

Identity Crises: An Analytical Study of Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea

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Abstract

In the Novels of Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre and Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea, the textual function of cultural representations of subaltern identity in the development and preservation of First and Third World connections is examined. It focuses on the texts' dominating discursive practices, examining how the West's hegemonic ideology is at work in establishing value systems while simultaneously presenting Third World people as subaltern. Both works are supported by the use of language that aids in the comprehension of hierarchical power structures and the potential for opposition to that agenda. It demonstrates how, under the cruel heritage of patriarchy and imperialism, Mr. Rochester has been a dominant voice and authoritative authority. The dominating discursive space in Jane Eyre restricts Bertha Mason's unique identity by denying her a subjective voice to claim her identity. However, in the sense that Antoinette/Bertha voices and struggles for her identity, the novel Wide Sargasso Sea acts considering the "re-inscription" of the novel Jane Eyre. Her individual identity and subjectivity are distorted by prevailing power structures and discourses, which create ideological conflict in existing social interactions and identities.

Despite the fact that she did not consider herself to be English and remained a scathing critic of English principles throughout her life, Jean Rhys (1890-1979) should be seen as a guiding light for English culture. She was awarded the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in recognition of her significant contributions to literature. She was born on the Caribbean island of Dominica in 1890 to a Welsh father and a "white Creole" mother. Even her best-known piece, Wide Sargasso Sea (1939), is founded on this 'catharsis,' or Creole identity, for which she is most well-known. Rhys and the Wide Sargasso Sea's description of colonial relations has been analyzed in recent literary criticism in terms of geographical, national, cultural, and racial themes. Given that the narrative's core is a White Creole character, the goal of critique should be to determine whether or whether the book reconfigures the previous cultural resistance of black Caribbeans against European rule (i.e. Antoinette). By dismantling and deconstructing the Western canon, Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea displaces the monolithic grandeur of the Western canon by rewriting Charlotte Bronte's iconic work Jane Eyre (1847). As an alternative text to the conventional perspective's monolithic construct, Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea defends cultural pluralism and plurality.

By shifting the attention from Jane to "the insane woman in the attic," Jean Rhys' best-known postcolonial novel Wide Sargasso Sea has long been considered as to a predecessor to Charlotte Bronte's novel Jane Eyre. It is a tragic novel that investigates the construction of knowledge about racial identity tragedy, particularly the identity tragedy of white Creole women. The paper tries to present a thorough view of Antoinette, the "crazy woman" caught between English imperialist control and racial class friction in the Wide Sargasso Sea, and to show that Antoinette's identity tragedy is the outcome of "being mute."

Keywords: Identity, Gender, Social, Culture, Sargasso, Sea.

INTRODUCTION

Jean Rhys was born in Dominica in 1890 to a Welsh father and a white Creole mother. She was the first of four children. Her whole adult life was spent in England, where she moved when she was sixteen. Many books were written by Rhys between the years of 1931 and 1979, among them: *After Leaving Mackenzie* (1931), *Voyage in the Dark* (1934), and *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1979). It is usually accepted that Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* is a prequel to *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which has been discussed by academics from a variety of views. As noted by M.M. Adjarian in her essay "Between and Beyond Boundaries in *Wide Sargasso Sea*," the novel successfully captures the historical, social, and cultural backdrop of alienation, displacement, and colonization through the "opposites." "Self and other," "sanity and insanity," "feminine and masculine," "black and white," and "fiction and history" are instances of opposing elements. Beautiful juxtapositions and the development of a global heritage-based awareness are hallmarks of the novel's writing style. As a white Creole descendant of Welsh, Irish, and Scottish ancestors, Rhys was criticized in various instances as a writer for her cultural ambiguity as a writer.

Some of the criticisms leveled at the postcolonial approach include the following: It is possible that Rhys, like the invading power she attacks in her poetry, was governed by its ideals. No matter how you look at it, is *Wide Sargasso Sea* exposing or concealing the horrors of colonialism. Rhys is a skeptic of imperialist discourse and practice, or is he a part of it? Whether or if she is capable of doing both, I don't know. In this story, what role do the black ex-Africans and Creoles have in the main character's destinies? Is the novel's finale an effort to transcend racial gaps or an acknowledgment of an unbridgeable divide? Since *Wide Sargasso Sea* is told in a fluid and polyphonic way, these issues have created polar opposite reactions in the past several years.

Antoinette represents the colonized while Rochester represents the colonizer, Great Britain, in the novel's cultural blunders, social

misunderstandings, and stereotypical gender issues, according to the majority of critics. There are several reasons for this, not the least of which being the fact that Antoinette, a Creole lady from Jamaica who marries Rochester, a civilized British man, "owns" a part of the Caribbean just as he does his future wife. Because he doesn't understand cultural differences, Rochester's patriarchal masculine voice subjugates Antoinette's feminine identity by calling her "Bertha," a European name. Most postcolonial critics and historians see the dominance of British male speech over female Creole identity as a symbol of what colonization has done to the colonized countries. As Carine Melkom Mardorossian muses about Rochester and Antoinette's turbulent relationship, she questions the influence of colonialism on their bond and the sense of alienation they feel because of what they stand for. Most postcolonial critics see Rochester's English lineage as evidence of British colonialism and domination in the West Indies, as does Mardorossian.

Consequently, his attitude toward West Indian culture is a mirror of how the colonizer sees and respects the colonized. Antoinette is the colonized in this sense, and her lunacy embodies both the instability and feeling of dislocation in the Caribbean, as well as the historical background of the island, which has lost its original identity as a consequence of colonialism. Although Antoinette's madness is depicted as her weakness – and hence the flaw of her country and people – it is the mechanism by which she fights colonialism. Colonialism is destroyed as Antoinette burns down Thorn Field Hall. However, her rejecting of the Anglo name given to her and the burning of Thorn field Hall ablaze is a reference to her freedom, and therefore, the end of colonialism as a symbol.

But there are other historians who dispute how Antoinette became mad and set fire to the Thorn field Mansion because she couldn't comprehend her husband Rochester or their surroundings or their own personal hopes for happiness. This led to the breakup of their marriage. As a postcolonial study, most researchers emphasize on how cultural identity

defines and differentiate people; how socially constructed values impact relationships within the categories of race, ethnicity and gender; and the relevance of broken family connections in a person's life. The bulk of the ideas are postcolonial. As a consequence, I feel that approaching the novel's "opposites" from a fresh perspective will enable me to approach it in a new way.

With this in mind, Mardorossian shows that the book's oppositions in the novel don't necessarily indicate a conflict between the colonized and the colonizer, but rather reveal each character's cultural and social background via the paradoxical features of each identity. These differences in culture show how unique their personalities really are and divergent ideas on how to convey one's thoughts. No colonial or racial power struggle is reflected in these people's ideas, which are reflective of their cultural, ethnic, and national identities. Folk groups are identified by an individual's characteristics (ethnicity, race, nationality, and gender). The sense of belonging to a particular group helps us identify the root reasons of misunderstandings and miscommunications, both inside and across groups. According to folklorist Alan Dundes, the word "folk" may apply to any group of people who share at least one characteristic. There are many ways to look at the *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and these common elements should be examined in order to understand the complexities and cultural misunderstandings that are inherent in the book. Because he is unfamiliar with her culture, Antoinette's folk group is used to "make her more knowable- and thus less threatening," according to Adjarian. He then "coerces his wife to subsume her identity and all the cultural and personal associations that go with it into a one he has constructed for her" because he is "true to his role as colonizer," he says. Like Christopher Columbus, "the classic colonizer-figure of the Americas," Rochester's colonization efforts, according to Adjarian, are a lot like Columbus's.

In spite of these critiques and multiple reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, my purpose is to give a fresh viewpoint on the book using folkloric themes. For example, I am aware of how colonialism may lead to disintegrated family ties as well as how a misunderstanding of cultural and ethnic differences can result in

misunderstandings and misconceptions. In contrast, folkloric methods may demonstrate that individuals belong to distinct folk groups because of their beliefs, traditions, practices and habits and expectations. This might explain why Antoinette and Rochester are unable to communicate with one another. If a person does not feel like they belong in a particular folk group, they may have an identity crisis and may be rejected by other groups with which they try to identify. According to Living Folklore, folk groups are made up of individuals who share similar values, rituals, beliefs, language, knowledge, and even ethnicity. An individual is automatically considered a member of a folk group even if they are not formally a membership of the group. In order to be an effective member of a family or other folk group, it is necessary to have a complete knowledge of the group's verbal and nonverbal norms and conventions. To other members of the group, as well as the outside world, the group's values, beliefs, and worldview are conveyed via these types of communication to the same general public. People in a family also share objects that represent important connections as well as ideals and customs. The idea of "groupings" is a product of both internal and external communication and interaction amongst groups. Antoinette, a white Creole woman living in an English colony of Jamaica after the British Emancipation Act frees colonial slaves, faces cultural and racial rejection as she tries to forge her own identity. They meet without even establishing whether she belongs to a certain folk group. Rochester will soon be her husband. His speech and morals originate from a completely other folk group, and he also has a separate set of cultural norms and practices. Because he is from the top crust of English society and has no idea what the Caribbean is like, he chooses to fit her into his own folk band. The island's lushness, its people's rituals, and the obeah shown in Christophine's ceremonies all contribute to Rochester's worry, and his responses to that anxiety are impulsive and overpowering, as Anne Simpson writes. Being an outsider to a folk group and unaware of its surroundings and culture shows how one's opinion of another may be influenced. Folklore must be defined before we can examine the cultural, social, and gender differences within and among folk groups.. Despite what many people believe, folklore

isn't solely about old traditions, folk stories, oral fairy tales, or supernatural events." Folklore is knowledge that is passed down orally, through song, dance, ritual, and other means of expression, but is not officially sanctioned by any authority, about the world, ourselves, our communities, our beliefs, our cultures, and our customs "The authors of the book *Living Folklore*, Sims and Stephens, write. It's a participatory, dynamic process of creation, communication, and performance when we share our knowledge with others." In cities, suburbs, and rural villages, "folklore is alive and well," they assert. It's a matter of ethics and values. "My goal is to bridge the gap between literature and folklore by incorporating both the richness of folklore and the most recent findings in literary history and folklore study into my work. As a consequence, I will be able to look into the origins of folk groups, what it means to be a part of a folk group, and how folklore affects one's sense of self and cultural identity in the *Wide Sargasso Sea*. It is possible to use these terms to gain a new perspective on the novel by looking at how folk groups interact with each other and with others. According to Peter L. Berger, Peter L. Berger, and Thomas Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality*, we "socially create" judgments from the ideas, values and experiences that our own societies take for granted.

Reality is a social construct. Understanding why Rochester and Antoinette can't understand each other is possible when we look at the principles that produce cultural misunderstandings and complexity among various folk groups as a product of society and as a creation of each folk group. As members of their separate folk groups, they also have different world views and objectives. Using folklore to examine literature may be uncommon; some literary scholars may consider that doing so is too time consuming and labor intensive because of the many aspects that must be accounted for in the analysis. Scholars and folklorists are beginning to see the value of studying the folklore motif in literary texts. H.R. Ellis Davidson explains, "This is not a matter of dredging the depths of our literature for folkloric nuggets, but a new recognition of how knowledge of folklore motifs can help literary scholars" Instead of looking at the text itself, folklore looks at people, places, beliefs

and habits that are reflected in the text. As Alan Dundes puts it, "the objective of folklorists is not to comprehend the text, but to understand people. In a literary novel, folklore can explain why some characters act the way they do, how locations and environment influence the notion of identity, and what role the qualities that define identity and culture have in these people's lives. "I will be able to have a better grasp of the link between folklore and identity in *Wide Sargasso Sea* if I combine literary history with folklore and other aspects of cultural studies. I'm hoping to have a deeper grasp of the characters' challenges and how their various (mis)conceptions push them apart by studying the book more closely.

GENDER-BASED IDENTITY

After the publication of Rhys' final novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *The New York Times* proclaimed her "the greatest living author." Academic critics have mostly ignored Rhys' novels for decades; now, thanks to feminist studies, it is experiencing a renaissance in popularity. Between 1927 and 1939, Rhys published four big novels and a handful of gem-like short stories as part of the French Left Bank literary trend. Literary impressionists like Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce would be proud of her work. Although her present fame is largely due to a resurgent interest in female authors and feminist topics, her piece is dedicated more properly to the masters of literary impressionism: Joseph Conrad, Ford Madox Ford, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce.. With the support of Ford Madox Ford, she began publishing her work and continued to do so even after falling out of favour with Ford's friends. After the publishing of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, she must have had a bitter feeling of pleasure to know that she had attained a level of success in the literary world comparable to that of her old friends. It's based on Jean Rhys' encounters with Ford Madox Ford, the subject of her first novel, *Quartet*. With her husband in prison, Marya Zelli moves home with rich and nice Hugh and Lois Heidler. Lois treats Marya with petty harshness while Hugh falls in love with her. There is a solitary woman who is impoverished, exploited, and an outcast who plays a crucial role in the story. It is Julia Martin's second novel in which she breaks up with Mr. Mackenzie, and she finds herself in

dire financial problems as a result. When Anna Morgan initially arrives in England as an innocent young girl, she has her first sexual encounter as a chorus girl and gradually declines to working as a massage therapist in the film *Voyage in the Dark*. Sasha Jensen, a homeless alcoholic living in poverty in Paris, reflects on how she came to be in this predicament in *Good Morning, Midnight*. Men and "respectable" society oppress a female character in each of the four novels. Financially, sexually, and socially the heroine is constantly "sentimental," yet she is also passive. Instead of focusing on her accomplishments or ideas, the reader is more interested in her feelings and opinions about them. She has been denied the opportunity to work in a meaningful and financially rewarding capacity. She's a social pariah, descended either from a foreign colonial culture hated by the locals or from a social environment where respectability is at a premium. Paris and London, which she views to be cities of terrible night, make her feel like an outsider. The protagonists' greatest concern is that they would be reduced to a model or type devised by a foreigner, which will cause them to lose their genuine identities. Each of them is forced to choose between becoming a femme fatale or starving to death, and they're all battling the loss of their unique identity in the face of this choice. After a twenty-year absence, Rhys returned to these concerns in her masterwork, *Wide Sargasso Sea*. A more intellectual work than the author's previous four, *Wide Sargasso Sea* does contain elements of the author's personal life, but it's less autobiographical.

Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* is an essential text for *Wide Sargasso Sea* students (1847). Rochester's insane West Indian wife (who finally dies in the fire she sets, which burns Rochester's house and blinds him, but permits Jane to marry him) is a block to Jane's marriage to him in *Jane Eyre* by Bronte. A complete depiction of Jane Eyre's madwoman may be found outside. In the eyes of her English rival and Rochester, the Wild West Indian woman seems disgusting and immoral. At first glance, Jane can't tell if the madwoman is a beast or a human being groveling on all fours. Like a hyena with swollen features, the psychotic lady assaults Rochester as she does in the previous episode.

From her early years in the West Indies, through her Catholic and Creole education, to the years she spent wooing and marrying Rochester's dishonest brother, *Wide Sargasso Sea* offers a sympathetic portrait of Rochester's insane wife's life. The West Indian wife's situation is very comparable to Rhys' own. The foreign wife has prepared a "counter-text," an extension of Bronte's novel that fills in the "missing" testimony and the obstacles that Bronte glosses over, in order to demonstrate her case in the novel.

Like a musical theme, each person has an own way of being identified. Identity refers to the whole pattern of equivalence within change that constitutes a human existence. Throughout the changes, there is a continuous me with the style, an individual's or a group's personality traits that are unique to them and reflect their values and beliefs. In addition to gender, sexual orientation, nationality or ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, these factors contribute to one's sense of self. It is crucial to know one's own identity, and it is equally necessary to know the identity of a group.

A character's growth in a novel cannot be fully understood without examining the different components that make up an individual's "identity," which is a large and complex concept. A person's cultural background, socioeconomic class, country, ethnicity, and gender should all be taken into account when determining a person's identity. People's identities are shaped by a variety of different elements, thus scientists and researchers should look at numerous aspects rather than focusing on just one part of their personalities.

As Antony Giddens defines it, people's identities begin to form in early childhood. People's social status, nationality, and ethnicity are shaped by the language, customs, beliefs, and traditions of their immediate families before they explore other values that appeal to their identity. Starting with their families, people form "groups" that allows them to express and share similar values. Folklore studies hold that "informal or unauthorized shared knowledge" is a defining characteristic of a folk community. It's only when they meet new people and form new "groupings" that they're able to speak "esoterically" or "exoterically" with each other, redefining and reinforcing a "new" notion of 'groupings'

Esoteric and extraterrestrial components play an important role in the comprehension of a folk group's folklore (and hence its identity) since it is dependent on presenting itself to others or defining itself in relation to other groups. In his book *The Concept of Identity*, De Levita emphasizes the significance of defining identity in relation to others rather than focusing just on one individual's own identification: A person's name is all they have to identify themselves on a deserted island. It's impossible to have an identity on a desolate island unless you're surrounded by other people. To put it another way, "folklore matters" when it comes to looking at how individuals are viewed and identified by others, rather than just the identities they've established for themselves or the identities they've previously been a part of by birth. "According to William Hugh Jansen, "the esoteric" refers to what a community believes about itself and what it believes others believe about it. According to this definition, the exoteric is "what one group believes about another, and what the other group believes about itself." Some of the more obscure elements may be picked up by a group accidentally, according to Jansen's theory. Depending on how much "isolation" and "communication" a group or an individual feels, people may be able to endure or reject exoteric factors held against them. In Jansen's view, "isolation" is the most important aspect that "makes a group susceptible to the esoteric exoteric force". "Many groups are defined merely because they each have their unique quirks," Jansen believes that. Individuals in the Wide Sargasso Sea may feel isolated because they feel cut off from their own group, or because of geographical distances that separate them from others in their own group. When it comes to Antoinette, Rochester's failure to grasp the many facets of this white Creole lady who has no sense of place in society because of her gluttony drives him to distance himself from her. Rochester is quoted as saying, "...I didn't love her. I was enamored with her, but it wasn't love. Because she was a complete stranger to me, I was unable to feel empathy for her". Antoinette's folk group is an example of Rochester's inability to accept or understand diversity. Because he cannot share Antoinette's sentiments or ideas, Rochester feels cut off from his wife and the world around them. On the other hand, Antoinette is dissatisfied with

her own folk band since she doesn't feel like she belongs. For ethnic and cultural reasons, she is isolated from her family and the rest of the world. Because he has relocated to a location that is completely unfamiliar to him, Rochester feels isolated. Even more difficult for him to have a sense of belonging is the fact that he married a woman from this alien society.

When applied to women, the term of "identity," which implies both similarity and difference, becomes even more paradoxical. Ethnicity, culture, language, social and economic status and gender all have a role in determining a person's sense of self-worth and identity. People who share similar characteristics may be considered members of the same folk group, however the differences in gender are due not just to biological differences but also to psychological conditions and preferences. Carolyn G. Heilburn explores the differences between men and women in her book *Reinventing Womanhood: A Novel*. When a kid is born, he or she is ceremoniously taken out of the female realm and implanted with his or her identity as a male, a responsible and unfeminine individual. However, she pays for it by losing her self-confidence and autonomy as she tries to find her identity in the quest for recognition. The social and parental expectations of society, which differ according to each cultural group, may be more important in shaping a woman's identity than such a ritual. These "socially created rules" are enforced on society through the usage of male speech. To become a decent wife and mother, a woman must adhere to certain social conventions; if she does not, she will be denied the opportunity to marry and fulfill her society responsibilities. Women in our culture aren't considered adolescents since they don't go through puberty searching for their own identity; instead, they start looking for a spouse. Antoinette, who is still trying to figure out who she is and where she fits in, believes that marrying Rochester would help her discover more of who she is. There's a definite shift in her persona after their marriage: She goes from being "Bertha" (a European name) to "the insane lady," a different personality imposed on her by her husband much like her new name, and it's not what she had imagined. For this reason, she has been renamed or rebranded. Despite her inferior social status,

she marries an Englishman who is white and Creole. Erikson is of the opinion that a person's true identity cannot be derived merely from the identity they give themselves. Identity formation and growth are both influenced by one's social network. It is because of this that society dictates how a decent lady or a man should behave, regardless of what people seek to portray themselves as, according to Erikson's writings. It "involves the underlying configuration of personal character and one's conscious awareness of it," Gardiner says of Erikson's identity theory. Individual self-realization and self-identification, as well as understanding and consciousness of the cultural standards that shape their identifications, can be characterized as identity. As described by Erikson, "Constitutional givens, unique sexual demands, favored talents, substantial identifications, effective defenses, successful sublimations, and consistent roles" were transmitted in this way. He argues that men and women go through the same developmental process from childhood to maturity, but Erikson identifies biological and psychological distinctions between men and women. As a result of the gender divide, men and women have quite different ideas about what life, marriage, and love should be like. It is because of this that a young lady spends her teenage years seeking for the guy who would enable her to realize her potential, and the phases of her life are jumbled for her." Rochester decides to marry Antoinette because he needs her money and, of course, to satisfy his sexual cravings, both of which have been given to him by his father. Rochester accepts to marry Antoinette because his father assigns him to do so and, of course, to satisfy his sexual urges, whereas Antoinette seeks marriage for love, stability, and a method to identify herself with her spouse.

Antoinette's impulsive behavior does not meet Rochester's standards of a lady. Antoinette discovers Rochester's illicit relationship with the young servant Amelie in the adjacent room. Solace from Christophine comes in the form of a bottle of rum, which Antoinette promptly downs. Folklorists claim that Rochester has already crossed the line of acceptable behavior for women, which is based on cultural norms that vary from civilization to society. When Rochester sees Antoinette, he sees a "other" since she is from a civilization and region he

doesn't comprehend. At first sight, Rochester is certain that Antoinette has gone insane: "When I saw her, I was too horrified to speak." There was nothing neat or tidy about her appearance; she was flushed and swollen from head to toe, and her eyes were wide open in a vacant stare. Her toes were the only things showing. When she talked, on the other hand, her voice was low and almost imperceptible." A woman in distress is shown in Rochester's role as a nutcase, although Rochester is the cause of all of the woman's erratic behavior and unhappiness. This may be due to her being intoxicated, but Rochester still sees her as a wild animal that must be tamed. This may be due to her being intoxicated. Some words connected to a female identity theory need to be established to define important gender differences: "primary identity, gender identity, infantile identification, social role, the identity crisis, and self concept." All of these are "components of adult identity that originate early in life." A "hypothesis about one's everlasting essence or style of being," according to Gardiner, is primary identity, while "apprehending about whose sex one is socially assigned." In Gardiner's view, female infantile identifications are more complicated than male infantile identifications because of the social duties placed on them by both their own culture and those of other societies.. As children grow older, they learn about "social roles and group identifications" and how these socially constructed roles (which should differ significantly across cultures, countries, and even among folk groups) are "highly polarized by gender, with a broader variety of acceptable options available to boys than to girls." Estranged individuals are those who don't fit in with the social standards of their own folk groupings. While the guy may get away with it by inflicting his own values on a female from a completely other folk group, the female rapidly becomes the other when she meets someone from a completely different ethnic group. Antoinette is the outsider in her own society and even in her own family because of her liminality. Even though he is the other in the West Indies, he begins to see her as the other when he visits Jamaica. Regardless matter where she comes from, Rochester has an advantage over her because he is a white man. Antoinette's mother and numerous other members of her family are mad, and Rochester views this as a trend that indicates Antoinette

would be no different, which further illustrates Rochester's dominance. His goal is to make Antoinette sound more recognizable to his own group and also to turn her Creole identity into an English one, so that he may better understand her and appreciate her by imposing socially acceptable "female duties" (according to English values, rather than West Indian ones) on her. Even while it is evident that gender affects social roles and personal identities, it is vital to recognize that these conceptions of gender and identity may differ in their applicability. It is therefore neither seen as an indication that Antoinette is mad, as her mother was, or that she is socially unsuitable, by Rochester's condemnation of Antoinette's passionate and impetuous behaviors as "proper." As Gardiner points out, "being an adequately feminine woman in a culture often entails doing what a mother does and being the type of woman she is." A woman's social acceptability is founded on the social standards of the folk members of the group in which she is a part of. When people from different cultures come together, they are more likely to misinterpret the myriad aspects that make up good femininity. Thus, people prefer to categorize one other based on their own personal beliefs. To her, Rochester is cold because he has been socialized to suppress his emotions, which Antoinette views as a sign of impropriety and perhaps madness. Antoinette's final inability to conform to the discourses that define the standard within the English upper class subjectivity is also acknowledged by Robert Kendrick, who imagines Antoinette as a respectable English wife. In addition, her family's history of mental illness and drinking further distances her from Edward's idealized normal. Antoinette's culture is unknown to Rochester; therefore he must make educated guesses about her based on his own cultural beliefs and those of others. No wonder Rochester is on board with Antoinette being raised by her mother, whom he dubs "the insane lady." Rochester's voice takes precedence in the masculine conversation. On the other hand, Antoinette's narrative is wrong since she loses track of time and location while travelling to England with Rochester. When Rochester and Amelie slept next to one other in the same room, she woke up with a nervous breakdown. Furthermore, she is being relocated from her comfortable surroundings to a new area where she has no prior knowledge.

Community, social and gender roles have been shaped by the unique ideals and cultural values of many folk groups. People's personal experiences have a significant influence on how they interact with new people and environments. Despite the fact that these norms vary from culture to culture, they are not universal: They are seen as significant folk groups having their own history, practices, and ways of group-internal and external communication.... Gender and sexual orientation groupings to put it another way: Gender roles and identities are traditional ways of expressive communication in and of themselves; they are social, artistic and folkloric successes in their own right.

A folk group's characteristics can be communicated through cultural or socially constructed laws, as Green points out. Folk music brings people together because of the relationships formed and the common interests shared. This collective identification and socially constructed standards like gender allow different folk groups to connect with each other. Due to cultural differences and social norms, people may misinterpret some social standards, although even misconception is a sort of understanding.

However, Judith Gardiner claims that social norms might vary based on the sort of group one is a part of. Social norms may signal that masculine figures are more dominant than female characters or vice versa, even if this is not the case. These social divides are examined by folklore studies, which show that various folk groups exist even within the same community, as in Antoinette's case. Ethnicity, colour, social and economic status, and other factors do not indicate that males are viewed as superior to females in Jamaica. Even if he isn't wanted, the white European male looks to be in charge, especially when married to a West Indian. Just like Marie Antoinette, he has the legal authority to grab the woman's wealth and deport her.

Gardiner defines these gender-based norms as follows:

For men, not acting like women is an essential part of surviving in a patriarchal culture. As a result, the range of behaviors that are considered appropriate for each gender is extremely narrow and skewed. Women's basic

identities, I believe, remain connected throughout their lives, and girls quickly, securely, and permanently establish the gender identity that differentiates them as women. I believe this is the case. When societal pressure is used to make gender an issue for women, they may experience discomfort and misconceptions as a result. As Gardiner demonstrates, there is a clear difference between being a man and a woman. Consequently, the social positions that women and men attain in their cultural groupings vary widely, and women are more prone to encounter existential concerns as a result of the subtleties of feminine identity.

Because she is "omitted from the cultural patterns of bonding at the core of society, at its centers of power," Antoinette seems to be "the outsider." Heilbrun adds, "In general, outsiders are convinced that they are in a context of different or excluded cultures. Outsiders are supposed to create their own culture, which women as a whole are blatantly failing at." It's impossible to become aware of the fact that you're a female outsider until you've been exposed to the idea of being an outsider in other ways, she adds. Due to the fact that she is continuously being redefined and named by others, Antoinette is unable to develop her own self-identity. According to the theory of female identity, "the theory of female identity demonstrates us how female experience is transmogrified into one of female perception, mostly in response to male frameworks for female experience," otherness is based on how the concept of otherness has "entered one's consciousness." Even though Antoinette dislikes the name Bertha, Rochester intends to learn about Antoinette's otherness by renaming her Bertha in accordance with his own notions of propriety. As a result of her family's past, she rapidly grasps the "madness" that is tied to her identity.

First to mention Antoinette's madness is his stepson-in-law, who also serves as a symbol of the macho discourse. Rochester receives a letter from Daniel claiming to be a warning about the sanity of the Cosway clan, but Antoinette isn't buying it. So long as Rochester is confident of this, the craziness in her identity will become an integral element of the character he creates for her. She embraces her madness, but not the name Bertha, proving that women don't

automatically become what men want them to be; instead, they choose to identify with what makes them most comfortable. "In certain cases, we join organizations to represent the identity we wish to build rather than expressing the identity we already have. New groups may be sought for, or existing organizations may be rejected, in order to communicate a more authentic sense of ourselves to those around us." As he is certain that she is becoming mad, Rochester continues to ascribe craziness to Antoinette's identity, and this finally becomes a part of her personality. She embraces her madness, but not the name Bertha, proving that women don't automatically become what men want them to be; instead, they choose to identify with what makes them most comfortable. "In certain cases, we join organizations to represent the identity we wish to build rather than expressing the identity we already have. We may seek out new organizations or reject organizations to which we belong because of proximity or circumstance in order to express an identity that is closer to our own notion of who we are." Afraid of what Rochester and her family will think of her, Antoinette finally joins the folk group in order to live her life as she pleases, free of the constraints of her respectable womanhood. As the novel points out multiple times, insanity runs in the family, and so she becomes what society expects of her. In spite of the fact that she has never felt connected to her family, Antoinette now understands them through the lens of craziness. Heilbrun employs one of the most well-known feminist writers, Virginia Woolf, to highlight the close connection between a female identity and the notion of otherness. Women have always been outsiders, according to folklorists, but Woolf argues that women's first responsibility is to recognize themselves as outsiders: "Woolf recognized that women have always been outsiders...she also recognized that women's important first task is to recognize themselves as outsiders." Antoinette is neither an insider nor an outsider; she resides somewhere in the midst of the two categories. However, the moment she discovers she has been and still is an outsider, she dons the mask of insanity to become, at the very least, the history of her family. However, we must acknowledge that the social structure of the society and people's relationships with one another and others impact the conceptions of self-awareness and

the idea of being an outsider. Gender and sex are important concepts to study in different cultures. People's perceptions of one other may be highly impacted by gender, and folklore studies examine both the similarities and the differences between people. Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Beliefs, Customs, Tales, Music, and Art defines sex and gender as the "aggregate of structural, functional, and behavioural characteristics that separate females and men from each other," according to the book. Folklorists, on the other hand, use somewhat different terminology to describe similar ideas: ... A person's sex is defined by the physical and functional traits that are directly linked to their genetic make-up... To define gender, we need to look beyond the biologically determined roles and expectations that people place on the two biologically distinct genders. These roles and expectations vary widely across cultures and time periods, suggesting that gender is more likely to evolve as a result of environmental factors than as a result of genetics. This does not imply that the words "woman" and "man" are universal categories, as what it means to behave correctly for one's gender might differ considerably among countries. Each and every folk group has its own unique take on the universal trait of diverse gender roles. But people may have some social expectations about them. The rejection of the opposite sex might be one of them. A man and his family may feel betrayed and shamed if they have to accept a male rejection for a female, but it might be even more difficult to do so if the male rejection is for a female. Antoinette's and Rochester's emotions to being rejected by the other sex are both challenging and a failing that must be remedied. When Antoinette changes her mind about marrying Rochester, Rochester remarks, "I did not like returning to England in the character of the rejected suitor jilted by this Creole girl." I believe I understand why, "That he is in love with her and wants to marry her, he tells her. In addition to the fact that he would feel powerless if he were rejected by a woman, he also feared that his family would view him as an outcast. Rochester promises Antoinette that she will be happy in her marriage. Even suggesting that Christophine perform a "obeah" to revive Rochester's love for her, Antoinette becomes depressed as he continues to distance himself from her. Female strives to create a link with another female for counsel and support

while the male tries to win back the girl who rejected him. In the West Indies, Antoinette is terrified of what others will think of her if she divorces her husband. Christophine tells her to "pack up and depart." However, Antoinette is afraid of what others would think of her if she divorces her husband. It was like, 'Which way are you going?' In what country will I never get to see him again? Everyone will make fun of me if I go.' 'They won't mock you; they will mock him if you go. A man who does not love you, the more you try, the more he dislikes you.' The more you care for them, the more they'll take advantage of you; the less you care, the more they'll irritate your spirit at all hours. It had been reported to her that she had met you and your spouse. To a large extent, everything Christophine has to say about males may be attributed to her own personal experiences with them. Despite the fact that her account sheds light on her cultural group's beliefs toward people of the opposite sex, it should not be accepted as fact. As an example of how different folk groups may communicate information and even have an influence on one another, she helps Antoinette by using her own knowledge. Understanding each other is easier when you share the same sex than when you hear about men from another man. Rochester and Antoinette both worry about what other people think of them when they make mistakes or fail to complete tasks that have been set out for them, which shows how social expectations affect how people feel and act. In certain cultures, women are required to dress in a specific way, and they may have their own tactics to attract men of the opposite sex. Even though Antoinette's culture dictates that she wear perfume on her hair as a sign of "appropriate" woman/wife duties in the West Indies, Antoinette doesn't want any more of it. She wants to look and smell like her husband. As a result, "women are encouraged to evaluate themselves based on their outward appearance and to compare the two." Additionally, children are taught to alter their appearance and demeanor in order to conform to societal norms." Females are more concerned with being accepted by their society than males, and as a result, they tend to disregard their own self-image. When it comes to the concept of a "decent lady," society predominantly influences men, rather than women themselves. Feminism, according to Thomas A. Green, is most often used to study gender from the standpoint of the

woman, who he claims is silenced by male discourses. As a general rule of thumb, folklore reminds us that gender is more than just a matter of biological, physical, or psychoanalytical characteristics. Gender identity is "fluid and dynamic," meaning that it is also socially formed. Every cultural norm, belief, tradition, custom, or expectation changes from one culture to the next. This approach acknowledges the importance of one's sense of self being rooted in their experience living in a particular (gendered) body with particular qualities and capabilities, even if all 'experience,' including bodily experience, must be seen as ideologically informed and therefore mediated (from an Althusserian perspective). The relationship between Rochester and Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* takes on a new perspective because of the way gender identity is developed via social interaction among members of the same folk group or with different groups. Instead of having hatred towards her because she represents the oppressed, colonized woman, Rochester is driven away from Antoinette by his own inner irritation and ignorance of another culture, as well as his dissatisfaction with his marriage to her.

CONCLUSION

To better understand and interpret complicated literary issues like the concept of identity and other aspects of identification, this research examines folklore studies (ethnicity, race, gender, cultural values). The topic of this research is Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which academics and literary critics have analyzed largely via a postcolonial lens. To show how colonialism has affected minorities not just economically but also emotionally and spiritually, the novel has been designated as a postcolonial work. It is widely accepted that Antoinette, the Creole lady who goes crazy after being a victim of colonization, and Rochester, the British colonizer, are the novel's main protagonists. Because the story is presented in such a comprehensive way, there are few ways to raise new questions and re-evaluate the novel from a variety of perspectives. Fresh study themes and a new interpretation of *Wide Sargasso Sea* have evolved from the employment of folklore methods to understand the cultural, ethnic,

socioeconomic, and gender-based disparities addressed in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. But even though there aren't any existing folklore materials for the *Wide Sargasso Sea*, this research has sparked new interest. Folklore has only recently been used as an alternative literary technique in literary studies, making it difficult to discover and apply folkloric notions to the novel. As a result, this study was a major success in terms of creating new notions that could be studied further and applied to other literary works. In the first place, our study has made a significant contribution to the question of cultural identity and diversity in the *Wide Sargasso Sea*. As a postcolonial perspective, it was constrained because of the intricacy of identity. Individuals' experiences with colonialism led to many misunderstandings and misconceptions about self-identification and other-recognition, which were then used to analyze the juxtapositions in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. In folklore, these cultural conflicts are generated by the existence of several folk groups, each of which has a distinct set of beliefs and practices as well as a distinct language and cultural origins. Folklore's esoteric and exoteric features, originally presented by William Hugh Jansen, can lead to personal misunderstandings and misconceptions about the folk groups they belong to. Folk groups' goals and expectations of other groups are reflected in these parameters. Esoteric and exoteric factors are used to examine the interactions between individuals since each person may have a separate picture of himself or herself.

Regardless of either they are members of the same folk band or not. It is possible that people may feel more related to or inferior to a different folk group because of their own personal values. It's no secret that the folk wisdom they've gleaned from their own community has had a significant impact on these folks. Defining a person's gender identity may be as challenging as defining their national or personal identity. For example, in her book, "On Female Identity and Writing by Women," Judith Gardiner explains how "socially imposed" the idea of gender is. Consequently, there is no universally agreed-upon description of what constitutes a gender role. These gender norms can become problematic when two people from different cultural backgrounds meet, as their expectations of each other's sex

will be different. In different communities, females and males are allocated to specific roles; not all societies impose the same ideals on people. Depending on the time period, the masculine voice may overshadow the female voice. As *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a twentieth-century novel, the male narrative predominates over the female one. Antoinette and Rochester, on the other hand, have distinct expectations of each other as a "decent" husband and wife; their cultural norms and teachings conflict as a consequence. Unlike a postcolonial perspective, folklore studies examine cultural differences throughout the spectrum rather than merely identifying individuals as representations of either the colonizer or the colonized. Moreover, folklore studies investigate not just society as a whole, but also people's individual experiences, revealing that individuals cannot be generalized based on their community's common values; even members of the same folk group may hold differing views. People can have a wide range of values, and they cannot be categorized merely on the basis of their ethnicity, language, gender, or skin colour. Nature has frequently been used as a metaphor for the colonial domain in a postcolonial perspective. As in the instance of the *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a site might symbolize both the colonized and the colonizer. Folklore focuses on the meanings of place names, what they imply, and how people define their sense of place rather than focusing on the origins of people. Folklore studies have shown that people associate the notion of "home" with their sense of self-identification with their geographical surroundings. Similar to how they characterize other individuals, they do so depending on how they were brought up. A new setting might cause people to lose their sense of belonging and security. As a result, people may not be able to connect themselves with geographical characteristics they are unfamiliar with, which can lead to misunderstandings about the culture in their immediate vicinity. As a result of this issue, people may miss-communicate and misinterpret one another. In the same way that kids recognize people from diverse cultures, they may even build their own sense of reality. One way of describing it is "dream-like," like in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. A lack of understanding of an event or its significance might lead individuals to characterize it as if it doesn't exist. The "dream-like" motif is the focus of

this research, which examines how the book's dreams are interpreted. In the bulk of earlier reviews, the book *Dreams in the Wide Sargasso Sea* was seen as a portent of things to come. However, according to Freud, whose psychoanalytical study led to folklore studies, dreams are just a recall of former experiences that are linked to the dreamer's current mental state. This, however, is not to say that dreams don't predict the future; rather, they're more intricate than that. According to this study, it is practically impossible to ascribe a singular meaning to dreams because of the subjective nature of dream interpretations. There are several methods to interpret dreams, based on the dreamer's own experiences and background.

This study reveals that a postcolonial perspective cannot adequately represent the many elements of folklore. *Wide Sargasso Sea* has traditionally been interpreted according to postcolonial ideas, but our research has given us a new viewpoint on the novel. As a result of the concepts and concerns raised in this study, scholars and folklorists will be able to approach the book with fresh eyes. There are a range of topics that go under the umbrella of folklore, including the study of people, nature, dreams, and one's own personal identity. Thus, the folkloric approach to literary studies provides a new perspective that will help many more future inquiries in the field of literature in general.

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