultural hybridization in both the domains: the culture of the colonized as well as the culture of the colonizers. Bhabha and Mary Loise Pratt hold such view. Especially Pratt clarifies the mutual transforming of the two different cultures when they confront each other through her concept of "contact zone".

For many postcolonial critics, postcolonial cultures are inevitably hybridized. And this hybridized process involves the dialectical relation between the European epistemology and the indigenous impulse to create independent identity. Robert Young a widely written commentator on imperialism and post-colonialism has remarked on the negativity sometimes associated with the term hybridity. He notes how it was influential in imperial and colonial discourse in giving damaging reports on the union of different races. Young would argue that at the turn of the century, 'hybridity' had become part of a colonialist discourse of racism. Certainly, hybridity challenges the pure and authentic concepts upon which colonialism was founded. Nowadays, this hybridity has been extended to the study of the phenomenon of diaspora. Diadporic writing is the highest point of hybridity. Hybridity or ambivalence as the migrant writers argue provides them the world views of both the spaces: Eastern and Western.

Undoubtly, hybridity does have the weak point also though it is supposed to have been reinforcing the destabilization of the native culture. However, the west remains the privileged meeting ground for all ostensibly cross-cultural conversations. Therefore, hybridity is not only enlightened response to colonial oppression. As Aijaz

Ahmad argues, it is not rooted in a particular socio-cultural context. Nevertheless, the migrant writing tends to be rather explicit in its commitment to hybridity. It claims to open an in-between space of cultural ambivalence that carries the burden and the meaning of culture. Consequently, it can not only depict the cultural disruption resulted by the colonial onslaught but also establish the indigenous worldview along with the imperialist one. In a way it has become an integral part of postcolonial writing. Salman Rushdie and Wilson Harris also believe that migrant writing has equally emerged as an aesthetic device to represent subaltern voice as such.

The postcolonial writers use various hybrid imageries, metaphors and symbols to realize their objective. In *Wide Sargasso Sea* also hybrid imageries, metaphors and symbols in the form of mimicry, as mentioned by Bhabha is pervasively present in the schoolgirls modeling, their behaviours on the holy martyrs in the parodic versions of his authority that Rochester is offered by Christophine and Antoinette. Similarly, it is emblematized in the novel in the unfortunate parrot, which seems to be anxious about its own identity. It speaks French and Creole patios, not English and asks repeatedly in French. In the same manner, when Rochester threatens Christophine with the law she answers him directly, dismantling his coded message of imperial power. Antoinette, who also mimics Cristophine's song in her attempts to become like her finds herself in the ambivalent situation concerning her identity. Hence, it can be concluded that hybrid imageries and metaphors challenge the towering imperial power so that a room can be made for the indigenous culture.

III. Textual Analysis

Wide Sargasso Sea as a postcolonial text

Wide Sargasso Sea can be read as a postcolonial text. Jean Rhys has critically analyzed the historical, cultural aspects of Caribbean island and the British Literature in the nineteenth century present in the widely known feminist cultural text *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte through reversed perspective. Christophine's Creole patois itself suggests a colonial story that is absent in Bronte's text *Jane Eyre*. As Spivak admits in her essay, 'Three Women's Text and the Critique of Imperialism', "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" (271). This exposes the fact that it was tactfully underwritten on the basis of colonial exploitation. Spivak, in fact, remarks that it is almost impossible to read nineteenth century British literature without remembering the politics of that imperialism understood as England's social mission in the cultural representation. In the present text also, Rhys exposes England's social mission in the cultural representation of Caribbean island, Jamaica revisiting and reworking of the gothic elements that are evident in Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. Further, the text draws the readers' attention to the issues of cultural difference to which the essentialist strategies had neglected. That is why, the feminist criticism, from Gilbert and Gubar's *The Mad Woman in the Attic* does not comment on the aspects of *Jane Eyre* which would interest postcolonial critics which the present text does.

In the present text the island was colonized previously by French and later by English colonizers. The colonizers treated the native people of Jamaica as slaves. Moreover, after the emancipation of the slaves, creoles were much affected by the impact of colonization. The novel is set just after the emancipation. Antoinette, a

creole girl came to the same position in which the blacks were before the independence. She had to lead the life of dangling position, an in-between situation, inferior even to blacks. Old Mr. Cosway, Mr. Manson, Richard Manson and her unnamed husband are the representatives of the colonial hegemony. For them this colonized space, Jamaica is uncivilized and barbaric. Therefore, they treat the native colonized people as inferior. Moreover, the colonialism appears to be hazardous to the native subaltern people who have no access to the ruling hegemony.

Spivak says that there can be no unrepresentable subaltern group. In the present text also there are no subaltern groups that cannot be represented. The problem, in fact, is in representation itself. In the master text, *Jane Eyre*, there are only few pages about 'Bertha' though this native subaltern woman who is Antoinette in the present text haunts the entire novel. It seems that Bronte herself has misrepresented the story of this creole girl. Similarly, in the present text, Rochester, one of the representatives of colonial margin, the English man dislikes and misrepresents her and even the Jamaican culture as a whole. Hence, in the final scene of the part two he says:

> I was tired of these people. I dislike their laughter and their tears, their flattery and envy, conceit and deceit. And I hated the place. I hated the mountains and the hills, the rivers and the rain. I hated the sunset of whatever colour, I hated its beauty and its magic and the secret I would never know. I hated its indifference and the cruelty which was part of its loveliness. Above all I hated her. For she belonged to the magic and loveliness. (111)

In this way the colonizers represent the third world space as a distant and uncivilized according to their imperialist mission. To tell the truth, through texts they represent the stereotypes of the spaces during and after colonialism. The present text

hints at secret histories, with the suggestion that the descendants of both the exploiter and the exploited want to hide what happened from Antoinette. Similarly, nobody speaks about both the colonial and post colonial experiences. As Antoinette says:"Many died in those days, both white and black, especially the older people, but no one speaks of those days now. They are forgotten, except the lies. Lies are never forgotten, they go on they grow" (84).

Postcolonial criticism challenges, the western canonical texts so that it can make room for indigenous cultural values and their worldviews as ignored by the western mainstream cultural values. It deals with the third world people's traumatic experiences like cultural disruption, hybridity, diaspora, migration and so forth. In the present text also, Rhys deals with the traumatic and ambivalent experiences of the subaltern people. Here, Antoinette is in extreme despair because of her in-between position. Being a creole, she always finds herself as the subject of hatred in front of the white as well as black people. For black people she is a 'white cockroach' and for the English white people, she is 'white nigger'. Therefore, she says: "Black ants or red one, tall nests swarming with white ants, rain that soaked me to the skin – once I saw a snake. All better than people" (12). Similarly, post colonialism focused upon challenging colonial ideologies imposed to the natives. It was preoccupied with the issues concerning identity and cultural roots of the indigenous people. When christophine replies to Rochester: "Read and write I don't know. Other things I know" (104), it seems that she is challenging the colonial hegemony imposed upon her. Similarly, Daniel Cosway once asserting his rights says: "I have my rights after all . . ." (78). Therefore, it can be called that Rhys in this present text is preoccupied with the issues concerning the identity and the cultural roots of the indigenous people of Jamaica in the form of her answer to the master canonical text, *Jane Eyre.*

We are well aware that colonial onslaught disrupted the indigenous culture which brought about hybridity, the dangling people torn between the native culture and the imperial culture. Further, Bhabha refers that the in-between condition of the colonized subjects has developed the concept of mimicry. Similarly, he argues that the colonized people challenge and devalue the imperialist truths as wrong or impure through mimicry when they use the imperialist language to express their indigenous experiences. Antoinette belongs to the same dangling people and so she says: "What am I doing in this place and who am I?" (117). Further, she mimics the culture of the colonized people as she is in the condition of in- between, between the native black and the white colonizers. The dress she wears, the food she gets and the life style as a whole all are the English way of life which she adopts though she does not purely belong to English culture.

Spivak believes in the voices of differences. In the present text also there are many voices speaking. For instance, Rhys has given Antoinette herself to speak. Similarly the unnamed husband (Rochester) also speaks in addition to the other voices belonging to christophine through Rhys narrative technique. While in Jane *Eyre* there is only single voice, the voice of the imperialists. Further, we are well aware that like, post-structuralism, post-colonialism rejects the coercive binarisms like west/east, man/woman and so on. Moreover, Spivak remarks that investigators speak about the subaltern and there can be no unrepresentable subaltern group. There is always the problem in representation. Therefore, subaltern has got to appropriate language and other strategies of the elites the way post-colonialism appropriates language and the theoretical strategies of the west. This shows that subalternity emerges as the symbol of post-colonialism. In other words, subalternity can be assumed as the internal critique within the field of postcolonial studies itself. Indeed these subaltern people

have their own world views and own cultural beliefs which we can find in the present text like, obeah, the belief on spirit theft, and the beliefs on spiritual death and so forth. Undoubtly, the present text also exposes the fact that subaltern people have their own world views which is included in my present work under brief study while studying subaltern women's' plight in *Wide Sargasso Sea.*

Subalternity in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Subaltern people refer to that group in the society who are inferior in social rank and are subject to the hegemony of ruling class. They are inferior on the grounds as class, caste, race ethnicity as well as gender and so forth. They are poor, downtrodden and are always subject to the activities of the ruling class. They have less access to the means by which they can control the representation of their own culture and social institution. The colonial historiography simply overlooks their resistance and is always busy in proving their own rule as it is based on the civilization mission. They believe that the people of colonized spaces are barbaric and uncivilized. Consequently, these subaltern people get misrepresented and manipulated. In the present text also the actual experiences and plights of the subaltern people in Jamaica are hidden and are misrepresented. That is why Rhys, in the novel indicates through Antoinette's narratives, "but no one speaks of those days now. They are forgotten, except the lies" (83-84). Further, Antoinette says, "there is always the other side, always" (82).

Racial discrimination is strictly prevalent in the text. After the emancipation of slaves, creoles were classified as inferior in the new society and were displaced by the new wave of colonizers. In those days, creole identities were defined as negative. These creoles were the subject of hatred for both the black as well as white communities. For instance, Antoinette's one time friend Tia, calls Antoinette, "white

cockroach, go away" (9) meaning that the emancipation has left the white slave owners in the same position as the blacks. Similarly, Antoinette mentions, "And I've heard English women call us white niggers" (64). The 'white nigger' was neither a white nor a black person, but regarded as inferior to the negroes. In this way, they had neither power nor money; both are resented by the new white people moving into the Caribbean.

Similarly, the present text also speaks about the poor and downtrodden people. The emancipation act brought freedom to those slaves but their situation remained the same. In fact, the new colonizers or the elites also treated them the same way as the old ones used to do. Therefore, in the present text Antoinette's mother tells her, "Godfrey is a rascal. These new ones aren't too kind to old people and he knows it" (8). Further, she says: "New ones worse than old ones- more cunning, that's all" (11) Further, Antoinette admits: "It was Christophine who bought our food from village . . . We would have died, my mother always said, if she had not stayed with us" (83). Similarly, she admits that Christophine was her father's wedding gift to her mother. She worked as a nurse for their family. Further, she tells: "She never saw her son who worked in Spanish Town" (7). It was because of poverty that these subaltern people had to work as slaves for others in addition to racial discrimination. Moreover, masters used to change the names of slaves according to their will. In the present text, Daniel Cosway is also known as Esau. He tells: "They call me Daniel (77)". Further, he says, "but my name is Esau (77)". Similarly, Antoinette's name is changed from Cosway to Manson and then to her husband' name, and he alters her name to Bertha though she pleads him not to do so. In the text, she admits: "He never calls me Antoinette now" (71). In this way their identity as a whole is defined by negatives. However, the subaltern people, despite of being poor and inferior assert their right

though the colonial and the elite historiography overlook them. For instance, Daniel Cosway says: “I have my rights after all” (78).

Besides, like in other postcolonial texts, in the present text also subaltern people are victimized by frustration and despair very often. For instance, Daniel Cosway in his despair and hopelessness tells to Rochester with a deep breathe about his father’s hatred towards him: “He send me some money – not a word, only the money. It’s the last time I see him” (78). Similarly, Antoinette too becomes frustrated and anxietic because of racial discrimination and says: “Black ants or red ones, tall nests swarming with white ants, rain that soaked me to the skin – once I saw a snake. All better than people. Better. Better, better than people” (12). She takes resort to her solitary life. Further, after being betrayed by her husband, she again takes resort her solitary life going to her madness.

The colonizers had the heart like stone. They do not value the native subaltern people. For them, these native people are just their slaves, uncivilized and barbaric people. They abuse these native subaltern women and throw them like the objects to be thrown after use even though they provide a hut and a piece of land for shelter like old Cosway. Similarly, they deny recognizing their own child like they refused to recognize the native mothers. As Daniel Cosway admits: “He looks at me like I was dirt” (78). Further, he says: “He laugh in my face. When he finished laughing, he call me what’ your mother’s name. I can’t remember all their names . . .” (78). Similarly, Antoinette’s unnamed husband has illegitimately fathered the child, Baptiste and he refuses to recognize him and does not render his patronymic name to him. For him he is half-savage child. In the last scene of the part two, when Rochester leaves Jamaica with Antoinette, Baptiste follows him. Here, the interior monologue of the unnamed husband opens. He says: “. . . , I thought about Baptiste and wondered if he had

another name – I'd never asked" (112). Further, he says: ". . . who would have thought that any boy would cry like that. For nothing" (112). In the text, this unnamed husband's sexual exploitation to female servants is symbolized in the cook's departure, when Amelie leaves with her mattress on her head.

Rhys extends this politics of naming both to imperialism and phallocentrism. She accomplishes this by her choice of time. The novel is set just the year after the emancipation act 1833 was passed, allowing the issues of colonialism to come to fore. However, at the same time, the novel is synchronized with the period of British history when there was no provision for married woman's property that would secure the legal identity of married women. Therefore, just as the unnamed husband refuses to recognize his child, Richard Manson also refuses to recognize Antoinette when he visits Thornfield Hall. As Grace Poole says: ". . . I was in the room but I didn't hear all he said except 'I cannot interfere legally between you and your husband'" (109). In this way, these subaltern people had to lead the life with ambivalent identities with no access to power and property.

Subaltern people have their own world views. They have their own kind of social and cultural beliefs. They believe in spirits, ghosts, witches and so forth. They have their own way of treating illness. They have herbalists and the witch doctors like obeah men and women etc. In African and Caribbean folk practice, where religion had not been externalized and institutionalized as in Europe, the obeah-man was doctor, philosopher, and priest. Healing was, in a sense, an act of faith, as it was in the early Christian church, and the fetish had come to mediate between man and god. Each man was also in a way not understood as a priest and through possession could not only communicate with gods, but become and assume the god. In Jamaica, Black Baptiste worshippers were often possessed. In the present text, Christophine has the

status of both the healer and witch partly, she speaks strange language and her food and clothes are Martinician rather than Jamaican. She regards Rochester's sexual control over Antoinette as a form of enchantment which turns her into zombie; he describes Antoinette just before they leave the honeymoon island as "'a ghost in the grey daylight'" (110). In fact, obeah is spirit theft, and it can reduce human beings to the state of puppets, dolls and zombie. When Rochester drinks the potion Christophine prepares for him he is overtaken by an erotic frenzy as the god of love enters and takes possession of him; after his night with Antoinette she is left bleeding and bruised, and he is brutalized. Though Antoinette caused this to happen to him through Christophine's powers, she argues that he too practices obeah: "Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name. I know, that's obeah too" (94).

In conclusion, we know that subaltern studies as a postcolonial critique aspires to inquire the colonial historiography and establish subaltern historiography. Further, it debunks the western imperialistic mission of cultural representation of the colonized spaces and aspires to restore the integrity of indigenous historians that appear naturally in non-linear, oral, symbolic, vernacular and dramatic through the deconstructive reading of the activities of subaltern consciousness. In the present text, the reworking and revisiting of the gothic element evident in *Jane Eyre* collaborates with the response of the colonial margin to the metropolitan centre. Hence, the rewriting of the story in the nineteenth century feminist cultural text *Jane Eyre* collaborates with the response of the subaltern group to the metropolitan centre in the present text that aspires to restore the subaltern integrity bringing forth the experiences and the predicaments of the subaltern people.

Hybrid or 'in-between' situation in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

In the present text Jean Rhys has used various hybrid imageries, metaphors and symbols. The novel starts with the sentence as: "They say . . ." (5), which reflects the assumption that Caribbean island was full of noises, but this island is full of voices, speaking different versions of English and French. Further, the culture of most of the islands' inhabitants is oral rather than literate. Moreover, there are some words, such as 'obeah' and 'zombie' that cannot be adequately translated into English. Therefore, Rhys in the text has used hybrid imageries and symbols in the form of mimicry, as mentioned by Bhabha which is pervasively present in the schoolgirls modeling, their behaviours on the holy martyrs in the parodic versions of his authority that Rochester is offered by Christophine and Antoinette. Similarly, it is emblematized in the novel in the unfortunate parrot, which seems to be anxious about its own identity.

The parrot speaks French and Creole patios, not English and asks repeatedly in French, 'who is there?' and replies in creole, 'Dear Coco' as Antoinette narrates in the first part of the novel, "He didn't talk very well, he could say, Qui est la and answer himself Che Coco, Che Coco" (22). After Mr. Manson clipped his wings he grew very bad tempered, and though he would sit quietly on Antoinette's mother's shoulder, he darted at every one who came near her and pecked their feet. It shows the signs of resistance in parodic version or mockery as well prefigures what will happen to Antoinette. Antoinette too wonders about herself : "So between you and I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all" (64). In her final dream in Thornfield Hall in England she hears the parrot call again and says that the wind caught her hair and it streamed out like wings but she has been deprived of her powers of any kind of flight by Rochester. This

suggests that whether her mimicry is in earnest or subversive, it heightens the desire of the colonial master to control and break her.

Bhabha argues that when the colonized people learn their masters' language and the culture, they simultaneously imitate their masters' language. Indeed, their imitation consists of mockery as well. Further, as Fanoon argues that the colonizers feared that if the natives learned much, they would challenge them back. So they designed the educational policy which would make the native people just the mediators and nothing more. It produced the dangling people with black skin white masks. Moreover, the context of white creole is even much ambivalent; they are inferior to both the black people and white imperialists. Rochester, in the text is the colonial master and he treats and controls his Creole wife with the assumption of the racial discrimination and the colonial onslaught so that she would not challenge him back. For this, he reduces her to 'Bertha' though she pleads him not to do so. Yet, the mimicry prevalent in the text is not a mask as Fanon describes in his *Black Skin White Masks*, rather it is an imitation which radically revalues the normative knowledge of the priority of race, writing history.

For many postcolonial critics, postcolonial cultures are inevitably hybridized. And this hybridized process involves the dialectical relation between the European epistemology and the indigenous impulse to create independent identity. In the text, when Rochester threatens Christophine with the law she replies him directly, debunking his coded message of the imperial power: "No police here [. . .] No chain, no tread machine, no dark jail either, this is free country and I am free woman"' (103). She further says: "Read and write I don't know. Other things I know" (104). Christophine's creole patois itself suggests the hybrid imageries prevalent in the text. Moreover, her personal life also asserts her deliberate difference from Rochester.

Antoinette, also mimics Cristophine's song in her attempt to become like her and finds herself in the ambivalent situation concerning her identity, a ghost who eventually sees herself without recognition as, "the ghost. The woman with streaming hair" (123). In fact, Antoinette could not always understand her patois song and she notices, "her songs were not like Jamaican songs and she was not like other women"(7). Similarly, she notices that Christophine also "came from Martinique – but she taught me the one that meant. 'The little ones grow old, the children leave us, will they come back?' and the one about the Cedar tree flowers which only last for a day" (7). As Deborah. A. Kimmy mentions Joseph Walker's views: "It means, of course, that Christophine has one of the true signs of resister, a counter language" (40).

In fact, patois itself is a counter language that works in- between lanuages, it privileges informal speech over formal grammar. It subverts the symbolic system to create new meanings, thus giving chance to the readers to play with words and hear other meanings waiting in the wings to speak. This play on/with words is evinced in Christophine's songs: "The music was gay but the words were sad and her voice often quavered and broke on the high note. 'Adieu'. Not adieu as we said it but adieu, which made more sense after all. The loving man was lonely, the girl was deserted, the children never came back. Adieu" (7). To tell the truth, Rhys inclusion of patois allows the readers to play with words, their sounds, their looks- to find new ways of reading. For instance, when the unnamed husband refers to Antoinette as a 'marrionatte', we hear an elusive word hiding within 'marrionatte'. Deborah. A. Kimmy argues that Playing with the French, 'marie' is a close homophone to 'marie' being married and to 'marie' 'bride'.

Similarly, Kimmy asserts that working in between languages one could formulate how marriage and dissolution of women's legal identities prior to the married woman's property Act of 1870 denied women agency and reduced them into puppets. Similarly, when Antoinette's mother says, "Now we are marooned" (6), we understand that after the independence, the previous colonizers' family or the white creoles came to the same in which the blacks were before, inferior even to blacks and have become poor and downtrodden. This also we understand through the hybrid language included in the text. A similar slippage in meaning is achieved by aligning Part One and Part Three of the text. The parallels between the house burning Coulibri and Antoinette's anticipated arson of Thornfield Hall (or the book of Jane Eyre) bear striking similarities. These similarities lead Caroline Rody to conclude that Antoinette "becomes symbolically a rebellious slave, and her fiery assault in Jane Eyre is rewritten as the revolt of colonized subjectivity against the master text" (312).

In conclusion, the cultural baggage that the European colonizers brought with them affected each of the colonized islands differently, in terms of religion, language, dress and gender relations which are exemplified in the text, though it is blurred, as the only island that Rhys knew well was Dominica for she had not been to Jamaica. Nevertheless, Rhys provides a knowledge of the Caribbean world and its problems derived from colonization. It reveals the discrepancies between British and Caribbean cultures. This incomprehension between the two cultures is at the root of Bertha's ambivalent situation, her subsequent madness. Hence, a kind of anxiety permeates her consciousness. So once, when her aunt reassures her that her hair will grow black after the fire, she remarks tersely: 'But darker' (24). To tell the truth, the revolt against the master text is seen not just in descriptive analogies and metaphors that rewrite the slave revolt into Antoinette's final act; the revolt is in language itself – as

seen in counter languages that break through colonial subjectivity. Anyway, the hybrid imageries and metaphors that are used in the text has challenged the towering imperial power so that a room can be made for the indigenous Jamaican culture as well the plight of the subaltern Jamaican women can be brought forth.

Wide Sargasso Sea: Subaltern Women's Plight

Wide Sargasso Sea depicts the experiences and the situation of the women who are under subaltern category. The novel exposes the predicament of the women who were doubly marginalized within their own patriarchal socio-cultural situation as well as under the colonial regime in Jamaica. These women were disadvantaged and repressed not only of gender. Besides gender, they were excluded and suppressed also of race, social class, caste, sexuality, and regional status. Even the post independence reinforced many of these exclusions. In fact, the present text as a whole attempts to provide the voice to the subaltern women so as to save them from being manipulated or misrepresented.

The present text played an important role in the evolution of feminist critical trends. Indeed, it was taken up as a successful corrective to the imperialism of the western cult feminist text *Jane Eyre* which turned a new page and it was realized that any claim to totality and representativeness could inadvertently result in the exclusion of some groups from that totality. The European mainstream feminist interpretations failed to see how Rhys's interrogation of the mechanisms of imperial domination extant in Bronte's text necessarily affected their analysis of gender in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Subordinating the text's racial to its sexual politics; they ironically reproduced the same kind of erasure that Rhys had initially set out to correct. In other words, those interpretations could not inculcate the cultural differences that result the heterogeneity and the differences in the experiences and predicament of the women

living in different cultures and worldviews. Certainly, subaltern women have their own kinds of plights which are vehemently different from that of the women living in the metropolitan centre. Spivak demonstrating the pitfalls of the Master Discourse, views that the mainstream feminism, "is the project of soul making beyond the circle of nuclear family. Here the 'native' subject is not almost an animal but rather the object of what might be termed the terrorism of the categorical imperative . . ." (271).

No doubt, European women too experienced the discrimination in the masculine world of the Empire. The third world women indeed experienced the double discrimination both in the masculine world of Empire and the colonial onslaught. That is why the plight of the subaltern women in the present text, especially of Antoinette (Bertha in *Jane Eyre*) cannot be explicitly similar one to the experiences of Jane in *Jane Eyre.* Sisterhood cannot be assumed on the basis of the gender, it must be formed in concrete, historical and political practice and analysis as well.

The story depicts the period just after the emancipation of the slaves, that uneasy time when racial relations in the Caribbean were at their most strained. It depicts the period after emancipation when the Jamaican slave society became a Crown colony with the legal castes of slavery being replaced by the more complicated divisions of a class-race-color system of stratification. The central character, Antoinette in the novel is descended from the plantation owners. Her father has had many children by Negro women. She can be accepted neither by the negro community nor by the representatives of the colonial centre. As a white Creole she is nothing. She is taken just as the taint of racial impurity, coupled with the suspicion that she is mentally imbalanced to bring about her own inevitable downfall.

After the emancipation of slaves, white creoles were hated by both the blacks as well as the colonial representatives. Therefore, Antoinette says: “I never looked at any strange negro. They hated us. They called us white cockroaches. Let sleeping dogs lie” (9). She further reports of an incident with a little girl, Tia, with whom she used to play in her childhood days. Tia had followed her singing: “Go away white cockroach, go away, go away . . .” (9). Even her husband himself, the English man who represents the colonial centre though unnamed in the entire novel shows his disgusting views towards her and sees in her: “Long, sad, dark alien eyes. Creole of pure descent she may be, but they are not English or European either” (40). As her husband (Rochester in *Jane Eyre*) says of her that she is not English or European either, as a child she wants to become the part of her black friend Tia’s family, but she longs for Coulibri and expresses in negatives: “Not to leave Coulibri. Not to go. Not” (24). In this way, Antoinettee seems to be much envied by such racial discrimination though she says that she got used to a solitary life. She tells, “I went to parts of Coulibri that I had not seen, where there was no road, no path, no track. And if the razor grass cut my legs and arms I would think ‘it’s better than people.’ Black ants or red ones, tall nests swarming with white ants, rain that soaked me to the skin- once I saw a snake. All better than people. Better, better than people” (12). In fact, her displacement makes her more conscious of what she is not than what she is. Her only positive feeling of personal identity comes from Coulibri and Granbois, but Manson and Rochester had usurped it respectively. Hence, she wonders panically as who she is, “who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all.” (64).

Spivak argues that it should not be possible to read nineteenth century British fiction without remembering that imperialistic mission. Further, she admits that

between patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and the object formation, the figure of woman in the third world disappears. As we are already aware, Spivak is concerned with the problem of representation which is not always factual and most of the time unreliable and fictional. The present text exposes the fact that the role of literature in the production of cultural representation should also be considered. In fact, the present text is the correction of the representation of Bertha's situation that is evident in *Jane Eyre.* Rhys re-examines Rochester and Antoinette's relationship as the enactment of a colonial as well as a sexual encounter. This shows that, Rochester himself is perplexed by the conflicting narratives that lie down below the surface of colonial policy and practice concerning his marriage with Antoinette. Christophine's creole patois itself suggests a colonial story that is absent in Bronte's text. Moreover, Rhy's Rochester who remains ironically unnamed however, haunts the text for the readers who knows of *Jane Eyre*, is aware that something always eludes him, that there is a secret. Just as the moment when he reduces his wife to a zombie, "her face blank, no expression at all" (107), he hears a voice of the island's message. The implication is that Rochester's consciousness is repressing what he knows he does not want to expose, as Victorian materials, to acknowledge.Therefore he says: :Here is the secret. Here" (108). Further, he says: "I was certain that everything I had imagined to be truth was false. False. Only the magic and the dream are true – all the rest' a lie. Let it go. (108).

In fact, Rochester's attitude towards Antoinette's birth place and the Caribbean culture as a whole seems to be that of the relation between the colonizers and colonized. That is why Rochester appears to be the representative of the colonial centre and he perceives even his wife Antoinette not belonging to European culture. He hates her for her being Creole and hates the entire Caribbean culture as a distant

one with uncivilized people full of mysteries. In this sense she is doubly marginalized both in the patriarchal social condition as well as in the colonial hegemony through her own husband. Certainly, European cultural mission represents the 'Third World' as barbaric or uncivilized one with full of mysteries and in the name of civilization mission, they colonize the particular place and exploit the native people and their culture. That is why Spivak, alerts not to ignore the role of European colonizing mission of the great age of imperialism in the cultural representation through their literatures. Indeed, she attempts to examine the operation of the 'worlding' of what is today 'the Third World' by what has become a cult text of feminism: *Jane Eyre* in her critical essay, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism'.

As we already know postcolonial feminist protest the use of essentialist strategies and argue for the overlap between patriarchal, economic and racial oppression, there is difference between the political polarities of First World and the Third World women. Indeed, we know that representation is always fictional or partial. Most of the time it is imaginatively constructed and it can advertently usurp the space of those who are incapable of representing themselves. Spivak argues in her widely discussed essay, "Can the subaltern Speak?" that subaltern cannot speak themselves. They have got to be represented and there are problems in representation. The elite intellectuals represent the subaltern voice filtered through their elitist perspective. In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha Manson is represented as, Rochester's first wife; the mad woman in the attic. Despite of her importance as a generator of events, she stands as the gothic ghostly element rather than being a real life-like character because she gives a disquieting ambiance to Thornfield hall, where Jane works as a governess. Charlotte Bronte through the very fact that Bertha Manson belongs to the Creole origin (a white Creole; a British woman born in the Caribbean) defines her, in the

beliefs of metropolitan 19th century, as 'tropicalized by her environments, emotionally high-strung, lazy, and sexually excessive'. In the present text also the unnamed husband (Rochester in *Jane Eyre*) depicts Antoinette, as a zombie, expressionless and says: "I noticed her face blank, no expression at all. There's not a tear in her" (107). He further says: "Tied to a lunatic for life – a drunken lying lunatic – gone her mother's way" (106). Indeed, he shows his possessiveness and superiority towards her claiming: " 'My lunatic'. She's mad but mine, mine" (107). In this way the European imperialistic mission construct a position for the woman in which she is made to represent the western individualism and by the implication of a superior western civilization they emphasize the modern freedom. The actual plight of the subaltern women is always unheard.

As Antoinette says, "there is always the other side" (82), obviously, there is always the other side and that is required to be considered before analysing the subaltern women's situation. Moreover, we already know that voices of difference, heterogeneity are to be emphasized for the essentialist strategies and the concept of homogeneity is not enough to interpret the Third World women's experiences. In the present text also in whatever way the unnamed husband depicts Antoinette, the truth is something else. Truth is rooted in the socio-economic periphery of Caribbean island during the post independence. The unnamed husband in fact, manifests his colonial imperial power depicting Antoinette as a mad, a lunatic. Not only the unnamed husband, many people around Jamaica fasten bad words on Antoinette and her mother Annette. On her way to go to the convent in the first day, a black girl and a boy of white skin starts talking and the girl says: "Look the crazy girl, you crazy like your mother" (27). Further, she says: "your mother walk about with no shoes and stockings on her feet . . . She try to kill her husband and she try to kill you too that day you go to

see her. She have eyes like zombi and you have eyes like zombi too" (27). Similarly, Danial Cosway's (Daniel Cosway is supposed to be Antoinette's cousin) letter to Rochester also indicates the similar implication. In the letter, Daniel Cosway mentions: "She shut herself away, laughing and talking to nobody as many can witness. As for the little girl, Antoinetta, as soon as she can walk she hide herself if she see anybody" (60). He further, alerts Rochester: ". . . it is my duty to warn the gentleman that she is no girl to marry with the bad blood she have from both sides" (60-61). In truth, both Antoinette and her mother are the victims of patriarchal social condition as well as the colonial hegemony. Therefore, their experience must be historically interpreted so that we can know the other side too that has been left behind by both the colonial imperialists as well as the so called elites.

According to Antoinette, after her father's death, her mother was very lonely and unhappy. She was very poor and so she grew away from other people. Antoinette accepts that she too grew away from other people. She too felt lonely and unhappy. She admits: "It happened to me too but it was easier for me because I hardly remember any thing else" (83). For her mother, it was strange and almost frightening. Everybody hated them. In her despair her mother utters: "Now we are marooned . . . now what will become of us?" (10). However, her mother pretended to be lovely. She too pretended. She says: "People came to see us again and though I still hated them and was afraid of their cool, teasing eyes, I learned to hide it" (84). Anyway, one cannot pretend for so long, one day it falls and again the same loneliness. In this way both the mother and daughter were alone in their beautiful place, Coulibri. Nothing was left. Their horse had been poisoned. Most of all, there was a night when their house, everything was destroyed. Little brother Pierre died that night. Antoinette tells: "They trampled on it. It was a sacred place. It was sacred to the sun!'. . ."(84).

Mother started to hate Mr Manson with whom she had married and could get rid of poverty, loneliness and the hatred. Then she would not let him go near her or touch her. The pain of loneliness, hatred was already there with her. Further, the additional tragedy of her son, Pierre's death had heightened her despair to its peak and so she brusts to Mr Manson that she would kill him and even tried too. Manson bought a house and hired a coloured man and a woman to look after her. For a while he was sad however, he often left Jamaica and spent a lot of time in Trinidad. After then, he almost forgot her. The black man and the woman treated her ruthlessly. She had gone totally mad and she would walk up and down and would go to her past. Once Antoinette, while going to see her heard her saying: "But this is very pleasant surprise Mr Luttrell. Godfrey, take Mr Luttrel's horse" (86). Then she seemed to grow tired and sat down in the rocking-chair. The black man would abuse her. The woman too proves herself to be unkind towards her. In this way her mother's pain remained unheard. Therefore, Antoinette says to her husband:

> Justice, I've heard that word. It's cold word. I tried it out. I wrote it down several times and always it looked like damn cold lie to me. There is no justice. My mother whom you talk about, what justice did she have? My mother sitting in the rocking-chair speaking about dead horses and dead grooms and the black devil kissing her sad mouth. Like you kissed mine. (94)

Antoinette herself is shown fallen into the abyss of despair. The entire text presents her as a subject of hatred and sunk in the pain of being loneliness and displaced identity. She has been presented as the subject of racial discrimination as well as the oppressed subject in the patriarchal social condition in the entire novel. In this sense, she is also doubly marginalized like her mother. In addition, both of them

had to face the colonial hegemony too even after the post independence. Antoinette finds herself in the ambivalent position. Being a white creole, she neither belongs to the white community nor to the black community. In coulibri and Granbois, the black people hated her for her being white colour and would sing the song of white cockroach. And the English people too denied her identity to be the English one as she says: “I’ve heard English women call us white niggers” (64). Therefore, she says to her husband: “So between you I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong . . .” (64).

In fact, her personal identity comes only from Coulibri and Granbois to which first Manson and secondly Rochester usurped. Coulibri is burnt down and Granbois left to rot because Manson and Rochester intend to exercise inappropriate control over them. Similarly, England is like a dream for her though she is married to an English man and ever since she mimicked the English way of living standard with her mother. Hence, even in the last part of the novel she says in her despair: “They tell me I am in England but I don’t believe them. We lost our way to England.” (117). Further, she says: “This cardboard house where I walk at night is not England” (118). In this way denounced and denied by both the countries she is marooned- with her existence jettisoned to the boarders.

On the other hand, Rochester’s perceptions and values are identified as a reflection of the European systems of imperial control through which he thinks and acts. He strives to produce a regulating narrative in order to penetrate and appropriate (through/with Antoinette) the ‘untouched’ othered place. He renames his wife Antoinette to ‘Bertha,’ thus domesticating her in terms of class as well as of sex and race, and confines her to an attic, the othered space against which his English house can define itself**.** In fact, this naming is an exercise of his appropriation, appropriating

Antoinette's quality for his own purpose. Therefore, he says: "' . . . it is a name I'm particularly fond of. I think of you as Bertha'" (86). Further, showing his masculinist imperialist power over her he says, "of course, on this of all nights, you must be Bertha'" (87). Antoinette resists his masculinist and imperial enterprise, however, by rejecting the ominous name and by disturbing temporal succession and contiguity. She revolts: "Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me someone else, calling me by another name" (94). To tell the truth, by playing a (false) signification of Antoinette in *Jane Eyre*, Rhys renders explicit the imperialist and phallocentric impulses involved in the politics of naming.

Further, this politics of renaming can be related to what Spivak views that women's subject position are denied from which they can speak on their own as both spaces, whether it is east or west are patriarchies. In both the spaces women subjectivity are turned into the object of male's desire. In her witty commentary, "A Literary Representation of the Subaltern: Mahasweta Devi's Stadyini", Spivak makes clear that the woman is turned into male's desire. No matter whether she is gazed from below or above. In the text, the unnamed husband (Rochester) depicts Antoinette according to his own desire. He reduces her to 'Bertha' according to his desire. Consequently, when gazed from above he reduces her to zombie and even calls her a marionate, a puppet he can control. He says about her :"Blank lovely eyes. Mad eyes. A mad girl . . . the doll had a doll's voice, a breathless but curiously different voice" (110). Here, as a puppet master he seems to be controlling over her speech. Further, he says: "She was only a ghost. A ghost in the grey daylight. Nothing left but hopelessness" (110). Rhys suggests that Bronte and Rochester both have misnamed Antoinette and this is exposed as the white British man's "authority" over the white creole woman. Similarly, when gazed from below, as Spivak suggests that Bertha

Manson is seen as ‘good wife’ for her self-immolation. Further, Spivak states that between patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and the object formation of woman disappears. Colonialism appears to be hazardous to females than to males in the colonized spaces.

Rhys deliberately extends the politics of naming both to the imperialism and phallocentrism. She accomplishes this by allowing the issues of colonialism to come to the fore. Meanwhile, the novel is also synchronized with the period of British history in which there was no married woman’s property act that would secure the legal identity of married woman. Just as the unnamed husband refuses to recognize the nameless child, she too is refused to recognize legally by Richard Manson when he visits to the Thornfield Hal. Grace Pole tells: “. . . I did not hear all he said except “I cannot interfere legally between you and your husband. It was when he said “legally” that you flew at him and when he twisted the knife out of your hand you bite him. Do you mean to say that you don’t remember any of this? I remember now that he did not recognize me” (119-120).

It is because of the word, ‘legally’ and not an innate bestiality that prompts her violent reaction. Antoinette once married is not legally recognized. She explains to Christophine, “‘. . . I am not rich now, I have no money at all, everything I had belongs to him’” (69). As Deborah A. Kimmey mentions, Rhys was concerned with the condition of married women prior to the married woman’s property Act of 1870 also. The married woman’s plight is manifested through out the entire novel. For example, Aunt Cora’s gift of two rings to Antoinette is the evidence that concerns for the woman’s lack of right to property after marriage, which has pauperized many women particularly within the colonial context.

The issue of legal identity is also at the heart of the unnamed husband's patriarchal as well as even the colonial hegemony over Antoinette. In fact, Rochester had married Antoinette in obedience to the paternal edict though gradually he realizes that he has been betrayed by his self interested father. Both Rochester and Antoinette were taught to dress up and play parts, with disastrous consequences for both as Rochester cannot drop the role of authoritarian. In fact, the marriage was based on the vested interest for the property that Antoinette had. This is evident when Christophine shows her scorn to Rochester: "Everybody knows that you marry her for her money and you take it all. And then you want to break her up, . . . she is more better than you, she have better blood in her and she doesn't care for money - it's nothing for her" (98). Rochester loathes Antoinette's otherness, and reveals a practitioner of colonial obeah and with the confidence of his own racial and cultural superiority he has stolen her spirit and driven her mad. As Christophine scolds Rochester: ". . . all you want is to break her up" (98). Finally, Rochester destroys her woman subjectivity, her legal identity and her personal identity as a whole and reduces her to 'zombie', according to his mere male desire.

Christophine says: "All women, all colours, nothing but fools . . ." (69). Of course, to some extent, it sounds correct. Possibly, it is because of women's own passiveness to the oppression and their own intention to endure the oppression; they become the object of male desires. Yet, there are other factors also, like caste, race, legal provisions to women and so forth. Anyway, in every space women are the subject of males objective desires in the patriarchal social structure. Moreover, in the context of the colonial situation women are doubly and even triply oppressed. These women are always abused. They have nothing to live for their own except poverty and oppression. And are either gazed from above as a sexual object or from below as a

goddess, a sacrificial being. In the text, besides Antoinette and her mother Annette, there are other women also like Amilie, Christophine and even Danial Cosway's mother (whether he is true or not) who have been the subject of male's desire to abuse.

Antoinette's unnamed husband has no qualms about having sex with Amilie but refuses to recognize his child from her. Further, he feels liscenced to reject his wife when it is implied by the jealous Daniel that she may have had colored lovers before she knew him. Similarly, Daniel Cosway reports that his father was Old Mr. Cosway. He tells that the man had a heart like stone and states: "Sometimes, when he get sick of a woman which is quickly, he frees her like he free my mother, even he give her a hut and a bit of land for herself, but it is no mercy, it is for wicked pride he do it"(77-78). Nevertheless, an ex-slave given as a wedding-present to Antoinette's mother and subsequently a caring servant, Christophine subverts the creole address that would constitute her as a domesticated other, and asserts herself as articulate antagonist of patriarchal, settler and imperialist law. Binita Parry in her essay, "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse", further analyzing Spivak's strategy mentions:

> Natural mother to children and surrogate parent to Antoinettte, Christophine scorns patriarchal authority in her personal life by discarding her patronymic and refusing her sons' father as husbands; as Antoinette's protector see impugns 'Rochester' for his economic and sexual exploitation of her fortune and person and as female individualist she is eloquently and frequently contemptuous of male Cconduct , black and white. (40)

For instance, in the text Christophine admits: “three children I have. One living in this world, each one a different father, but no husband, I thank God. I keep my money. I don’t give it to no worthless man” (69).

Anyway, these subaltern women are ruthlessly abused on the grounds of gender parallel with their socio- economic condition and geographical location. Their voices are simply ignored in the patriarchal society despite the fact that they also contribute to their male counterparts, family the society as a whole. However, they are privileged to be heard by their own male counterparts, and are deprived form that opportunity as well. The colonial as well as elite historiographers simply ignore them and misrepresent them. They have no access to speak on behalf of themselves. Therefore, they are doubly under shadow. They got to be represented with appropriate means and strategies. Certainly, colonialism operated very differently for women and for men, and the double colonization that resulted when women were subject both to general discrimination as colonial subjects and specific discrimination needs to be taken into account while analyzing any kind of colonial oppression.

Spivak echoes that to analyze the postcolonial Third World text it is necessary to proceed with the assumption of the voices of differences. Further, Chandra Mohanty argues that this is in contrast to the complicit self-representation of Western women as educated, modern, as having control over their bodies as sexualities and the freedom to make their decisions. Obviously, the plight of Jane in *Jane Eyre* is vehemently different from that of ‘Antoinette’ in the present text or ‘Bertha’ in *Jane Eyre* as well as other subaltern women in the text. Jane represents the modern educated woman who can have control over her body as well as sexualities and freedom. She represents self representation of the Western women who can make their own decisions. On the other hand, Antoinette represents the average third world

woman who leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender and third world woman; the ignorant, poor, tradition bounded, domestic, family oriented and victimized as well. Spivak, further suggests, "*Jane Eyre* can be read as the orchestration and staging of the self-immolation of Bertha Manson as 'good wife'" (272). Thus, there is distinction between the Western feminist re-representation of women in the Third World, and the Western feminist self representation. There is difference between the plight of subaltern women and the western educated or graduated women with their assumption of modern freedom.

As Chandra Mohanty states, experience must be historically interpreted and theorized if it is to become the basis of feminist solidarity and struggle. Certainly, Jean Rhys has historically interpreted the experiences of Bertha Manson and other subaltern women in the text and saved them from being misrepresented and manipulated by giving voice to Bertha herself in *Wide Sargasso Sea* through reversed perspective. Hence, in the present work it has been tried to look upon the differences between the plight of the women belonging to metropolitan location as well as the subaltern women belonging to Third world.

IV. Conclusion

The present work attempts to study the plights of the native colonized women in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and brings forth the diverse experiences of the women in Third World or colonized spaces and metropolitan location through subaltern and Third World feminist perspectives. Particularly, it intends to study the anxiety and the feelings of self-disgust and self-dispossession of a Jamaican creole woman, Antoinette, 'Bertha' in *Jane Eyre.* Certainly, Rhys's Bertha becomes the focus of unbearable cultural tensions which reflects the postcolonial experience of subaltern women.

We are well aware that Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a creative answer to the famous British feminist cultural text *Jane Eyre*. Indeed, Rhys's revision has foregrounded the Third World women's experience, by giving a voice to Bertha to expose her experience which has been ignored in by Charlotte Bronte in *Jane Eyre* though her presence haunts the entire novel. In *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Antoinette is given voice to expose her predicament to represent the plights of the subaltern women whose lives are hazardous under the patriarchal social structure as well as colonial regime together. Spivak argues that these subaltern women remain unheard and they remain under shadow and are misrepresented to foreground the western individualism. In *Jane Eyre* Bertha's story remains unheard to establish the western individualism as well as to consolidate Jane Eyre belonging to west whose experience is explicitly different from her. In the novel, she is depicted as insane, a ghost like woman maiming her husband. Similarly, in *Wide Sargasso Sea* also Antoinette is reduced to Bertha, zombie by her unnamed husband who represents the colonial margin. However, in *Wide Sargasso Sea,* Rhys has given voice to Antoinette to expose her experiences through reversed perspective, as Antoinette says, "There is

always the other side, always" (82). Certainly, there is always the other side for representation is always fictional and partial. It can inadvertently usurp the space of those who are incapable of representing. European imperialist social mission takes advantage through this representation which is the very plight of subaltern women, the plight of Bertha in *Jane Eyre* and even Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea.*

Certainly, discourse of representation should not be confused with material realities. The European mainstream feminism cannot explicitly encompass the Third World women's experience nevertheless; the European women too experienced the discrimination in the masculine world of Empire. Chandra Mohanty asserts that the average Third World women essentially lead a trauncted life based on their feminine gender and being Third World they are poor, ignorant, uneducated, domestic, tradition bound, family-oriented and victimized etc… Further, Ellek Bohemer argues that these subaltern women were disadvantaged and repressed not only of gender. Besides gender, they were excluded and suppressed also of race, social class, and, in some cases, religion, caste, sexuality and regional. Antoinette is also ignorant, domesticated, family-oriented and victimized. Moreover, she is victimized by the colonial onslaught too in addition to the patriarchal social structure. She is victimized by the cultural disruption brought by colonial onslaught. For being a creole she becomes the subject of hatred for both the white as well black communities. She becomes inferior even to black community after the independence of slaves. In this way, she becomes forced to bear the unequal cultural tensions and finds herself in dangling situation, an in-between situation with less access to power as well property. Hence, she is forced to lead a life full of anxieties for being displaced and also becomes abused and pauperized under the patriarchal social system indeed even with

the lack of provisions for married woman's property right in the contemporary English legal system.

Postcolonial critics argue for the inclusion of the overlap between patriarchal, economic and racial oppression, the difference between the political polarities of the First World War while discussing about the Third World Women's experience. Similarly, they argue that colonialism operated very differently for women and for men, and the double colonization resulted women subject both to the general discrimination as colonial subjects and specific discrimination which needs to be taken into account while analyzing any colonial oppression even after independence. Antoinette too becomes the victim of both the general discrimination for being the native creole as well as specific discrimination for being female, the traditional or pre-colonial constructions inflicted by the contemporary masculinist bais that falsely represents 'native' women as quietest and subordinate. Hence, to analyze the oppression inflicted upon Antoinette, it is necessary to proceed with the assumption of the voices of differences which Rhys has it is in the east or in the west, woman's subjectivity gets dissolved in male's undertaken in her text with the voice of Antoinette herself in addition to the unnamed husband (Rochester in Bronte's text) and others like Christophine through her literary as well as linguistic strategies.

As spivak remarks, whether desire. They cannot speak on behalf of themselves as in both the spaces they are turned into the objects of male desires. Antoinette and Jane Eyre both become the object of desires. Both are compelled to bear the gender discrimination. Both have their own kind of female experiences despite of being in different spaces. However, the woman from the colonies is not to sacrifice as an insane animal for her sister's consolidation. This native Caribbean woman, Antoinette has her own plight which requires to be historically interpreted and theorized and it

has been done by Rhys in her present text. Therefore, there is difference between the experience of a suppressed native creole, Antoinette and the western college graduated women with their individualist and essentialist ideologies as well as control over their body. Hence, as Spivak suggests, subaltern people got to appropriate language and other strategies of the elites the way post-colonialism appropriates language and theoretical strategies of the west, and posits women in the role of the subaltern women questioning the male constructed voice of women within patriarchal society, Jean Rhys in *Wide Sargasso Sea* has given Bertha a voice to herself to question the male constructed voice of women within patriarchal society.

To conclude, with the usage of various hybrid imageries, metaphors and symbols, Jean Rhys has inculcated the experiences and the predicaments of subaltern women in the novel to show the diverse experiences of the subaltern women belonging the Third World and metropolitan centre. Certainly, sisterhood cannot be assumed on the basis of gender. It must be formed in concrete, historical and political practice for the basis of feminist solidarity and struggle.

Works Cited

Abrahams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms.* 7th ed. Singapore: Harcourt Asia Pvt. Ltd, 2000.

Ashcroft, Bill. *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies*. London: New York: Routledge, 2004.

- - -. Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Reader*. London: New York, Routledge, 1995.

Bertens, Hans. *Literary Theory: The Basics*. London: New York: Routledge, 2003.

Bhabha, Homi. K. *Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

Bhadra, Gautam. "The Mentality of Subalternity: Kantanama or Rajdharma." *Selected Subaltern Studies*. Ed Ranjit Guha. Delhi: OUP, 1998. 63-69.

Bohemer, Ellek. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literatures*. New York: OUP, 1995.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Invitation to a Dialogue". *Subaltern Studies IV*. Ed. Ranjit Guha. Delhi: OUP, 1986. 360-376.

Das, Veena. "Subaltern as Perspective." *Subaltern Studies VI*. Ed. Ranjit Guha. Delhi: OUP, 1989. 311-24.

Fister, Barbara. *Third World Women's Literatures: A Dictionary and Guide to Materials in English.* London: Greenwood Press, 1995. 407-408.

Guha, Ranjit. "Dominance without Hegemony and its Historiography." *Subaltern Studies VI.* Ed. Ranajit Guha. Delhi: OUP, 1988. 209-310.

- - -. ed. *Selected Subaltern Studies.* Delhi: OUP, 1988.

- - -. ed. *Subaltern Studies I.* Delhi: OUP, 1982.

- - -. ed. *Subaltern Studies II.* Delhi: OUP, 1983.

Kimmy, Deborah A. “Women Fire and Dangerous Things: Metatextuality and the Politics of Reading in Jean Rhy’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*.” *Women’s Studies*. 34: 113-31. nd.

Ludden, David. ed. *Reading Subaltern Studies.* Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003.

Mardorossian, Carine Melkom. “Double (De) Colonization and The Feminist Criticism of *Wide Sargasso Sea.” College Literature*. Spring 99. Vol. 26. Issue 2, p79, 17p.

Myer, Valerie Grosvenor. *Charlotte Bronte: Truculent Spirit*. London: Vision Press Ltd., 1987.

Prakash, Gyan, “Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism.” *American Historical Review* 99. 5 (December 1994): 1475-90.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation.* London: Routledge, 1992.

Radhakrishnan, R. *Diasporic Mediations.* USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Ed. Angela Smith. England: Penguin Book, 1997.

Rody, Caroline. “Burning Down the House: The Revisionary Paradigm of Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea.” Famous Last Words: Changes in Gender and Narrative Closur*e. Ed. Alison Booth. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 1993. 300-25.

Spivak, Gyatri Chakravorty. “A Literary Representation of the Subaltern: Mahaswetadevi’s ‘Stanadayini.’” *Subaltern Studies V.* Ed. Ranajit Guha. Delhi: OUP, 1987.

- - -, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader.* Ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrismass. New York: Columbia UP, 1994, 66-111.

- - -, Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography.” *Subaltern Studies IV.* Ed. Ranajit Guha. Delhi: OUP, 1986. 330-363.

Visweswaran, Kamala. “Small Speeches, Subaltern Gender: Nationalist Ideology and its Historiography.” *Subaltern Studies IX.* Ed. Shahid Amin and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Delhi: OUP, 1996. 83-125.