



## **Anchored Racism, White Supremacy, and Blackness in Jean Rhys Wide Sargasso Sea**

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### **Abstract:**

*This article reveals the effects of the inescapable act of racism on both Creole and black communities in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) through fostering the logic of white supremacy and black inferiority inserted by the two oppressive systems of colonialism and slavery in the West Indies. Centering the narrative on two characters, Rochester and Antoinette, this study focuses on the ways Rhys uses in her novel to explore Rochester's psychological colonization that is based on human differences, targeting Antoinette, a Creole woman. It exhibits how his behaviours and attitudes transmit an acute colonial mindset that devalues the peoples and cultures of the Caribbean, displaying no devotion or empathy towards either group. This study concludes that racism as a social and ideological system anchored deeply in white supremacy underscores dual rejection; undeniable racial, cultural complex, and hierarchies imposed by the two systems of slavery and colonialism.*

**Key words :** Racism, White, Black, Creole, Colonialism, Slavery.

## **Le racisme ancré, la suprématie blanche et la négritude dans *Wide Sargasso Sea* de Jean Rhys**

### **Résumé :**

*Cet article révèle les effets de l'acte inévitable de racisme sur les communautés créoles et noires dans *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) de Jean Rhys en favorisant la logique de la suprématie blanche et de l'infériorité noire insérée par les deux systèmes oppressifs du colonialisme et de l'esclavage dans les Antilles. Centrant le récit sur deux personnages, Rochester et Antoinette, cette étude se concentre sur les moyens que Rhys utilise dans son roman pour explorer la colonisation psychologique de Rochester qui est basée sur les différences humaines, ciblant Antoinette, une femme créole. Il montre comment ses comportements et attitudes transmettent un esprit colonial aigu qui dévalorise les peuples et les cultures des Caraïbes, ne montrant aucune dévotion ou empathie envers aucun des deux groupes. Cette étude conclut que le racisme en tant que système social et idéologique profondément ancré dans la suprématie blanche souligne une double rejet ; un complexe racial et culturel indéniable, ainsi que des hiérarchies imposées par les deux systèmes de l'esclavage et du colonialisme.*

**Mots-clés :** Racisme, Blanc, Noir, Créole, Colonialisme, Esclavage.



## Introduction

The two processes of slavery and colonialism are debilitating, damaging, dehumanizing, and permanent. Regardless of their destructive effects on human beings, remedial acts and procedures are urgent and obligatory for healing their relentless vestiges and wounds. The departure of the colonizer and the abolition of slavery are accompanied by an escalating spiral of paradoxical circumstances and violence that have never-ending consequences at all levels. They couple with leaving hostile endemics, negative vision, and depressing milieu full of a cache of loss, pain, hatred, and resentment.

Among the malign plans inserted by imperial ideologies is introducing concepts in a manipulative and elusive sense. Over time, numerous notions and concepts were considered as practical tools to change the balance between nations and people. Therefore, they were exposed to many revisions, transformations, additions, modifications, and replacements. Racism and even colourism are among such social constructs burgeoning from the Western ideological framework.

The aim behind building such an inconceivable paradox is not to enhance humans' status but to build up an aristocracy and a permanent caste based upon hierarchy and not human achievement. Power determines the parameters of inclusion, exclusion, acceptance, and rejection. These concepts, rather than being an outstanding part of a real episteme, serve as a zone of a forged ontological entity and discourses. Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* explores such vital issues through her intriguing narrative and characters, such as Antoinette and Rochester. Based on this context, the central question

guiding this study is: To what extent do racist ideologies affect one's sense of the self, individuality, position in society, and the coherence of identity under a postcolonial context?

This paper seeks to show how Rochester, who represents the example of the white colonizer, actively erases his Creole wife, Antoinette, of her sense of self through inherited racist ideologies and attitudes. It reveals how the repeatedly instilled oppressive behaviours foster rejections of her heritage and the erasure of her cultural roots. The process of renaming establishes a severe process exercised by colonial subjects on the colonized to lose their identity.

In this article, an analytical approach has been used to evaluate the novel using Frantz Fanon's theories, focusing on racism inside postcolonial societies. Based on Frantz Fanon's concepts of neuroses, the phobic object, the Manichean thinking, and the other, the effects of racism anchored in white supremacy are exhibited.

## **1. Historical View on Racism In the Americas**

Throughout history, human beings' social status, their position, and entitlement to numerous privileges have been closely tied to their skin colour. Approaching whiteness means evolvment, social stability, and psychological superiority. Historically speaking, European's feeling of being superior on the earth and their belief that their nations and people should be destined towards greatness and glory reinforce their actions.

Effectively, the desire to rule, lead, and reign coincides and couples with brutality and crusades, in addition to inserting religious texts to validate their acts. Despite the cruel criminality and inhumanity they embrace, feeling



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satisfaction and supremacy submerge their actions because of doing right by God (Bulhan, 2015). Colonialism in the Americas and the severe genocide against Native Americans are degrading and humiliating. Racial superiority, cultural sublimity, social highness, and religious supremacy transcend one's imagination to justify the wrong actions of colonialism in the Americas.

Slavery represents a cruel well from which racism and its cognates emerge, evolve, and burgeon into other forms of conscious or unconscious racial sense of superiority. Enslaved people suffer a diverse, thorny, and escalating spiral of war and violence. The hostile images of torture, kidnapping, punishment, criminality, hatred, and persecution reveal that there is no way a race can consistently enslave members of another race for more than three centuries without developing a sense of racial superiority (Fonseca, 2010, pp. 58-59). To legitimize enslavement, oppression, and humiliation, religious texts, religious practice, and the notion of political infidelity provide numerous inspiring justifications that are skillfully woven to convince the racial other of his inferiority.

Considering the Moors, who are dark skin people from North Africa, as having different attributes as infidels and valid people for enslavement is an attempt to expel them from the "new attributes" and justify their enslavement. The logic of expansionism in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, especially for the Portuguese and the Spanish, was to enslave Africans and Amerindian populations. Therefore, reinforcing inferiority based on dark skin color and physical features, in addition to supporting these ideas with religious texts, promotes racist ideologies (Feagin, 2006).

Racism in American society transcends racial prejudice; it becomes a social and ideological truth that is entrenched at a deeper level. It is an institutional system anchored in white supremacy and affects all related aspects of life. Racism, as grounded in a racist ideology, is found everywhere, in racist emotions, habits, laws, and racist institutions. Over time, it becomes a sign of moral inadequacy and abuse (Feagin, 2006).

European imperialism skillfully witnessed the extension of the platform of colonization to North America, Africa, Central America, and South America. The newly born expansionist order of economy, and the extensive capitalist system, entrapped with self-greed, selfishness, and the desire for supremacy, complicate the weaving of a simple definition for being a human being under a moral caliber and social adequacy. Therefore, colonization emerges through brutal acts and deeds, including genocide, slavery, and suppression, neglecting all degrees of a tangible perception of how to live peacefully. This predatory machine leads to forged ethics and widened discriminatory ideology built upon a caste of hierarchy of races, infused with colonial and imperial practices "supported by forms of racial exploitation, oppression, and legal and de facto segregation"(Feagin, 2006, p. 11).

The discourse of racism is skillfully grounded in historically built and woven theories of racialization that advance the concerns and interests of Whites. Through a recognized repertoire of specific characteristics, images, discourses, and practices, racial power is exploited carefully to be directed against powerless minorities and those who are considered "out of history." Racialized ideologies are expressed in many ways and serve to encourage patterns of



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exclusion and marginalization; “Racist beliefs and practices, although widespread and persistent, are frequently invisible to everyone but those who suffer from them”( Henry and Tator, 2010,p.1). Within misunderstood racist assumptions and ideology, race is regarded as the leading theory and reason for implementing social inequality.

Racism represents an encyclopedia that permits society to believe inherently that Aboriginal peoples should occupy miserable socio-economic positions because of an inability to conform to the “designed norm” and the mainstream. Beliefs in meritocracy simultaneously justify and authorize ongoing forms of colonialism and white privilege by perpetuating the myth that those who hold power do so because they ‘work hard’.

## **2. Frantz Fanon’s Unearthing Colonial Racism and its Effects on Peoples**

Racism emerges as one element of the vast systematized oppression of a people; the occupying power attempts to legitimize its whole domination by incredibly scientific arguments. The "inferior race" will be denied based on race to rationalise notions and acts of difference further. In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986), Fanon refers to blackness as the primary parameter of establishing a series of derogatory values that are deeply connected with inferiority, sinfulness, baseness, lack of civilisation, etc.

Racism stems from the desire to realize an “emotional equilibrium” for the whites. Therefore, inflicting all that is unacceptable and undesirable about the self will situate the black man within the scapegoating mechanism. Under these circumstances, the black man feels guilty, victimized, and

distanced culturally and socially. For the white, the black man is the “object capable of carrying the burden of original sin” (Fanon, 1986, p.192).

Through this severe and acute process, the white tries to project what he wishes he possessed and his desires onto the black man. Racism in this manner acts essentially as a defense process through which the white insists on “projecting his own desires onto the Negro, the white man behaves ‘as if ‘the Negro really had them” (1986, p.165). The notion of jealousy is clearly to rationalize hatred here, and it is through instilling stereotyping or caricaturing and exaggerating it hopelessly through a phobic process. The paradox is that the racist subject has a great desire to own this trait; he covets this particular quality. He comes to claim his fear and hatred to be possessed by the racial other; there is a ‘rapturous admiration of black ... prowess’ (1986, p.174).

When his cultural forms, way of thinking, dressing, behaving, his language, and his sexual behavior are poorly judged, condemned, and abandoned, the oppressed desperately incline to the oppressor’s culture. The logic of enslaving starts from the belief of making him inferior through emotional and intellectual justifications of all sorts of inferiorization. It is through the myth of black or bad colour that the chasm is extended and deepened between the two poles. Fanon (1986) claims that “In Europe, the black is the symbol of evil” (188).

Racism, thus, will be ingrained in the whole collective unconsciousness of Europeans that “is purely and simply the sum of prejudices, myths, collective attitudes of a given group” (1986, p.188). The proposed arguments are the material to feed all political and cultural colonization and subjugation. Indeed, the collective unconsciousness of



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Europeans appears as a result of cultural coercion that constructs the black as a source of potential evils and conflicts.

The oppressor inserts a frightening character and severe authority, imposing new ways of liquidation on the native's points of reference and cultural systems. Under the new ways of seeing, guilt, shame, inferiority, and pronouncing an irreversible lowness of his cultural style will be the main results of this dialectic. Therefore, the black man is obliged to avoid the black spiral haunting him everywhere. He is faced with two choices: either to turn to whiteness in the hope of being identified as white one day, or to embrace his blackness since it is impossible to get rid of it.

Frantz Fanon's notion of Manichean thinking (1986) skillfully reveals the ability of racism that is never completely transcended to motivate difference and distance (superiority/inferiority) by making all cultural values submit to a terrible split and division into a binary opposition of white (positive) and black (negative). The distinction surpasses colour to include all moral, psychological, and cultural aspects. The racist explanation at the level of culture and psychology is less tangible and harder to disprove in comparison to that related to the body or the physical side. When it comes to the case of the [black man] ... nothing of the kind. He has no culture, no civilisation, no "long historical past" (1986, p.34).

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon explains that the native within the amalgamation of these racist ideologies is under a 'nervous condition' (1990, p.17). He goes on to reveal how the conflict between the imposed impulse and the wish leads to irrational behaviour. Therefore, growing in a racist society

that believes in '... the archetype of the lowest values is represented by the Negro' (Fanon, 1986, p.198), will make this wish completely unattainable. This impossibility will give birth to acute '*Neurosis of blackness*'. Black people may develop 'neuroses of race' during their contact with whites.

According to Frantz Fanon, the colonial environment is a mixture of racism, oppression, and violence, and all these elements are the primary materials of cultural trauma. He further confirms that the black subject's racial neurosis lies in the infantile trauma. The black child's trauma is profoundly caused by the child's exposure to a colonial environment that is full of racist values and oppression. It is worth mentioning here that Fanon considers the early traumatic event as the source from which neurosis emerges to be cultural in form, and its origin is regarded as a type of cultural trauma. As Fanon puts it, 'there is a constellation of postulates, a series of propositions that slowly ... with the help of books, newspapers, schools and their texts, advertisements, films, radio-work their way into one's mind' (1986, p.152).

During the colonial context, racist coloration has accompanied overwhelmingly diverse cultural forms. Myriads of characters were poorly depicted in media, such as television, radio, comics, films, plots of stories, "the Wolf, the Devil, the Evil Spirit, the Bad Man, the Savage are always symbolized by Negroes" (Fanon, 1986, p.146). This hostile milieu which is full of negativity, gives birth to diverse pathologies and phobic objects that arouse feelings of insecurity, dread, and fear. Ambivalence is another repercussion of racist ideologies and emerges through the contradictory reactions, impulses, and affects burgeoning as



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a single component at the level of one's body, such as fear and attraction.

Thus, Fanon (1990) confirms that the West inserts unthought, coerced cultural premises as the primary reason for creating an incredible space of the "other" by distancing the difference between the subjugated and the master. To emancipate colonized nations from the problematics of identity crisis, they had better oppose Western powers, reject their racist ideologies, and withstand the imposed identity by these powers. It is through highlighting the act of resistance that they develop their own identities by exhibiting loving images of the black community.

### 3. Racist Ideologies in Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, published in 1966, is a critically powerful work of fiction, drawing on the themes and main character of the novel *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë. This fantastic and entertaining novel tells the story of the supposedly culturally naked protagonist Antoinette, who was born into a Creole family uprooted after the emancipation of enslaved people in the British Caribbean islands in the 1830s and 1840s, and who was a victim of social and cultural rejection of both white and black communities. It also focuses on the heroine, who spends her entire life struggling with numerous repercussions of exile, loss, and alienation born from imperialist and racist ideologies and practices. Jean Rhys aims to reconstruct the image of the Creole woman **intriguingly and brilliantly**.

Jean Rhys, through this prominent and selected figure, transmits a shadowy world steeped in the stains of an identity crisis and shaky cultural ambivalence. The deep-

seated sense of strangeness and dislocation that her protagonist always feels submerges the main details of the plot and the heroine, who is harshly caught in the crossfire of diverse racial, cultural, and social paradoxical circumstances. By being a victim of the gaze of dominant ideologies and the yoke of internalizing a constructed subjectivity, she suffers a double feeling of belonging as an insider and outsider, being here and there, and this is what complicates Antoinette's inner security and self-construction.

Jean Rhys conveys the reality of a West Indian female who is grounded in multiple layers of disturbance and charged with ambivalence and ambiguity inside an alien and hostile milieu haunting her life and psyche. Antoinette, who is neither black nor white, transmits harsh dilemmas clearly and essentially carries the stigma of servitude, slavery, and racism as a repressive and harmful structure that serves as a modern imperial weapon and phenomenon refined within the colonial encounter that draws her to a desperately crucial status.

Rhys's text is rife with issues of colourism, which stems from the constructed systems of white supremacy and black ugliness ingrained in our culture. While the standard of beauty and the dominant aesthetic are inextricably interconnected with the skin colour, Antoinette, as a light-skinned girl, is highly sensitive to colour vagaries, the drawbacks of her past/history, and the parameters of acceptance and rejection closely tied to the tone of colour. Legitimacy and authenticity are built around understanding the process of colorism that guides one to comprehend better how racism operates in our societies.



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The binary oppositions of blackness/whiteness thus emerge as a clear manifestation of a terrible 'racial project,' which is regarded as eternally intact. Therefore, this dichotomy will be sustained as a point of reference and a solid fertile ground for identifying and defining one's position in a given society. Antoinette's restlessness grows from her inability to belong to any particular colour and therefore "community". Jean Rhys' philosophical mooring about colour pushes the reader to understand how the treacherous ramifications of deploying race and colour as a self-evident notion of an inherent hierarchy aim to justify the logic of imperialism.

#### **4. The Fanon Ambivalence**

Rhys clearly reveals Frantz Fanon's anticolonial criticism when correlating between race and postcoloniality, in which the process of racism is regarded as a framework of injustice and inequality. She shows how the dichotomy of whiteness and blackness operates and how it functions through an awful psychology leading to a severe psychic injury in which the acute experience of alienation and loss becomes the central defining feature of the native's identity. For a West Indian black islander, whiteness is an expressive and eloquent feature of the planter class. The black girl of the Caribbean, Tia, and Antoinette's friend, transmits this idea by saying, "Real white people, they got gold money" (Rhys,p.19). Whiteness here is a key factor in determining social status, and plays a significant role in how individuals are perceived and treated.

Whiteness shapes our basic views, our daily understanding of the self, and even society. Being black

surpasses the location of difference to reveal the political, economic, social, and cultural status and position. For Fanon, colour is the primary tool of colonization, imposes a misunderstood hierarchy, and situates the colonized in a state of non-acceptance and non-satisfaction:

I as a man of color do not have the right to seek to know in what respect my race is superior or inferior to another race. I as a man of color do not have the right to hope that in the white man there will be a crystallization of guilt toward the past of my race (Fanon, 1986, p.228).

Rhys's vision towards the pervasive constructed nature of whiteness/ blackness leads many to be left out of magic, purity, and beauty. Antoinette needs to play the position of the heroine who transmits such essential issues. In this regard, Rhys inextricably invites the reader to probe Antoinette's rage, anguish, and terror towards these embedded questions. Antoinette is caught in a highly dual position, especially since she belongs neither to Europe nor to Jamaica.

In the same line, Antoinette, throughout this narrative, is the auxiliary and heart of ambivalence. While she is regarded as an alien by the British, she represents the example of strangeness and abnormality to the blacks who discover her hybrid colour. Because of the plunge into racist ideologies of colour and the accumulation of contradictory subjugating systems of oppression and suppression, she fails to gain a room of her own in this world. In Jamaican society, she is the figure of a "white cockroach". She is entirely despised and rebuffed by her population:

I never looked at any strange negro. They hated us. They called us white cockroaches. Let sleeping dogs lie. One day a little girl followed



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me singing, 'Go away white cockroach, go away, go away.' I walked fast, but she walked faster. 'White cockroach, go away, go away. Nobody wants you. Go away.' (Rhys,1966, p.8)

She is the symbol of a "white nigger" for the white population in England, "And I've heard English women call us white niggers. So between you I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all.' (76). Therefore, in between these connotations, Antoinette's belonging to "nowhere" aggravates her feelings of ambivalence, non-acceptance, and disturbance.

The degree of racism is closely apparent and reaches its peak when Mr. Mason orders Antoinette not to acknowledge her black relatives. Indeed, our world has become so narrow that blackness has attained a devalued juncture interconnected with the feeling of shame, timidity, and a sense of a permanent stigma attached with fear. It has reached the point that the shade of our skin has become the parameter for controlling every detail in our lives. It has debilitated the past and works to manage our present and future.

Mr. Rochester believes that the women surrounding Antoinette, such as Christophine and most ex-slaves, are superstitious people. Rochester, who represents the white community and the sense of superiority, marries Antoinette in an attempt to receive her inheritance, "a fortune of thirty thousand pound" (369). This act reveals the greed of the British Empire to loot the natives' wealth for economic supremacy, "Your husband certainly loves money"(140).

Therefore, the systematic racism, the repeated process of inferiorization, and the deep-seated sense of dehumanization of the black people mean that, within the oppressive, colonial environment, there is one specific group to whom they turn to scapegoat. These racist cultural practices also mean that the attempts to reach superiority can never be achieved without scapegoating and victimizing the racial other through the process of inferiorization.

The mother, Annette, dismisses her daughter's inquiries regarding numerous issues related to the past by saying, "all that is long ago"(34). Interrogations without clarity and forced ambiguity are what make Antoinette unable to face her identity crisis. She is unable to distance herself from either her ethnic heritage or from the black spiral haunting her because of her distinctiveness; she "lives an ambiguity that is extraordinarily neurotic" (Fanon, 1986, p.192).

Antoinette emerges as a phobic object who reveals fear, dread, insecurity, and terrible ambivalence in front of Rochester's violent sexual abuse. Sexual violence emerges here as a logic of intimidation upon which colonialism is built and structured. It is through this logic that Rochester puts the ambivalent Antoinette in a state of fear. Creating a terrifying ambivalence in one's identity is by putting women's bodies on the ground. Through this extremely crucial thought, the victimized body can "catch all." The relationship of marriage between Antoinette and Rochester reveals that colonization and chattel enslavement manifest themselves through an institutional racism that most Africans experience in the Diaspora, and explores the consequences that the denigration and devaluation of blackness have had on the human psyche.



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This situation has created a deep vacuum inside the colonized Antoinette and intensified the psychosis nurtured by societal ills, a deep sense of racial and cultural void, alienation, and inferiority, which coincides with the institution of this marriage as an exemplary model for subjugating an oppressive system based on power, domination, and superiority that the white is enslaved with. This institution summarizes how the idea of “human” that is inserted by European tradition is itself a racist one.

As the victim of internalized racism, Antoinette displays a terrified consciousness. She enacts the map of the Caribbean as one whose limits are drawn by entangled political crisis, historical hostility, and cultural void. Rochester’s violent treatment and sexual exploitation of his wife, Antoinette, affect her identity construction, render her weak, invisible, inferior, and silenced, marginalize her by appalling racism, and alienate her by abominable differences. This act couples with that atrocious and rigid picture of raping enslaved women at the plantations as a manifestation of the permanent psychological injury and damage littered with negative meanings and connotations of blackness derived from stories of evilness and sin. This image, shaped by centuries of enslavement, creates a wide gap of social hierarchies built on skin colour that persists invisibly in our psyches. Rochester’s hatred transcends his wife to reach the natives:

‘Her coffee is delicious but her language is horrible and she might hold her dress up. It must get very dirty, yards of it trailing on the floor.’ ‘When they don’t hold their dress up it’s for respect,’ said Antoinette. ‘Or for feast days or to Mass.’ ‘And is this feast day?’ ‘She wanted it to be a feast day.’

‘Whatever the reason it is not a clean habit.’ I hated the mountains and the hills, the rivers and the rain...She had left me thirsty... (Rhys, 1966,p. 105)

It is evident through this marriage, built on the English superiority complex and simultaneously, establishing the role of English ideology, that Antoinette has been isolated from others. Thus, this challenge prompts Rochester to deem Antoinette mad to reach the height of his ideological position and patriarchal authority. Once he realizes that her native imperfection is threatening white supremacy, he turns to the enslaving master’s methods of suppression in an attempt to possess her. His wish is to put the West Indian culture under control.

Over her madness and neuroses, he comes to maintain his white stance and feels his power, authority, and superiority. And therefore, it is through the racist environment he has transplanted that his institution of marriage comes to fall. Though his ultimate ability to transmit the discourses that conform to what is normal and to constitute his place and rank, he has succeeded in finalizing the destruction of his family and marriage.

Violent overthrow and empathy are essentially the appropriate methods by which the denigrated woman negates “the other” and can externally compensate perfectly for her internal loss, the deep-seated sense of inferiority, and her lack of equilibrium, and repossess what was taken by force from her. Under colonial conditions and circumstances, racism in the novel emerges as an intrinsic mode of operation imbued with a focused meaning, socialized and repeated as a mundane aspect that is idealized as a norm of collective life. Racism in this way is a systemic, fabricated



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structure that burgeons from ideological consequences and, most importantly, material ones.

The internal fracture for the heroine gravitates outwards, leading to moral and psychic schisms. Rhys's protagonist suffered a perpetual and permanent internalized complex and negativity that can only be delivered through periodical and quotidian eruptions of rebellion and violent struggle. According to Albert Memmi, this type of racism operates as a pathological state that puts both the colonized and the colonizer into a terrible vacuum and vicious circle that is ultimately debilitating for both sides.

Rhys enforces the idea that race and colourism emerge as colonial tools to embed racist ideologies that globally have no logical reasoning: 'racist reasoning has no secure foundation, is incoherent in its development, and is unjustified in its conclusions ... racism is not simply of the order of reason ... [it] is called forth and maintained, in its essence and goals, by something other than itself' ((Memmi Albert, 2000, p.21). Rhys, depicts racism as an obligatory impulse to draw a space for victimization based on biological or physical undeniable differences that have no explanation for acceptance or refusal. She insists that her heroine is the victim of a pathological desire within the imposed dominance and subjugation.

Antoinette is keen to find a means of escape from her blackness and may resort to longing for her husband's love passionately. Though she tries to respond to Rochester's pleasure, she puts on his white veil. However, the white dress is not always the radical solution, Fanon puts it, 'The colonised is elevated above his jungle status in proportion to his adoption of the mother country's cultural standards. He

becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle” (1986, p.18). Indeed, it is only through the positive affirmation of her blackness that she can serve as a shield of resistance against any negativity. The setting of the fire at Thornfield by Bertha can be analysed as a form of revolt against the empire. It couples with Britain’s act of abolition of slavery and her struggle with economic crises, while Jamaica emerges as of paramount economic importance to England.

Because of her racial trauma, wounds are inflicted on her body and mind. This type of trauma can bring about shifts at all levels: patterns of intimacy, beliefs, worldview, interpersonal relationships, and personal identity. According to Frantz Fanon, racial trauma is inaugurated by the racism instilled by the colonizer on the colonized from diverse perspectives: society, body, history, and culture.

Another glaring example of racism appears when Rochester attempts to deny Antoinette her name, recalling her as Bertha in an attempt to distance her from her crazy mother. This name is derived from Charlotte Brontë’s novel *Jane Eyre*. Renaming means to impose another identity on the victim. This act signifies lots of things related to her personal, social, and cultural identity. The process of being without her name is in itself an oppressive system exercised by the colonial patriarchal culture. For Spivak, Antoinette is “a person without lines of social mobility” (2006,p.28). The image of self-division emerges as an inherent feature resulting from the colonialist brain and subjugation, and is beyond any question. Fanon’s psychological analysis explains the effects of colonial violence on colonized people;

The Negro’s behaviour makes him akin to an obsessive neurotic type, or, if one prefers, he puts himself into a complete situational neurosis. In the



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man of colour there is a constant effort to run away from his own individuality, to annihilate his own presence , , The attitude of the Black man toward the white, or toward his own race, often duplicates almost completely a constellation of delirium, frequently bordering on the region of the pathological. (Fanon,1986,p.60)

The examples of non-acceptance and rejection are redundant throughout the novel. Antoinette is not only despised by her people, her friends, and her husband. Antoinette also receives the same hatred from her mother. When she wakes up crying after a shocking nightmare, her mother complains and blames her for the noise that frightens her little son, Pierre, "I will go and take Pierre with me...It is not safe. It is not safe for Pierre" (34-5) .

Antoinette receives a normal maternal love. Even her mother reveals her racist treatment to her daughter and does not cater to her with the needed maternal affection. She grows up despised, alienated, and rejected violently by her mother, who gives more importance to her brother, Pierre. The environment where she grows up is built on racist thoughts, inequalities, and exhibits the alienating factors, revealing the signs of inherited emotional isolation, sadness, despair, and vulnerability. Indeed, she is increasingly lost at the personal, historical, cultural, and social levels.

Even her creoleness is not satisfactory within the degrees of inclusion. Creoleness is what draws a negative status, image, and being. Creoleness in the novel is synonymous with hatred, rejection, and refusal. Antoinette's creoleness does not posit her in a superior status on the social ladder, but she is completely rebuffed with a decadent and debased gaze. Creoleness essentially carries the deep sense of

strangeness, homelessness, and being an outsider. Therefore, Antoinette's creoleness can be both a peaceful sign and a terrifying marker. Rhys spends a powerful mind to humanize the woeful and depressing conditions of the heroine, who, though being very far from the surface of blackness, is not safe from the built "standard" of classification. White beauty is therefore 'based on the racist assumption of black ugliness.' (Hunter, 2002, p 179).

The Creole situation remains the primary reason for the ambivalence of the heroine and stems from the debilitating West Indian past and its count and sometimes invisible power. Diverse resonances through history become attached to the Caribbean realities, cultures, and literatures and emerge as a reflection of the pervading existence of colonialism in the islands and its corollary hierarchical perceptions of race based on social differences and separation.

Indeed, Jean Rhys herself produces from her protagonist Antoinette a portion of extensive colonial discourses and their drawbacks, such as issues of racism, ambivalence, exclusion, and monstrosity. Her protagonist is what increasingly shapes the creative substance that lies at the heart of the region's politics and ambiguities. Rhys combines her writing with the articulation of this outstanding history, which is a European product. She reveals the fact that even histories are narratives and, therefore, they can be reconstructed and reinterpreted.

Through a brilliant literary work, Jean Rhys's text combines the inherited Creole culture with a revisionist dimension to the European archival and documentary sources. Therefore, Rhys is highly interested in "reconstructing a distinguished voice," through which she



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can bring the complexity of the background through its miraculous interconnectedness with gender issues, racist dilemmas, and socio-cultural questions, in addition to the colonial context and political debates. In this respect, Gregg claims, “If, in the 1960s, the socio-political struggles helped to shape critical response to Jean Rhys in the Caribbean, these events and the presence in England of West Indian writers decisively shaped her own perception of the West Indies and her writing” (1995, p. 39).

## **Conclusion**

Based on colour, colonialism and slavery emerge as terrifying racial projects through which blacks have suffered dreadfully. Antoinettes, as depicted in this particular novel, has stayed at the threshold as she belongs nowhere. Because of her Creolization and being the daughter of an ex-slave holder, Antoinette faces all sorts of dehumanization, marginalization, hatred, invisibility, and rejection. The accumulation of suppression and frustration from both white and black Jamaicans buries the heroine in an identity crisis and dilemmas. It is through the dichotomy of white supremacy and black inferiority that racism operates horribly, and accordingly, neuroses of race were developed, and an incomprehensible hierarchy was implemented.

The phobic object, therefore, is denied inclusion and acceptability. Ambivalence and the position of the other are irreversible and crucial repercussions burgeoning from political, cultural, and social dimensions of blackness. This

study attempts to explore the impacts of psychological colonization and white, racist ideologies embodied in Rochester on the erasure of the native identity of Antoinette. The findings conclude that it is only through the affirmation of one's race, colour, culture, and social stance that negativity can be dissipated. It is also through serving loving images to blackness and the black community that satisfaction will reduce the awful degrees of the native's repeated anguish and tensions.

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