

**Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a "Writing Back" Of Charlotte
Brontë's *Jane Eyre***

By

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

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2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.
5. This thesis was conducted with the help of some authentic primary and secondary sources.
6. This study wishes to interpret some scholarly sources regarding its field of study.
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Approval

The thesis titled “Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a “Writing Back” of Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*” submitted Aahnaf Tahmid (20103014) of Fall, 2023 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts on February 25th, 2024.

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Abstract

A number of authors from countries which were previously colonised, came up with the intention of responding to the European canonical texts through their own writings in the postcolonial era. This thesis will analyse the postcolonial reinterpretation of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* by Jean Rhys in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The paper will examine the ideas of "subversion," "rewriting," and "displacement" employed by Rhys to challenge Brontë's colonial discourse presented in her writing. Ashcroft's theory from *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* will be utilised in this paper. A comparative analysis between two works, demonstrating the manifestation of "writing back" in postcolonial literature will be conducted in this paper. Upon careful analysis of the two works, it will be evident that Rhys has effectively altered Brontë's work by undermining its fundamental components, namely the characters and themes.

Keywords: Subversion, Rewriting, Displacement

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Many authors from formerly colonised countries started to "write back" to European canonical works in the post-colonial era. Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), a postcolonial "rewriting" of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), is the focus of this thesis. Examining Rhys's use of "subversion," "rewriting" and "displacement" to challenge the colonial discourse present in Brontë's novel, this paper illustrates the strategies Rhys employs to challenge Brontë's writing. The framework presented in *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* by Ashcroft is used in this paper. The purpose of the discussion is to better comprehend the philosophy of the authors. To demonstrate how "writing back" occurs in the postcolonial text, a comparative examination of the two novels that is used in the paper is conducted. Rhys has essentially reworked Brontë's story by altering its central characters and ideas and this reworking of Rhys is analysed after comparing and contrasting the two novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

This paper consists of a comparison of two authors from different countries: Charlotte Brontë from England and Jean Rhys from the Dominican Republic. There is a clear cultural and historical divide between the two women authors. Despite the fact that their nationalities are different, both Brontë and Rhys wrote in English. *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Brontë and *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) by Rhys are compared. These two literary works with such contrasting styles were clearly written at different times, as evidenced by their publication dates. This is a product of the authors' social setting. Many authors have undoubtedly been affected by others, that is beyond dispute and reading the works of others can inspire them to write any kind of literary works. It can be regarded as "direct influence". In general, works of European authors serve as inspiration for postcolonial writers. Rhys's work reflects Brontë's influence. The latter is Rhys's "*tour de force*" in response to Brontë's classic.

Having been so profoundly impacted by Europeans, newly independent countries had to reconstruct and affirm their identity. The goal could only be attained by actively working against colonial discourse. Thus, post-colonial discourse was developed to analyse how the Europeans employed "discursive strategies" to subjugate and colonise non-European

countries. Consequently, "rewriting" emerged as a central strategy of postcolonial literary texts, with many authors using it to deconstruct colonial texts by lifting elements from European texts and reworking them in opposition to colonial ideology.

Jane Eyre is a part of the canon of Brontë's work that delves into her native culture and customs. Her pen name, Currer Bell, was used for the novel's publication. During the early nineteenth century, exotic literature like Brontë's, explored imperialism. Brontë examines and celebrates British customs and history. She uses characters in her stories to depict her era. Moreover, she paints a bad picture of non-Europeans by ignoring anything and everything that has to do with the "Others." Among the European writers of the time who wrote novels with a colonial focus, she stands out.

Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* is regarded as a post-colonial text. Novelist Ella Gwendolen Rees Williams, also known as Jean Rhys, was born and raised in Dominica as a Creole. As a young teenager, she embarked for England. Her goal in writing this novel was to "deconstruct" stereotypes about her culture and present a new picture of her homeland. An important part of "rewriting" is having influence. Therefore, Rhys could express her opinion on Brontë. She uses a few figures from Brontë's novel. She also touches on several issues that are prevalent in *Jane Eyre*. Rhys's command of the English language is also crucial to the credibility of her claims. They may be fiction, but there is a lot of historical research that went into them. The concept of "deconstructing" classic works originated in postcolonial literature, which sought to prove that Caribbean people were oppressed by Europeans.

Issue and Working Hypothesis:

Many critics and scholars have researched about the literary influence between Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966). These critics acknowledge that Rhys's novel is a response to *Jane Eyre*. In this paper, this tradition is continued and the novels are discussed in terms of "writing back". Primarily, the discussion is about the parallels between the two novels. For the purpose of making a comparison, "rewriting" techniques, specifically "subversion", "displacement" and "reversal" shall be attempted to be employed. The goal is to use these methods on the characters and themes used by both authors.

In a context of rewriting, what parallels can be found between Brontë's and Rhys's literary works?

In order to achieve her purpose, Rhys has adapted elements from Brontë's story. The two novels were written by two distinct authors. Rhys responds through writing back the story Brontë has been telling. Therefore, an attempt is conducted to follow the theoretical direction offered by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffith and Helen Tiffin in their book, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (2002). This theory is appealing since its focus on post-colonial authors' "writing back" tactics seem to be a good fit for the topic of this research. The hypothesis describes how authors from Asia, Africa and the West Indies respond to the colonial rule of Europe. They dismantle the canons of imperial powers and analyse how post-colonial authors use literature to describe their cultures and countries. It is crucial for postcolonial writers to deconstruct the representations found in literary canons. The goal is to learn more about the ways in which Jean Rhys reimagines Brontë's works by employing familiar plot devices, characters and themes.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë and *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys are two works of literature that were written one hundred and nineteen years apart. Many critics have analysed and evaluated them, applying a wide range of literary theories in the process. For instance, Thorpe draws a postcolonial parallel between *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* in his essay "The Other Side": *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Jane Eyre*. Specifically, he takes issue with the portrayal of Bertha, in the novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea* and sees Rhys's work as a rebuttal to *Jane Eyre*. Since the critic asserts that "There is always the other side," Antoinette becomes the centre of attention. In Brontë's novel, Bertha and Rochester were portrayed in different ways. The critic asserts that Brontë's novel has biased depictions and the critic attempts to establish connections between the two novels. Brontë uses Bertha's mental illness as a vehicle for racial stereotypes, but the author glosses over her background and experiences. The British, and Jane in particular, can feel sorry for Bertha because of her condition and the hardships she has endured. In addition, Thorpe says that Rhys is one of the writers that encourages people to read about mental illness. Jane and Antoinette share many difficult situations, which the critic utilises to establish comparisons between the two. The critic also delves into Antoinette and her husband's relationship, highlighting how their shared identity of personal experience leads to frequent misunderstandings. They just can not get their heads around one another.

Wolfgang G. Müller is another critic who has contrasted the novels of Brontë and Rhys. Based on a Victorian classic and framed through a post-colonial lens, he examines the intertextual status of *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys. From an intertextual perspective, this is where he bases his analysis. According to Müller, post-colonial fiction is where Rhys finds her unique voice, even though she did take certain ideas. Although *Wide Sargasso Sea* relies on *Jane Eyre* as a pretext, it is not dependent on it. He claims that Rhys seeks answers to the problems with the Jamaican Creole language in *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë. Müller points out that the omission in Brontë's work pertains to the early life and experiences of Bertha Mason. Through the use of real-life settings and events, Rhys focuses her narrative on the characters' struggles with race and social hierarchy. In addition, Brontë's indirect incorporation of imperialism makes her literary work a colonial one. In her own unique way, Rhys deciphers it. According to the reviewer, colonisation is beneficial to Jane. A number of characters' names, including Bertha, Rochester and Grace Poole, have intertextuality.

Of Heroines and Victims: Jean Rhys and Jane Eyre was written by the other critic, Dennis Porter. An analysis of *Jane Eyre*, Bertha, and Mr. Rochester through a feminist lens is presented in this essay. The reviewer delves at how *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* interact with one another. "In the *Wide Sargasso Sea* [...] Bertha was not born mad but made so [...] by men." Human tyranny is the intended object of the author's criticism. The fact that Antoinette's husband drove her insane gives the impression that she is oppressed. The dehumanisation of the heroines is demonstrated by Dennis Porter's revelation of masculine dominance in both stories. The two characters that view the heroines as objects of their sexual desires are Mr. Rochester and Antoinette's husband. Using a postcolonial lens, the critic also discusses how colonialism affected society through force. *Wide Sargasso Sea* shows Mr. Rochester as an oppressor, in contrast to his role as a sufferer in *Jane Eyre*. He marries a crazy woman in the first novel and then uses her as a means to amass riches in the second. Porter analyses the two works and finds that Rochester is different in each. At the conclusion of the work, Brontë allows him to survive. Because he wed the Creole girl for her wealth, Jean Rhys "sees him as unredeemable" on the other hand.

An essay by Malgorata Swietlik titled "*'Wide Sargasso Sea' by Jean Rhys as a postcolonial response to 'Jane Eyre' by Charlotte Bronte*" draws comparisons between the two works. Using a postcolonial lens, she examines them. She elaborates on how Rhys altered significant portions of Brontë's novel. The causes of her mental disorder are the

primary focus of her article. Brontë presents her perspective while perpetuating West Indian prejudices. Antoinette is given voice, dignity, identity and right to tell the reader her side of story, as Swietlik instructs the audience. The colonised territories are the ones that Rhys elucidates. Living between two cultures is difficult for Antoinette and she does not succeed in being welcomed. In order to explain Antoinette's craziness, Rhys gives her a voice and fabricates her backstory. Additionally, the reviewer demonstrates that the unidentified spouse is likewise a victim in Rhys's work. In her analysis, Swietlik uses Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism* as a framework. By pointing out that 19th-century literature portrays "the Third World" and defines "European identities," the critic demonstrates why Spivak's argument is significant. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is the complete antithesis of the fairy tale, while *Jane Eyre* is easily interpreted as a Cinderella narrative.

Chapter 3: Methodology

For the analysis of the two novels, Bill Ashcroft's idea of "writing back" in the context of postcolonial theory will be used. Ashcroft echoes the effects of colonial literature on colonised people and the responses of postcolonial writers to these effects. Non-Europeans, according to European authors, defy civilizational standards. They viewed the "Other" through the "ethnographic lens". That everything having to do with foreigners is inherently "primitive" is a reflection of the colonial mindset. The dominance of European languages in conquered nations is a direct result of colonialism.

New generations of postcolonial writers, however, are challenging colonial rule by reclaiming colonisers' languages. The terms "abrogation" and "appropriation" are substituted by postcolonial writers. The term "abrogation" refers to a rejection of the hierarchies, aesthetics and assumptions of imperial culture. This means that the writers have strong opinions about the English version of particular concepts and idioms. By utilising the concept of "abrogation," writers who are eager to challenge the coloniser's claimed validity in their work can do so. An inauthentic appearance of the language is desired by the postcolonial writers. Contrarily, "appropriation" refers to the meeting point of Standard English and the "vernacular tongue." Because every country has the potential to create its own unique form of English apart from the British one, postcolonial writers avoid using Standard English. This is

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how they want to stand out from the crowd. The "vernacular" and "code-switching" practices of Jamaicans serve as an example of this.

The idea posits that the most significant aspect of post-colonial discourse is the appropriation of writing itself. This discourse can seize the marginality placed on it and redefine literature and culture by appropriating the power vested in writing, thereby embracing hybridity and syncretism as sources of inspiration.

The power of appropriation accurately represents the image of the colonised. Postcolonial writing, in essence, rejects the rhetoric employed in the literary canon and endeavours to present a contrasting perspective.

The primary objective of formulating a novel mode of communication in *The Empire Writes Back* is to establish their autonomy from the central authority. The efficacy of "appropriation" depends on written works that can challenge the image established by the coloniser. Postcolonial literary works differ from European literary works in their utilisation of linguistic variation. Therefore, they exemplify distinctiveness, deviation from the standard of the city. Essentially, the empire suppresses the outer regions, causing the postcolonial text to reject the coloniser's language. The literature contains instances of formal subversions or thematic contestation.

Postcolonial philosophy centres on the concepts of place and displacement. The main characteristic of postcolonial literature is the latter. The phenomenon can be described as an identity crisis that arises from the interaction between one's sense of self and their surroundings, resulting in a sense of not belonging. Through the eyes of the colonised, it delves into the problems caused by the broken link between history, language and the environment. There are numerous circumstances that can cause someone to undergo dislocation. This occurs when there is a transition from one location to another that is unfamiliar and unfamiliar. Voluntary displacement occurs when individuals choose to migrate, while involuntary displacement is linked to colonialism or enslavement. Both the coloniser and the colonised experience displacement when they relocate to a new setting.

The concept of "place and displacement" originated during the post-colonial period and is a prevalent theme in its literature. Colonial dominance exerts an influence on both the social and linguistic alienation. Despite gaining independence, the former colonies nevertheless retain a theoretical sense of being colonised by the concept of 'Englishness'.

There is a linguistic divide among people whose native tongue is either not widely spoken or has been marginalised as a result of colonial rule, systematic erasure of their language as a result of servitude, or both. It is evident that the colonial power enforces its language upon the indigenous population, disregarding the fact that it is unsuitable for accurately representing their new environment. Consequently, authors go through what is known as "linguistic displacement" even if they do not really move. Until English either becomes universally acknowledged as "English" or undergoes a change by adopting a native tongue, isolation will persist in this scenario. Displacement in postcolonial literature causes words and their signifiers to no longer have the same relationship to grammar, codes and other linguistic constructs. As a result of their forced relocation, indigenous communities must abandon the practices and beliefs closely linked to the English language. As a result of what is known as "linguistic displacement," postcolonial writers often use both their native tongue and the language of the coloniser. Their texts depict "linguistic variation" when there is a convergence between the language used by the dominant group and the language used by the subordinate group. The purpose of doing so is to respond to the coloniser and demonstrate the disruption of the English language. The settler requires a new language to effectively convey a feeling of being different or alien. They find displacement more tolerable than being forced to adopt a particular language.

Postcolonial theories emerged following the emergence of postcolonial literature. Postcolonial authors strive to demonstrate the universal and global nature of their culture. They highlight their autonomy from the central authority. Consequently, individuals might attain influence by becoming proficient in the dominant language in urban areas. Postcolonial authors aspire to subvert the dominance of canonical literature through their marginalised literary works. They revise it to present the European realities from a post-colonial standpoint.

All postcolonial literature must contain elements of subversion. According to Lashley, the word "subversion" is linked to the underlying cultural and linguistic assumptions of the English canonarian texts. The canon established by the dominant group must be deciphered by authors by inverting the language and substance. Dismantling or questioning long-standing conventions or principles is known as "subverting the canon." The task of revealing and articulating these practices and institutions will result in the replacement of some texts

with others and, just as crucially, in the reconstruction of the so-called canonical texts through different ways of reading. Assumptions underpin the European canons. Reorganising a canon by a writer is subversive. Through both textual engagement and the rejection of customary limitations, it offers a new reading of the canon. Deconstructing dichotomies and questioning canonical works are two goals of subversion. To further undermine the portrayals, postcolonial writers use counter discourse. Reassessing and updating the fictional and historical narrative of Europe is essential. Bill Ashcroft's concept seems to be a good fit when comparing the two masterpieces of literature. Writers might use this idea to their advantage when responding to texts and when reversing the canon of European literature.

Chapter 4: Parallels Between the Characters of *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*:

The following analysis examines the characters in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* for the purpose of comparison.

4.1: Parallels Between Bertha Mason and Antoinette Cosway:

The two primary female characters, Bertha Mason and Antoinette Cosway, both play pivotal roles in the narratives. The authors depict them in contrasting manners. Colonisers typically enforce their own cultural norms and practices. The British imparted their literature, landscape and history to the colonised in order to emphasise the distinctions between them. The Imperial ideology emphasised the supremacy of British culture and values. It underscored the notion that foreign countries do not conform to British standards, categorising them as "savage," "native" and "primitive." Colonies and colonised individuals are shown as inferior and marginalised in their respective literatures, highlighting the power dynamics. Charlotte Brontë presents Mr. Rochester's wife within this particular scenario. The individual in question is Bertha Antoinetta Mason, who migrated from Jamaica to England. Brontë depicts the character in a manner that renders her silent, relying on other characters to portray her. The possibility for a dissenting voice is denied to West Indian women. In Brontë's narrative, Bertha is shown as a lunatic mostly based on her outward attributes rather than her personal encounters. Bertha is portrayed as an eccentric being who remains unnamed until a subsequent point in the novel. The narrator portrays a biased depiction of her due to her non-English background and aims to caution against the perils associated with this formidable being. Mr. Rochester only invites his guests to see Bertha when the wedding day

is disrupted. The latter is depicted as indistinguishable between a beast and a human at first glance. She is depicted as a creature, which crawls on all fours, snatching and growling in an unfamiliar manner and is wrapped in garments and has a large amount of dark grizzled hair, which is as wild as a mane. It is evident that Jane has a negative opinion of Bertha's appearance. Dennis Porter states that the concept of "subhuman" is defined in relation to a deteriorated genetic lineage.

Brontë appears to view the Creole as an individual who does not conform to the standards of Englishness. Bertha is perceived as a person who is not part of the group or community. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak examines Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* in her essay, *Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism*. Spivak's essay critiques Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar for perceiving Bertha Mason solely through a psychological lens, as a dark counterpart to Jane. Ignoring the colonial component, they see Bertha as Jane Eyre's unconscious double. In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha undermines Jane's legal rights by erasing the line between humans and animals. The animalistic traits that Bertha possesses are alluded to by Spivak. Because of this, the author presents Bertha in a demeaning light. In contrast to Brontë, Rhys prefers to show animal symbolism in her own work.

The goal of postcolonial "rewriting" is to provide a new take on classic works by questioning and undermining the existing literary canon. By providing a new perspective on Bertha, Rhys in *Wide Sargasso Sea* questions the biased depiction of the protagonist. Following her mother's marriage to Mason, Antoinette's name is changed to Antoinette Cosway Mason. The obligation to adopt the surname of Antoinette's English stepfather follows naturally. Furthermore, her husband changed her name to Bertha. Her British spouse is obviously having an effect on Antoinette. Rhys changes Bertha's name throughout the novel until it becomes Bertha Antoinetta Mason, undermining Brontë's depiction of the woman. In order to prevent Antoinette from reclaiming her identity, her husband changes her name without her will. Therefore, like a person who has been colonised, Antoinette experiences an identity crisis because of the oppressive actions of the British coloniser, who demonstrates a lack of respect towards her.

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Rhys provides additional justification and explanation for the peculiar appearance of Bertha. Rhys asserts that Antoinette experiences rejection and oppression from both society and her husband, who makes an effort to seduce the servant, Amélie, one night. The husband expresses his lack of curiosity about what was occurring in his wife's bedroom, separated from him by a thin wall. This indicates the husband's indifference for his wife's emotions, similar to the lack of regard the coloniser has for their subjects. The Englishman's objective in the West Indies is to amass fortune by exploiting rules that are advantageous to him. Antoinette's condition grows increasingly intolerable, prompting her to turn to alcohol and subsequently succumb to sadness. This image challenges the conventional portrayal of Bertha in Brontë's work by suggesting that her lunacy is not a hereditary trait, but rather a consequence of misery and suffering. The husband seemed to lack remorse for his oppressive treatment of his wife. Rhys clarifies that the protagonist is the victim of her spouse. This establishes a comparison between the relationship of the coloniser and the colonised. By demonstrating Antoinette's dehumanisation, Rhys challenges the notion that this character comes from a mentally unstable family. Her objective is to portray the difficult situations her character experiences in order to make her more relatable and humane.

Brontë consistently portrays Bertha's racial identity when Jane informs Mr. Rochester that she encountered a terrifying woman. She asserts that Bertha appears to her as a figure filled with fear and an eerie presence. Additionally, she assumes the role of a "Vampire" that instil "terror" in the coloniser. Brontë clearly employs "race" as the fundamental element for portraying her character. Susan L. Meyer argues that Brontë's utilisation of blackness as a metaphor is influenced by the historical context of British colonialism. Brontë frequently characterises Antoinette based on her skin colour, which is worth mentioning, in order to define her to highlight the disparity between the coloniser and the colonised. Consequently, Bertha, as a "white Jamaican Creole," is subjected to criticism and dehumanisation due to her foreign ethnicity. According to Brontë, the white Creole is comparable to the locals because they are not seen as equals to the British. Moreover, Brontë emphasises the danger posed by Bertha by referring to her as a "clothed hyena". Undoubtedly, the primary characteristic of this creature is its resounding laughter, which is linked to peril. The presence of Bertha in the story may serve as an indication that colonialism inevitably attracts undesirable individuals, akin to the by-product of any given process. The provided image is evidently connected to her origin from a British colony. Bertha is consistently perceived as an "abnormal, subhuman

entity". Brontë attempts to depict the "non-white" individuals as the oppressors, implying that the colonised people provoke the British. Brontë presents a portrayal of Bertha that is enduring and immutable. Brontë employs colonial rhetoric to present a clichéd and unflattering portrayal of Bertha. In contrast, Rhys portrays her in a contrasting manner.

Helen Tiffin defines postcolonial "rewriting" as the act of a post-colonial writer adopting a character or characters, or the fundamental assumptions of a British canonical literature, then exposing and undermining those assumptions in order to serve post-colonial objectives. Many postcolonial authors employ a character to rectify the misconceptions associated with her. Rhys chronicles Antoinette's entire existence to illustrate the circumstances that resulted in her confinement in an attic at Thornfield Hall. Throughout her life, she consistently grapples with feelings of "alienation and disintegration," particularly during her childhood. In Thornfield, Antoinette's voice serves to illustrate the impact of her difficult circumstances and to convey the ambiguous and indeterminate nature of Brontë's tale. Antoinette grapples with insanity in England. It is evident that Antoinette has a voice to advocate for herself. Spivak asserts that she identifies herself at the conclusion of the novel. Antoinette's portrayal of her look suggests that she is examining the "other side" of lunacy from a unique perspective. To clarify, she portrays herself as a ghost to symbolise her experience of being victimised. Antoinette's appearance has become pleasant and no longer evokes fear. Rhys offers a novel and inverted viewpoint on the character. Rhys finds many stories significant since Brontë's "single story" perpetuates stereotypical portrayals of Bertha.

The concept of displacement pertains to the field of postcolonial studies. Ashcroft stated that a significant characteristic of post-colonial literature is the preoccupation with the concepts of place and displacement. Rhys endeavours to elucidate that Antoinette grapples with relocation. Indeed, she experiences displacement on multiple occasions during her life. After the fire at Coulibri, Antoinette is compelled to go and live with Cora. This removal severs the connection between Antoinette and her mother. Displacement affects the interconnection between the two personalities. Antoinette's current status is despised by her due to the rejection she experiences as a result of this particular transformation. She deliberately distinguishes her current existence from her history, as she regards her mother as deceased. Annette is nonexistent to her. Antoinette holds the belief that she experienced death during her childhood. Antoinette recounts her encounters with displacement to expose "the alternative perspective". Rhys affords her the opportunity to deconstruct the perilous notion

of the "single story". The colonised individuals must be given an opportunity to contemplate and evaluate their experiences.

Antoinette's spouse firmly believes in her mental disorder and makes the decision to transport her to England. Antoinette discovers that she is confined within a chamber. It is evident Antoinette has been involuntarily relocated from the West Indies. Antoinette has been forcibly relocated to England and is being confined to a room under the supervision of Grace Poole. Rhys aims to denounce a form of captivity with this translation. Evidently, the displacement has a detrimental impact on her experiences. Consequently, she unconsciously rejects the fact that she is in England upon being informed. It can also be the underlying factor contributing to her mental instability. It is worth mentioning that her spouse locks the room without providing any explanation. Therefore, Rhys aims to hold the coloniser responsible for the difficult ordeals that Antoinette endures, with the intention of dismantling the conventional portrayal initially presented by Brontë. Antoinette's struggles appear to mirror the prolonged miseries of the colonised. It is evident that Rhys utilises displacement as a significant component for her protagonist to convey her thoughts and emotions. Antoinette recounts her personal narrative in England, which diverges from Brontë's.

To sum up, the analysis depicts the determination in which Jean Rhys engages in the act of rewriting and subverting Charlotte Brontë's character Bertha. Rhys acknowledges the potential harm that can arise from a singular narrative being imposed upon Bertha. Brontë does not provide a comprehensive narration of Bertha's entire story. She provides those descriptions due to her country's influence. Therefore, her authoritative text perpetuates biases while Rhys offers an alternative perspective on Brontë's narrative. Rhys's objective is to depict Antoinette as a victim and illustrate how the British degrade the Creole, stripping her of her wealth and sense of self. Rhys amplifies the silenced Bertha's voice to articulate her encounters with tyranny. Rhys portrays the alternative perspective of Antoinette's life and encounters.

4.2: Parallels Between Mr. Rochester and the Unnamed Spouse:

Mr. Rochester's character is similar to that of the unnamed husband of the Caribbean island bride, which brings us to our second comparison. An important part is to look for descriptions of the husbands of the female characters in previous works. Charlotte Brontë and Jean Rhys want to provide a unique perspective on the two characters.

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Mr. Rochester holds significant importance as a character in *Jane Eyre*. Brontë portrays him as a victim who endures challenging circumstances, particularly "family troubles". He has no money remaining. Therefore, he desires to wed Bertha, who hails from Jamaica, in order to get a substantial sum of thirty thousand pounds. Brontë explicitly conveys to the reader that he has been betrayed. Brontë's inclusion of Rochester's perspective serves the purpose of providing him with a means to defend himself. He explicitly states that he has been denied his inheritance and has not been informed of his wife's insanity. Brontë justifies the challenges faced by the colonisers. Based on his appearance, it seems that he is a gentle and innocent British individual, rather than someone who oppresses others. Furthermore, he acknowledges that his captivation with Bertha lies in her exquisite physical appearance, which aligns perfectly with the societal standards of English beauty. This underscores the notion that the English hold in high regard and emphasise specific standards of beauty, whereas other countries are seldom linked to it. Furthermore, Brontë consistently demonstrates his contentment, stating that he is a "joyful individual" and that his personal encounters have been blissful. It is worth mentioning that Charlotte Brontë, in an attempt to conform to societal norms, seeks to persuade her readers that Rochester is a victim of his unfortunate marriage to the mentally unstable Bertha. Brontë's concealment of the coloniser's reality and ideology is evident in this statement. To clarify, Brontë asserts that the colonised individuals assume the role of oppressors over the colonisers. Mr. Rochester is perceived as being stripped of his human qualities. Consequently, Brontë's text presents a favourable portrayal of the English people. Brontë portrays the English spouse in a positive light, but Rhys seems to challenge and break down this idealised image.

Jean Rhys provides a narrative of Rochester's life from the viewpoint of someone from the West Indies. The husband remains anonymous in the novel. Rhys asserts that he has deliberately refrained from mentioning the specific name. In the second portion, the husband begins his tale abruptly, without providing any introduction, as described by Malgorata Swietlik. She affirms that Rochester is unworthy of being named because he robs Antoinette of her own name. According to Swietlik, the coloniser is deemed unworthy of being named. She makes it clear that she has no intention of drawing parallels to *Jane Eyre*. One possible interpretation is that Rhys is trying to represent the English people in general.

Several of Rochester's traits are reflected in Rhys's work. She refrains from discrediting the character in its entirety. Through the prism of postcolonialism, Swietlik

analyzes him. She claims that the English social rules depict Rochester as a victim in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. As a second son without any inheritance, he is compelled to travel to the colonies in order to secure a wealthy bride through financial transactions. Portraying him as a societal victim demonstrates Jean Rhys' arduous endeavour to depict an unavoidable tragedy, stemming not from individuals but from the regulations within the post-colonial society. It is evident that both ordinary individuals from England and the colonies are subjected to the oppressive colonialist system. The husband, whose name is not mentioned, agrees to the marriage that was organised by his father. While in Jamaica, the husband plans to marry Antoinette. But he claims he worked hard to get what he wanted and was surprised nobody paid attention. This would indicate that he did not put up any kind of fight against his father's demands. He may have been a "victim" of an arranged marriage, but his greed drives him to steal Antoinette's wealth nevertheless. In an open statement to the governess Christophine,

Antoinette claims that her husband rightfully owns her money under "English law" during their acquaintanceship. The British Empire's voracious appetite for wealth is personified by Rochester. So, the husband can be seen as a tyrant in the *Wide Sargasso Sea*. With a well-defined goal in Jamaica, Rhys paints Rochester in an entirely different light. Deconstructing Mr. Rochester's reality, Rhys challenges it. By delving into the colonial discourse, Rhys reveals the hidden and unknown truth about the colonizer.

Exalting one's own "cultures" and "traditions" is a common theme in postcolonial literatures. According to their claims, the colonizer paints an image of the "empire as a place of exoticism.". Exoticism, in the context of postcolonial literatures, refers to the characterization of locations as being different or foreign by the coloniser. Within this particular setting, the spouse characterises the honeymoon destination, Granbois, as being remarkably foreign. He acknowledges that he is unable to tolerate this location because it is not just untamed but also threatening. For him, the West Indies is a separate and unique location compared to England. Consequently, he regards it as perilous, dreadful, and a "gloomy location". Indeed, he is unable to handle the encounters of the colonised location. As per the husband's account, playing the game at that location at night was deemed unsafe. Therefore, due to the coloniser's animosity against the region, he is unable to comprehend it. Rhys focuses on the theme of exoticism in her literary work as a means of addressing the Non-European setting. According to *The Empire Writes Back*, the coloniser experienced a

sense of alienation and did not have a sense of belonging in the colonised territory. Consequently, the husband's encounters are situated in a specific location. Due to his displacement to the West Indies, he has negative feelings towards the place as it is unrelated to his own culture. This indicates that his experiences in that location are incompatible with the new area; therefore, he portrays it as different. Grace Poole affirms that his sojourn in the West Indies has profoundly transformed him. This displacement has a significant influence on his character and sense of self.

Linguistic displacement affects not only indigenous populations but also English-speaking individuals who face marginalisation. The latter expresses itself when individuals start to feel disconnected or estranged from the practice. Regarding this relocation, the postcolonial writer utilises this technique to analyse and break down the English language. Within this particular scenario, the husband, whose name is not mentioned, expresses that "Desire, Hatred, Life, Death" were in close proximity in the darkness. It is evident that Rhys employs capital letters to emphasise the fear experienced by Antoinette's husband during the night. However, this could indicate that he is currently in an unfamiliar and unique location that is shaping his experiences and impacting his language. Ashcroft argues that English is incapable of fully encompassing one's cultural experience. It is evident that his vocabulary is inadequate in expressing his emotions precisely.

It might be inferred that the two authors have contrasting depictions of the two masculine characters. Both individuals are inspired by Jamaican culture and are victims of a forced marriage. Brontë's novel depicts the protagonist's story from a single perspective, portraying their character in a positive light. Rhys subverts and rewrites the character from a postcolonial standpoint due to her recognition of the profound influence of a "singular narrative".

4.3: Parallels Between the Unidentified Mother and Mrs. Annette Cosway:

The similarities between the mother who remains nameless and Mrs. Annette Cosway can be seen through a comparison. Various perspectives are used to depict these two personalities. A new beginning and a changed life have been bestowed upon Bertha's mother by Rhys. As far as the colonizer is concerned, the colonized are barbaric and undeveloped. Charlotte Brontë tries her best to portray Bertha's nameless mother in *Jane Eyre*. It is only evident that she belongs to the Mason family. The author omits the protagonist's name in order to facilitate

generalisations. Moreover, she aims to depict the West Indians by means of the unnamed mother. They lack the ability to articulate their thoughts or opinions. This enables the author to disseminate clichéd portrayals of the "Other". In addition, Brontë also denies her the opportunity to narrate her own story. Brontë argues that the colonised lack a voice and are unable to narrate or depict their own experiences. Indeed, the West presents a singular narrative regarding individuals from non-European backgrounds. Brontë seemed to believe that it is highly unlikely for this mother to be considered their equals. While Brontë portrays her in a particular manner, Rhys presents a fresh narrative for her.

Postcolonial authors appropriate characters from canonical texts in order to challenge and undermine them from their own perspective. The mother is given a different life and story in Jean Rhys's novel because of what is seen as the "incompleteness" of Brontë's composition. A postcolonial novelist knows better than to put all one's eggs in one basket. Hence, Rhys tries to dismantle the traditional portrayals. Mrs. Annette Cosway is the name she gives to the mother. The daughter, Antoinette, thinks names matter. Rhys feels compelled to give her West Indian characters names so that the colonized people can avoid negative stereotypes. Moreover, Antoinette recounts the arduous and severe ordeals she endures. Annette is afforded the ability to express herself verbally and display her emotions. It can be inferred that Rhys employs the technique of "subversion" in *Wide Sargasso Sea* to deconstruct Brontë's narrative. She revises the character by assigning her both a name and a voice, so challenging the authenticity of the original text. It is evident that she endeavours to establish the authenticity of her narrative by assuming a new persona.

Brontë typically portrays the mother in an unfavourable light. According to Mr. Rochester, she is a notorious mother. The novel asserts that Bertha originated from a lineage of mentally unstable individuals, consisting of imbeciles and lunatics spanning three successive generations. Essentially, she portrays the entire family as insane. Upon examining three generations, it may be inferred that the entire lineage of this family's Creoles may suffer from mental illness. The reason is that the initial waves of immigrants arrived in Jamaica during the latter part of the 17th century. It is evident that Bertha's mother is unnamed. Hence, her insanity might be linked not just to an individual but also to the entire West Indian populace. The entire society is insane. They are perceived as "Other" and regarded as inferior to the British.

Brontë argues that her British audience disregards the existence of West Indians, necessitating the need to educate them. Therefore, her assertion is that they are all identical. Brontë seeks to demonstrate their insanity to emphasise the notion that this society poses a danger to the British. During that period, individuals who were mentally unstable were confined to asylums due to doctors' inability to accurately identify their condition. They were detained in order to ensure the safety of society. They posed a significant threat and exerted oppressive control over the coloniser. They were inherently unequal to the coloniser. Brontë's representation focuses on the distinction between the colonised and the coloniser. Consequently, she strives to make her narrative conclusive. Although the mother poses a threat, Rhys's objective is to decipher and interpret these conventional and predictable visuals.

Rhys, as a postcolonial writer, seeks to deconstruct the biased portrayal of Bertha's mother. In order to elucidate the origins of her mental illness, she delves into her early life and recounts the challenging situations she endured. The narrative commences subsequent to the enactment of the Emancipation Act. Antoinette asserts that her mother continued to make plans and have aspirations. Furthermore, she affirms that the dancer was very remarkable on the night when they returned from their honeymoon in Trinidad. This demonstrates that Annette did not possess inherent madness, but rather encountered distressing events. Antoinette recounts that the Jamaican women never approved of her mother, since Christophine said that she was too beautiful. This demonstrates that Annette is despised within her community and experiences systemic racial discrimination. Rhys affirms her status as a victim of her culture. The purpose of her narration is to imbue this character with human qualities.

Rhys provides a more extensive account of this individual. She fabricates the challenges she had in her life. She examines the sense of isolation experienced by Annette. The latter individual is estranged and excluded upon the arrival of the doctor. The woman's physique gradually became slender, and eventually, she declined to venture outside her residence altogether. She isolates herself when she is unable to find a resolution for her child Pierre. It is evident that alienation may contribute to her sadness. The situation deteriorates when Mr. Mason reneges on his commitments. He refuses to fly to England in order to cure Pierre.

Rhys elucidates that Annette's circumstances deteriorate with her marriage to Mr. Mason. Rhys obliterates Brontë's text. Annette is given the chance to speak and share her personal experiences. Annette is subjected to victimisation and dehumanisation by the British due to their refusal to listen to her. Furthermore, she experiences distress following the demise of her son, Pierre, as well as her parrot.

One defining feature of English-language postcolonial literature is displacement. When discussing Annette's experiences, Rhys uses the concept of "place and displacement." In the *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Annette struggles with her forced relocation. After the house burns down in Coulibri, she is forced to leave her home. Mr. Mason compels her to relinquish all of her possessions. Rhys endeavours to persuade the audience that Annette did not possess a congenital mental illness. Following the tragedy, Annette was unable to comprehend the events that occurred. Annette is perceived as a societal victim. Hence, Rhys elucidates Annette's state of insanity from a postcolonial perspective.

She incorporated different perspectives to ensure the authenticity of her story. Additionally, she demonstrates the importance of numerous narrations. There is always an alternative perspective. Furthermore, Rhys's objective is not alone to depict her descent into madness, but also to employ the technique of "linguistic displacement". In addition, she incorporates adjectives that are not typically employed in sentences to decipher the English grammar. Consequently, the language used by the coloniser is perceived as lacking authenticity.

Annette's sickness is widely recognized, yet people struggle to come to terms with it. Antoinette frequently experiences oppression due to her mother's condition. They are seen as a menace. Additionally, the residents of the estate perceive her as a threat. Rhys employs the technique of "linguistic displacement" in her portrayal of black characters as well. She accurately depicts the linguistic patterns and speech of black Jamaicans, commonly referred to as the "vernacular language". *The Empire Writes Back* argues that the vocabulary used by the colonisers is insufficient to accurately depict a newly colonised territory. The black girl skillfully utilises the convergence of French and English to portray Annette. In addition, she analyses and breaks down the norms of English grammar. This exemplifies how postcolonial writers reject and repudiate the language of the coloniser. They seek an alternative in order to avoid appearing "inauthentic" and being insulted.

Due to the lack of understanding of mental illness at that time, those exhibiting symptoms of craziness were confined to asylums. Annette resides in a charming abode with the intention of ensuring the safety of others. Essentially, she is concealed from view. She is being confined by a black couple in order to exert control over her and prevent any potential issues. The African-American woman disagrees with Antoinette's visit as it leads to "trouble". Rhys seemed to have a thorough understanding of her Jamaican persona. She substitutes "a beautiful residence" for an asylum. She asserts that there was already enough trouble without that. Additionally, Mr. Mason abandons his wife following her psychiatric condition. Antoinette asserts that the individual appeared to have a distaste for Jamaica, specifically Spanish Town.

The female characters are depicted differently by Brontë and Rhys. The mother role, who is unidentified, is portrayed by Brontë using colonial terminology. So, her "single story" continues to show the colonized in a biased light. It is important to recognize that her stereotype needs to be challenged in order to create a fresh narrative for her. Rhys has presented an alternative narrative for her. She provides her character with a unique narrative to demonstrate to her audience the potential for multiple storytelling approaches. She exposes the circumstances that Annette experiences in order to deconstruct and revise Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Annette is depicted as a victim who is marginalised and deprived of her humanity due to her past experiences.

4.4: Parallels Between Cosway's Idiot Boy and Mason's Idiot Boy:

This section will focus on comparing the two novels' depictions of the idiot boy. No matter how many times the writers call him a "idiot," their depictions of him couldn't be more different. To the colonizer, the colonized are "primitive". In her writing, Brontë demonstrates that Mason's son is a "primitive" due to his status as an "idiot". According to Mr. Rochester, there was also a younger sibling who was completely mute and intellectually disabled. The author withholds a name from the protagonist to symbolise the entire society. In addition, she asserts that his ailment is a result of genetic inheritance. In addition, Brontë denies him the opportunity to narrate his perspective. He lacks a voice due to his incapacity to achieve equality with the coloniser. He lacks the ability to talk about himself. Brontë emphasises the importance of distinction. She emphasised the importance of mental illness. She presents him

with a single clichéd image. Rhys presents a contrasting portrayal to Brontë's negative description.

Rhys uses the concept of "subversion" to understand the prejudiced portrayal. Reconstructing the canonical works is what this term alludes to in *The Empire Writes Back*. In her assertion that Brontë has ignored his real name, she discredits his authenticity. The fact that his surname is Cosway is something she reveals. However, his mental illness cannot be attributed to genetics as his mother did not exhibit signs of madness until his passing. Rhys endeavours to imbue this figure with human qualities. He is shown to be a victim as Mr. Mason obstructs Annette's efforts to have him receive medical care in England. Annette attributes his current predicament to the coloniser. Rhys did not assign him a name to symbolise the collective victimisation and dehumanisation experienced by all the colonised individuals from the West Indies at the hands of the British. Furthermore, she holds them accountable for their indifference towards the plight and conditions of the colonised.

Moreover, the boy perishes while being forcibly removed from Coulibri. Rhys endeavours to restore the reputation of the young man. She challenges the portrayal of those with mental illness by highlighting their vulnerability and inability to defend themselves.

To conclude, Rhys undermines the stereotype established by Brontë. Rhys's work elucidates that the boy is merely a casualty of colonisation. The coloniser neglects to provide him with healthcare and consideration. The British have subjected him to dehumanisation. Rhys demonstrates an awareness of the biases and endeavours to reframe them through a West Indian perspective.

4.5: Parallels Between Mrs. Eff and Mrs. Fairfax:

As housekeepers, the characters share a commonality. Although Mrs. Eff is assigned the role of housekeeper at Thornfield in Rhys's story, Brontë's work features Mrs. Fairfax in this capacity. These two individuals are portrayed in conflicting or contradictory ways. Mrs. Fairfax is a significant and mysterious character at Thornfield in the novel *Jane Eyre*. Brontë prioritises her British identity and portrays her in a favourable manner. The author appears to extol this character as she maintains a certain distance from the servants in order to prevent complications and assert her dominance over them, despite her yearning for companionship due to her solitude. It appears that Mrs. Fairfax is less inclined to engage in conversation concerning her master, indicating that she is successfully fulfilling his desires and following

his commands. In addition, Mrs. Fairfax endeavours to warn the author to use caution in regards to Mr. Rochester. She rationalises her position by aligning herself with the social status of her employer, since class disparities held significant importance during that time. Although she cautions Jane about the marriage, she remains unaware of and unable to acknowledge the presence of the madwoman. Mr. Rochester affirms that the British housekeeper, albeit lacking precise understanding of the events, is innocent and not involved in imprisoning Bertha. Brontë endeavours to portray the housekeeper in a favourable light. Brontë offers only a single narrative for this character. Administrators in an English household are commended for their honesty and loyalty by the author. Even so, Rhys gives her a different picture.

Postcolonial authors aim to demolish figures found in the canon through the concept of "subversion". Rhys endeavours to redefine the role of the housekeeper in order to expose the detrimental impact the English housekeeper has on Antoinette's existence. Mrs. Eff assumes the duty of employing Grace Poole to confine Antoinette in the attic. It is evident that Mrs. Eff is aware of Antoinette's presence in the house and persuades Grace to find employment for financial reasons.

It is evident that Rhys is against Brontë's portrayal of Mrs. Fairfax since Mrs. Eff is focused on increasing her husband's money. Rhys depicts her in an unfavourable light to illustrate her complicity in confining Antoinette within a room. Rhys endeavours to expose the true visage of the British coloniser. Mrs. Eff epitomises the coloniser who devastates the livelihood of the West Indians.

To conclude, Rhys challenges Brontë's portrayal of the British manager, Mrs. Fairfax, by introducing a contrasting character, Mrs. Eff. Grace Poole is employed to imprison Antoinette in the attic. Rhys reverses the image of Mrs. Fairfax and provides her with an alternative interpretation. She offers an additional narrative for this character to expose the true nature of the British. It is imperative for Rhys to raise awareness about the peril posed by the coloniser. Rhys assumes the position of Mrs. Fairfax, a virtuous and naive housewife, in order to revise it. Therefore, the presented image portrays her dedication to the betterment of the British people. According to Rhys, both her husband and Mrs. Eff are responsible for imprisoning Antoinette.

4.6: Parallels Between Richard Mason in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*:

Parallels can be identified not only between the two housekeepers, but also in the literary works of both Brontë and Rhys. A few of the parallels manifest themselves in the persona of Richard Mason. European authors categorise Non-Europeans as the “Other” due to their residence outside of Europe's physical limits and adherence to different traditions. Brontë asserts that Jane initially regards Mason as a "polite" individual, but has suspicions regarding his true identity due to her lack of familiarity with him. Jane describes him as being "not exactly foreign, but also not completely English", hailing from a "tropical nation". Richard Mason is originally from the West Indies. Consequently, Brontë endeavours to ostracise him from English society due to his peculiar physical features. Therefore, she regards him as a foreigner in her nation. Brontë focuses on the distinction between themselves and the "outsider". Richard Mason cannot attain the same status as the British due to his West Indian origin. Brontë asserts that Mason hails from Jamaica, whereas Rhys contradicts her.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys presents Richard Mason in a way that contradicts Brontë's story. As a postcolonial writer, Rhys reimagines Richard's story via the lens of "subversion". Mr. Mason and his kid are regarded as British. Rhys's literary work is more focused on internal perspectives rather than external influences, as shown in Brontë's novel. Antoinette's husband describes Mason as an amiable and welcoming individual who formed a strong bond with him and placed full trust in him. It is evident that their connection is founded on mutual interests. The husband commends Mason for his ability to mostly generate earnings from the colonised. Furthermore, Aunt Cora accuses Mason of unjustly taking away Antoinette's inheritance. Mason might be seen as a method to enhance the husband's financial prosperity and advantages. The primary concern for them is the ascension of the empire and its prosperity. It is evident that English laws are established to prioritise their own interests while disregarding and excluding the colonised. Consequently, Rhys presents a fresh depiction of Mason as someone who follows and serves the coloniser.

According to Brontë, Richard Mason is the colonizer's oppressor. In trying to save his sister, he ruined Mr. Rochester's wedding, and the author scolds him for it. Mason acknowledges the presence of the madwoman and affirms that she now resides at Thornfield Hall. Brontë's intention appears to be to demonstrate that both Mr. Rochester and Jane are

subjected to the Mason family's victimisation. Therefore, the author portrays the British as victims of the oppressive rule enforced by the colonisers. Brontë's character, Mason, exerts oppressive control over both Jane and Rochester, hindering their marriage. However, Rhys offers a unique perspective on this matter.

In order to contest Brontë's beliefs, Rhys employs the notion of "subversion". As shown in her work, Antoinette's stepbrother is Richard Mason. Richard Mason plans to visit England very soon. As Rhys's story shows, Mr. Mason is actually British. The author reverses his role as a colonizer and becomes the colonized after deciphering and inverting his identity. Additionally, Rhys creates a new ending to Antoinette's life as the story starts with her early years. No evidence of Mason's confession about Rochester's first wife has been found. Additionally, a conscious attempt is made to undermine Brontë's text near the end of the third portion of Rhys's work. Antoinette envisions herself surreptitiously acquiring Grace's keys and descending the stairs. She ignited a fire within the residence and perished. Upon awakening, she discovers Grace in a state of intoxication, unconscious and asleep. As a result, Antoinette chooses to take her own life.

She then takes advantage of the situation by stealing the keys and running through the hallway. Her suicide does not take place before the novel ends. Depending on their perspective, readers might draw different conclusions about the likelihood of suicide from this conclusion. As a result, the uniqueness and inversion of events that define Bertha's conclusion in *Wide Sargasso Sea* are crystal clear.

In conclusion, the portrayals of Richard Mason by Brontë and Rhys could hardly be more different. Redressing this figure's image, Rhys employed the idea of "subversion". Rhys claims that Mason harmed Antoinette in addition to destroying the lives of the British characters. She detracts from Brontë's work by telling a new story from a different point of view. For Rhys, the other tale is of importance. Rhys's objective is to both undermine the persona and illustrate that she accomplishes this by employing the same vocabulary as the coloniser. She demonstrates her proficiency in language and her ability to influence her audience.

4.7: Parallels Between Grace Poole in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*:

This section focuses on establishing comparisons between the character of Grace Poole from *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*. They serve as caretakers for Bertha and Antoinette. In the novel, *Jane Eyre*, Grace Poole is perceived as an enigmatic individual residing in Thornfield Hall, and her laughter arouses suspicion among the inhabitants. She possesses an air of enigma as her true identity as a servant remains concealed from everyone. She is under suspicion for the peculiar laughter. Consequently, it may be concluded that Grace is also a victim, as she is perceived as an outsider by the household members. The British can appreciate her role as a servant due to her ability to effectively conceal Bertha and maintain unwavering loyalty to her employer. Moreover, Mr. Rochester apprises Jane that he has employed Grace Poole due to his confidence in her. According to him, Grace has generally been an effective caretaker, as she consistently rescues him. Brontë commends this servant as she seems to embody a commendable role in Rochester's perspective. Grace Poole exemplifies the archetype of the British servant who is eager to satisfy the master. She resembles a coloniser who assists Rochester in imprisoning Bertha. Brontë emphasises Grace's contribution to the expansion of the empire due to Bertha's origins on a colonised island. Grace is also isolated and marginalised by her society because of her. It can be inferred that she is a victim. Therefore, the colonised individuals may perceive this character as exhibiting signs of depression. While Grace Poole's portrayal in *Wide Sargasso Sea* highlights her dehumanisation, it also presents a conflicting perspective.

Helen Tiffin suggests that postcolonial authors often appropriate characters from well-established literary works in order to present a fresh and distinct viewpoint. It is evident throughout the narrative that Mrs. Eff employs Grace Poole to serve the master in order to acquire financial advantage. Grace emphatically states that she refuses to serve the devil without any form of compensation. This character's affinity for riches indicates her alignment with the coloniser's perspective. Rhys seems to be portraying the mindset of the coloniser through the character of Grace, who has a strong affinity for money.

It is evident that Grace Poole, being British, had the intention of amassing wealth through colonisation. Unlike in *Jane Eyre*, Bertha's existence in the house is consistently disregarded, making her distinct from a victim. However, in Rhys's novel, she is not subjected to oppression as her role as a keeper does not demand exertion from her. Rhys

appears to attribute responsibility to this British figure and portrays her as an oppressor of the colonised, as she dehumanises Antoinette. Furthermore, Grace Poole is perceived as an alcoholic who frequently becomes intoxicated, particularly during the nighttime hours. Consequently, difficulties arise.

To sum up, Rhys portrays Grace Poole in a contrasting manner throughout her novel. Grace is employed by the master to amass wealth. However, she displays a lack of concern towards her patient from the West Indies. Rhys endeavours to reframe this figure through a postcolonial perspective in order to reveal the authentic essence of the coloniser. Rhys's narrative unveils Grace's true identity, dispelling her aura of mystery and mystique. Rhys's narrative is significant as it unveils the authentic narrative of the British character. She undermines the portrayal of her British character on a global scale.

Chapter 5: Parallels Between the Themes of *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*

This chapter focuses on comparing the prevalent themes shared by *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Indeed, the prevailing themes in both literary works are madness, the dynamics between the oppressor and the oppressed and the institution of slavery.

5.1: Parallels Between the Theme of Madness in the Two Novels:

This section focuses on the discussion of mental illness, as it is crucial to examine how the two authors approach this matter. The theme of madness is examined through the characters of Bertha in Brontë's novel and Antoinette in Rhys's novel. The canonical texts portray the colonised as someone who is perceived as an outsider. In this particular context, Brontë's portrayal of Bertha Mason is commonly regarded as that of a mentally unstable individual, however, it is worth noting that the narrative surrounding her is completely dominated by Rochester's patriarchal perspective and viewpoint. It is worth mentioning that England had an increase in mental disorders during the nineteenth century. Consequently, asylums were built. They were considered a secure location due to their confinement of mentally unstable individuals. Brontë perceives Bertha as a perilous individual and a foreigner to both her husband and society. She believes that her condition is hereditary and tends to prioritise her external appearance over her internal emotions and personal experiences.

The postcolonial authors in *The Empire Writes Back* challenge and subvert the assumptions found in the canonical text by reinterpreting them from a contrasting viewpoint. Therefore, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys provides a platform for Antoinette to express her personal encounters and the subjugation she endured throughout her existence, ultimately resulting in her descent into madness. Antoinette recounts her personal account to rebuild the narrative originally written by Brontë. Dennis Porter observes that Antoinette is the deranged offspring of an insane lady. However, Jean Rhys transports us to the early stages of the voyage that originated from the birth in Jamaica and culminated in the attic room at Thornfield. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Jean Rhys establishes thematic consistency by asserting that Bertha Rochester's madness was not inherent, but rather a result of external influences.

According to Rhys, Antoinette's mental illness is not inherited. Therefore, the author examines her childhood and adulthood experiences to challenge the preconceptions created by Brontë and demonstrate that she was not previously insane. In terms of rewriting, Rhys subverts the portrayal of Bertha by affording her the opportunity to recount her untold experiences, a narrative perspective absent in Brontë's original work.

Bertha is subjected to a racial characterization by Brontë due to her indifference towards Bertha as a person, solely because of her mental illness. Rochester perceives himself as a victim due to being tricked by Richard Mason. Brontë affirms the perilous nature of the familial madness by highlighting the confinement of Bertha and her mother. Rochester proclaims that his bride's mother was deemed insane and confined to a lunatic institute. As she reveals her sentiments of inadequacy through comparisons to others, she is imprisoned in the asylum to warn the Europeans about the insane. Furthermore, Rochester accompanies his wife to the physicians who make a public announcement about her mental illness diagnosis. What is the objective of confining Bertha to the attic? During that era, individuals with mental illness were regarded as a menace to society. Bertha poses a significant threat to those in her vicinity. Therefore, it is imperative for Mr. Rochester to confine her. The "madwoman" was secluded from the rest of the individuals to ensure her safety. Brontë demonstrates the dominance of the English language in comparison to Jamaican Creole. In order to cast her as the "Other" and marginalize her, Rochester claims that she is a "alien" incapable of being led towards anything more meaningful. Overindulging in drink and sexual urges led Bertha to her insane state. The way Rochester acts shows that he is being taken advantage of by his wife. Antoinette confronts Bertha's husband about his stereotyped characterization of her.

Rhys really rewrites the narrative of insanity within the Mason family with the intention of dismantling the notion that familial lunacy is solely attributed to genetic inheritance. The author establishes a fresh start in Antoinette's life in order to rationalise her insanity. Annette, the mother of Antoinette, is not depicted as a mentally unstable woman, while Brontë overlooks her early existence. Rhys discloses that Annette is the woman who was subjected to oppression by both her community and her English husband. The story depicts Jamaica as a society composed of individuals from both white and black ethnic backgrounds, where the Creoles have challenges in assimilating and coexisting. Hence, Annette and her daughter face the challenges of alienation and oppression. It seems that she despises the location due to the tyranny enforced by individuals. Annette's narrative reaches its pinnacle when she weds Mason. Her spouse neglects her, particularly after her house in Coulibri is torched. Indeed, Rhys revises Annette's state of insanity and discloses that Mason confines her within a residence at the onset of her disease. Nevertheless, he disregards the pursuit of a remedy for her mental instability due to his perception of her as non-human. It is evident that she has been subjected to victimisation and dehumanisation by the British. Despite Rhys providing an explanation for Annette's madness, she persists in asserting that Antoinette too possesses an alternate aspect.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys portrays Antoinette's mental instability by employing two unique narrative voices that are present in both the main character and her husband. The author employs these voices to illustrate the contrasting self-perceptions of both the coloniser and the colonised. The spouse, who remains unnamed, narrates the second part of the story. He is unaware of Antoinette's craziness, but he is informed by Daniel Cosway, Antoinette's stepbrother. The sender of the letter expresses the belief that it is their Christian obligation to caution the recipient about the unsuitability of marrying the woman in question due to her unfavourable genetic heritage. Consequently, Rhys deconstructs Brontë's portrayal of Rochester, particularly in relation to his realisation of her mental instability. Postcolonial "rewriting" is evident in Daniel's actions, as he not only spreads tales about the hereditary illness in Antoinette's bloodline, but also accuses Richard Mason of betraying her spouse. Rhys exposes the husband's actual situation due to his acceptance of the rumour regarding his mental condition and his refusal to acknowledge Antoinette's point of view. Consequently, it is evident that Antoinette is a victim due to her spouse disregarding her voice due to being perceived as lesser, whereas Rhys empowers her to redefine this aspect concerning insanity.

Brontë opted to depict Bertha's insanity from Rochester's point of view, whereas Rhys provided Antoinette's perspective to revise it. Regarding the experiences of Rhys's protagonist, Elizabeth J. Donaldson asserts that the work portrays the potential causes of her mental instability, including a challenging upbringing, a perilous societal environment, and the eventual betrayal by her spouse. Antoinette's character demonstrates that she did not possess inherent madness, but rather became a victim of her husband. According to Rhys, the husband effectively manipulated Antoinette into madness and exploited doctors as a means to declare her as mentally ill and isolate her from society, deeming her a danger to others.

According to Dennis Porter, Bertha's craziness is caused by her sexual desires and is influenced by males, both individually and as a group. Therefore, Rhys conducts an investigation to demonstrate that she has been subjected to sexual abuse. For example, Sandi and Daniel Cosway might be seen as prime illustrations of men who engage in sexual assault towards Antoinette. The spouse regards Antoinette as a mere sexual object. Antoinette can be perceived as a victim of her husband's oppressive and abusive behaviour. Cosway significantly contributes to the destruction of Antoinette's life by confirming that she has indeed been subjected to sexual exploitation. Therefore, it is evident that Rhys reinterprets

Bertha's insanity as a consequence of male subjugation rather than being inherited from her mother.

It can be inferred that Rhys counteracts her insanity in order to rectify the perception, returning to her earlier years to retell Antoinette's story. It is evident that Rhys's objective is to expose a negative portrayal of the colonised and demonstrate that they are not fundamentally flawed or inferior, but rather their current state is a consequence of colonisation.

5.2: Parallels Between the Theme of Dominator and Dominated in the Two Novels:

This section focuses on analysing the interaction between the dominant and subordinate characters as shown in various literary works. Europeans hold the belief that they possess a higher level of superiority. The connection between Mr. Rochester and Bertha Mason is examined in *Jane Eyre*. The woman is controlled by her husband due to her mental instability. Therefore, Bertha experiences oppression due to her perceived inadequacy.

The theorists in *The Empire Writes Back* argue that there exists a correlation between cultures that are dominated and those that dominate. Postcolonial literature, such as those from the Caribbean, address the dynamics between the oppressor and the oppressed in order

to analyse the politics of domination. It is evident that Rhys examines the British's imposition of dominance over Antoinette. Rhys discloses that the husband exercises dominance over his wife by exerting control over her financial resources. The author refutes the coloniser's actions and asserts that the coloniser's objective is to acquire and dispossess the colonised individual of their belongings. The husband's marriage exemplifies the oppressive nature of colonisation as he unjustly denies his wife access to her own money within the jurisdiction of the "English Law". Aunt Cora accuses Richard of engaging in an extramarital relationship with an unnamed spouse, asserting that he is relinquishing all of the child's possessions to an unfamiliar individual. Christophine suggests that the spouse has a strong desire for fortune. Therefore, the husband represents the British coloniser whose sole driving force behind his actions is the desire for growth and excessive material gain, regardless of the immense misery inflicted upon others. He attempts to rationalise this behaviour by shifting the blame onto the colonised individuals, deeming them incapable of fair treatment due to inherent flaws.

Furthermore, Antoinette appears to be subjected to oppression by the British. The husband perceives her as a doll due to her possessing a marionette quality. It seems that he characterises her in this manner in order to persuade the reader that the colonised individuals should be subjugated by the British due to their perceived incompetence. The husband asserts that Antoinette possessed a voice that resembled that of a doll. It is evident that Antoinette lacks authority and is unable to assert her thoughts or assert her rights due to being dominated. The colonised individual is denied the opportunity to freely express themselves and is forced to keep silent, much to the character Bertha. Therefore, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the process of rewriting is evident in the departure from Brontë's novel, as it portrays Bertha Mason as being subjected to oppression and domination. Antoinette experiences oppression and dehumanisation at the hands of the British due to her Caribbean origin.

5.3: Parallels Between the Theme of Slavery in the Two Novels:

The final section focuses on the examination of slavery as a significant motif in the literary works of both Brontë and Rhys.

The novel, *Jane Eyre*, portrays the influence of British colonisation, particularly in Jamaica, where the institution of slavery is prevalent. This is illustrated by a secondary character named Bertha Mason. Susan L Meyer asserts that slavery is alluded to throughout the work through the deliberate omission of specific dates by Brontë. Meyer states

that the events in the story take place prior to the abolition of slavery. Brontë concluded her writing endeavours in 1846. Towards the conclusion of the story, Jane informs the reader that her marriage to Rochester occurred a decade prior. Therefore, it can be inferred that it occurred approximately about 1836. Moreover, Rochester proclaims to Jane that he got married to a Creole woman who had been kept hidden in the attic at Thornfield for the past ten years. It is evident that Rochester's marriage to Bertha is motivated by imperialistic intentions, as his objective is to obtain slaves and land. Hence, it may be inferred that the imperial component held great importance for the British during that period. However, it happened at the same time as the elimination of slavery. Meyer asserts that Brontë incorporates the theme of slavery in *Jane Eyre* to depict the systematic subjugation of individuals for commercial gain. In essence, the elimination of slavery resulted in Britain facing economic difficulties as Jamaica had held significant economic significance for England. The act of Bertha igniting a fire at Thornfield can be interpreted as a symbolic act of rebellion against the empire. Even though slave rebellions had ceased years before due to the Emancipation Act, Bertha can be interpreted as an indication of the ongoing nature of slave revolts.

Rhys examines the institution of slavery in her work as a means of illustrating the influence of British colonisation on Jamaica. It is worth mentioning that she refers to the Emancipation Act, which effectively abolished slavery. Hence, the author endeavours to depict the events that transpired on the island as a means of addressing Brontë's concept of economic oppression. For instance, the Cosway family and Mr. Luttrell experienced financial hardship following the abolition of slavery. It is evident that Britain had minimal regard for the welfare and circumstances of the individuals residing in its colonies. They experienced destitution as a result of losing their wealth and without receiving any compensation. Rhys provides vivid descriptions of the situations endured by slaves who continued to serve their masters. The prominent characters in this regard are Christophine, Godfrey and Baptiste. The primary factor is their lack of proficiency in any certain occupation.

Rhys provides additional details regarding the circumstances of the emancipated slaves. She asserts that black individuals continue to rebel against their former owners, even with the enactment of the Emancipation Act. It is evident that the white population mistreated the black population. Godfrey was negligently disregarding the master's instructions. He seemed to advocate for racial equality. This might be regarded as a situation that applies to all

individuals of African descent. Indeed, it is connected to history as the rebellion of blacks endured.

Furthermore, Rhys challenges the British Empire by introducing a character named Mr. Mason who serves as a contradiction. In the narrative, he incurs hatred due to his severe treatment of black individuals, resulting in their dismissal and subsequent replacement with white staff. Rhys appears to critique British colonial rule and counter Brontë's arguments by presenting the underlying factors that prompted black individuals and Jamaicans to rebel. It is evident that Rhys depicts the imperative for the black individuals to revolt against Mason due to his failure to seek remedies for their circumstances. The uprising precipitated the downfall of Coulibri. Rhys believes that it was necessary for the black community to resort to violence as a means of action, as maintaining a peaceful approach with the coloniser had shown to be ineffective. Moreover, she demonstrates that black uprisings persisted even after the Emancipation Act was enacted. They persisted in their rebellions to expose the severe conditions they endured. Ashcroft examines the concept of displacement in postcolonial literature. Forced African slaves brought to the West Indies exhibit this feature in Rhys's writings. Slavery and exploitation are practices that Europeans put them through. As they learn to communicate in both their native tongue and the language that has been forced upon them, Africans undergo linguistic displacement. Rhys aims to demonstrate the linguistic deprivation experienced by colonised nations. Consequently, she exploits this opportunity to seek retribution against the language of the coloniser by deliberately undermining its authenticity. Linguistic displacement is attributed not only to Christophine but also to Daniel Cosway, who asserts that she lacks both financial resources and companionship. Consequently, Rhys disassembles her English grammar by means of "deconstructing". The postcolonial author incorporates "linguistic displacement" as a means of responding to the coloniser through their writing. Therefore, Rhys portrays the encounters of the colonised. It is evident that Rhys employs the concept of "linguistic displacement" to illustrate the slaves' inability to utilise the language of the coloniser. This can be interpreted as a linguistic rebellion.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

To sum up, a correlation between the two novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* is established. The concept of "writing back" and its underlying ideas to illustrate how Rhys responds to the classic work through her own writing is utilised here. The contrast demonstrated that Rhys assimilated and rectified the original novel, *Jane Eyre*, in order to present a fresh portrayal of her homeland. The two works are analysed in accordance with the theoretical framework of *The Empire Writes Back*. Rhys has reinterpreted her work by using some assumptions from Charlotte Brontë in order to present her own rendition. Rhys's novel has a West Indian perspective that contrasts with Brontë's. It is important to mention that the act of "writing back" is done on the level of individual characters and overarching ideas. Upon analysing the characters, it can be stated that the novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea* features several characters that bear resemblance to each other. The choice to utilise well-known characters by Rhys is an attempt to "appropriate" them and "subvert" the literary conventions used by Brontë. Thematic comparisons between the works are another possible analysis. Rhys presented several subjects to retell them from her personal viewpoint. It can be told that every writer has a desire to advocate for their own culture. This dissertation aimed to illustrate the concept of "writing back". Rhys and Brontë utilise English as the shared language in their storytelling. Charlotte Brontë's classic novel is written from a colonial standpoint, presenting a pessimistic portrayal of the Creole. However, Rhys has reinterpreted Brontë's text from her own perspective, even if she was influenced by the established literary works. It might be inferred that the postcolonial author's intention was to rectify the English classic. In their different works, the authors have faithfully portrayed life in their nations in the 1840s. A total of seventeen locales in Jamaica and England are covered in both books. British colonial rule extended to Jamaica during the period. The two novels' protagonists and antagonists were compared. Certain shared traits have been noted among them. Some of the characters in *Jane Eyre* are Mason, Bertha, Mrs. Fairfax, Mr. Rochester, and Grace Poole. Cosway Antoinette (who becomes Bertha), her husband Mason, Mrs. Eff, and Grace Poole are some of the characters in *Wide Sargasso Sea* who are similar to those in *Jane Eyre*. We use the themes of "place and displacement" to look at how the literary works' characters are affected by them and how Rhys undermines them.

Then, there was a focus on exploring the extent of subversion by examining similar issues. Initially, the prominent issue of lunacy is addressed that is pivotal in both literary masterpieces. Another significant subject examined is the dynamic between the dominator and the dominated. Ultimately, the institution of slavery was scrutinised. Rhys aimed to modify and challenge Charlotte Bronte's work by comparing *Jane Eyre* with *Wide Sargasso Sea*. To sum up, Rhys effectively challenged and refuted *Jane Eyre* by deconstructing and rectifying the portrayal of the colonised in *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

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