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**Antoinette's Identity Loss, Identity Quest in
Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea.**

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Dedication

To our Parents

To our Brothers and Sisters

To our Friends and Colleagues

To our dear Teachers

To our caring Supervisor

And to all GUENDOUZ and DJABOREBBI family

Acknowledgments

First thing first, we would praise our all mighty Allah for He is the main supporter and guider that helps us accomplishing our work despite the different hardships we faced throughout our career. A special thanks would be given to our supervisor Dr. Sadoune Farida that helps us, advise us, support us and being patient throughout this long journey.

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Abstract

This study is conducted in order to investigate and analyse the theme of identity crisis that the heroine of *Wide Sargasso Sea* Antoinette's suffer from due to her race, gender and social class that were representing the main reasons that led her to lose her identity and mental health. We will try also to clarify the tribulation that the Creole minority to whom the heroine "Antoinette" belongs faced every single day, and how they have suffered from hatred and racial discrimination because of their hybridity, also; how much it was hard to be stuck between two different countries, ideologies . Furthermore, we will portray the ways in which Antoinette was triply oppressed by being both women, hybrid and colonized, and how these different oppressing forces contributed in the loss and the madness that she faces.

Keywords: identity crisis, race, social class, identity loss, madness, gender.

ملخص الدراسة

ان الهدف من اجراء هذه الدراسة هو تحليل موضوع أزمة الهوية الذي تعاني منه بطلة القصة بسبب عرقها وجنسها وطبقتها الاجتماعية التي كانت تمثل الأسباب الرئيسية التي دفعتها إلى فقدان هويتها وصحتها العقلية .سنحاول أيضاً توضيح المحنة التي تواجهها أقلية الكريول التي تنتمي إليها البطلة "أنطوانيت" كل يوم ، وكيف عانوا من الكراهية والتمييز العنصري بسبب عرقهم ؛و كم كان من الصعب أن تكون عالماً بين دولتين مختلفتين و أيديولوجيات مختلفة .علاوة على ذلك ، سنقوم بإيضاح الطرق التي تم بها اضطهاد أنطوانيت من خلال كونها امرأة ، كريول ومستعمرة ، وكيف ساهمت هذه القوى القمعية المختلفة في فقدان هويتها مما أدى في نهاية المطاف الى اثابتها بالجنون

الكلمات المفتاحية: أزمة الهوية، العرق، فقدان الهوية، الطبقة الاجتماعية، الجنون، الجنس

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List of abbreviations

WSS: Wide Sargasso Sea.

WW2: World War Two.

General introduction

General introduction

Shortly after so many countries have gained their independence, a new era has emerged by which colonies have turned out to be independent countries. The term postcolonial, in fact, is viewed by literary theorists and critics as the effected culture by imperial process, right from the moment it starts, till present day. In a similar vein, and since colonial empowerment severely affected its colonies and destroyed many principles, beliefs, history and even heritage; post-colonial writers' aim, therefore, was to shed light on certain aspects in order to demonstrate the methods and ways in which their cultural, historical, economical, political and religious norms have been tarnished and distorted by imperial activities since colonialism has delved deep into issues such as culture, race, gender and identity. Toward this end, one of the most controversial themes comes into existence, namely the essence of belonging, especially after the multicultural and hybrid nations that were cropped up, Creole people is one of the striking evidences of this impact. In the meantime, postcolonial writers tried to attract readers' attention to the causes and consequences of identity crisis that emerged during postcolonial era.

This thesis will be investigating some core terms in postcolonial literary theories such as hybridity, race, gender, double consciousness, diaspora and displacement and how these ideas are reasons and ways to oppress people and consider them inferior and less powerful leading them to identity crisis and eventually to the loss of their identity. Moreover, we will discuss Erik Erikson's Theory of Identity and Identity Crisis in relation to the novel since he contributed a lot to the theme of identity crisis. He has explained in his eight stages the reasons that may lead either to identity development or identity crisis.

Since Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* is considered a postcolonial novel that discusses mainly the idea of identity crisis, the quest for identity and the ways in which race and gender are major reasons that led her heroine Antoinette to lose her mind and lives in an utter madness;

Rhys tries to explain how colonialism, society and individuals are involved in destroying one's identity through some practices of discrimination, outcast, hatred and inferiority applied upon a specific group of people (Creoles). Ashcroft et al (2000) hold that postcolonial literary theory is all about how cultures and societies are affected by colonisation. Since 1970s, literary theorist and critics have discussed this term to elucidate the extent of how colonial power could be destructive to someone's or a nation's identities and values. They introduced several key terms that pioneered the standing belief of the post colonial literary theory such as otherness, hybridity, creolization, double consciousness and diaspora.

Wide Sargasso Sea (1966) is a postcolonial novel where Rhys tried to give a voice, dignity and identity to the heroine of the novel "Antoinette". The Creole woman Bertha, referred to as "the mad woman in the attic" in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, has prompted the author to empathize with the character of Bertha and how Bronte portrayed her in such a terrified and a horrible image (especially that Bertha is from the West Indies). In this sense, Rhys re-writes her novel as a reaction to *Jane Eyre*, but with a different perspective.

Wide Sargasso Sea is a semi-autobiographical fiction that tells the life of the hybrid author Jean Rhys who experienced racial and gender discrimination in both Britain and Jamaica. She was born and raised in the Caribbean island of Dominica and settled at the age of 16 in England in order to pursue her education. She was from a Welsh father and a white Creole mother. Interestingly, her experience behind living in Europe gave her the sense of being a stranger, especially after she had been outcasted by both Black Jamaicans and white Europeans. These racist practices upon her, gave her the senses and the feelings of alienation and displacement.

Since the novel is considered as a postcolonial work, Rhys describes the Caribbean society and how they were treated by the British colonizers according to their race, gender, and

class in an attempt to indicate the relationship between the colonised and the colonizer in addition to the colonial forces that affected the Caribbean identity, language , culture and religion. Furthermore, she dealt with the identity crisis that were experienced by the Creoles who were a mixture of Euro-African origins, and how they suffered from racial discrimination due to their hybrid origins.

The fact of being hybrid creates a state of neglect, hatred and disgust against this new minority, in which they were considered neither blacks nor whites. This led them to question their real belonging , their status in society and sometimes even why they were born at all , this is known in the postcolonial literary theory as” hybridity “which is the state of a person migrant who is trying to combine the culture of the country hosting him/her with the culture of his/her original country without living aside any of them(Bhabha). Eventually, this state of living divided and caught between two different cultures, thoughts, traditions and ideologies will create an identity crisis and loss to them. In the search for their real identity creole people have suffered to prove their existence in different ways such as mimicry and Englishness.

Therefore, postcolonial writers tend to use this literary approach as a tool to point out the negative effects concerning the shifting ideas of identity and culture caused by the imposition of western values. As far as, postcolonial writers used postcolonial literary approach as a way to share the experiences of the colonised, they also analyse the novel written by westerners during the colonial period and they rewrite back those literary works as a response to the stereotypes portrayed by westerners about what is known as the third world countries people . In fact, the ‘writing back’ strategy was a significant hallmark that characterised this period in order to challenge the colonial ways of knowing (McLeod:33).

Statement of the problem

As far as Rhys's ideas are concerned, she attempts to rejuvenate Bertha's character, develop it, in order to pin down and analyse the major reasons behind Antoinette (Bertha) madness and identity loss, to create a new version of the novel, but this time with a different standpoint. Similarly, several critics have cropped up claiming that WSS is a prequel or rather a culmination to Bronte's Jane Eyre.

This study will investigate the gradual reasons behind Antoinette identity crisis and loss due to the internal and external pressures that drove her to a complete madness.

Objective of the study

The study aims at exploring the identity loss that Antoinette experienced and her quest to build an identity by herself, the obstacles that prevented her from being a free and an independent woman and the reasons behind losing her identity, that eventually led her to utter madness.

The novel will be analysed following mainly the theory of postcolonial literary theory, to draw boundaries and to limit the scope of data analysis, for it could be analysed using any other literary theory and perspective.

Research Questions

The inquiry is motivated by four main questions:

1. What are the main reasons that drove Antoinette to madness?
2. What are the obstacles and hitches that faced the heroine and prevent her from constructing an independent identity?

3. Does Rhys really achieved her goal in giving her heroine an identity and dignity, that she thought it is missed in Bronte's Bertha?

Methodology and general approach

Since the novel is a work that could be approached from different lenses and analysed by different viewpoints, we tend to analyse it from the perspective of postcolonial literary theory mainly through some basic tenets such as hybridity, race and in-betweenness, in a way to narrow down the scope of the study. Also, we will use the analytical method in which we collected data from different articles, journals and thesis.

Glossary

Creole: A person of mixed European and Black descent, especially in the Caribbean.

“The Creoles, the black people of the Caribbean region, are the descendants of colonial-era slaves, Jamaican merchants, and West-Indian laborers” (Lexico.com).

Hybridity: It is the state of a person migrant who is trying to combine the culture of the country hosting him/her with the culture of his/her original country without living aside any of them (Bhabha 1994).

Identity: In sociology, is used to describe the way that various social categories such as class, gender and ethnicity influence an individual's perception of themselves and how they are perceived by others (Jenkins 2008, p. 17).

Othering: a term coined by Gayatri Spivak, it refers to the ‘the social and/or psychological ways in which one group excludes or marginalises another group’ (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2013, p. 118).

Postcolonial theory: Is a radical philosophy that interrogates both the past history and the ongoing legacies of the European colonialism (and American imperialism) in order to undo them (Schwarz 2005, p.4).

Race: The concept of race is used to categorise people based on physical appearance. Although scientific arguments about the inherent inferiority of racial groups have been continually debunked, race is a social construct that continues to have significant effects on people's lives (Furze et al. 2015).

Chapter One:

The Theme of Identity and Identity Crisis

Introduction

This chapter will explore the issue of identity in literature and in postcolonial literary theory, it will examine how this concept became a major theme and one of the basic tenets that this literary theory stands on. Identity lies at the heart of postcolonial project that postcolonial writers focused on, due to the impacts of colonialism that have been experienced during and after independence, in addition to the writing back strategy that have been used to challenge the western values, ways of knowing, literary works of the English canon and the stereotypes. The last part of the chapter will be devoted to Erik Erikson's Theory of Identity and Identity Crisis in relation to the novel.

Methodology and general approach

In this chapter we relied on the postcolonial literary theory in order to narrow down the scope of study since the novel could be approached and analysed from various viewpoints. Also, we used the analytical method due to reviews, articles and journals we rely on while conducting this research, without forgetting to mention Erik Erikson's Theory of Identity and Identity Crisis that helps us a lot in analysing the heroine identity crisis and loss that she undergoes.

This chapter is composed of twenty-four paragraphs, and three main titles intitled: Identity in Literature in which we discussed the theme of identity in general and how it starts to claim its place in the literary works, the second title was entitled Postcolonial literary Theory in which we tackled the theme of identity in the lenses and point of view of postcolonial literary theory. The last title was entitled Erik Erikson Theory of identity and Identity Crisis in which he proposed in his eight stages of identity development the ways in which a person either succeed or fails in passing or not passing them successfully. It is clearly obvious how much the six stages reflect Antoinette's identity crisis in which she was not successful in passing any of them.

1. Identity in literature

In spite of the fact that the concept of identity has no precise definition since it is a changeable issue that have been defined and viewed from different perspectives related to varied environments and cultures, as Hall asserts “ Identity emerged as a kind of unsettled space or unsolved question in that space, between a number of intersecting discourses”(1989, p.10). As well as, Mercer(1990) suggested that it s not possible to come with a valid definition to identity issue since it is not a fixed concept, he argue that “Identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty”(43). Yet, some scholars come with a definition as Woodward (2003) declared that “identity is about the elements of choice that we might have when identifying with the world around”, in addition to the above definitions some dictionaries defines it as “the collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a thing is definitively recognizable or known”(Thefreedictionary.com/Identity).

Consequently, identity is a concept that could be measured by being different since it is the element that define societies and individuals. Due to the diversity that the world have seen in the late years concerning the different races, hybrid nations caused by the huge amount of immigrants that brought with them their own traditions, beliefs and cultures; the issue of identity has become a central concern due to these factors, people in such cases stand in a position that they are torn between totally two different beliefs, countries, languages and cultures(as the case of black Americans, Creoles). These situations will make people sense feelings of nostalgia, diaspora, dilemmas especially those who are not able to accommodate with the country hosting them, because they are surrounded by new culture, place and society which may lead them to identity crisis especially those who are still resisting and struggling for their threatened identity.

Obviously, without an identity, a person is worthless, unknown since a person could be only identified or classified by being different or similar to others. Whereas, identity gives the person a sense of confidence, pride, worth and even social status, it might be also a sign of shame and a way of treating others as inferiors based on their race, religion, gender, ethnicity. In accordance to what have been said above, there was a huge attention concerning identity and other terms connected to it, identity crisis and its causes and consequences have taken the big part because most of the literary works tackle this problem and how their characters experience these situations of being either exiled, immigrant, hybrid , how they face repeatedly questions concerning their identity, country, and belonging, for example : who are you?, why are you here?, where are you from?... all these are in fact factors in driving someone to ask his existence, his place and his worth. This conflicting thoughts and ideas create a crisis within the person who is living such pressures , so obviously they at least try to prove themselves by resisting or proving their existence especially those who are considered minorities (such as the creoles whom they were in between the blacks and the whites conflicts, being outcasted by both sides led them to try to prove themselves in the society).The term of identity crisis have been defined as “A psychosocial state or condition of disorientation and role confusion occurring especially in adolescents as a result of conflicting internal and external experiences, pressures, and expectations and often producing acute anxiety.” (The Free Dictionary).

Fregusan (2015) explains identity and how it is shaped by different aspects (gender, social class and race). Identity is derived from our experience that can shape our identity. Race is very important in defining one's identity because it shows how he or she will be treated by others, as it can bring alienation and discrimination. whereas, it could be a source of pride, motivation, confidence and belonging. Where gender identification refers to one's inner sense as female or male, thus gender is defined as the behaviours, personality and characteristics that are produced culturally. Concerning social class, it is said that is has a significant role in forming

one's identity in ways that he or she can belong to a certain group that has the same social status by which he or she could be recognised differently in relation to others.

2. Postcolonial literary theory: History, development and tenets

The fact that postcolonial literary theory is considered a recent theory that start to claim its place among the theories only at the late 1970s, yet, postcolonial writers and theorists do their effort in order to clarify the effects that colonialism has on cultures and societies. Ashcroft et al (2000) point out that postcolonial literary theory is all about how cultures and societies are affected by colonisation. Whereas, Ania Loomba (2005, p.7) goes on and defines it as the conquest and control of the other people's land and goods. In this context, postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak and Edward Said...pioneered the basic terms and tenets that were the foundation stone of this theory (hybridity, creolisation, neo-colonisation, decolonisation, double-consciousness, diaspora, mimicry, orientalism, the other, gender, race ...); these tenets were major themes in postcolonial literature .

As mentioned earlier, the process of oppression and empowerment that the colonialism practiced upon the colonised people on their lands led to the emergence of one of the major and important themes to the surface which is identity. Obviously, huge literary works especially those that come out from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, middle East, and India describes characters who are struggling with their identities due to the destructive effects that colonialism left on them , how they are trying to identify and restore their cultural identities since the impose of the western values detach them from their tradition, language, and culture. In this sense in postcolonial theory, marginalised, silenced, oppressed nations and individuals are given voice. In other words, postcolonial literature is concerned with the literary works produced by the countries that were colonised in which it addresses the struggles, problems, sufferance that colonised people experienced in the light of western colonisation. Postcolonial literary theory

aims at pointing out the negative impacts mainly the shifting ideas concerning identity and culture caused by colonial power.

It is obvious that each literary period has its own peculiarities and writing style that differentiate it from the other periods, postcolonial writers concern themselves with colonisation, decolonisation and neo-colonisation .They approach western works (especially those of the canon) in order to either subvert or modify them or both, they analyse the traditional colonial discourse and how some literary works reinforce the colonial ideology (Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*) . Also, postcolonial writers go on in order to break the stereotypes that the colonial give to the colonised such as savages, primitive and uncivilised and how colonisers use these claims to justify the colonial process. So, what postcolonial writers did here is replacing the colonial narrative with a counter one , what is later come to be known as the 'writing back strategy' or 'The Empire writes back to the center' a term coined by Salman Rushdie in which the center is England and the 'writing back' notion is crucial in order to understand the various strategies of decolonisation that the former colonies of Britain have used to set the record straight. Accordingly, the writing back strategy lies at the heart of post colonial project in which major postcolonial writers writes back to the imperial canon as a rejection and challenge to the western ways of knowing and how they undermine the colonised and treat them as an inferior objects (some works of writing back include Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*(1958)/Yeats's *The Second Coming* (1919), Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966)/ Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847) , Marina Warner's *Indigo* (1992)/ Shakespeare's *The Tempest*(1611) . Writing back is a postcolonial term that refers to the act of challenging previous stories, ideas, discourses about people, cultures, events, histories or things (Ashcroft et al, 2006). As mentioned above, postcolonial writers use this strategy in order to expose the ways in which colonial powers work and how they give a negative image about their colonies , as well as to clear the image for readers and to address writers who reinforce the colonial ideology either consciously or

unconsciously; it was a way of resisting and fighting those stereotypes written by westerners that misrepresent them. As Fanon declared: “The postcolonial novel is a reply on a minor scale to the dominating power, the literature produced by natives become differentiated and make itself into a will to particularism” (1963, p. 237). The writing back strategy is initially used to challenge the stereotypes (picturing the colonised as dangerous, lazy, primitive, ignorant as a mean to legalise their conquest) by illustration from the novel ‘ *Wide Sargasso Sea* ’ by the Englishman Mr. Mason : “They are more alive than you are, lazy or not, and they can be dangerous and cruel for reasons you wouldn’t understand” (Rhys 1966, p.16).The writing back strategy was also used as a resistance to the forms, styles, themes of English literature and seeking their identity to confirm independence.

As previously mentioned, the theme of identity became a central issue to be discussed in the postcolonial literary works and this huge attention concerning this subject was due to identity crisis that the colonised experienced due to the diversity and multicultural nations, societies, races that were constructed because of the colonial bringing slaves and workers from different places. As (Sheoran 2014, p.1) argues “The major theme in the works written in the postcolonial period have been the fragmentation and identity crisis experienced by the colonised people and the important impacts of colonialism on the indigenous”. Furthermore, Mercer also declared that “Identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty” (1990, p. 43).

The question of identity was one of the most controversial issues if its not the most important during postcolonial era , in which the crisis of identity faced both colonised and newly freed nations, that the circumstances of the postcolonial era and the economical and cultural problems that the countries went through were obstacles in the search and formation of an independent self which consequently caused in their identity crisis . Colonised nations and

writers as well struggle against what are called the decolonisation in all the domain: life, culture, art, economy, politics in order to demand back their identity which was lost due to the power of colonialism. Jens Brockmier and Donal Carbaugh (2001) argues in their narrative that “The notion of identity stand for a large area of life, also it was because of the colonial impact”, in addition, Pieterse argues also that after WW2 , at the time of decolonisation when imperial identities were decentred, the question of the Other become critical and prominent theme(2002, p.22).

The fact that most well known postcolonial writers and theorists come from former British colonies, helped in making the works more realistic and concrete since they witnessed and lived themselves these circumstances , some of them reflect their own life experiences in their works such as the themes of identity construction and crisis, hybridity, immigration, racial discrimination .. that they suffer from (in WSS Jean Rhys tells her own story, her experience as a creole, oppressed women, colonised and hybrid that suffers from racial discrimination, colonisation, patriarchy and society oppression as well). In the book of the empire writes back Bill Ashcroft asserts that literature offers one of the most important ways in which the postcolonial period’s perception are expressed and so profoundly influential (1). Franz Fanon once declared in his theoretical argument about the consequences of colonialism and the change formed by the experience of immigration “examines the experience of having to wear “white masks” to get by Europe to the bend one’s own identity as so to appear to the colonizer to be free of all taint of primitive native traits (Ryan, 117-118). Whereas Edward Said one of the most prominent and postcolonial figure gives his central point of identity construction which is the ability to resist, to recreate oneself as a postcolonial, anti-imperialist subject and this recreation of the self needs to be contextualize because it is the construction of identity that constitute freedom and human being are what they make themselves, even if they are subjects of repressive discourse (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 112)

So here what postcolonial writers and novelists do is to resist and strife the English literature by the counter discourse away from a traditional and usual form of mimicking the colonial discourse and in fact this way of writing enable them to straddle two cultures with the ease of long acquaintance as Rushdi declared .

3. Erik Erikson's Theory of Identity and Identity Crisis

Identity construction become the core of arguments for many scholars, theorists and psychologists such as Sigmund Freud, Erikson and others. Since our dissertation is concerned with the identity construction, crisis, loss and quest ; we choose to approach the novel through the lenses of Erik Erikson's Theory of Identity and Identity Crisis, and how his stages reflect to a big instance the problems that the heroine Antoinette in the tackled novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* went through because of her inability to build social relations and develop a sense of self and independence . In his psycho-socio study, Erikson give the essential elements that are the base in constructing one's identity, a person will either sense a fulfilment or development when he/she succeed in passing those stages or he/she will simply get confused and lost which led the person to prefer isolation and loneliness.

Erik Erikson is considered the Father of psychological development because his stages describes in his theory are very much applicable and realistic since they reflect feelings and acts that face everyone. This theory could be applied through the entire life span. According to Erickson identity is "the conscious sense of self that we develop through social interaction, which is constantly changing due to new experiences and information we acquire in our daily interactions with others"

In this theory, Erickson proposes eight stages in which each stage consists of two contradicted concepts, in which the focus is on the resolution of these different crises in order a person becomes a successful and complete person by which the successful completion of each

developmental task results a sense of competence and healthy personality, on the other hand, failure to master these tasks leads to feelings of disappointment, mistrust and crisis. Erickson believes that we are motivated by the need to achieve competence in certain areas of our life. In this part we will display the eight stages and what each stage is concern with, then we will tackle the stages that are related to our novel and reflect anionite identity crisis.

The first stage is trust vs mistrust (0/ ½) where the baby develops a sense of trust from his parents or a sense of mistrust if he/she finds them unreliable. The second is autonomy vs shame/doubt (½ /3) in this stage success leads to autonomy and confidence and failure leads to shame and doubt ,whereas the third stage is concerned with initiative vs guilt, here the child explores his surroundings trying to make plans and build dreams , during this period children begin to interact with other children, plan for activities and games in order to develop their initiatives at the same time self confident .

The fourth step is industry and inferiority (5-12) in a child's psychological development is when he/she enters school in which he/she begins comparing himself/herself to others and meet demands that may lead to industry or inferiority by developing social relations with groups that improve his self-esteem and the sense of pride. Identity vs confusion is the fifth stage and most crucial stages in this theory which distinguish the adolescent period from age (12 till 18) when they investigate for their self independency that endure for the whole life through different engagements in order to obtain and achieve their goals and develop their identity , it is admitted as the transformation and transition process from childhood period to adulthood that by its advancement will direct the individual to fit into a proper society, at the same time contribute "loyalty" with the acceptance of others regarding their differences in ideas to shape their identity formation while if it encounters failure it will result individual confusion and chaos to determine their position in their society and perceive the sense of inferiority.

Furthermore, to the above-mentioned stages, the sixth stage is intimacy vs isolation, it occurs during young adulthood between the ages (19/40), at this period an adult person may search for intimate social relations with others in order to share memories and experiences together that survive forever. These relationships may provide comfort, relief and positiveness, while conversely those who are kept detached may sense isolation, alienation, unsecure, and discomfort. According to Erikson, the stage of identity vs confusion is necessary to constitute intimate relationships and social interactions. Generativity vs stagnation is the seventh stage in Erikson's theory, is when people enter the period known as the middle adulthood precised between the (40-60). Generativity imply working in order to give some achievements to yourself as well as others and society , for example volunteering , taking responsibility as a way to benefit your country by sharing your knowledge , assistance and contributing to the development of your nation and the coming generations .On the other hand, those who fail to master this task will face stagnation as a result of being passive in their society , since they do not contribute positively and do not improve themselves.

The last stage of Erikson Theory of Identity and Identity Crisis is about Integrity vs despair (60 to the death). This stage is about either feeling satisfied of their accomplishments and he/she sense a feeling of integrity or he will regret the wasted time he/she spent without any benefits, their main focus would be on what "would have", "should have", and "could have" been . So, they face what remain from their lives with feelings of bitterness, depression and despair.

Since our dissertation is not concerned with the last two stages because Antoinette start facing issues concerning identity crisis from died young, for this reason, we will discuss only the stages that reflect what the heroine Antoinette have faced and experienced. We will try to shed light upon each stage in relation the novel.

First thing first, the first and the second and the third stages reflects how Antoinette faced from the very beginning of her life the racial discrimination and hatred due to their race and her father who was an ex-slave owner. Also, the heroine did not experience the feelings of a strong and unified family since her father have passed away and she lacks the love a caring mother who did not devote any time to her, and never allowed her even to share or ask about something related to their past, so simply Antoinette and her mother Annette did not have the natural relation that is supposed to be between a mother and her daughter. In addition, the circumstances that Antoinette lived from the racist acts, and expressions from the part of the slaves(burning the house, poisoning her mother's horse, her brother Pierre death and the hard situation they were going through because of poverty since her father lose of fortune and bankrupts) lead her to sense a feeling of insecurity , thus the realisation of these events complicate her search for identity especially her sense of selfhood was unclear .

The fourth stage would be reflected in the sense that Antoinette did not have a normal childhood as the other children of her age, due to the fact that she had no friends(even her only childhood friend Tia has betrayed her and did not accept her among the black society and she always considered her as a daughter of a former English slave owner) as the others, no games and no shared dreams or goals, that is why she was raised as lonely and isolated girl. Because her mother did not care about her and prefer her brother Pierre, Christophine the black servant takes the responsibility of raising her and considering her as her own daughter, this also implicate that Antoinette did not have a normal image about her mother who is usually suppose to take care of her children, give them love and raise them under her shelter. According to Erikson, if a child does not enter with social relations with other children or family members, this will consequence an inferiority complex that might be developed and continued to his/her whole life.

The fifth stage would be clearly recognised by the urgent desire from the part of Antoinette to determine to which society she belong in an attempt to fit between either with the Caribbean society or with the white English, but the cultural and racial rejection from both sides, led her to realise that she is outcasted by both blacks and whites . As long as Antoinette was raised by Christophine whom she taught her the black traditions and customs led the heroine to lean on to the black side, this fact annoyed her mother Annette whom she engaged to the Englishman Mr. Mason as a way to escape her race and to seem more English. The mother wants her daughter to do like her and mimic the English habits, clothes, customs. Yet, Antoinette refuse to do so and this is clearly observed when Antoinette consider her stepfather as a master in which she used to respond him with “Yes puppet” a term that slaves use with their masters.

Because Antoinette has failed to fulfill and pass the previous stages caused a difficulty in developing and maintaining successful relationships for the heroine , and this is illustrated in her marriage and relation with her husband Rochester where she starts to show an acceptance to the British values by marrying Rochester, seeking love, care that she did not find before , but her husband show the opposite where he mistreat her, call her with different names and do his major efforts to destruct and annul her identity .Though all these harsh and repressive treatment against her, Antoinette still love her husband and hoping that he will love her one day where she seek the help of Christophine in order to make Rochester love her through practicing the Obeah .All this was in order to establish an intimate relationship with her partner has proved to be a total failure with dire consequences.

Conclusion

It was worthy to examine the theme of identity since this concept is crucial in determining one’s belonging and how it is a two-edged sword by which it would lead us either to sociability or loneliness. We discussed also this concept in general and also from the view of

postcolonial literary theory, how this theme was and still a hallmark in the post colonial literary theory by being one of its major discussed and recurrent themes due to the devastating effects of the colonial powers.

Chapter Two:

Analysis of the Theme of Identity in *Wide Sargasso*

Sea

Introduction

This chapter will be allotted to the Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* Heroine Antoinette identity crisis, loss and quest. In addition to the reasons that stand behind Antoinette's identity crisis and how these reasons were leading her to a dark end. We will also discuss Antoinette madness and if the madness is inherited or that she was driven to it and how this madness consequences her death as way to free herself from all the different destructive sides that harms her. Also, this chapter will clarify how the triple oppression that the heroine undergoes resulted in this destruction.

Methodology and general approach

In this chapter we relied on the analytical approach in which we gathered data from different sources including journals, articles and thesis .We also used the corpus- based approach in which we conducted this works through focusing mainly on our understanding of the novel and analysing it, also it was considered as a main source for textual evidences that supported our analysis.

This chapter is composed of sixty-three paragraphs and three main titles. The first title which is identity in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is about the literature review that was made about this novel, in which we took different scholars and critics point of view concerning *Wide Sargasso Sea* from a postcolonial view of course. The Second title was entitled the causes of Antoinette identity crisis, in which we discussed the main reasons that drove the heroine to lose her identity. The Consequences of Antoinette identity crisis and loss, was the last title in which we tackled the consequences and the results on Antoinette's identity crisis basically madness and death.

1. Identity in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Since the first publication of Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), the novel became the concern of many literary critics that analyses and approach it from different perspectives and viewpoints. Some critics view it mainly a feminist work since it represents the patriarchal domination over women, mainly the heroine Antoinette and how her English husband try to dominate her and impose the English identity, customs and name on her. Others sees the novel from a stylistic view which that class it to be a modernist work due to the writing techniques used by Rhys which characterised the modernist era such as the stream of consciousness, the shifting and multiple narrative and given the story from different viewpoints to give a chance to the reader to understand the novel from different perspective and backgrounds. On the other hand, a lot of critics consider *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a purely a postcolonial work that examined themes like race, identity, hybridity, in-betweenness, Creole and the relationship between the colonised and the coloniser; which are in fact the main discussed themes in postcolonial literary theory. Since our concern is mainly with the theme of identity that cover the biggest part in the novel, we aim to approach this work from a postcolonial lens in order to narrow down the scope of our analysis. Before starting our analysis concerning identity crisis that the heroine experiences, here are some famous postcolonial views concerning the novel.

Gayatri Spivak one of the most influential and famous figures in the postcolonial theory, Studied *Wide Sargasso Sea* from a postcolonial viewpoint and declared in her famous essay :” Three women’s Texts and A Critique of Imperialism”(1985), where she examined the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised from a postcolonial perspective, in her essay she focuses on the role of language and voice in the process of identity formation. Nese Senel (2014), tried to analyse in her article entitled” A Postcolonial Reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys” the concept of ‘Othering’ through the heroine husband and how he sees and

treat his wife according to the idea of the other. Also, she dealt with the crucial identity problems that faced Antoinette. She declared that:

Wide Sargasso Sea is such an attempt to exert a previously silenced voice using the mainstream methods and language with the basic purpose of constituting a cultural self for the formerly suppressed voice of the Creole peoples. (Nese, 2014, p.38)

Through her article, Silvia Capello concentrates on the importance of cultural identity and the decolonised people's voice during the postcolonial era, she observed that *Wide Sargasso Sea*:

Emerged within the huge postcolonial literature where, according to Ashcroft, both a national and regional consciousness try to assert difference from the imperial center. Such literature subverts the privilege of the 'center' in order to give voice to that 'periphery' which has been silent for long time. (Capello, 2009, p.47).

In addition to the above-mentioned articles, Nibras Kadhim (2011) shows how much Antoinette suffer from the feelings of exile, loneliness and marginality that the author Rhys herself suffer from and experienced as a Creole woman. Another critic that share the same view of Kadhim is Akram Al-Deek (2016). In his essay, he explains how much the novel mirrors and reflects Jean Rhys's alienation. He claims that there are three ways in which Rhys feels displaced: First thing first, the fact that she a female that is marginalised by her patriarchal husband. Secondly, being a Creole or a hybrid of a mixed European and black African descent. And lastly, as an individual that is displaced from her homeland.

2. The causes of Antoinette identity crisis

Back to Jane Rhys highly acclaimed novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, where the heroine Antoinette is subjected to different forms of oppression practiced upon her through three

different sides, the Jamaican society, colonialism and her patriarchal English husband .In such case Antoinette found her self-caught between three different ideologies which oppress her according to 1.her race(creole),2being a female,3.as a colonized women. Rhys tries to show through her heroine the state of being torn between two countries without being able to identify yourself fully with any of them, this different acts that was exercised upon Antoinette harm and affect her identity in which these circumstances prevent her from creating and constructing a normal and independent identity as any person. And in fact, this destructive practice shows how much the concept of identity could be shaped and influenced by various factors such as race, gender and social environment.

When reading and analysing the novel a person would recognize and notice countless factors that were the main reasons in Antoinette's identity crisis such as, her race, home and belonging, family, friendship, colonization and patriarchy...

At the first place, we shall start with the main reason which is her race or being a hybrid and a creole woman made up of a welsh father and a white creole mother. Antoinette's hybridity was faced by social, racial and cultural rejection because each group see the other side with a different perspective and with a huge feelings of hatred and disgust ; the white people for example does not accept the creoles due to their black mothers which they once were slaves that work under their command so the whites see them as inferior, aliens, lazy ..as Rochester(Antoinette's husband) once describe her : She never blinks at all it seems to me. Long, sad, dark alien eyes. Creole of pure English descent she may be, but they are not English or European either" (40). Whereas, the black people are full of feelings of hatred and anger because they consider the creoles as Europeans due to their fathers which were enslaving them and treating them as objects that has no rights , Antoinette talk about how black people hates them and how they were racist in which Antoinette was trying her maximum to avoid even looking at their faces especially after the emancipation act (An act that was passed by the British

government which entail that all the slaves in the British colonies are set free) was passed, black people became more violent and abusive, she once declared: I never looked at any strange nigga. They hated us. They called us white cockroaches. Let sleeping dogs lie. One day a little girl followed me singing, "Go away white cockroach, go away, go away." (I.1.3.2). This double rejection creates a kind of confusion to Antoinette because she is not able to define to which group, she really belongs since she not accepted neither by blacks nor whites and here is a quote that describe this double rejection that Antoinette suffer from: ... A white cockroach. That's me. That's what they call all of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave traders. And i've heard English women call us white niggers ... I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all ». (Rhys,64). And this will suggest that the high tension that was between the black Jamaican and the white Europeans, colonized and colonialists' clashes in the suspended mind and psyche of Antoinette who is in fact carrying two opposing worlds in her yet not belonging to either of them. The state of Antoinette's hybrid culture and origin push her to suffer from what is known as the trauma of the in-betweenness. Throughout the novel Antoinette is not called or known by her actual name but she was named by other labels such as Annette's daughter (black people) or the wife of Mrs. Rochester (Bertha-her white English husband), the imposed different names show how Antoinette was not able to strike a balance by herself which include that all the identity crisis and loss that Antoinette lived was due to her in-between position.

The lack of sense of home and belonging could be also another reason in the heroine identity destruction. Surprisingly, Antoinette was fluctuating between not knowing where to belong to (Britain or Jamaica) and on the other hand she was related to Colibri and does not want to leave it because she s love it since she was born and raised there .Whatever the difficulties she endured there, yet she is trapped to the beauty of Colibri and she does not want to leave it ;these quotes are a quite evidence :

“As I run, I thought, I will live with Tia and I will be like her. Not to leave Colibri. Not to go. Not “(38)

“The sky was dark blue through the dark green mango leaves, and I thought, that is my place and this where I belong and this is where I wish to stay” (90)

These two quotations could be a striking evidence that Antoinette really love her home land and in which is a place that give her a sense of safety and warmth even if they were not welcomed by the society and this could be exemplified and pictured in the way Antoinette describe her home and Colibri estate and how she is fond of the gorgeous nature of Jamaica..” our garden was large and beautiful as the garden in the Bible- the tree of life grew there ..”(16).

“When I was safely home, I sat close to the old wall at the end of the garden. It was covered with green moss soft as velvet and I never wanted to move again. Everything will be worse if I moved again”. (07)

“I lay thinking, ‘I am safe. There is the corner of the bedroom door and the friendly furniture. There is the tree of life in the garden and the wall green with moss. The barrier of the cliffs and the high mountains. And the barrier of the sea. I am safe. I am safe from strangers. (11).

In the above quotations we can clearly see that home was a source of life, tranquillity and peace for Antoinette, it was in fact a shelter for her that protect her and her family from strangers and this indicates that home for Antoinette was part of her identity and how it would not be since all her memories are in this house; but eventually this peacefulness will not last for long due to the black revolt against them which led to the house set in fire and the loss of her brother Pierre and her parrot: “But now I turned too. The house was burning, the yellow-red sky was like sunset and I knew that I would never see Colibri again. Nothing would be left, the

golden ferns and the silver ferns, the orchids, the ginger lilies and the roses, the rocking-chair and the blue sofa, the jasmine and the honeysuckles, and the picture of the miller's Daughter. When then had finished, there would be nothing left. That could not be stolen or burned." (37-8)

When the house was burned by the slaves, Antoinette thought that she has lost everything and that is nothing left for them, it is clearcutting that witnessing her home fading away in the red flames deprived her from those beautiful object that they once form a part of her life and contribute in giving her the sense of safety. This action and the way she describe the burned object show how Antoinette was deeply hurt inside.

Later on, and despite her husband attempts to convince her that England is better than Jamaica, Antoinette stay on her words and her love for Colibri and described England as a cold, dark place. "'Oh England, England," she called back mockingly, and the sound went on and on like a warning I did not choose to hear"(48). Also, England was like a dreamlike to Antoinette because her visions are based on pictures and textbook as if England is not real for her: 'Is it true,' she said, 'that England is like a dream? Because one of my friends who married an Englishman wrote and told me so. She said this place London is like a cold dark dream sometimes. I want to wake up'" (57).

Another element that could be also recognized as a reason in the destruction of Antoinette identity is social class or the social status, when the Cosway family remained poor after Antoinette father 's death

due to the Emancipation Act which is another reason, the heroine was put in a state of fear, discomfort and insecure:" Now we are marooned, my mother said, now what will become to us" (2).

“Christophine said I had no clean dress. ‘She got only two dresses, wash and wear. You want clear dress drop from heaven? ...’. She must have another dress ‘, said my mother.

“I don’t know how she got the money to buy the white muslin and the pink. Yards of muslin. She may have sold her last ring, for there was one left.

In fact, Antoinette was afraid of poverty because she did not want to be at the same status with the black people due to their deeper hatred to the Cosway family especially that Antoinette and Annette are considered in the sect of ex-slave owners or as the black slaves call them the wife and the daughter of a slave owner Mr. Mason said once to Annette :” Annette, be reasonable. You were the widow of a slave-owner, the daughter of a slave-owner...” (27).

“..... and soon we would be dead for we had no money left”.

But the bad feelings that once scared Antoinette vanished as soon as Annette which is Antoinette’s mother married the rich Englishman named Mr. Mason, here the little girl show feelings of safety and comfort or even sometimes superiority because of the money they gained again due to her step-father, and this is seen in these quotes said by Antoinette:

“Coulibri looked the same when I saw it again, although it was clean and tidy, no grass between the flagstones, no leaks. But it didn’t feel the same. Sass had come back and I was glad. They can smell money, somebody said” (26).

“In some ways it was better before he came though he’d rescued us from poverty and misery “(17).

“ We ate English food now, beef and mutton, pies and puddings. I was glad to be like an English girl but I missed the taste of Christophine’s food” (18).

As we mentioned above the, a person cannot talk about the identity crisis that Antoinette and her family pas through without mentioning the Emancipation Act(1833) passed by the British government in order to free the slaves in Jamaica in exchange of financial compensation given to the ex-slave owners to recover the damage that occurred in their plantations, yet the British government did not stay at its words and put the British slave owners in Jamaica in a very hard situation which led eventually to their bankrupt and unfortunately most of them have commit suicide like Antoinette's father Alexander Cosway and their neighbour Mr. Luttrell :Another day I heard her talking to Mr. Luttrell, our neighbour.

And her only friend. 'Of course, they have their own misfortune. still waiting for this compensation, the English promised when the Emancipation Act was passed. Some will wait for long time.' (2).

The surprises does not end up here the worst is yet to happen, this act could be accused because it is the main reason of the rough violence that was practiced by the blacks against Antoinette family and the engine that led to the black revolt against the whites in which the racial tension was highly performed after a long period of slavery. This revolt took a lot of precious things from Antoinette that harm bitterly her identity, beginning with the house that was set in fire and her brother that passed away because of the fire and their pet animal (the parrot) that was burning in front of Antoinette's eyes and finally t

Her mother horse which was poisoned by the slaves that were demanding their money from Annette, not believing her useless tries to convince them that she had no money to pay them.

"I thought, Pierre is dead. He looked dead. He was white and he did not make a sound, but his head hung back over her arm as if he had no life at all and his eyes were rolled up so that you saw the whites." (22).

“I opened my eyes; everybody was looking up and pointing at Coco on the glaciais railings with his feathers alight. He made an effort to fly down but his clipped wings failed him and he fell screeching. He was all in fire” (25).

Obviously, family and friendship are very important in our life, they give us support, love, guidance, protection and many other things, and of course they help a lot in shaping and constructing our personalities and identities since they are an integral part because of their huge influence they made upon us. Unfortunately, Antoinette did not have any of them from her childhood, she was raised as a lonely and isolated girl away from the family love or the friends joy and memories as she said ‘ I get used to solitary life’ (2). Beside her loneliness, Antoinette consider very few people as her family: ‘these were all the people in my life-my mother and Pierre, Christophine, Godfrey, and Sass who had left us’ (6).

Let’s start with Antoinette’s mother who was one of the most reasons that destroy her identity creation and making Antoinette in a diasporic state, because she did not understand the reason why her mother hate her and why she always avoid Antoinette and her questions or the love felling that any girl keen to her mother “I hated this frown and once I touched her forehead trying to smooth it. But she pushed me away, not roughly but calmly, coldly, without a word, as if she had decided once and for all I was useless to her” (4). Antoinette was very harmed from the part of the closest person to her; she never cares about her or ask about or even give the love or the care that the mom should give to her babies; she just hates her. Also, whenever Antoinette ask her mother something concerning the past or her father, she silences her and told her that this is something from the past and it is not necessary to know about it “Why do you pester and bother me about all these things that happened long ago?”(5). Despite all Antoinette attempts to be close to her mom and have a good time with her, yet she always refuses and reject her efforts.” I stared to fan her, but she might rest if I left her alone, she said Once I would gone back quietly to watch her asleep on the blue sofa- once I made excuses

to be near her when she brushed her hair, a soft black cloak to cover me, hide me, keep me safe”

(6). All what Antoinette needed was a bit of love and care from her mother that preferred her little brother Pierre more than her, she give all the love, care and protection.” I was crying. The covering sheet was on the floor and my mother was looking down at me. Did you have a nightmare? Yes, a bed dream: She sighed and covered me up. You were making such a noise. I must go to Pierre, you’ve frightened him...” (10). Even though when Antoinette head back to visit her mother who was recovering, she was happy when she first saw Antoinette because she thought that Pierre is with her but when she realizes that Antoinette is alone, she pushed her roughly:” ... But when I reached the tidy house where she lived now, I jumped out of the carriage and ran as fast as I could across the lawn.....But I recognized her hair, one plait much shorter than the other. And her dress. I put my arms around her and kissed her. She held me so tightly that I couldn’t breathe and I thought, it’s not her. Then, ‘it must be her. ‘She looked at the door, then at me, then at the door again. I could not say, ‘He is dead’, so I shook my head. ‘But I am here, I am here,’ I said, and she said, ‘No,’ quietly Then ‘No no no’ very loudly and flung me from her. I fell against the partition and hurt myself...” (30). After this visit Antoinette remained silent throughout the whole way back to Aunt Cora house, realizing that her mother really did not care about her and did not love her as she love and care about Pierre even if he is dead, yet she could not forget her beloved son that was the main reason in Annette madness and death since she did not accept the loss. In fact, this was the last time that Antoinette saw her mother until her funeral. Also Antoinette did not cry when her mother died and this is impossible, how could you lose your mom and you do not after passing away and this may indicate how Antoinette lose hope from her mother since she also did not care about her so she simply make the same response: ”while I am drinking it I remembered that after my mother funeral, very early in the morning, almost as early as this, we went home to drink chocolate and eat some cakes. She died last year, no one told me how, and I did not ask. Mr. Mason was there

and Christophine, no one else. Christophine cried bitterly but I could not. I prayed, but the words fell to the ground meaning nothing” (41).

Acting and growing like a black woman was one of the reasons that annoyed Annette and made her hate Antoinette, she hate black people probably, she wants her to grow up and be as an English women: “Then there was that day when she saw me growing like a white nigger and she was ashamed of me, it was after that day that everything changed”(104).

The emotional vacuum that Antoinette suffer from led her to find other sources of love and care and in fact that were two characters that really love Antoinette and care about her which are the servant Christophine and Aunt Cora. Christophine love Antoinette very much and consider her as her daughter, she took the responsibility of raising and taking care of her since she was little child, she sang for her before sleeping, feed her, wash her clothes, protect her and most importantly love her and she even call her doudou (In French Patois the local language of the Caribbean) which mean my little child or little darling, she did all what a real mother do for her child:” No doudou, No!”(87).On the other hand, Antoinette also does “And here is Christophine who was my ‘my da’ (a word in patois which means my nurse) my nurse long ago” (49). This term indicates how much the closeness and affection that Antoinette keen to Christophine who was the only person that Antoinette trust and feel safe with like this quote indicate:” I left a light on the chair by my bed and waited for Christophine, for I liked to see her face last thing”(20). Moreover, she advises Antoinette to leave Rochester when she realizes that he harms her identity and insult her, she never loved him and she always told Antoinette that this man will be her end:” I tell her so. I warn her. I say this is not the man who will help you when he sees you break up” (126).

Another person who was by the side of Antoinette which is her Aunt Cora, she appeared in many places in the novel supporting the Cosway family especially after the slaves burn the

house, Aunt Cora loves Antoinette and treats her with kindness and affection and after the death of Antoinette's mother, Antoinette stayed in the house of her aunt until she was sent to the convent "Aunt Cora put her arms round me. She said, 'Don't be afraid, you are quite safe. We are all quite safe.' Just for a moment I shut my eyes and rested my head against her shoulder". (22). Aunt Cora was there along the hard times that Antoinette and her family suffer from especially when the house was set in fire, she protects Antoinette and she kept her near her until they flee the angry slaves: "I began to cry. 'Don't look,' said Aunt Cora. Don't look.' She stooped and put her arms round me and hid my face." (25). After the house was burned and Annette went to the town to recover Antoinette found herself laying with a bandage in Aunt Cora's house, she took care of her during this hard time:" She bent down and kissed me. 'Is there anything you want? A cool drink to sip? ... 'No, not a drink. Sing to me. I like that.'" (29).

Friendship is another reason in Antoinette's journey of identity crisis and loss since she never has a friend or the joy, toys or anything that a normal child should have and pass through and the childhood period is very important in shaping either a strong or a weak personality but unfortunately Antoinette did not have any of these things because of her race that mark her an outcasted girl that no one accept to play or spent time with her except one girl whose her mother was the friend of Christophine, a black girl named Tia. At the very beginning Antoinette was very happy when she was with Tia, they spent a lot of time together, they play and most of the time they swim together:" Sometimes we left the bathing pool at midday, sometimes we stayed till late afternoon. Then Tia would light a fire ... we boiled green bananas in an old iron pot and ate them with our fingers out of a calabash and after we had eaten she slept at once" (7). This period was marked by the happiness that Antoinette's felt but this happiness will not last for long because Tia do many things that chocked and harmed Antoinette, in fact Antoinette did not expect those racist acts from her only friend Tia that she took and lean to her race, the black one and consider Antoinette as white, the scene does not stop here where Tia participated when

the blacks revolted against Antoinette's family where she shoot Antoinette with a stone in her head and before that at the very beginning of their friendship where she stole Antoinette's dress and money: "Tia had gone. I searched for a long time before I could believe that she had taken my dress" (8).

Going back to the scene of the black revolt, Jean Rhys used an object that is frequently used in the novel, an object that serve as a way to see the other side or what is known in postcolonial literary theory as otherness. Rhys used the Lookingglass and mirrors to clear this image and to say that 'There is always the other side, always' as Antoinette said. This object symbolizes many things one of them will serve as the madness that Antoinette will live later on. Like was this quote said: "Then not so far of them I saw Tia and her mother and I ran to her, for she was all that was left of my life as it had been. We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, bathed in the same river. As I ran, I thought, I will live with Tia and I will never leave Coulibri. Not to go. Not. When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it. I did not feel it either, only something wet, running down my face. I looked at her and I saw her face crumple up as she began to cry. Stared at each other, blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like a looking-glass." (27). In fact, the mirrors serve as Antoinette' double identity, from the very beginning Antoinette fails to belong to any social group. This scene allude that Antoinette wishes to be like Tia "A black women" not a creole which is neither white nor black, the wish that Antoinette was dreaming of to be either a black or white stems from her desire to belong either to Jamaica as Tia or to England, not staying in-between position as a hybrid with a divided self . So, Tia is an identity that the heroine longs for to be her own, yet Antoinette realizes deep inside her that she will never have the sense of belonging. This what made Antoinette prefer the nature as a friend more than people and its quite clear throughout the novel how much Antoinette loves nature and this is very clear through the way she describe it: "And if the razor grass cut my legs and arms I would think 'it's better

than people: Black ants or red ones, tall nests swarming with white ants, rain that soaked me to the skin- once I saw a snake. All better than people. Better. Better, better than people” (11). This quote shows how much Antoinette suffers from loneliness, isolation and depression. All these factors help slowly in destroying and harming not only her identity but her existence. The degree to which a person comes up and asks for his or her reason why he or she is living or even born is enough to know that this person is really lost:” And between you I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why I was born at all”(77).

Now, we move to one of the most important and crucial factors that were also reasons in driving Antoinette mad, or more properly the factors that complete the role of driving the poor Antoinette to an utter madness which are her patriarchal husband and colonialism. We could assume that Antoinette’s patriarchal, colonizer and oppressive husband was the biggest guilty in destroying totally his wife identity, trying to strip her from her roots, country, culture and even her name.

Rochester in *Wide Sargasso Sea* would be given the biggest part from oppressing and harming the heroine since he represents two oppressing sides which are patriarchy (19th century Victorian society) and colonialism (The English empowerment). So here, Antoinette was doubly oppressed by her husband and other male figures that also contribute either directly or non-directly in this destruction. Rhys in her novel tries to give a glimpse how slaves back that time were treated by the British colonialism and this for some reason may legalize the violent that the black practice against the whites. Rochester treats Antoinette not as human but as an object that he owns for himself, he never loved her and he married her just for her money in order to prove for his family that he could live and make a fortune in a foreign country since the patriarchal traditions exclude the younger children from their father’s wealth because simply the eldest son will own his father’s wealth. This annoyed Rochester because his father excludes him from owning anything, so he married Antoinette to take her wealth:” It was all very brightly

colored, very strange, but it meant nothing to me. Nor did she, the girl I was to marry when at last I met her I bowed, smiled, kissed her hand, danced with her. I played the part I was expected to play. She never had anything to do with me at all. Every movement I made was an effort of will and sometimes I wondered that no one noticed this. I would listen to my own voice and marvel at it, calm, correct but toneless, surely But I must have given a faultless performance. If I saw an expression of doubt or curiosity it was on a black face not a white one” (53). It is known in the patriarchal society that when a woman gets married, all her wealth will go directly to her husband and she is no more have authority or right to use or take advantage of her money. Rochester from the very beginning came with a bad intention which is to take control over her fortune, when Antoinette refuse to marry him, he did not accept it at all because he was afraid and ashamed about what his family will say about this refusal and how a hybrid creole woman put him in such a shameful situation:” He went out meekly and while I dressed I thought that this would indeed make a fool of me. I did not relish going back to England in the role of rejected suitor jilted by this Creole girl. I must certainly know why” (55). In this case, Rochester did his best to persuade Antoinette that he really wants her and he will do anything to make her happy, safe and peace the three things that Antoinette were missing and longing for but he did not utter the word of love: ‘ your said heart’, she said, and touch my face. I kissed her fervently, promising her peace, happiness, safety’ (57). So obviously, Rochester was fooling and exploiting Antoinette as all the colonial powers did with the colonized, they used them for their own purposes without bearing in mind that these are human beings that could be hurt because of such acts.

To some extent, Rochester was amazed by the beauty of Antoinette and the beauty of the nature, but he never confesses: “She was sitting on the sofa and I wondered why I had never realized how beautiful she is” (56). Furthermore, he always compares the beauty of Antoinette with the beauty of the British girls, he wishes that Antoinette was purely English.” Looking up

smiling, she might have been any pretty English girl and to please her I drank” (48). But for him the fact that she has a black origin also annoyed him, especially when she makes some actions that black people did or when she speaks the French patois and even when she kisses or hug a black person like Christophine for example: “why do you hug and kiss Christophine? I’d say. ‘why not?’ ...’ I wouldn’t hug and kiss them,’ I’d say, ‘I couldn’t’ (67). After Rochester get used to Antoinette and Jamaica, he start to show some signs of love and longing towards Antoinette and in places in the novel he confesses that he has certain feeling towards her and at the beginning they were somehow happy with each other: “There was a bottle of wine on the round table. It was very late when I poured out two glasses and told her to drink to our happiness, to our love and the day without end which would be tomorrow I was young then. A short youth mine was” (60). And here is another quote:” Her mouth was set in a fixed smile but her eyes were so withdrawn and lonely that I put my arms round her, rocked her like a child and sang to her. An old song I thought I had forgotten” (59). But this love will not stand for long. As soon as Rochester received a letter from Antoinette’s stepbrother ‘Daniel Cosway’ a letter that claims that the COSWAY’s are all made beginning from their father to Anette, Pierre and lastly Antoinette whom Daniel suggest that she will have the same faith as her mad mother and claim that she will try to kill him(Rochester) as her mother before try to kill Mr. Mason and before him Mr. Cosway. This letter affects Rochester very much and made him sleepless for about a week and most he was frightened and he really believed what was written. After this Rochester start searching for the truth realizing that all people around him were aware of this only him, even his father, brother, Richard and the servants were aware but they hide the truth. Soon, the scenes of love, affection and longing will turn to ones of questioning, oppressing and imprisoning. Later on, Rochester was eager for Antoinette but not from a source of love, but a one of lust:” I did not love her. I was thirsty for her, but that is not love. I felt very little tenderness for her, she was a stranger who did not think or feel as I did” (69). When Rochester convinces

Antoinette that he loves her and when he was sure that he succeeded in his plan he starts abusing her sexually not for love but just for pleasure as we mentioned earlier :” One afternoon the sight of a dress which she’d left lying on her bedroom floor made me breathless and savage with desire”(69). At first glance, Antoinette thought that her husband really loves her and she was very happy to the extent she ask him that if he won’t her to die, she will respond for him:’ what would?’ she did not answer that, then one night whispered, ‘ if I could die. Now, when I am happy would you do that? You wouldn’t have to kill me. Say die and I will die. You don’t believe me? Then try, try, say die and watch me die’ (68). And this was the aim of Rochester, to make her fond of him in order he could use her easily, to harm her and make her as Emelie called her a ‘Zombie’ or a walking dead, alive but not alive:’ Die then. Sleep. It is all that I can give you ... wonder if she ever guessed how near she came to dying. In her ways, not in mine. It was not a safe game to play-in that place. Desire, Hatred, life, Death came very close in the darkness. Better not to know how close. Better not to think, never for a moment. Not close. The same... ‘you are safe,’ I’d say to her and to myself” (70). At the beginning when Antoinette did not met Rochester yet, she was hopeless, sad, lonely and depressed to an extent that made her wish death, her life was useless for her and this show how much Antoinette was living a turmoil inside herself and outside by the different forces. But this vision will change when she met Rochester, she really loves him, she thought that he will love her, protect her and most importantly to ensure that he will compensate her about all what happened to her in the past, but they were a fancy dreams that have nonsense to Rochester since he never loved her but he pretend that only to gain her trust and goes on for his plans: ‘You’re safe,’ I would say. She’d liked that- to be told ‘you’re safe.’ Or I’d touch her face gently and touch tears. Tear- nothing! Words- less than nothing. As for the happiness I gave her, that was worse than nothing. I did not love her’ (68-69). Simply, he intended to bring her back to life to see her sufferance and to make her dying but not quickly, no very slowly, as if he enjoys seeing her pains and he enjoys

torturing her: "I never wished to live before I knew you. I always thought it would be better if I died. Such long time to wait before it's oven" (67). This quotation shows to what extent Antoinette's perspective of the world surrounding her changed when she met her husband thinking that everything will be better now, he teach her to love things and to need love in her life, but she did not know that this love for this man will put an end to her existence. Rochester respond to Antoinette's question by: "Why did you make me want to live? Why did you do that to me? Because I wished it. Isn't that enough?" (67). Rochester knows that Antoinette did not have the ability to leave him whatever he did for her, she will always be his own, especially after he took everything from her, all her wealth so she remains poor again. He starts to treats her as mad women, he really believed the claims of her brother Daniel. For him she is only a subaltern and a stage he must pass to show his abilities of making a fortune in a land he never visited and to challenge his eldest brother that took from him all the wealth.

Later on, Rochester start to call Antoinette with other names such as "Bertha, Antoinetta, Marionetta", he used to do that in order to tease her and made her angry, that was intentionally: "When he passes my door he says. "Goodnight, Bertha". He never calls me Antoinette now He was found out it was my mother's name. "I hope you will sleep well, bertha" (87). Antoinette was very angry and she never accept calling her Berth she hates this name:" My name is not Bertha: Why do you call me Bertha?' Because it is a name I'm particularly fond of. I think of you as Bertha." (107). The idea of renaming Antoinette with another name bring forth the idea of colonization. He took from her the Creole name (her identity) and replace it with another one which seems more British one as he always wishes to be an English girl. The fact that Antoinette refuse renaming her with bertha, liked Rochester because he was happy seeing her getting mad, he simply aims to provoke her and he tries to convince her that Jamaica is not good because England is better, but all his tries were all in vain because Antoinette was really love Coulibri and Grandbois:" Her mind was already made up, about England and about Europe. I could not

change them and probably nothing would... her fixed ideas would never change Nothing that I told her influence her at all” (70).

Rochester did not end up here, yet he did other things to provoke Antoinette and play more on her psychological side, where he cheated her with Emelie the black servant and the one who hate Antoinette the most she was pleased to do things that harms Antoinette, they were doing that in the dressing room, the room that was next to Antoinette’s sleeping room so she was hearing them talking and laughing at her house: “There was a spark of gaiety in her eyes, but when I laughed she put her hand over my mouth apprehensively I pulled her down beside me and we were both laughing. That is what all I remember most about that encounter. She was so gay, so natural and sometimes of this gaiety she must have given to me, for I had not one moment of remorse. Nor was I anxious to know what was happening behind the thin partition which divided us from my wife’s bedroom” (111). Antoinette did not stay like that, she went to Christophine seeking her help, saying that Rochester no more love her. Christophine advise her to leave him:” You ask a me a hard thing, I tell you a hard thing, pack up and go” (83).But Antoinette refuses saying that she owns nothing now and all her wealth goes to Rochester and she has no other place to stay in:” He will not come for me. And you must understand I am not rich now, I have no money of my own at all, everything I had belongs to him” (84). Besides that, Rochester was abandoning Antoinette and leaving her intentionally to make her always a follower of him, when Antoinette seeks the help of Christophine, she asks her to abandon him and to stop running after him because men like this:” When man don’t love you, more you try, more he hate you, man like that. If you love them they treat you bad. If you don’t love them they after you night and bothering your soul case out” (84). In fact, Antoinette went to Christophine not for a piece of advice but for another that Christophine understood once she saw Antoinette, she want a love liquor from her in order to make Rochester love her, she knew that Christophine practice the Obeah or the black magic and everyone knows that, but

shockingly, Christophine refuse saying that it is very strong for beke(a white person) and she advise her to talk to him and to tell him everything about her past, to defend herself and her mother and to stop the claims that says they are mad.

Antoinette was stick to the pint that Christophine must made her that liquor, so she made her one, when Rochester knew that her cheated her with Amelie to pay Antoinette back for poisoning him. It is clearly recognized that Amelie was used by both Rochester and Daniel to hurt Antoinette, the first one have a relation with her and the second one used her as a messenger of his letters to Rochester in order to convince him that his wife is really mad and that he must be strict with her and did not give her the chance to bewitch him as her mother does before. Without forgetting Richard who was also a part of oppressing his stepsister, from the very beginning he refused to ensure Antoinette's money and to keep her rights during the marriage, she just married without any legal provision: "When I passed her room, I heard her quarrelling with Richard and I knew it was about my marriage. 'It's disgraceful,' she said 'it's shameful. You are handing over everything the child owns to a perfect stranger. Your father would never have allowed it. She should be protected, legally, A settlement can be arranged and it should be arranged. That was his intention..... 'You are talking about an honourable gentleman, not a rascal,' Richard said. 'I am not in a position to make conditions, as you know very well. Sha is damn lucky to get him, all things considered'" (88).

After having love with Amelie, Antoinette go to Christophine for three days, Rochester was not bothering himself or asking about his wife, he was setting there at ease after he payed Amelie and sending her away. Here, Christophine interfere to help Antoinette, she ask him to forget all what happened and to love his wife again, but when he refuse, she demand him to let some money for Antoinette and to let her be under her care, but he again refuse and swear that he will put Christophine in jail as a revenge to poisoning him." So much for you, Josephine or Christophine, I thought. So much for you, Pheena" (115). Rochester was very aware that

Christophine is the only person that remain loyal to Antoinette and she is the only one who protect her and he knew that she is the last Alley that remain for Antoinette, so he planned to put her in jail in the charge of practicing Obeah in order to leave his wife alone so that he will have now all the freedom to do whatever he want and to clench his fest totally on Antoinette. Rochester destroyed everything beautiful in the eyes of Antoinette, he made her unhappy:” Do you know what you have done to me? It’s not the girl, not the girl. But I loved this place and you have made it into a place I hate. I used to think that if everything else went out of my life I would still have this, and you spoilt it. It’s just somewhere else where I have been unhappy, and all other things are nothing to what has happened here” (118), he breaks her up as Christophine said:” But you don’t love. All what you want is to break her up” (124). Furthermore, he changed her name to Marionetta, Antoinetta which means a doll, Antoinette was like a doll to him because she never talks, that is why he took power over her, to weakened her, to make her cry and to speak.

After he get rid of Christophine, Rochester make a deal with Antoinette’s stepbrother Richard to claim definitively her madness, so that he will be able to take her to England:” I don’t see why I should tell you my plans. I mean to go back to Jamaica to consult the Spanish Town doctors and her brother. I’ll follow their advice. That is all I mean to do. She is not well” “Her brother! She spat the floor. ‘Richard Mason is no brother to her. You think you fool me? You want her money but you don’t want her. It is in your mind to pretend she is mad. I know it. The doctors say what you tell them to say That man Richard he say what you want him to say- glad and willing too, I know she will be like her mother” (130).

3. The consequences of Antoinette identity crisis and loss: madness and death

“Pity. Is there none for me? Tied to a lunatic for life- a drunken lying lunatic- gone her mother’s way” (134).

Antoinette was taken to England by Rochester, locked in his house attic, he never come to see her again, she was lonely, amazed and she did not know why she is brought up here, she waited for Rochester to come and beg him to let her go, but she never saw him again.” Why I was brought here? For what reason? There must be a reason. What is it that I must do? When I first came I thought it would be for a day two days, a week perhaps. I thought that when I saw him and spoke to him I would be wise as serpents, harmless as doves. ‘I give you all I have freely,’ I would say, ‘and I will not trouble you again if you will let me go.’ But he never came” (144). When Rochester pack to come back to England, he described Antoinette as ghost, though deep inside him, he was not sure about Daniel’s claims: “I did it to. I saw the hate go out of her eyes. I forced it out. And with the hate her beauty. She was only a ghost. A ghost in a grey daylight” (139). Rochester did not accept to let Antoinette go even if he does not love her, but he refuses to let her go, and he deep inside know that she is not mad as they claim.” If she too says it, or weeps, I’ll take her in my arms, my lunatic She’s mad but mine, mine”(135).

Antoinette madness come to be apparent when she start to imagine her mother standing in the room and staring at her as she used to do, when she feels that the ghost that haunted the house is following her, when she shouted seeking Christophine help though she was not there and seeing the ghost in the mirror but not recognizing that in fact the ghost is her. Also, the time sequencing is very important, Antoinette mind seems very dispersed, because the logical sequencing was not right, she jumps from event in the present to event in the past “Suddenly I was in Aunt Cora’s room” that is why Antoinette recollection of the past events could not be trusted, because she did not memorize everything due to her fragmented identity.

Antoinette loss of identity happen when she uses the word ghost:” It was then that I saw her- the ghost. The women with the streaming hair. Sha was surrounded by a guilt frame but I knew her” (153). Antoinette did not recognize that the ghost she sees is her second polar or her physical self, as the scene of the Lookingglass that happened with Tia which led Antoinette to

wish that she was not in between, she hoped that she was either black or white, the same happened here, when she saw her reflection in the mirror she did accept the new English identity that is imposed on her by Rochester by the name of Bertha. Antoinette was stick to her Creole identity and this is symbolized by the red dress, it remember her of Coulibri her home that she always love and never wish to leave, the dress was full of flower scents:” The scent that came from the dress was faint at first, then it grew stronger. The smell of vetiver and frangipani, of cinnamon and dust and lime trees when they are flowering. The smell of the sun and the rain” (150). In fact, this dress represents Antoinette Creole identity that she refuses to resign, she refused to wear the white dress that the English woman wear and she stuck to her red one. That dress gives her the strength and made her aware about the reason why she was brought her:” But that does not matter. Time has no meaning. But something you can touch and hold like my red dress, that has a meaning. Where is it?” (149). As much as, the red dress symbolizes Antoinette Creole identity, it symbolizes her death also. From the very beginning of the novel and the red color is associated with Antoinette, Rhys used it to foreshadow the heroine destiny.: “Underneath, I will write my name in fire red, Antoinette Mason” (34). Another important hint is the parrot Coco’s death. The scene of Coco getting burn in a cage and not being able to free himself from the fire, represent both Antoinette and Annette death and how they are trapped to a patriarchal society which they could not flee its captivity, so that death is the only solution.

After she put on the red dress, Antoinette seems that she embraces and accept her death.” I took the red dress down and put it against myself” (150). Antoinette’s identity quest was her death, it was her freedom from this imprisonment and captivity, she took the candles, burned the house as a final way to make her voice heard, so that Rochester has no way just to listen. When Antoinette burned the house, she meant by it that she is refusing both the imposing of the English identity and her husband Rochester and insisting on her attachment of her Creole identity.

Conclusion

It was really interesting to discuss the identity crisis that the Creoles as Hybrid minority suffer from, and to examine the different factors that they encounter almost every day from various sides. In fact, the Creole people faces different kind of racial segregation and destructive acts that harm and destroy their identities. The fact that they were hybrid create an identity crisis for them, they were totally neglected and outcasted, women were given the biggest part of this hatred since the oppression is doubled because simply, they are both Creoles and women. Unfortunately, Creole women were totally marginalized and they were in the front of this war facing racism, sexism, gender, race inequality, imperialism and patriarchy.

It was very important also to clear how the triple oppression that the Creole faces play a major role in creating this crisis.

For this reasons, postcolonial literary theory was found to defend the right that those people have loosed, to keep the identities that these forces try to erase and to challenge those stereotypes that were given about the people who were under colonialism in order to justify their process. Hybrid people were having a big chance in postcolonial literary theory, since this aspect was given a very huge interest from the postcolonial scholars, they try to show how these people suffer due to their mixed blood.

Through the character of Antoinette, Jean Rhys try to clear the image and to portray how her female protagonist suffer from an identity crisis due to her race and how Antoinette suffer from triple oppression due to the conflicting sides that try to impose different kinds of identities on the heroine. She aims to capture how it is hard to be in a position that you could not know where you belong, a position that make you torn between two different ideologies, that each side mark her as the other and never accept her to his side.

General Conclusion

General conclusion

Wide Sargasso Sea is a work that depicts the life of the hybrid female protagonist that suffers from different forms of racism and hatred. The novel was written by Rhys in order to give the voice of the other silenced and marginalized side, the Creole voice. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a prequel to Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and her racist depiction of the Creole woman 'Bertha'. Rhys wrote her novel to give the Creole women voice, dignity and most importantly an identity, that she was not able to have in *Jane Eyre* since she was portrayed from a colonial perspective as a mad and savage West Indian woman. This time, Rhys decided to write the novel from the other side, from the Creole side not the colonial one. As Antoinette declared 'There is always the other side, always'. So, this time it was the turn of the Creole mad women of Brontë to tell the story from her own perspective and view, the hybrid and Creole view. It was made to defend the Creole identity and to show the devastated effect of colonial and societal left on someone's own identity. As simple as that, Rhys was there to defend her protagonist and to highlight the reason that led the young female character to an utter madness.

The first chapter was precised for the theme of identity, and how this concept increasingly became one of the most important and recurrent themes discussed in the postcolonial literary theory and the postcolonial novel. Also, how this concept is considered one of the basic tenets that this theory lay on.

We dealt also with the writing back strategy since *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a writing back to the center (England) especially to Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. In order to raise the Creole voice against the colonizer and to challenge the concept of the 'Other' which is totally marginalized, savage and has no right to speak, a subaltern that must follow the white supremacy. In addition to that, the last part of the chapter was devoted to Erik Erikson's Theory of identity and Identity

Crisis in relation to the novel since many of his proposed stages coincides with the case of the novel protagonist Antoinette.

In the second chapter, we went on to discuss the identity crisis that the heroine faces. In addition to the reasons that led her to lose her identity, and how she tried hard to quest her real identity. We also investigated the controversial claims about Antoinette mental health and if she inherited the madness from her family specifically her mother or that, the violent acts practiced upon her from different sides pushed to her to madness. Furthermore, this chapter picture how much race could be a destructive concept that is used to abuse and to bully on people, and how it could be a reason that made a person neglected and hated by all what surround him.

Wide Sargasso Sea(1966) was an example that illustrates the different kind of segregation, hatred, racism practiced upon a particular person or group and the colonial stereotypes that always show the colonized as inferior, subalterns, savages, ignorant and how these claims were used to justify the colonial empowerment on those people in their lands and how those claims gives them the right to oppress these nations and peoples like the case of Antoinette who were imprisoned in her husband attic after claiming her madness and after a long journey of loneliness, sexual abuse, race issues and both social and psychological maltreatments that consequences her madness and her death.

To conclude, Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a work that was written in order to defend her identity, since Rhys herself was creole that suffered from different kinds of abuse. She aims to depict how much the creole minority suffer in order to persist their hybrid identity and how they were treated and neglected by both whites and blacks. In addition to their useless attempts to define themselves to which group they really belong. In their quest for identity, Creoles suffer from the case of being torn, in-between, which led some of them to adopt some ways in order

to be accepted such as Englishness and mimicry. In some parts of the novel, Antoinette was trying hard to do that she hates the case of being in-between, she just wanted to be either black or white not in the middle, because the middle was the main reason in her identity crisis, she simply dreamed of a fix belonging in order to live in a society that do not define your identity due to your race, color and gender.

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