

From a Madwoman in the Attic to a Fairy Land: A Conversation with Antoinette in Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea

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Abstract : Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a prequel to Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, explores the history of the other and gives voices to the people who were silenced and kept under the darkness of negation and denial for a long time. *Wide Sargasso Sea* provides an alternative understanding of Charlotte Brontë's mad Creole woman, i.e., Bertha Mason of *Jane Eyre* in the postcolonial context. Rhys transforms Charlotte Brontë's Victorian romance into a realistic narrative. In doing so, she re-reads Bertha as Antoinette, the unspeakable figure of otherness, into an unnameable self, and creates a new stage for the inner self. She in the novel is no longer a lunatic heiress in Rochester's attic rather in this novel she finds her fantasy, dream and most importantly, voice. Rhys peeps through the character of Antoinette through her fragmented memories, dreams, and identity. Antoinette's identity is mutilated constantly in the conflicts between colonizers and colonized, male and female, black and white. We shall use postcolonial theories like Bhaba's hybridity and third space as a methodology to reveal the dialectics of struggle of a doubly colonized woman. We shall see that Bertha Mason was neglected by Brontë because of her madness and was locked in the Rochester's Attic, but here Rhys beautifully converts her madness as a language of Antoinette, a language for her protest, a language for her liberation, a language for her dreams. In this present paper, we shall try to show how Antoinette tries to free her soul and body from the clutches of her multiple existences, identity, and narratives.

Keywords : colonizer, dislocation, fragmented memories, identity, narratives

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