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## **A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF Wide Sargasso**

**“Sea by Jean Rhys”**

Thesis submitted to the Department of English Language and Literature as a partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of *Master* in Literature and civilization.

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## **Declaration of Originality**

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this humble work to my dear parents, all my family, my husband and to everyone who contributed in his/her own way in the completion of this work.

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## **Abstract**

The West Indies (Caribbean) was one of the areas that has been subjected to colonial power's, oppression, and harsh image of criminality. In fact, *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys serves a postcolonial writing and reading as a response to the English writer Charlotte Bronte's *Jean Eyre*. Through the character of Antoinette Cosway, Rhys draws a similar character to Bertha Mason with the intention of creating a voice and dignity to the margin. Through this story, she demonstrates these complex facets of living for the Caribbean people. Caribbean women rather than men suffered diverse types of oppression because they experienced another level of dominance imposed on them by men and patriarchal society. Thus, the aim of this work is expose the main complexities emerging behind a colonial and postcolonial oppression, such as madness and neglect. Another aim is to reveal the diverse agents and factors born from an imperial process, such as colour hierarchies, racism, and ethnicity which lead to a kind of disturbance and ambivalence at the level of constructing a self-image and authentic identity. In addition to that, this paper aims to transmit how the accumulation of these harsh circumstances inserted by an imperial and orientalist attitude and character (Rochester in the novel) contribute to create a big room for "the complete Other who is examined from both a postcolonial perception and representation through the character of Antoinette.

This research work will conclude the unchanging reality and existence of the postcolonized body through the combination of diverse features of in-betweenness, hybridity, unbelonging, isolation, estrangement, Othering lack of belongingness, and therefore the certainty of the persistence of disturbance and ambivalence at the level of identity, in addition to the feelings of insecurity, inferiority, and distrust .

**Keywords:** the Other; Identity; Oppression; Postcolonial; West-Indies.

## Table of Contents

<b>Declaration of Originality</b> .....	<b>I</b>
<b>Dedication</b> .....	<b>II</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>III</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>IV</b>
<b>General Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>

### *Chapter One: Between the Literary and Historical Zones*

I.1. Introduction.....	4
I.2. Jean Rhys and her Style of Writing.....	4
I.3. The Caribbean between Beauty, Pain and Creation.....	5
I.4. Dominica as a Microcosm of the Caribbean.....	7
I.5. Slave Trade as a Permanent Evil.....	8
I.5.1. Slavery as a Parasite.....	8
I.5.2. Women Slaves Status.....	10
I.5.3. Slave Emancipation.....	11
I.6. Caribbean's Creative Mirror.....	12
I.6.1. Questions of Interests.....	13
I.6.2. Examples of West-Indian Literature.....	13
I.6.3. African Literature as a Source of Inspiration.....	13
I.6.4. Caribbean Women Writers.....	15
I.7. Conclusion.....	16

### *Chapter Two: Between a Postcolonial Theoretical and Conceptual Issues*

II.1. Introduction.....	18
II.2. Postcolonialism.....	18
II.3. Post colonial Theory.....	21
II.3.1. Homi Bhabha.....	23
II.3.1.1 Hybridity.....	23
II.3.1.2 Mimicry.....	25
II.3.2 Edward Said.....	26
II.3.3. Frantz Fanon.....	27
II.4. Post-Colonial Feminist Theory.....	28
II.4.1. Ania Loomba.....	29
II.4.2. Gayatri Spivak.....	29

II.4.2.1. The Subaltern Subject.....	30
II.5. The Other.....	30
II.6. Post-colonial Literature.....	31
II.7. Conclusion.....	33

### ***Chapter Three: A Postcolonial Reading to Wide Sargasso Sea***

III.1. Introduction.....	35
III.2. Wide Sargasso Sea.....	35
III.3. Hint from the Novel.....	36
III.4. Postcolonial Reading to Wide Sargasso Sea.....	37
III.4.1. The colonizer/colonized.....	38
III.4.2. Displacement and Belonging.....	38
III.4.3. The Fanonian Ambivalence.....	39
III.4.4. Mimicry to a Solution to Identity Crisis.....	41
III.4.5. The Other and Orientalism.....	42
III.4.6. Hybridity and In –Betweeness.....	45
III.4.7. The Subalterns Characters.....	46
III.4.8. Resistance and Freedom.....	47
III.5. The symbols.....	47
III.5.1. Sargasso Sea.....	47
III.5.2. Christophine: a Symbol of the Oppressed and Rebellious Blacks.....	47
III.6. Conclusion.....	49
<b>General Conclusion.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Glossary.....</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>60</b>

## ***General Introduction***



As a result of the contact between the two zones of the colonized and colonizer, many postcolonial societies faces numerous problematic at all levels; political, social, and economic. Other dilemmas includes disturbance in language, identity, culture and even religion. In fact, Caribbean literature and creative imagination have a wide response in front of these historical realities. Indeed, *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys reveals multiple complexities surrounding the Caribbean wo/men in general. In a deconstructionist approach and response to the English writer Charlotte Bonte's *Jean Eyre*, Jean Rhys serves a postcolonial reading to *Jean Eyre*'s novel through playing upon her characters, plots, and themes. The protagonist Jean Eyre who is called Bertha and who is silent marginalized and Othered in her novel and story is given a real voice in *Wide Sargasso Sea* to tell her story and suffering. Shifting this lonely, sensitive, and marginal Creole protagonist from the peripheral spaces to the center, is one of the main goals of Jean Rhys.

In fact, diverse elements cohere in the novel to create a sense of identity crisis, such as gender, race, ethnicity, and the process of Othering. Thus, the aim of this work is expose the main complexities emerging behind a colonial and postcolonial oppression, such as madness and neglect. Another aim is to reveal the diverse agents and factors born from an imperial process, such as colour hierarchies, racism, and ethnicity which lead to a kind of disturbance and ambivalence at the level of constructing a self-image and authentic identity. In addition to that, this paper aims to transmit how the accumulation of these harsh circumstances inserted by an imperial and orientalist attitude and character (Rochester in the novel) contribute to create a big room for "the complete Other" who is examined from both a postcolonial perception and representation through the character of Antoinette.

In this regard, this research paper will address the following research questions:

1. What are the main changes brought by the colonizer to the West-Indies?
2. What are the main agents and elements leading the postcolonized body, especially the female one to disturbance and ambivalence at the level of his/her identity?
3. In which ways does Jean Rhys create a different position of the “Other” from Charlotte Bonte’s *Jean Eyre*?

In this vein, the aforementioned research questions are hypothesized as follow:

1. Colonialism has contributed in reshaping the West-Indies at all levels; politically, culturally, economically and in every detail.
2. The oppressor inserts diverse tools and oppressive methods, such as colour heirachies, ethnicity, race, sexual abuse to disturb the Caribbean wo/men.
3. The Other in Jean Rys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea* is seen and regarded from a postcolonial representation and context. Therefore, it is given a voice to tell his/her story.

Since this investigation is based on anecdotal narrative rather than facts, so the suitable research method is qualitative which has been followed in order to answer carefully the former asked questions and assure the objective of the study.

This dissertation consists of three chapters. The first chapter will provide an overview about the historical and the literary background of the novel. The second chapter is theoretical and will give an overview about postcolonial concepts and theorists. The last one will unearth the main themes, plots and characters in the novel through conducting an analytical and thematic study using the postcolonial approach.

## ***Chapter One:***

### ***Between the Literary and Historical Zones***

## **I.1. Introduction**

The West- Indies includes diverse population arriving from different places and geographies from the whole world, such as Britain, India, France, Italy and West of Africa. In fact, under this plurality, diversity and the ambiguity of being in this new world, these people tried to find a collective name, representation and definition to themselves. The harsh and painful experiences of pain, negligence, slavery, the lost of memories and colonialism contributed to shape the general realities and the environment of the region. These historical records, events and brutal practices intervened in reshaping the past as well as the present. Jean Rhys as writer belonging to this spot served many attempts to draw a real vision and side for recording faithfully this sick history and the numerous crises contributing in the act of destabilizing the West-Indian mind and body. Therefore, in this chapter, lots of attempts were made to deal with this unknowledgeable part in the region. In addition to that, I worked hard to give an overview about what is named as “historyless” place. Moreover, through this investigation, I tried to deal with the literary, social and artistic sides to enrich the reader’s views and perspectives about the historically suppressed cultures.

## **I.2. Jean Rhys and her Style of Writing**

Jean Rhyss' novels describe both women's limits, culture, and gender. Rhys' strategies and style resemble those of experimental writers such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Dorothy Richardso. Her treatment of words is similar to Gertrude Stein's poetry in that it frequently relies on sound and syntax for meaning. The social isolation that Rhys' characters face appears to emphasize a private, even schizophrenic, vision. To borrow a phrase, she developed her own distinct forms of interior monologue and a fragmented style.

Rhys was a writer interested in developing many techniques of narration and storytelling. Her aim is writing to the elevated degree. In addition to that, inserting a range of diverse literary strategies to reach the greatest proficiency and skillfulness of which she was able for articulating, in literary forms, the insights she had gained in living and in writing. For Rhys, the main basis of fiction is auto-biography. In this respect, she claims: 'I know that "parler de soi" is not supposed to be the proper thing to do ... [but] I feel so fiercely about that. "No one knows anything but himself or herself" (1994; 103-4). She believed that her own writing always emerged out from an incident or something that had existed and happened, the process of writing firmly involved a real movement away from such autobiography and reality. In her novels, truth could be found only through the destabilization of identity and language. Rhys' characters and fictional strategies disrupt the moral order, and are always disconnected and fragmented between the past and the present. In this respect, she said:

*"Something to do with time being an illusion I thinks. I mean the past exist side by side with present, not behind it; that what was- is. I tried to do it by making the past (the West-Indies) very vivid -the present dreamlike..." (1994:24)*

### **I.3. The Caribbean between Beauty, Pain and Creation**

The Caribbean islands in general can be defined by the complexity of its history or being completely historyless. Under diverse secrets and accounts, this geography becomes a motive and destination for myriads of people around the world. Both colonialism and slavery have a wide hand in shaping and reshaping the region as a new phenomenon. Under the diversity of human beings' arrival for many reasons, diversity of cultures, languages and customs has resulted from the confluence created either by choice or necessity. Safra, Jacob et al give a general idea about the West Indies. They say:

*“.... the West Indies is racially heterogeneous and largely described from an early population society based on slave labour. Most of the blacks are descended from African slaves while many of the white are descended Spanish, French, British, or Dutch Colonist. The West Indies creole languages evolved from pidgin variants and European Languages have become the common languages of people. The French and English creoles are blend of these languages with African and West Indies languages. By contrast the major Spanish language communities- Cuba, Perto Rico, and the Dominican Republic speak pure Spanish, Papiamento, a Spanish-Dutch-Portuguese English Creole, is widely spoken in Aruba and the Netherlands, Antillees , East Indians constitute a substantial minority in the region, especially in Trinidad and Tobago, where they make up forty percent of the population. Chine constitutes a smaller minority, and whites account for some seventy percent of the population of Cuba and Puerto Rico”. (1998:598)*

In addition to that, the shared sense of history and geography of the Caribbean have resulted in many cultural components including similarities and amalgamation. This region is endowed with exceptionally beautiful scenery and landscapes and yet-undiscovered ocean resources arose from the sixteenth century.

The nineteenth century shaped completely a new society through the abolition of the slave trade. This fact contributed strongly in embedding security and stability for many people, especially the foreigners who came under diverse reasons of either war or economical motives. This fact has allowed the region to distinguish itself in our own time.

The Arawaks who inhabited great parts of the Greater Antilles, the Leeward Islands, and the Bahamas represented the main native people. They focused on agriculture as an important activity for living. However, the Carib groups were war-like. The last group encompassed the Ceboney who depended on fishing and hunting as two major exercises (Lowenthal David, 1972, Williams Eric, 1962). These tribes contributed with their talents in transmitting significant oral tradition, such as legends, oral stories, narratives and myth.

Creativity and imagination were two defining features for artistic beauty and creation. Through the production of large number of internationally recognized personalities, such

as poets, dancers, novelists, designers, painters, and musicians, the process of checking new definition and representation for the region outside the imposed stereotypes of the devilish masters took place.

The West Indies was encouraged by great movement of migrations in an attempt to replace the depopulated indigenous people by the European's explorers. White indentured labour servants in addition to the Africans slaves contributed in the re- institution of the nation. Extreme discrimination, racial hierarchies and acute racism took place under these conditions. Black Africans left their homes in Africa to find themselves between widespread diseases, excessive work, malnutrition and high punishment unto death (Mimi Sheller, 2003).

#### **I.4. Dominica as a Microcosm of the Caribbean**

Dominica is considered as the largest and fertile island in the eastern Caribbean Sea. The French islands of Guadeloupe and Marie-Galante are its closest neighbours to the north, and Martinique from the south. A very powerful volcanic activity contributed in its formation. It has a wide range of high mountains covered in plants and forests. Dominica is considered as the last Caribbean spot colonized by the imperial Europeans powers due to the fierce and the acute resistance of the native Caribs. It contains 751 km<sup>2</sup> as a surface, which means that both the geographical position in addition to its surface can open diverse doors for economy, tourism, and even commercial relations.

The Dominican Republic has lots of features and characteristics which make in common with many places of Latin America. Many writers conclude that it is a microcosm of that region. As the whole islands of the Caribbean, Dominicans have lived divers problematic and dilemmas, and experience numerous obstacles at all levels, such as political, economic, civil disorder, ethnic and religious tensions. Naturally, Dominica is

characterized by its beauty, nature, many waterfalls, green plants, valleys, rivers, rare plants, and diverse species and categories of animal stages. English is the official language, although the majority speaks a patois, a mix of African and French linguistic elements. The majority of its people are Roman Catholics.

## **I.5. Slave Trade as a Permanent Evil**

The West-Indies is characterized by the two harsh systems threatening its existence and growth; Slavery and colonialism changed the West-Indian's content. In fact, these two processes of thoughts were introduced for a very long time and intervened in every detail of this region. The main aim of the Europeans was to elevate economy and luxury. They characterized the region starting from the end of the fifteenth which coincided with age of exploration in America. This evil continued until the beginning of the twentieth century.

### **I.5.1. Slavery as a Parasite:**

The slaves' circumstances were used in very difficult and harsh activities; they represented mere objects and property and thus were not safe from some of their master's mad decisions. A slave missed all parameters of existence, though he could own space and family in his own time, but never married without permission. In this respect, Inikori stated that:

*“slavery existed at one time or another in every society and went further that it is a reflection of the general tendency in all human societies for the strong to exploit the weak”.*(DATE/ PAGE)

Slave trade lasted for approximately 40 years and included criminality in every act and practice. African people left their homelands because of war, hunger, trafficking in human beings and many other ambiguous conditions. They ultimately created a new world where diaspora shaped people's life. They felt extreme change, especially under the brutal and



the violent system of slave trade. However, the host land allowed them to be introduced to multiple cultures, people, and products. In this sense Oruno Lara claims:

*“slavery in the caribbean was more than an institution with its own laws and customs and methods of keeping order. It was literally a “totalitarian” system of economic, political, social and sexual exploitation based on force, violence and the ideology of racism. The ceremonial in which the slaves were integrated into the system was meant to blot out their past and their culture, and kill them as free men and members of society” (1994:9)*

Slavery was nothing more than institutionalized human parasitism, according to Orlando Patterson. They were economically, socially, politically, and culturally marginal and alien. Because of the slave's marginalization, they could be badly exploited in a manner that would never have been rational otherwise.

Slavery is related to parasitism since it emphasizes the imbalance of human relationships, according to Patterson. The master renders himself reliant in the process of controlling and subjugating his slave. As a result, the master's need for the slave reinforces the use of violence. Parasitism can range from small exploitation or dependence to complete reliance on the master, and it can be deadly to the slave. In this respect, Patterson says:

*“Instead of individual holders and slaves constituting the units in the relationship, the institution of slavery is conceived of as a single process that operates on the total social system. The systematic parasitism of the slave holder’s culture and society naturally reinforce the direct personal parasitism of the slaveholder on his slave. In this sense, the slave maybe said to suffer both personal and institutional parasitism”. (1982:337)*

The birth of the slave trade came at the most severe stage of Africa's history at all stages of Africa's history and outside the world. African men and women are reduced to products, and the breakdown of male blackness is weakened. In particular, there is a situation where

there is an economic imbalance between West South Africa and other countries in the world.

### **I.5.2. Women Slaves Status:**

In slavery, women represent a special mark in history, and have a distinct dimension. Slave women were considered as white master wives. Though men and women were exposed to the same kind of slave work, indigenous women's were fundamental agent and factor at the level of community and family. In this respect, Columbus' states that these women "appear[ed] to work more than the men" (Shepherd 1999, 9). Though life conditions were very harsh for a slave in general, women's slave faced worst circumstances. They were obliged to struggle alongside men in order to live a simple way of life, protect her dignity, to prove her integrity in society and culture. They showed positive figure in slave rebellions and resistance. They participated in many acts and plots against their masters; women have also been found to figure prominently in such events as suicides and mass poisonings (Klein, 1986: 94).

Slave women in the West-Indies showed and displayed their powerful personalities, attempts for liberation and independence. They checked for self worth through their refusal and opposition to many jobs and tasks performed in the fields on plantations. This rebellion was seen through diverse expressions and acts, such as not getting married, rejecting to reproduce, and various types which can be seen in the form of physical opposition.

In the Caribbean, the system of slavery aimed to suppress and degrade the image of women and the real figure of womanhood in different ways and forms, "Maternity and fertility was at the core for plantation survival, and so women's resistance to these policies

were all too common (Reddock, 1994: 24). These slave owners were afraid of these women's rebellions. Other subversive acts included taking on the role of "Obeah" (mostly female practitioners of African pagan rituals such as magic, folk medicine, and group dances) in relation to instances of revolt in Jamaica. Women slaves committed witchcraft and poisoning against their white masters, as well as other secretive practices such as crowning black kings and queen.

### **I.5.3. Slave Emancipation:**

The division created in the British society led the Anti-Slavery Society in Britain in the early 1800s to oppose this kind of trafficking in human beings and considering it as inhumane operation. While others argue the opposite. Slave emancipation was born also from the high sense of resistance and rebellion transmitted from the mountains of every island. Second, there was a shift in Britain from mercantilism to free trade. The slave trade had sparked one of the era's most heated economic debates (Williams, 1970: 138).

The industrial revolution contributed in creating economic and political changes in Britain between 1783 to 1833. Monopolistic interests began to give way to capitalist interests. Free trade swept the logic of the country. Sugar taxes were abolished in 1846 when the Com Laws were repealed.

The abolition of slavery grew because this type of trade became no longer practicable economically or commercially viable. In addition, slaves represented a burden rather than a help because of the rise of the cost of sugar production.

The financially depleted plantations, on the other hand, signaled a shrinking market for British exports, as did the drop in demand for imports. For British manufacturers, India and Brazil emerged as profitable markets. Furthermore, European markets were flooded with

less costly beet sugar, rendering slave-produced Caribbean sugar uncompetitive. This, in turn, had an impact on the British shipping industry, which relied on the sugar and slave trade to the Caribbean plantations for profit. Furthermore, in order to maintain their commercial viability, British sugar refineries required more raw sugar, which the Caribbean colonies were unable to supply, and even if they did, it was more expensive than French colonial sugar. As a result, it has been argued that the fight against slavery was actually a fight against monopoly.

The Haitian revolution's extreme antislavery campaign was itself a fight for land and ownership, which, while affirming enslaved people as agents of change and subjects in their own right, simultaneously brought attention to the ambiguous bounds and meaning of slavery and freedom categories.

The zones of freedom and unfreedom were brought together in such a way that the borders between them appeared to be continually in flux, constantly changed. The moral world's 'waving line' between slavery and freedom created 'spaces of mobility and ambiguity,' with multiple crossing points, breaking points, and constant flows (Konrad 2015, 3).

## **I.6. Caribbean's Creative Mirror**

English Caribbean literature discussed diverse topics related to the region and its historical context. The harsh terrain and experience which were full of racism, oppression, colour hierarchies, and suppression, were highly transmitted through the pages of numerous writers and poets.

### **I.6.1. Questions of Interests:**

These West-Indian writers considered their novels, fiction and short stories as a mirror through which all historical, social, cultural and even political issues were transmitted. They tried to make their histories comprehensible and through the literary work, resistance, opposition and correcting histories took place. Through art and the world of beauty, the societies' ills and pains were skillfully interpreted. Alienation, rootlessness, questions of belonging /longing, homelessness, identity, history, and exile are among the most dominant themes and questions in West-Indian literature. The experience of slavery, colonialism and their effect on the West-Indian body were prominent issues. In this respect Rose Acholon said that, "the dehumanizing influence of colonization ...is as damaging as it is permanent" (1987, :78).

### **I. 6. 2. Examples of West-Indian literature:**

The literature and literary works of the Caribbean area were written in French, Spanish, or English. Among the works written in English; *Miguel street* by V.S. Naipaul (1959) , *Lucy* by Jamaica Kincaid(1990), *Here Come The Sun* by Nicole Dennis-Benn(2016), *The longest Memory*, written by Fred d'Aguiar in 1995, *Crossing the River* by Carol Phillips in 2006), and Jean Rhys's 1966 novel *The Wide Sargasso Sea*, As a result, Caribbean literature played a significant role and influence in postcolonial studies because it provided a multitude of powerful and new techniques that supported understanding and reading literature. This was not limited to the Caribbean, but it served to benefit all literature.

### **I.6.3. African Literature as a Source of Inspiration:**

Historically, Africa is considered as spiritual place and home for many West-Indians writers and people. These representatives reject to inspire their cues and views from

Europe. The West-Indies literature derived lots of oral traditions from African literature. Kebra Negast (the "Book of Kings") is the most well-known Ethiopian literary work in this period. Slave narratives, such as Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, were popular in the West throughout the colonial period (1789).

African literature resented topics such as liberation, independence, and many African nations obtained independence and, as a consequence, their literature rose in number, quality, and reputation. Most African works and authors have appeared in Western university curricula through their creative poetry and short story collections published at the end of the twentieth century.

African authors started writing in both European and native African languages for international purposes. Many famous literary critics claim that the conflict between past and present, tradition and modernity, indigenous and foreign, individualism and community, capitalism and socialism, motivation and self, and, and at last, with both "africanity" and humanity, are dominant concepts in contemporary African literature.

African literature is a collection of written styles in African languages, as well as oral materials written in both European and African languages. Traditional writers usually wrote from a specific geographical area and often participated in other cultures in the Mediterranean. Northern Nigerian scholars created written literature in Hausa and Arabic. Literature has been created by the people of the Horn of Africa. Christianity is considered traditional in the region of Africa where Geez and Amharic are spoken.

During the colonial period, slave narratives such as Olaudah Equiano's *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* were the most well-known African works. *The Black Hermit*, written by Ngugi wa Thiong'o of Kenya in 1962, was the first East African

drama. *Things Fall Apart* (1958), by the famous writer Chinua Achebe, was among the first pieces of African literature to receive international critical acclaim.

#### **I.6.4. Caribbean Women Writers:**

The overwhelming political and cultural need to define "Caribbeanness" influenced the years that precede and follow independence. English curriculum that shaped their early school education had a tremendous influence on writers, and they were thus irrevocably linked to a brutal type of cultural tyranny. Women writers faced additional gender oppression because their expressions of nationalist sentiment were overlooked and their voices were largely unheard.

Vic Reid's novel *New Day* (1949), Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), C.L.R. James' *Minty Alley* (1952), George Lammings' *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953), Roger Mois' *Brother Man* (1954), and V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961) were among the "booming" works of Caribbean literature.

The 1970s literature coincided with female publishing, a new generation of female writers interested in examining and disrupting power beyond their oppressive surroundings.

In the 1980s, there was a greater representation of women in both gender-specific and mainstream anthologies. Using African images can be regarded as a means of changing the rights of the Caribbean writer and the Caribbean artist's claim to change the view of the colonial world (198).

## **I.7. Conclusion**

To conclude, this chapter aimed to trace a general view about the West –Indies through covering different aspects of life at all levels historically, socially, culturally, artistically, without forgetting to focus on the literary side born from the amalgamation of diverse events in this region. Thereafter, the second chapter will deal with the literary and historical context of the novel.



***Chapter Two:***  
***Between a Postcolonial Theoretical and Conceptual***  
***Issues***

## **II.1. Introduction**

The division of the world into unequal powers pushes numerous people to the edges of the margins. Therefore, those who define power according to their parameters are considered as the superior. The rest of the world is highly wrapped in diverse meaning of inferiority. Colonialism is considered as an act which intervenes painfully in changing concepts and notions. Therefore, postcolonial nations, theorists, writers and people have to fight and resist strongly the colonizer's greed. They instill a sense of responsibility and take in charge seriously their entire nation's concerns. Thus, in this chapter, I strive hard to work on theoretical concepts, such as post-colonialism, post-colonial theory and enrich the chapter with examples about these theorists who feed the field with their agency and wisdom in breaking forged discourses and concepts.

## **II.2. Postcolonialism**

The notion of post-colonialism emerges from the high pressure exercised on powerless people in different spots in the world, such as Algeria, India, China, Egypt and African countries. It examines the rhetoric of human's exploitation, domination and oppression under the criminal process of colonization. It attempts to give a value and a deep seated-sense of dignity to myriads of people who were oppressed in their own history and geography. Therefore, postcolonial writers and representatives tend to reassess the forged colonial histories from their own lenses, and record its events from the stand point of the colonized. Power reflects the main notion and concept that creates a high un-equilibrium between the colonized and the colonizer. Post-colonialism replaces many voices, and represents myriads of humans around the whole world to express a diverse kind of resistance. Post-colonialism according to Ashcroft et al means:

*“All that cultural production which engages [...] with the enduring reality of colonial power [...] -post-colonial is still best employed, as it was in the first edition, to refer to post-colonization. This is process in which colonized societies participate over a long period, through different phases and modes of engagement with the colonizing power, during and after the actual period of direct colonial rule”. (2002: 195)*

During colonization, the colonized gives no consideration to the dignity of the colonized. They receive diverse degrees of punishments, neglect, torture, and psychological crisis. These kinds of deprivation classify them in a space very far from the self, being considered as sub-humans. Resistance, thus, takes diverse figures of struggle and revolt. Post-colonialism reflects, therefore, the intellectual side of resistance through cultural production and creating a surface and body for postcolonial theory. In this vein, post-colonialism assumes the responsibility to provide provocative and challenging views on colonial and neocolonial authority. In addition to that, it serves explosive argument on how to combat the alien rule imposed on their minds and bodies. Post-colonialism is a highly responsive rather than descriptive critical theory whose role is to instill a sense of responsibility over the fields of history, literature, culture, knowledge and discourse of imperial power.

Frantz Fanon for example is one of the main leading figure in picturing the horrors of the emperors through fascinating works, such as *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) as well as in his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952).

Although, post-colonialism suggests a hopeful picture about a powerful future for the colonized, and promises an era free of colonialism, new kinds of dominance, enslaving and subordination including new forms of global empires may emerge as a result of lots of changes at the level of economy, self-profit and the colonizer's endless materiality. It is important not to confuse post-colonialism with the assumption that the world we live in now is free of colonialism. However, it seems that it becomes inherent issue to colonize

and embed destruction in many corners in the world. In this respect, Ahmed Aijaz explains this issue by saying “colonialism” then becomes a trans-historical thing, always present and always in a process of dissolution in one part of the world or another, so that everyone gets the privilege, sooner or later, at one time or another of being the colonizer, colonized, and post-colonial - sometimes all at once, as in the case of Australia” (1995:9).

Post-colonial writers occupy an obligatory position to address their people’s concerns, and work hard to bring light to diverse aspects of colonialism and imperialism. They bear total responsibilities towards a radical change. Through arising inspiring themes of self-discovery and representation, these writers highlight important issues of self-identity construction through counting their actions and choices.

Post-colonialism is defined as a significant term with different connotations of political resistance and involvement in the systemization of imperialism, modernity, identity, self – representation, culture, geography, and post-modernity. As disclosed in scholarly journals in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths ,and Tiffin’s book the *Empire Writes Back : theory and practice in postcolonial literature* (2002), this concept was brought to life in the mid 1980s when Edward Said ‘s’ *Orientalism*” was published in 1978.

Some people disagree about the word post-colonialism without hyphen and with it, so is there a difference between them? Although the debate over whether to use “postcolonialism” or post-colonialism” has left many scholars completely baffled, the two terms are correct and interchangeable. There is no difference between the two. Surprisingly, the word is made up of two parts: “post”and” colonialism”. The meaning of the term “post” is “after”, therefore, it has to do with the time following a period. Colonialism on the other hand, refers to the period of European colonization of America, Africa, Asia and other parts of the world. As it explained:

*The consensus in the field is that “post-colonial (with a hyphen) signifies a period that comes chronologically “after” colonialism. «Post-colonial” on the other hand, signals the persisting impact of colonization across time period and geographical regions. (Ashcroft Bill et al, 2013:32-33)*

In a broad sense, “postcolonialism” is a term used to describe the period following the liberation of colonies from European colonization. Post- colonialism works on heaving the effects of World War II and colonialism in culture and organizations on the colonized .To get this reason, historians use this word to refer to the post-independence moment.

Post- colonialism in novels mainly aim to raise typical issues of identity, national cultures, self representation, discovering the main roots and traditions of the colonized after precisely gaining his independence. In fact, depicting the effects of colonialism remains more sensitive issue either physically or psychologically because “More than three-quarters of the persons living in the world today have had their lives molded by the expertise of colonialism, argue Ashcroft et al in the Empire write back (1989:1).

Therefore, the terms post-colonialism and postcolonialism are interchangeable. It is just two different ways of spelling the same. They are used to describe how race, ethnicity, culture and human identity have been transmitted and represented in the contemporary era particularly following the end of colonialism.

### **II.3. Post colonial Theory**

Postcolonial theory has proven its efficacy over difficult concerns and different areas of interests. Theoretically, postcolonial theory is a powerful body that aims to reveal the diverse effects of colonialism, a method that work to challenge colonial power’s prevailing discourses. This theoretical body emphasizes the impacts of colonialism on both the colonized and the colonizer, and examines discriminative and exploitative acts.

Emphasizing on the past is very necessary to build a constructive future. In this line of thought, Ashcroft et al focus on how Postcolonial theory gives importance to “the problems of transmuting time into space, with the present struggling out of the past, and, [...], it attempts to construct a future” (Ashcroft et al 2002: 35).

Postcolonial theory offers alternative tools and ways of revising the colonized history from the perspective of the native who represent the only recorders of their history. It responds to colonialism and the complex power dynamics that exist both during and after colonization. In particular, postcolonial theory has discussed that systems of racist knowledge are born and rooted in an imperial mindset and accordingly how the voices of the natives have been drawn as silent and invisible. Postcolonial theory is interested also in extending and confirming a specific regard of the colonized, taking into consideration how the experience of colonialism has changed certain habits, behaviours and ways of thinking. The term “postcolonial theory” has sparked the flow of the powerful of what is described as powerless. Though Marxist approaches and theories to colonialism focus on the economic side and sector, they leave diverse unexamined aspects of colonialism such as empathy, post- colonialism is of a hybrid state, focusing on both Marxism and postmodernism. In this line, Leela Gandhi claims: "Arguably, then, it is through poststructuralism and postmodernism - and their deeply fraught and ambivalent relationship with Marxism - that postcolonialism starts to distil its particular provenance" (1998: 25).

The frame of knowledge is highly important for theorizing in the realm of post-colonialism. Therefore, the process of deconstructing and destabilizing truths coming from distrust places represents a great opportunity for the marginalized voices to impose themselves in the academic world. In the same vein, postcolonial theory is highly self-critical atmosphere.

In addition, post-colonial theory subject provides straight-forward and accessible summaries of the major work of prominent thinkers such as: Edward said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bahabha. It also examines the paths of resistance to colonialism and discusses post-colonial identity theories, which have produced some of the most powerful and challenging critical work in recent decades.

### **II.3.1. Homi Bhabha:**

Homi Bahabaha is a specialist in post-colonial theory, a literary and cultural critic, theorist of post-colonial culture and advocate for humanities. He is influenced by the fruitful works of Derrida, Foucault, and Bakhtin. His work is essential for anyone interested in cultural discourse. He was born in Bombay on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1949. He is indebted of creating key and important concepts in the field of postcolonialism, such as: ambivalence, difference, hybridity, third space and mimicry. Bhabha studied at Oxford. He has lots of popular works as: *The Location of Culture* (1994), *On Cultural Choice* (2000), *On Writing Right* (2003) and *the Nation and Narration* (1990). Through these works he relates issues of colonial destination, such as power and cultural change. Homi Bhabha refers to the unjust divisions of histories and cultures around the world, and to the role of discourses in feeding such unequal created powers, he says:

*“Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial testimony of Third world countries, and the discourses of “minorities” within the geopolitical divisions of East and West, North and South. They intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic “normality” to the uneven development and the differential, often disadvantaged, histories, of nations, races, communities, people”. (1994: 245-6)*

#### **II.3.1.1 Hybridity:**

Colonial acts, practices and the so heavy past in the native lands contribute in the creation of a history of a forged image and defaded history. The contact between the

colonized and the colonizer participate in changing one's content and character. Homi Bhabha is credited **in** bringing out the term hybridity. The concept defies the essentialist type of identity and suggests an emerging miscegenation and new transcultural types through the amalgamation and the syncretism of different varieties of people. Hybridity includes numerous examples, such as linguistic, cultural, racial, and political. As a result of the contact between the colonizer and the colonized, and because of the enduring hierarchies over the colonized, an ambivalent state and disturbed status would emerge for both of them. In Bhabha's words;

*"...hybridity is the sign of productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities, it is the name of strategic reversal of the process of discriminatory identities that secure the pure and original identity of authority, hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects" (1994,112).*

Hybridity can be regarded as a cultural combination and mixture that create a new culture and identity constructed under the colonial oppressive systems and the sustained contact between the colonizer and the colonized. Hybridity appears from different aspects of colonization, which create the clash of culture. As a result, the collision between cultures emerges from the diversity in cultural systems, traditions, and languages. Therefore, this concept can be regarded as a very important feature and element, which helps to delineate the shapes of cultural diversity, created within the mixture of ideologies, languages, and cultures.

Hybridity checks to question the emerging binary oppositions between diverse contradicted elements and parts such as colonizer/ colonized, black/white, and self/other, through re-examining the notion of power, hence the hybrid discourse indicates the deconstruction of the dominant power and culture and the productivity of the colonizer at the same moment.



Colonization represents a process of altering the colonized identity. This change helps to shifting fixities. There is remarkable shifting imposed on the native's identity with fixing the culture and the identity of the colonizer. This process leads to reshaping the colonized values, customs and traditions. In this sense, controlling the colonized becomes very easy with admitting the colonizer's culture. Thus, this created space becomes an in-between space situated between the dominant and the "other". Hybridity and in-betweenness therefore are regarded as the major features of postcolonial body and culture.

Since the integration of two diverse cultures will directly give birth to the emergence of a third space of enunciation. Therefore, new patterns of speech and styles will be produced. This combination and mixture create a kind of plurality and difference of styles and voices are born through the contact between the two zones of the colonizer and the colonized.

This will highlight the ability of interaction between the two directions.

Literature/s as hybrid can be incredibly powerful tools for creating new and unique experiences and identities, which can be particularly poignant for people who belong to marginalized and underrepresented groups. Grobman explains:

*“The hybrid text is a volatile mixture of parts that work against, within and among one another and it is fraught within, and among one another and it is fraught with tensions and conflicts. However, these very qualities offer transformative possibilities for reading, interpretation appreciation, politics and pedagogy” (2007: XiV)*

### **II.3.1.2 Mimicry:**

An important concept in post-colonial theory, as it focuses on describing the ambivalent connection between colonizers and colonized. In fact, colonial episteme and discourse foster the colonized to imitate and ‘mimic’ the colonizer. This process occurs through embracing the colonizer’s culture, habits, values, language, assumptions, and institutions.

The main result of this process is the reproduction of the previous traits. Mimicry therefore leads to a break in the colonial control and dominance the behaviour of the colonized.

However, in order for this colonized to prove his existence, mimicry is also the path for towards a recognized status the colonized. Bhabha refers to mimicry as a tool for reinforcing the imperialist's authority. He says “... *colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*” (1994:86)

### **II.3.2 Edward Said:**

Edward said was a professor in the field of literature at Columbia university, public thinker, and the pioneer of the academic subject of postcolonial studies. He was born in Mandatory Palestine. He used his knowledge in bridging the gap between Western and Eastern worlds. Edward said inaugurated the post-colonial field with “*Orientalism*” (1978). *Orientalism* is the production of ideas, knowledge and opinion about *the orient*.

In more ways than one, Edward Said's *Orientalism* represents an encyclopedia full of details about conceptions that have shaped European awareness of the universe. It examines also the concepts and viewpoints which have come to define what we call the *Orient*. Orientalism acknowledges the reality among these cultural norms. Said goes on to investigate how minds have already been fashioned to engage with particular processes which have come to consume us over the course of the book. Said (1978) explains his view on his popular release *Orientalism* by saying:

*“My contention is that Orientalism is fundamentally a political doctrine willed over the Orient because the Orient was weaker than the West, which elided the Orient's difference with its weakness....As a cultural apparatus Orientalism is all aggression, activity, judgment, will-to-truth, and knowledge”* (1978:204)

From the white Westerners perspective, the non- white is always regarded as a sub-human and completely an inferior. Accordingly, under the ideology of colonialism that highlights the inferiority of any race in comparison to the whites, therefore, Orientalism is depicted by the West to design and justify their superiority over the East.

### **II.3.3. Frantz Fanon:**

Franz fanon was a black Caribbean psychiatrist, political philosopher, pan- Africanist , and Marxist humanist concerned with psychopathology of colonization and the human, social and cultural consequences of decolonization .One of the pioneer thinkers on colonialism in works such as: *Black Skin ,White Mask* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth*( 1992).

Frantz Fanon works are full of details about the effects of blackness on the colonized, and his/her continuous desire for whiteness. Whiteness stands as a coherent feature for beauty, power, purity and superiority. The black man's regard couples with impurity, evil, savagery and primitivism. The black man is an "object capable of carrying the burden of original sin" (Fanon, 1967). Therefore, the act of satisfying people about their ugliness is the main tool of terrorizing them and instilling in them an eternal sense of inferiority. In this vein, Frantz Fanon claims:

*"Whiteness, has become a symbol of purity, of Justice, Truth, Virginity. It defines what it means to be civilized, modern and human. That is why the Negro knows nothing of the cost of freedom; when he has fought for Liberty and Justice ... these were always white liberty and white justice; that is, values secreted by his masters. Blackness represents the diametrical opposite: in the collective unconsciousness, it stands for ugliness, sin, darkness, immorality. Even the dictionary definition of white means clean and pure". (Frantz Fanon, 2008:14)*

## **II.4. Post-Colonial Feminist Theory**

Women are depicted in stereotypical roles like as suitable for house tasks, marginalized groups entities, submissive, and weak in this literary works. Postcolonial theory is especially concerned with the depiction of males in previously colonized nations and in western places. Feminists attempt to release women from double colonialism, while post colonialists seek to uncover ideologies that depict them as inferior. Feminist and postcolonial theories have emerged independently of one another, yet to adapt to and overcome the same issue. They have many common characteristics of the path they take, but they do not intersect. In the recent decade, not only has their comparable path received a lot of attention, but so has their ideal and real.

In its ongoing repeating of the imperative to include gender concerns, postcolonial feminist theory puts pressure on conventional postcolonial theory. Post-colonialism and feminism have developed a difficult relationship, with feminist critics claiming that postcolonial theory is a male-dominated field that has not only ignored but also exploited women's concerns. Postcolonial feminist theorists have accused postcolonial theorists of misrepresenting women in nationalist rhetoric as well as obliterating their involvement in the battle for independence.

Orientalism, Edward Said's foundational work, paid little attention to female power and featured just a few female writers. Homi K. Bhabha's work on the ambivalence of colonial discourses investigates the connection between a "colonizing" subject and a "colonized" object without taking into account how gender characteristics may complicate his model.

Critics like Carole Boyce Davies, who are wary of postcolonial critique's male-centered slant, frequently questioned: "where are the women in the theorizing of

postcoloniality?”(Date: 80). McClintock views Imperialism as an oppressing power which cannot be comprehended with neglecting gender.

*“Imperialism cannot be understood without a theory of gender power. Gender power was not the superficial patina of empire, an ephemeral gloss over the more decisive mechanics of class or race. Rather gender dynamics were from the outset fundamental to the maintenance of the imperial enterprise”.* (McClintock Anne, 1995:17)

#### **II.4.1. Ania Loomba:**

Ania Loomba is currently a professor at the University of Pennsylvania and an Indian literary researcher. Colonialism and postcolonial studies, race and feminist theory, current Indian literature and culture, and early modern literature are among her research interests. She earned her BA, MA, and M phil degrees at the university of Delhi before moving to England to do her PhD at the university of Sussex. She is well experienced in writing, teaching and editing. Comparative literature and Women’s studies are also among her areas of interests. Loomba gives a high importance to history, and focuses on the intersection between gender, postcolonialism, history, colonialism and feminist theory. In addition to that, she tackles diverse issues and ideologies related to colonial discourses and relates them to literature. Her work Colonialism/Postcolonialism is highly considerable and valuable being translated into diverse languages, such as Japanese, Italian, Korean, Turkish, and even Arabic language. Loomba’s areas of research also deal with the relation between colonialism and sexuality as a colonial project for invading women’s bodies.

#### **II.4.2. Gayatri Spivak:**

Gayatri spivak is an Indian scholar, a leading figure and voice in the field of post-colonial criticism, a literary theorist, and feminist critic who was born on February 24th, 1942. She is an important voice in the field of deconstructive criticism. Spivak works as a professor in an American university and as an important member of the institute of

comparative literature and society. Her experience, thus, is of undeniable interests for self-justification, especially for a woman who acts as an activist philosopher of history.

#### **II.4.2.1. The Subaltern Subject:**

The term refers to the colonized subject who coincided and coupled completely with a total neglect or absence from colonial- accounts of the colonized period. The subaltern operated in a separate level from the colonizer and the elite class. The concept of the subaltern is central to postcolonial theory. Gayatri Spivak refers to the non-recoverable idea of the subaltern subjectivity, as it is different for the non-subaltern to comprehend it. She questions theorists about their attempt of flattening them into an essentialist class?

In addition to that, the subaltern is missing a voice to express and represent himself. Therefore, the process of hearing this voice is also very far and outside the realm of possibility.

#### **II.5. The Other**

The idea of the Other holds all meaning of negativity for the colonized from weakness, stupidity, savagery, and primitivity. The term disregards the intellectual, physical and even spiritual capacities for the colonized as a human being. The Other is always designed as a barbarian, uncivilized, uneducated, and sub-human. In fact, the imperialist exploit the term to maintain authority over others in order to justify his power. It also makes him look different from himself. The term is widely discussed in post-colonial studies, and it creates two distant and totally different corners. Those who represent the norm and the reference are the ones who portray the Self with comfort and superiority. The others are the Other who is always defined by his faults, stereotypical and stigmatized images.

For the West, geography plays a major role for the construction of Otherness. In Edward Said's work of *Orientalism* (1978), he refers to how the West figures the East as an Oriental Other. In this sense, he also explains how power as a fabricated notion intervenes in such distribution. Discourses, on the other hand, contribute in reshaping realities, notions and concepts.

The Self and Other is well explained in the work of W.E.B. Du Bois' *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), and he utilizes the example of black and white as a central topic for Self/Other by examining diverse agents, such as sociology, history and ethnography to analyze the African American situation. In this vein, he says:

*"After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with a second-sight in this American world,- a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness,- an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder". (9)*

## **II.6. Post-colonial Literature**

The majority of postcolonial authors exhibit a number of opinions and thematic notions that are closely linked to both the terms "colonizer" and "colonized." Literature includes varied and rich types and genres, such as poetry, novels, short stories, and novellas. All these emerging works reflect a full sense of anti-colonialism and resisting frame. Diverse literary genres emphasize white Europeans' racial discrimination as a source of superiority over conquered peoples. Language has its own critical part and power in combating oppression and tyranny. Most postcolonial writers approach the difficulties in a variety of

ways. They combine native and forced language to create a hybrid that emphasizes the colonized mind's fractured condition.

Identity, history, memory, national culture, language and tradition are the major avenues that enrich postcolonial literary works. Theorists of postcolonial theory look at both colonial texts and postcolonial literature. Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha, and others are some of the renowned thinkers that popularized colonialism. These theories linked postcolonial literature to a variety of subjects, including history, politics, philosophy, and literary traditions, as well as its relevance in modern society.

Most postcolonial thinkers are from postcolonial nations, such as Edward Said from Palestine, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak from India, and Frantz Fanon from Martinique, a French colony. As representative to Individuals and nations in postcolonial countries, began writing and portraying their experiences of colonialism from one hand and giving a major surface to liberate what is called the Other from another side. Literature, thus, acts as an arm to defy various obstacles and attempts to bring a change about by independence. Lots of postcolonial works in fact feed the colonized brain with their morals, lessons, and representations to the heritage, roots, customs, and traditions. Struggling for national identities remains a sacred role and responsibilities for these writers. *Wide Sargasso Sea* for Jean Rhys, Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things*, and Assia Djebar's *Women of Algiers in Their Apartment* transmit one of these writers burdens and occupations.



## **II.7. Conclusion**

To conclude, this chapter gave an overview about the emergence of post-colonialism as a reaction to numerous mal-practices of oppressive acts and brutal abuses of the colonizer in the colonized lands. Then, it shed light on post-colonial theory through examining diverse examples of theorists and some of their outstanding works. The chapter also dealt with postcolonial feminist theory and revealed how Third World women struggled and endured their disregarded status. Moreover, the end of this chapter introduced the role of literature in the process of intellectual struggle and how it provided a powerful voice for the Other. Thereafter, the third part of this investigation will deal with the literary analysis of Jean Rhys novel and how these described events influenced her writing.

### ***Chapter Three:***

### ***A Postcolonial Reading to Wide Sargasso Sea***

### III.1. Introduction

Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, published in 1966, is a critically powerful work of fiction, taking its theme and main character from the novel *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë. This amazing and entertaining novel tells the story of Antoinette, who was born into a Creole family uprooted after the emancipation of slaves in the British Caribbean islands in the 1830s and 1840s, and who spend her complete life struggling with numerous repercussions born from a colonialist and imperialist ideologies and practices. Through this chapter thus, I will discuss certain helpful themes and their relationship to the act of seeking coherence and self-representation. In addition to unearthing the main plot, characters and the major symbols intersecting to create a kind of coherence in the novel.

### III.2. *Wide Sargasso Sea*

*Wide Sargasso Sea* is a beautiful masterpiece and novel written on 1966 by Jean Rhys. The Dominican-British author serves and inserts a postcolonial reading and feminist interpretation and prequel to the novel of Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). Antoinette is the protagonist in the novel and resembles the writer to some extent at different levels and experiences. Antoinette shares with the writer many degrees of struggle. Jean Rhys focuses on Antoinette's harsh events and disturbed psychological conditions. Her story starts to progress negatively from her youth in Jamaica after her saddening marriage to Mr. Rochester the English gentleman. Rochester intervenes in every detail in her life, and renames her with the name Bertha. He declares her madness, relocates her to England, and isolates her from the world in his stately mansion.

Antoinette becomes torn-halves in a patriarchal community in which she completely belongs neither to Jamaica nor to Europe. *Wide Sargasso Sea* discovers the unknown

behind inherited colonial legacies and ideologies that divides the postcolonial body into diverse pieces either because of his/her colour, class or ethnicity. Jean Rhys explores significant themes emerging from the power of the relationships between women and men and discusses the issues of Caribbean history, race, othering and assimilation.

Though Rhys has published many novels and works, *Wide Sargasso Sea* remained prominent and valuable in terms of its messages. It has provoked a revival of concerns and interest in Jean Rhys personally in addition to being commercially a successful novel.

### **III.3. Hint from the Novel**

The title alone gives away what the book is about. Antoinette represents the main character and the protagonist of the novel. In the nineteenth century, she was born into a slave-owning family in Jamaica. At the time, the West Indian abolitionist movements were emerging, and black slaves were rising to fight for their equal rights.

Her slaveholder or father died unexpectedly. The lives of Antoinette and her family became difficult. The heroine Antoinette was doomed to suffer self-identity confusion as a white Creole in Jamaica's West Island. On the one hand, white rulers marginalized them as well as they faced racism from the West-Indian's blacks.

Antoinette was named a "white cockroach" after being deceived by her sole closes friend, until the burning of her family's home forced her and her family to relocate. She was the first wife of Edward Rochester that made her crazy and her end was tragic by madness.

Edward Rochester was the husband of Antoinette. He represented the main character and the protagonist of the novel, and the narrator of the second part of the novel. He was

the youngest son of a wealthy Englishman. He played the role of the colonizer who colonized the “creole” Antoinette who robbed her identity and gave her another name “Bertha”; this name was from Charlotte Brontë’s novel *Jane Eyre*. As a result, she became mad because her husband took her to England and locked her in the attic also he had an affair with one of the servants.

Annette is Antoinette’s youthful and lovely mother. Annette is Alexander Cosway’s second wife, and afterwards Mr. Mason’s. Annette was shunned by the white Jamaican ladies because of her beauty and outsider status. Annette, reflected a disembodied presence throughout the novel, exhibited hints of insanity and sorrow in her daughter’s first memories. She felt abandoned, terrified, and tormented, and she was frequently the focus of rumor. Following the fire, Mr. Mason abandoned Annette in the care of a black couple who allegedly degraded and insulted her situation. When Antoinette was in the convent school, Annette died.

Annette’s first husband, Alexander Cosway, gave her a servant called Christophine as a wedding gift. She is a smart and ancient character who is loyal to both Annette and her daughter and wields an underlying power inside the family. Christophine used obeah, a Caribbean black magic, to assist Antoinette and restore both her husband’s affection and eventually her health.

#### **III.4. Postcolonial Reading to *Wide Sargasso Sea***

The novel encompasses diverse issues and multiple themes contributing to explain major facts and agents that intervene in the life of the post-colonized body creating a kind of gap and identity crisis. Here are some of them:

#### III.4.1. The colonizer/colonized:

The British conquer the Caribbean as one of their earliest territories. In the picture of Rochester, a fresh and clear version of the colonizer who has colonized a Creole Antoinette. Rochester represents the figure of the oppressor whose tyranny and power can be seen clearly through the captive Antoinette. She as a Creole character transmits the image of the subjugated woman. Because of her husband's mal treatment, she claims; "There is no justice" (Rhys, 1997, p. 94). Antoinette therefore bears all sorts of hurt and disappointment because of the pain inflicted upon her, her reaction to these circumstances appears strongly: "She smashed another bottle against the wall and stood with the broken glass in her hand and murder in her eyes" (Rhys, 1997:95). In fact, the clash between these two diverse zones of the colonizer/colonized will affect the every detail in the colonized's life. In this respect, Bressler claims:

*"colonized people's frustrations, their direct and personal cultural clashes with the conquering culture, and their fears, hopes and dreams about the future and their own identities". (2011:202)*

#### III.4.2. Displacement and Belonging:

The notion of displacement is highly employed in the novel. It is widely related to postcolonial theory. The Little Oxford Dictionary defines displaced person as the one "who has had to leave his home country as a result of war" (2008: 157). Displacement is when a person is forced to leave his surroundings and go to live in a new place. They find it difficult to coexist and communicate with people because of the difference of their culture, so they feel lonely and isolated and it will be difficult to adapt to a new place.

The experience of displacement can be strongly noticed in Jean Rhys's life through her immigration to England. Rhys's characters from another side transmit the issue of

displacement which has diverse repercussion on their daily lives, psyche and behavior. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, for example, the birth of the heroine Antoinette in Caribbean never makes her lives a sense of belonging because she represents a Creole nicknamed a “white cockroach”.

Her husband, Rochester tastes this experience and because of his frequent travel from the comforts of his homeland to his foreign country, he discovers a new world for him. So, he lives without friends and relatives and hides his feelings and controls his emotions and does reveal them.

Displacement is also associated with the experience of colonialism. Both the colonizer and the colonized are in a state of displacement. That arrival of the colonizers from his land to the native’s land leads also to experiencing the feeling of displacement.

Antoinette in Rhys' novel finds herself under an extreme emotion of lack of belonging. Though being born and raised in the Caribbean, never feels as one who belong to every point of her homeland. Her community mistreats her, so the sense of strangeness, loneliness and unbelonging haunt her everywhere. In the novel, the characters affected by displacement feel that what was familiar to them has become unfamiliar “*Everything is too much ...To much blue too much purple, too much green...*” (Rhys, 1997:39)

#### **III.4.3. The Fanonian Ambivalence:**

According to Franz Fanon colour is the main tool for colonization, and forces the colonized to be in state of non-satisfaction. He stresses “*Blackness’ is the racial characteristics through which all the colonized people have to pass*” (1991:124). From this quote, we grasp that the colonized are always associated with blackness and the colonizers are white. Non-white individuals are depicted as nasty, evil, primitive, uncivilized and

heathen. Therefore, s/he is an “object capable of carrying the burden of original sin” (Fanon, 1967:192).

In the same line, Antoinette as white creole, is caught in -between a white and a black throng. The British regard her as an alien; the blacks who discover her hybrid colour, regard her as weird or abnormal. She is thus highly neglected by the two milieus and populations. She never tastes the sense of tranquility and peace of mind. She loses her complete trust in the self because of the accumulation of opposing subjugating systems of oppression as well as suppression. She is rejected by the West-Indian society because she represents the figure of a “white cockroach” and highly rebuffed by the white population in England as she depicts the image of a “white nigger”. Tia who is the childhood friend of Antoinette reveals the extent of hatred hold by people to Antoinette and her Creole family. Tia herself expresses all degrees of racism by calling her friend Antoinette a “white nigger”, a hybrid who belongs to nowhere (Rhys, 1997:64). This kind of rejection found everywhere simply because of her colour leads to the emergence of disturbance at the level of her identity. Antoinette explains this issue to her husband:

*“...a white cockroach. That’s me. That’s what they [the blacks] call all of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave traders. And I’ve heard English women call us white niggers. ... I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all”. (Rhys, 1997: 64)*

In the same vein, even her questions to her mother about her past remain always unanswered and rejected. Annette dismisses her daughter’s questions about every issue related to the past, by saying: “all that is long ago” (Rhys, 1997: 60). Therefore, Antoinette is unable to construct her own authentic identity and unable to break away from the complexity of her ethnic heritage in order to form an independent self, she "lives an ambiguity that is extraordinarily neurotic” (Fanon, 1967: 63). In addition, the protagonist suffers from colonial remnants of racism and imperial culture. Therefore, her confinement



in between this milieu leads to her disturbance, fear, split and insecure life. In fact, she reflects “a phobic subject who arouses a sense of subjective insecurity ..., that is, it incurs feelings of fear or dread” (Fanon, 2004:123).

All Caribbean’s population see Annette and her Creole daughter as a horrible image and example among human beings, just as black Caribbean’s do. In fact, Annette and Antoinette are considered as outsiders because of creoles and Africans. Antoinette receives worse treatment in England too either because of her colour, class or ethnicity. So, “she is (Antoinette), therefore, doubly exiled on her island home and her mother country, having no place to truly belong” (kadhim, 2011:592)

#### **III.4.4. Mimicry to a Solution to Identity Crisis:**

In fact, the marriage which gathers between Antoinette’s mother and Mr. Mason, who represents the rich Englishman, represents a source of hope inside Antoinette in order to solve the major crisis emerging at the level of her identity. The sense of Englishness inspires her through the feeling of having a protective member in the family who will serve them security. Their aim and desire to live a better life oblige them to imitate literally the English society so that they can integrate into their world. Imitation takes place in different angles; behaviour, mode of life, and ways of eating. Therefore, mimicking the colonizer is the only way to distinguish themselves from others. Antoinette and her mother’s mimicry become noticed everywhere by adapting not only the colonizer’s ways of life but even his lifestyle and thought. When Antoinette starts eating English food in a manner that reflects the English mode, she says: “We ate English food now, beef and mutton, pies and puddings. I was glad to be like an English girl but I missed the taste of Christophine’s cooking” (Rhys, 1997: 17). However, all these altered manners and behaviours do not

serve a solution to Antoinette's identity crisis and problems. Antoinette's crisis aggravates and doubles after her marriage with Mr. Mason son Rochester.

Sexual abuse from another side is a tool of colonizing and creating a terrifying ambivalence in one's identity. So, Rochester's violent sexual abuse to his own wife Antoinette silences her, and renders her to a weak, inferior, and unable to take decisions. Therefore, the wisdom saying "A nation can not be conquered until the heart of women and their bodies are on the ground" seems true. In fact, sexual abuse is among the tools of the colonizers to create an ambivalent postcolonial subject suffering an identity crisis.

#### **III.4.5. The Other and Orientalism:**

Antoinette lives and experiences an identity problems and disturbance at all levels either in her homeland or outside its borders in her life. She is the example of the subjugated woman; her life is completely represented under a triple oppression. Firstly, she faces an acute patriarchy embedded in the society. She tastes a deep feeling of isolation because she is a Creole woman in a society defined by blackness in the West Indies. In-betweenness places her neither in the white English society nor in the newly emancipated slaves.

In addition to the hegemonic suppression imposed by her husband. Antoinette suffers all degrees of the harassment simply because of the absence of a pure whiteness and blood. All these circumstances contribute to draw a position for Antoinette as a "complete other", in this respect, "Orientalism, in Said's formulation, is principally a way of defining and 'locating' Europe's others" (Ashcroft 2001: 50).

In fact, diverse agents are motivated to create a surface for "the Other", and the same dimensions contribute to silence this "Other". Howells declares that, "Rhys speaks from a self-consciously marginal position raising issues of gender and colonial difference in

fiction of resistance which are always compromised by the conditions of female dependency” (1991: 58).

Through Edward’s Said’s light and Orientalism, the reader can notice all figures of othering and marginalizing, Rochester who is supposed to be the helpful and protector husband, he is considered as the first enemy to his wife. He situates himself as the “subject” while his wife as the “Other”. Through his behaviours, he transmits the image of colonial hegemony and the trope of an evil colonizer. Through his treatment, Antoinette becomes the slave figure and image whose identity is eliminated. The first step of the erasure of her identity starts after changing her name by Rochester from Antoinette into Bertha. She insists on calling her by her name:

*“Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name... I loved this place and you have made it into a place I hate... I used to think that if everything else went out of my life I would still have this, and now you have spoilt it... I hate it now like I hate you and before I die I will show you how much I hate you”.* (Rhys, 1997: 94).

Rochester claims that Antoinette represents his own possession and property; therefore, he can take her forcefully to live in England. There he locks her brutally in the attic as an attempt to deprive her from comfort and existence. In England, Antoinette finds herself in darkness; she could not discover herself in a looking-glass “I saw Antoinette drifting out of the window with her scents, her pretty clothes and her looking-glass... there is no looking-glass here and I don’t know what I am like now” (Rhys, 1997: 117).

Madness emerges as non arguable feature for the highly accumulated imperial oppression, “The author transforms the first Rochester into an individual figure whose madness is caused by imperialistic and patriarchal oppression” (Swietlik 2005: 2). England becomes the ghost which contribute in her insanity; “They tell me I am in England but I don’t believe them”.(Rhys, 1997: 117)

The protagonist knows that the fate of her mother and the tragic history of her whole family can be misjudged and misunderstood by others. That is why the heroine assures to her husband: "There is always the other side, always." (Swietlik 2005:4).

Geography intervenes in delineating the oriental view and approach adopted by the West towards the East, which is drawn on Eurocentric ideology and universalism as it is explained by Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1978). If any society does not fit with the structures of power defined by the West, so this society is considered as East, the Other, and the rest. Said exposes the West regard and unchanging gaze towards the East, which is always doomed as inferior, he says this Orient "features, in the Western mind as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (Dennis Walder, 1990: 236). Antoinette therefore does not conform the West parameters in Rochester's eye. She is neglected thus to the periphery by her husband.

The orientalist or Eurocentric manners is widely present in *Wide Sargasso Sea* when Mr. Rochester character, the Englishman and Whiteman who seeks a surprising union with Antoinette in order to solve his financial problems. Mr. Rochester emerges as a devilish character obsessed with racist and stereotypes at the opening of the story. He shows a deep fascination by Antoinette; however, this fancy does not sustain longer. In fact, after the honeymoon, he arouses his hidden emotions and treated Antoinette as 'bad blood'. The orientalist view of Mr. Rochester uncovers itself rapidly towards Antoinette. However, his Eurocentric Universalist regard is not limited at Antoinette, but it is generalized to the whole native and Caribbean people.

Mr. Rochester's declaration that he is 'married to the wrong kind of woman', is completely sufficient to reveal his illogical constructions and ideas towards the rest of the world. Mr. Rochester's satisfaction that Antoinette is a woman that cannot fully conform

and fit the parameters of the white pure Englishness though she is not among the more inferior 'Nigger' kind. When the servant Christophine serves him coffee, he refuses with disgust. When Antoinette insists, he declares, "I like the drink, but I hate the language" (Rhys 1997: 45)

The hue of her skin and her origin are the key reasons for dubbing her as the "Other." Ethnic differences might be a source of friction between them. Antoinette is a Magyar who appears from Manifestations of society's incapacity to comprehend the other.

#### **III.4.6. Hybridity and In –Betweenness:**

In this novel, colonialism creates a situation in which individuals lose their identity and are unable to complete the process of exclusivity. Antoinette represents the person who is searching for his identity and origin. Who is she? She tries to imitate and distances herself from her culture, roots, and place of origin. She is always accompanied by numerous questions, such as "Who am I?" "...No they have taken everything away .What I am doing in this place and who I am?" (Rhys, 1997:116)

Antoinette feels that she doesn't belong to this place, and this makes her lose her belonging. Therefore, the protagonist is facing an identity crisis as a result of colonial or newly independent societies. She is having a bad time re-establishing her identity because she is in a world where she feels inferior, isolated, and marginalized from all sides. This is due to the domination of the colonizer on the colonized. Antoinette is trapped between English colonial and Jamaican origins. She is considered a marginalized woman because of her Creole origin. As a result, she doesn't know where her true identity belongs because she is shunned by Jamaican and European societies.

Antoinette's case is a "hybrid" because she doesn't know where she belongs to. She suffers a situation of "in between". Her hybridity combines between what is English and colonial with what is Jamaican; in this respect, Bhabha claims that:

*"For me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the "third space ",which enables other positions to emerge"* (Rutherford ,1990:211)

Antoinette is a member of a group of countries known as the English, and hence does not reflect the true culture of other countries in the war-torn West Indies. She and Annette despise all things black and constantly make fun of their supposed inferior culture, which they never mention. This part of the culture makes her more vulnerable to other traumas, such as infertility and alcoholism, which can occur during in-between times. A new Creole style of life that deviates from the norms of white English society and black society has been created. People in a restricted in-between category, such as Annette, are identified by their ability to live in a social region of need while looking for upper-class males. Annette and her daughter both have a similar perspective on society. As a result, Antoinette is subjected to masculine oppression, which causes her resistance and double meaning as an Indigenous and postcolonial person.

#### **III.4.7. The Subalterns Characters:**

The subaltern has not been able to speak up or raise their voice in support of freedom in front of a universal and Eurocentric system of judgment inserted by the West. Antoinette struggles against all factors that exercise subjugation in her dreams in which she sets fire against the whole captivating British prison-house. Many subaltern characters in the novel, like Antoinette, has the desire of revolting against all the oppressive power and structures that devalues their own identity.

#### **III.4.8. Resistance and Freedom:**

There is resistance declaring her values in the end. The burning of the castle represents her liberation from the world of her passion. The flames are being resisted, and this finally provides the darkness with the light it requires. At the moment, Antoinette stands calmly and serenely facing her death, she understands that her spirit, independence, and strength stem from her consciousness, and that her strength will not allow Rochester to control her, and that this knowledge calms her in both calm and easy knowledge.

#### **III.5. The Symbols**

The novel inserts lots of symbols and each one reflects lots of meanings and purposes in the novel

##### **III.5.1. Sargasso Sea:**

The "Sargasso sea" is a large area that connects to ocean currents. The North Atlantic Ocean is surrounded by a broad belt of water. There is currently only the Sargasso Sea and one Sea of Mirrors on the ocean floor. The Sea of Aron symbolizes that Antoinette is in an awkward predicament. The ocean makes further analogies to Antoinette's condition. She cannot get away from something that is enslaving her and trapping her in a societal framework. Antoinette was like the Sargasso Sea, yet she existed in two worlds. She is straying because of the negative consequences of European colonization.

##### **III.5.2. Christophine: a Symbol of the Oppressed and Rebellious Blacks:**

Christophine is the servant of Annettes and the nurse of Antoinettes, a symbol for physical and psychological strength, standing up in front of persecution and dominance of

people. Christophine is depicted as an intelligent and independent woman. She is very powerful in front of the gossip surrounding her black heritage. Her practice of black magic is so mysterious.

Christophine typically aids Antoinette when she is having problems of her own. She emphasizes the significance of financial freedom to Antoinette. Because of their skin, black individuals appear to be an underclass, and hence are more suited to being maneuvered into many roles. Rochester prefers that the coffee be served in the kitchen rather than on the floor, and she despises the machine when she is serving it. Their degradation of black female bodies is an easy method for them to demonstrate their supremacy. They believe black women are the worst of all human reproductive ages, and as a result, they have reduced them to beasts.

Christophine is a significant feature in the story, a woman who views things differently than others. Her bravery prevents her from being perceived as an unattractive lady by anyone other than whites, people of a specific color background, or black people. She must oppose the European power and privilege bestowed upon her. A wise old woman is depicted.

She keeps an eye on Rochester to see whether he intends to kidnap Antoinette. She is a courageous fighter who is always seeking justice. She presents a severe condemnation of Rochester in the voice of her judges, *"Everybody knows that you marry her for her money and you take it all. And then you want to break her up, because you jealous of her..."* (Rhys, 1997:98). Christophine and her fellow blacks are continually seeking their rights and fighting against tyranny, albeit they are not alone in this battle. They continue to pose a threat to white settlers. Rochester claims; "When I looked at her there was a mask on her face and her eyes were undaunted. She was a fight, I had to admit." (Rhys, 1997:105)



### **III.6. Conclusion**

In her novel "*Wide Sargasso Sea*", the writer Jean Rhys discusses diverse postcolonial issues. Therefore, in this chapter I tried to discuss such questions, such as displacement, unbelonging, ambivalence, mimicry and hybridity. Another attempt is to reveal the main obstacles Antoinette struggles with during her search for an authentic identity. Being the Other and in marginal position is also among the main tools brought on by the oppressive colonial regime that this chapter aims to expose clearly.

## ***General Conclusion***

*Wide Sargasso Sea* written by Jean Rhys is a postcolonial novel whose aim is “writing back” to the colonizer and Charlotte Bonte’s *Jean Eyre*. It draws the tragic and dramatic zones of a postcolonial Creole female. This novel through playing upon the same characters of the English writer, attempts to exhibit the major effects of both colonial and imperial acts, discourses and epistemological violence. It also shows how the accumulation of diverse imperial scenes contributes in marginalizing Third World women into very low spaces, and silence their voices and ambitions.

This research analyzes the characters and themes relating to postcolonial issues as represented in *Wide Sargasso Sea* through a postcolonial approach. It explored numerous ways and tools for both disturbing the construction of the postcolonized identity, especially the female one. In addition to exposing the major elements of marginalizing and othering him/her.

Accordingly, the first chapter deals with a historical reading to the novel’s context. The second chapter focuses on conceptual and theoretical part related to the novel. The last and third chapter analyzes the major characters, especially Antoinette who suffers all degrees and sorts of oppression. It also provides an in-depth analysis of the themes from a postcolonial perspective.

The analysis of the characters reveals that Jean Rhys in *Wide Sargasso Sea* focuses mainly on her female characters, especially Antoinette and Christophine rather than the male characters.

The study shows that the imperial violent episteme, discourses and acts represent a dangerous oppressive system and cohere to alter diverse levels of the Caribbean’s life whether cultural, political or economic.

This research paper reveals also that madness, disturbance and ambivalence emerge as a result from diverse logics, tools and behaviours conducted by the imperialists. Thus, they intervene strongly in identity handicap and lead to psychological crisis and even contribute in the split of one's unity. Rochester represents in the novel the figure of the colonizer and his badly treatment to Antoinette based on racism, colour hierarchies, violence and using the parameters of class, gender and race in the wrong way limit the boundaries of her growing normally in an appropriate state. His oppressive and subjugating methods to Antoinette leads her to silence, fear, confusion, indecisiveness and the most important one to creating a complete Other. This Other suffers exclusion, marginalization, because of inserting a colonial episteme and self-image that raise the degrees of women's negation and the erasure of their voice and identity.

Jean Rhys postcolonial reading and writing to the novel contribute in giving her protagonist a voice by shifting her from the periphery to a central position through giving her a role to tell her story and transmit her suffering and therefore she could be heard at least by readers.

This research paper faces lots of hindrances because of the unavailability of research materials in libraries. The second limitation is that the novel is based on two cultural backgrounds, such as Jamaica and Dominic.

At last, a recommendation for further research may lie in the study of this novel from other perspectives, such as feminist, psychological or post-modern. Furthermore, a comparative research between Jean Rhys novel and Charlotte Bonte might be valuable.

## ***Glossary***

## **Postcolonialism**

The notion of post-colonialism emerges from the high pressure exercised on powerless people in different spots in the world, such as Algeria, India, China, Egypt and African countries. It examines the rhetoric of human's exploitation, domination and oppression under the criminal process of colonization. It attempts to give a value and a deep-seated sense of dignity to myriads of people who were oppressed in their own history and geography.

## **Racism**

individual and group prejudices and acts of discrimination that result in material and cultural advantages conferred on a majority or a dominant social group.

## **The colonizer**

An individual or entity that establishes a colony or colonies: such as a : a nation or state that takes control of a people or area as an extension of state power the country's relationship with its former colonizer.

## **The Other**

The idea of the Other holds all meaning of negativity for the colonized from weakness, stupidity, savagery, and primitivity. The term disregards the intellectual, physical and even spiritual capacities for the colonized as a human being.

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## *Appendices*

## Appendix 1: Synopsis

### II.2 Jean Rhys

While Ella Gwendolen Rees Williams represents the real name of the writer, Jean Rhys is her literary name. She was born on August 24, 1890, in Roseau, Dominica. She belongs to a former British Caribbean territory. Rhys, like the heroine of one of her most known works, *Wide Sargasso Sea* was of Creole descent. Her father was British, while her mother was a native white West Indian. In fact, Rhys had a lot in common with Antoinette Cosway, and her own life experiences are likely what influenced the events described in her work. Rhys' great-grandfather was a slave owner who bought a Dominican sugar plantation in the eighteenth century, but his estate fell on hard things once the Emancipation Act was implemented.

In 1936, Rhys reflects lots of events happening to her at the personal and familial level in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Rhys, like her female heroine Antoinette, grew up in the Caribbean feeling isolated and being alone as a white girl in a predominantly black neighborhood. In 1907, she traveled to England for studying when she was sixteen years old. However, the death of her father forced her to stop.

Rhys married a small Dutch writer named Jean Lenglet in 1919. The couple had two children, a daughter and a son, both of whom died young. During the 1920s, they wandered aimlessly across Europe, occasionally settling in Paris, where they resided as bohemian artists and then were introduced to the nascent modernist movement.

The sentiments of dislocation that Rhys must have had at this time (and throughout her life) are reflected in her writings, which mostly deal with wandering and disadvantaged women who have been relocated far from their roots.

Rhys wrote *The Left Bank and Other Stories* in 1927, *Postures* (1928), *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie* (1931), *Voyage in the Dark* (1934), and *Good Morning, Midnight* (1935). According to historian Francis Wyndham, who was a principal key in Rhys's rediscovery in the second half of the twentieth century, all the previous books are autobiographical in origin and deal with basically the same female heroine at various phases of her life. "

Rhys moved to England, where she avoided intellectual groups, grew up poor, and developed an addiction to alcohol that would follow her for the rest of her life. She was arrested in 1949 for assaulting neighbors and police, and she was rediscovered as one of Britain's great writers in 1958 after the BBC aired a dramatization of *Good Morning, Midnight*. *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which Rhys had been working on for years and had been heavily edited, was ultimately published in 1966 and won the W.H. Smith literary prize the following year. Rhys was named a Commander of the British Empire in 1978 for her services to literature. On May 14, 1979, she died.