

## DETECTION OF THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY BRITISH IMPERIALISM AND THE ANATOMY OF THEIR SUPERLATIVE TRAITS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN CHARLOTTE BRONTE'S JANE EYRE AND JEAN RHY'S WIDE SARGASSO SEA

Farhana Haque

### Abstract

The aim of this paper is to trace the elements of British colonialism and their superlative traits over their subordinate people. This paper will unfold the embedded colonial spirit in the works of the Nineteenth century British novel *Jane Eyre*. To do so i have chosen the two quintessential English novels, such as Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*(1847), and its prequel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) written by Jean Rhys. The first novel was belonged to the Victorian period and the second novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* will help us to know how the colonial subjects or colonial others has been oppressed by the British colonizers. Through the post colonial text like *Wide Sargasso Sea* we could see that how far the supremacist ideologies has been ingrained in literature. For example, in the novels *Jane Eyre*we could able to see how the identity of the Colonizer has been created by the depiction of colonial other. Charlotte Bronte hasbeen exhibited this beautifully in her novel *JaneEyre*.If we attempt to detect the history of British imperialism there we will see the expansion of British colonies and simultaneously parallel with the British concern for a national identity, arising mostly in the Eighteenth Century. With the colonization of the Caribbean Islands and the other subsequent British satellites, identity within the British Empire became even more complex. This reinforced the need for a distinction to be made between the multicultural, colonized British subjects and the racially, culturally and religiously homogenous Britons who possessed the coveted "Englishness". Such idea of English superiority found its voice in the narratives of English novels, especially in those which were written during the Romantic and the Victorian period which was the primetime for the British imperial conquest. As i have given my settled goal of tracingcolonial predisposition and the anatomy of their superlative traits i have designed my paper with some important and significant parts to present the British Imperialism and their smug of being the powerful rulers. Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* will show how the British colonialism imposed their superiority towards the inferiors like West Indian creoles and shed further lights on this novel along with its post colonial counterpart, Jean Rhy's *Wide Sargasso Sea*. *Jane Eyre* will unveiled the cultural hierarchy which was presented in the text and also will explore the contested nature and meaning of 'Englishness' throughout the narrative of the colonizer (*Jane Eyre*) and the colonized body (*Wide Sargasso Sea*). While Bronte's text constructed the definition of Englishness by juxtaposing English characters against the colonial other, Rhy's text did fight against Bronte's cultural hierarchy while simultaneously colluding with the colonial project.

**Key Words:** British Colonialism, Post colonialism, Supremacist ideologies, West Indian Creole

### INTRODUCTION

Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* was the successful accomplishment of British's colonial enterprise. And along with this novel i will also discuss the post colonial novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* to show that how the web of imperialism settled in the Caribbean Islands. First of all i would like to vignette the British ruler's anarchy inside of the English literature. Colonization of the Caribbean islands and other subsequent British satellites, identity, within the British

empire became more nebulous and reinforced the need for distinction to be made between multicultural imperial British subjects and the racially, culturally and religiously homogenous Britons who possessed the coveted Englishness. By creating this demarcation within the empire also allowed the British to discuss the darker parts of their national history. Suddenly acted like slavery became divorced from the English history that promoted liberation and instead, associated with the creolized population of the Caribbean islands, who had forfeited their marks of

Englishness throughout their colonial contamination. Therefore the superiority and desirability of Englishness has been found a narrative voice in the English novels. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Jane Austen's novel *Jane Eyre* expressed the impact of imperialism and elevated the English identity. According to Edward Said, English novels has been created the immense importance in the formation of imperial attitudes. Said also remarked that nations themselves could be viewed as narrowness and with the English novel dominating the literary scene of both Britain and its colonies throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

English attributes quickly became the dominant narrative of the entire British empire. As Said noted, "never in the novel, in that world beyond seen except as subordinate and dominated, the English presence viewed as regulative and normative." I will use Said's theory to examine how Englishness was able to reach its elevated status throughout the empire and how it has been shaped the way that English and colonials viewed themselves within this imposed cultural hierarchy. The main goal will focus not only on citizens of the English metropole and the formerly enslaved west Indian colonials but also the colonial elite. Indeed, English attributes considered as an ideal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century English literature which was so powerful that, it did allow the most unlikely of characters to become icons and heroines. For examples, the heroin of Charlotte's Bronte's celebrated work *Jane Eyre*. In the novel *Jane Eyre*, Jane was introduced to the reader as being plain and poor. She lamented her own lack of good looks when she first arrived at Thornfield and commented on the alienation from handsome men:

"I should have known instinctively that they neither have nor could have sympathy with anything in me." (Bronte, 130).

In the novel, it was Rochester's lack of classic features and beauty that has been emboldened Jane to approach him and later she fallen in love with him. However, Rochester's mad creol wife in the attic created a foil for Jane which made her to occupy the role of English heroin. By juxtaposing the two women throughout the novel Bronte made herself engaged in what Said described in his theory, which was to uplift the one party by the comparatively made weaker of the other. Thus Bronte successfully created a strong binary between Bertha's creol otherness and Jane's white Englishness. While Jane was depicted as healthy, chaste, modest English and free, Bertha was shown to be mad, blatantly sexual, violent, creol and needing restraint. In the famous unveiling scene

in the attic, Rochester compared the two women side by side, saying, "compare these clear eyes (Jane) with the red balls yonder (Bertha). This face with that mask- this form with that bulk..." ( Bronte, 329).

Bronte's use of the creol figure that encapsulated more literary criticism than any other English text and has been created an absolutely necessary concept to investigate against the colonization of 19<sup>th</sup> century's English novel. Just as *Jane Eyre* did settle down the narrative of special inclusion where Jane and Rochester were allowed to exist within the scope of Englishness, Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso sea* has been made the platform which was the narrative of exclusion. But here in *Wide Sargasso Sea* the characters were attempted to achieve English attributes but continuously fall apart. Thus *Wide Sargasso sea* became the creol answer to Bronte's English text, which actually produced a more comprehensive understanding of Englishness through the double narrative voice of the colonizer and the colonized and these were the included and the excluded. Rhys thus attempted to resist the superiority of English attitudes which was found in *Jane Eyre* by engaging in what Homi Bhabha described as colonial mimicry. Her novel acted as the pre-equal for *Jane Eyre*, mimicking it in style and genre. She even made Antoinette as a person of bear striking similarities to Jane regarding her religious education, isolation in society and loss of childhood friends yet while Rhys attempted to mimic but not mirror the English colonial novel in effort to resist its narrow view of Englishness and subsequent coding of the other. She simultaneously has been colluded with very ideas she was trying to resist by depicting Antoinette as constantly an influenced figure who did try to distinguish herself from the blacks on the island and made herself appear more white, more European, more English. Rhys made her character internalize the cultural hierarchy that has been added the values of Englishness above all else. Antoinette's interactions with various racial and ethnic groups of island both unsettled and re-enacted many of the common sense and thus has been structured of English superiority and bring into question whether *Wide sargasso sea* can be considered as a post colonial text at all or not, when the entire promise of the novel was a reaction to the English imperial narrative. Using Bhabha, I have planned to look at *Wide sargasso sea* to discern to what extent the novel was being illustrated the narrowness of Englishness condemning its exclusion of hybrid bodies and how far it will seek an unconsciously perhaps, to complete the project of colonialism.

By exploring the role of English attributes of English people played in the creation and formulation of *Jane Eyre* and *Wide sargasso sea* which has been created the new reading and has been emerged as the texts which supplemented and complicated the feminist readings of critics like Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar and Elaine Showalter that have been preceded it. Now I can begin with the exploration of authorial choices, such as Brontë's decision to have a creole madwoman as Jane's foil in *Jane Eyre* while Gilbert and Gubar have famously argued in their feminist critique of *Jane Eyre* that Bertha represented Jane's sexuality open and liberated other. A reading through the lens of Englishness could suggest that Brontë did choose a creole woman to highlight Jane's Englishness and to reinforce the English superiority which was considered as normal during the 19th century. Brontë's decision to keep Bertha as silent and put her aside from her maniacal laughter also did expressed more to Brontë's opinions on empire and its inherent link to a culture of silence than to a feminist reading of female subjugation.

Spivak also touched upon this culture of silence when she has started to discuss the subaltern as being a position without identity and the inability of an action. She has been stated that the subaltern can't represent itself through a narrative voice but was always being represented by others and pushed in to the dominant pre-existing meta narrative in this case, British imperialism. Thus Jane and Rochester both were given a voice as they did represent the meta-narrative of British imperialism history, while Bertha was condemned to subalternity and silence. Similarly instead of reading Jane's decision to return to Rochester after he has been lost his eyesight in the fire as a sign of female control and domination, we could read her decision through Bertha's death as its the scars of the colonial experience. Rochester finally was permitted to get rid of his colonial contagion (Bertha) and did receive the apt signals from mind to marry Jane which can perpetuating the imperialist ideals of English superiority through an English wedding and the birth of an unquestionably English son. Antoinette's madness in *Wide sargasso sea* also became complicated by this reading of Englishness which can propose the idea that Antoinette's madness resulted from a colonial identity crisis and her frustration was not being able to fit within the narrow constructs of English superiority versus her sexual and social subordinations by the male. In the same way Rochester attempted to control Antoinette's sexuality could be read as having less to do with simple misogyny and more to do with policing the boundaries of the English identity by preventing the

conception of creole figure that would falsely pass for English.

**The term 'British' symbolizes the prevalent and effective power of Englishness over the West Indian black natives through the novels *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea***

The British government met with the anxiety of losing their one of the most effective colony, which was America. The loss of American colonies in the late eighteenth century, and created the disagreement over identity and cultural hierarchy which was predominantly domestic. However, with the loss of America and increasing angst was proved proved the continuation of the superiority of Britain's imperial power within the European community which was about to perish. Therefore they felt the importance to regain their reputation and made a promise to come together as a nationally and culturally homogenous metropole in order to control their remaining colonies. Thus, as David Armitage pointed out the term "British" became colonized by the term "English", which came to stand for Great Britain (the mother country) and its inhabitants as a whole. Englishness was settled at first as a social construct then changed from something of domestic significance to something of imperial importance. To establish and protect the cultural borders of the metropole against the inevitable process of cultural hybridization that occurs in the contact zones of empire, the British government was very alert. In the seventeenth century, British imperialism has been settled their colonies on the land of America in order to generate wealth for the mother country. Many government officials has taken the British colonies as their father and the colonized people were considered as their children, who will suppose to make every provision for their welfare effectively. It seems that, Britons just took the role of superiority over the American colonies and acted like their guardians. When the colonists started to openly rebel, Britain soon realized they have made a tactical error in its treatment of the colonies by not establishing royal authority as Spain did with its colonies.. After observing the war of American colonies, the British started to feel that, they will face with the loss of their cultural and national identity. Believing in a shared Englishness and national loyalty which has provided them a false sense of security about their American colonies, therefore made Britain more susceptible to colonial revolt. In a narrower definition of Englishness, a shared sense of identity between domestic English subjects and British colonial subjects, which made Britain more diligent in its command and surveillance of its colonies. Linda Colley summarized this shift in domestic cultural politics when she says:

“ In the half century after the American war, there would emerge in Great Britain a far more consciously and officially constructed patriotism which stressed attachment to the monarchy, the importance of empire the value of military and naval achievement, and the desirability of strong stable government by virtuous able and authentically British elite”.

The British government has been inclined to maintain the cultural hierarchy in which the white race will be acknowledged universally and superior, while the blacks and the natives of the islands will be always subservience and needing governance. Here it is certain that, the English people settled with the ingrained ideas about their crown of superiority that led them towards the inherent right to rule their subordinate subjects. Gradually the British imperialism has been stretched their colonies over the African regions and started to impose English cultural norms inside of the natives life. For example, Charlotte Bronte did choose the country West Indies to undermine their quality by making the comparison with their polish and disciplined Englishness. The main protagonist of *Jane Eyre* novel was certainly Jane Eyre, while on the other hands, Bronte has been presented Bertha Mason as a colonial other to elevate the position of Jane. In the post colonial novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Jean Rhys tried to give the strong answer to the British for their colonial power, but somehow in this novel, Rhys also get agreed with the colonial project. As a result the black slaves began to emulate the British norms which has been seen in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Some of the characters in that novel continually took an attempt to act or be like the white people. Britain's supremacy also allowed to control the colonies through racial subjugation and disavow any knowledge or involvement. From this perspective two separate and distinct national histories arose in Britain. One is domestic history, and the other one is imperial history. Following this two practice here i can include David Armitage's theory:

“British history is assumed to mean domestic history implies extraordinary history. The attributed character of the second empire as an empire built on military conquest, racial subjugation, economic exploitation and territorial expansion rendered its incompatible with the metropolitan norms of liberty, equality and the rule of law and demanded that the empire be exoticized and further differentiated from domestic history”.

Having these two divergent histories allowed Britain to simultaneously oppose slavery as morally depraved in Great Britain and yet practice slavery in its colonies to gain wealth. In *Jane Eyre* these two

divergent histories can be appropriate for Mr. Rochester and Jane Eyre's life histories. Because both of them received their fortunes through their affiliation with West Indies( Rochester's wife Bertha and Jane's uncle), yet the source of this West Indian wealth, namely the slave trade was never openly acknowledge. The novel *Jane Eyre* was examined through some contexts such as the economic struggle in Britain which was considered morally correct by the metropole and the economically advantages for the empire. After examining scenes such as the one in which Bertha has been arranged the platform to set fire on Thornfield. Such violence and aggression in Bertha made her firmly stay in the group of the inferior West Indian creole, and consequently elevated Jane to the role of the orderly English woman who mirrors Britain's sense of imperial control.

### ***Bronte's dichotomy to Create the Creole character Bertha for enhancing the superiority of Jane and Englishness***

As British began to colonize the West Indies, India and Australia, thus the English narrative spread and became the dominant cultural narrative throughout the British empire. Narratives of British thought that they got the right to own the land which they have acquired against the non-European inhabitants and showed the proper right to rule over the inferior regions according to their concept. The English narratives strongly asserted the metropole's superiority hence constructed the hierarchy with Englishness at the top of it and ensure their dominance throughout the empire. Bronte has been placed the strategy in her choice of Bertha, the novel's anti heroin, as a West Indian creole woman. As Gikandi discusses in “Maps of Englishness”,

“English novels can assert their characters legitimacy as English by holding them up to the colonial other for comparison, highlighting their difference and alterity, and thereby asserting their Englishness”.

In *Jane Eyre*, Bronte has been settled her dichotomy whereby Jane's Englishness was enhanced by Bertha's otherness. In Bronte's comparison of Bertha and Jane, she did focus on six main areas of differences, firstly appearance, secondly health, thirdly liberty, then violence, after that religious perspectives and finally sexuality. Following those main areas of differences of Englishness and otherness, i must say that Bronte has been depicted Bertha as an animal when she described her attack on Rochester, saying,

“the lunatic sprang and grappled his throat viciously and laid her teeth into his cheek”. (Bronte, 328)

By portraying Bertha as sub-human, Bronte effectively diminished the reader's sympathy and compassion for her. And instead of making her an independent woman, Bronte has placed Bertha's position as an imprisoned woman, and made the readers to think her as a beast with no entitlement to English ideals of liberty. When Bertha was effectively dehumanized, she has entitled the role of hindrance instead of victim. She did lose her actual identity after entering in Rochester and Jane's culturally sanctioned union. Bertha was neither entirely English nor entirely human. And as a whole Bertha was forfeited from every kind of right in her life. On the other hand, Jane gave the permission to love Rochester and withhold sympathy for Bertha. In Bronte's description of Bertha it was implicit that, Bertha was tainted by the colonial disease and aberration.

### **The superiority of English people's physical health according to the Medical geography**

As Alan Bewell discussed in his work, *Jane Eyre* and Victorian medical geography, Bronte refused

"to separate question of spiritual or national well-being from question of health and mobility". Imperial medical geography that settled to elevate England as a metropole by showing that disease came from other places on the earth, particularly the West and East Indies. Medical geography thus played a large role in determining which places were healthy and which places needed to be improved. Moral and ideological values such as liberty, purity and normality were expressed through a country's climate and medical pathologies. By these ideologies now I can proceed towards the physical superiority of Jane than Bertha. English people's moral superiority over another culture or race could be seen through their physical repulsion, immune response to that location. Similarly the depravity of diseased colonial spaces did create the evidenced in their ability to contaminate healthy English bodies. The English people actually inherited the characteristics to show smug towards another culture or locality. This colonial disease can be seen in Richard Mason whom Jane recognized immediately as being not altogether English and described as sallow-faced and vulnerable to chills. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette's aunt Cora has left the island because of her poor health and returned to England for a year. Cora's exposure to the West Indies has contaminated her, so that she became afraid that another English winter will kill Bertha's mania and this too can be seen as an indication of her moral inferiority manifested through her physical deterioration and discolorations. This interpretation seems especially salient when the compared descriptions of Bertha's

health with Jane's thriving existence at Thornfield. In *Jane Eyre*, the English heroine Jane also showed her disgust towards Bertha, she said,

"It was a discoloured face, it was a savage face, I wish I could forget the roll of the red eyes and the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments" (Bronte, 317).

Here it can be said that, Bertha's discoloration in her blackened and inflated lineaments implies colonial sickness and contamination. However, while Bertha's physical appearance deteriorates as the novel progresses, Jane's health improves

"Upon first arriving at Thornfield, Jane goes on walks in the English countryside and described as having unblemished savage (Bronte, 114).

Here this unblemished savage means Bertha's uncivilized appearance. As her relationship with Rochester transformed from that of master servant to mutual friendship and respect, Jane reflected

"the blanks of existence were filled up, my bodily health improved, I gathered flesh and strength" (Bronte, 166).

By all her comments now it's almost vivid that, Jane herself knew about her English health which will be compromised in a colonial world. When Rochester did reveal about his colonial diseased wife to Jane after their wedding ceremony got interrupted, Jane made the hasty departure from Thornfield and was taken in by the Rivers family. There she met with St. John Rivers, later discovered to be one of her cousins, who earned his respect towards Jane as a suitable Christian woman and potential missionary wife. When St. John did propose to Jane, and asked her to follow him to India to spread Christianity within the British colony, she got immediately terrified. Jane's fear of leaving England, as she asserted that, "If I go to India, I go to a premature death" (Bronte, 450). Here Jane's this kind of sayings did prove her true Englishness, about how much she feels comfortable to be in England, no matter she is in sad or gloomy state or not, the main happiness lies to live in England with all her English attributes. That's why when she came to know about leaving England she got scared. St. John's sister also did agree that Jane's delicate English constitution "would not live three months there as she would surely fall victim to colonial disease and eventually death" (Bronte, 462). By making it impossible for Jane to leave the metropole for the British colonies, Bronte confirmed Jane's purely English constitution and moral superiority over diseased Bertha.

### **Jane's superiority displays by the English inheritance**

In *Jane Eyre*, Bronte has been constructed the connection between physical debility and moral weakness that stretched the linkage to the political arena. The superiority of English people made the way of oppression to Bertha's life. As Edmund Bunk states in his writings on the French revolution, the English citizen's inherent right to freedom stems from history: you will observe that, from Magna Charta to the declaration of right, it has been the uniform policy of our constitution to claim and assert out liberties as an entailed inheritance derived to us from our forefathers, and to be transmitted to our Posterity as an estate Specially belonging to the people of this kingdom. Therefore, while Jane did assert her independence and has been thrown off her oppressions such as the Reed family. Antoinette didn't because her hybrid identity as a creole exclude her from this history of inherited rights. And here we can see the main point of discrimination of Bertha than Jane. In both the texts, *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso sea*, the readers did encounter with the moments of liberty for Jane and moments of imprisonment for Bertha/Antoinette. Jane voiced her desire for liberty while at Lowood, saying, "I desired liberty; for liberty i gasped; for liberty i uttered a prayer; it seemed scattered in the wind then faintly blowing" (Bronte, 99).

By acting rationally, Jane was able to place her in the local newspaper, acquire a new position as a governess at Thornfield, and ultimately her desired freedom from Lowood. On the other hands, Antoinette was imprisoned by Rochester in a room on the third floor of Thornfield. For marrying with Jane, Rochester didn't able to force Jane to stay once as she would discovers his disastrous marriage. Here Rochester played the role of indicator who can show the difference between Jane and Berth. How English freedom paved its way in *Jane Eyre* that we would able to understand through Rochester's attitudes. In *Wide Sargasso sea* Rochester was able to escape his miserable marriage to Antoinette by lacking her in a "cardboard world" ( Rhys, 115). It is to be noted that in the novel *Jane Eyre*, Jane was addressed as an pure and disciplined English woman who got the Inherited right to live her life freely, while on the other hands, Bertha was depicted as a right less person, who had no inherited right to live her life according to her wish expect of having the imprisoned life by her husband.

**Rochester's heedless life represents his English traits while Bertha's colonial otherness represents her uncivilized traits**

Being an English gentleman Rochester was having no resistance of doing heedless deeds in his life. He was able to live life of a bachelor, roaming Europe and took many mistresses, but disowned both his wife and their marriage. For Rochester, England was a haven while on the other hands, for Antoinette England seemed like a prison rather than a refuge Antoinette has been lost her freedom in England, and as well as she has been lost her voice. As Gikandi pointed out,

"empire equals domination and a culture of silence, nation equals freedom and the culture of liberation". It is to be noted that, in *Jane Eyre*, Bertha and Richard Mason were presented as colonial subjects. Bronte enacted Gikandi's dichotomy, by providing an English national narrative which was expressed only through the voices. And as Spivak explained in her discussion of the subalterns, can be represented only through the description of others who fall within the English meta-narrative, never herself. Bertha's effective silencing of the subaltern identity was coupled with Rochester's silencing of the colonial body once again Gikandi's dichotomy was enacted as Rochester's national identity which allowed him to dominate Mason and silence him, warning,

"Richard it will be at peril of your life if you speak to her: open your lips-agitate yourself-and I'll not answer for the consequences"( Bronte, 236).

Bronte's text was justified to restraint Bertha by pointing out her own lack of restraint, in regard to both violence and sexuality, and her excesses once again enhanced Jane's Englishness. During the nineteenth century. When Bertha used knife that means she has gone against the English norms. And in all the forms of physical violence, the use of the knife was considered the most primitive and uncivilized by the English courts system. Bertha's violent revolt also been alluded to the result in the West Indies that the English were so terrified of during the nineteenth century. Her narrative functions as slave narrative within the text as she was taken from her native home by the white European colonizer, travelled on her own middle passage from Jamaica to England, and was enslaved in Thornfield by her colonial oppressor. Bertha's position as colonial other was once again reinforced when she enacted a slave rebellion similar to the burning of Coulibri by former slaves in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, setting fire to Thornfield while the colonial master was sleeping inside. By making Bertha's narrative mirror as a slave narrative, Bertha's excessive sexuality also makes her perfect foil to demonstrate Jane's Englishness by making Bertha a West Indian creole, Bronte invoked prevalent stereotypes of nineteenth century Britain,

which characterized colonial women as intemperate and unchaste- terms Rochester used to describe Bertha in *Jane Eyre*

### ***Jane's self-discipline fuels her existence higher than Bertha Mason***

The self discipline which Jane possessed was very accurate according to the English attributes while on the other hands Antoinette got the lacks of credible qualities of Englishness during Victorian era. Rochester criticized Antoinette for being emotionally transparent in *Wide Sargasso sea*. Jane was adept at hiding her emotions. She was even able to discipline herself into not showing her attraction to Mr. Rochester;

"I had reason to congratulate myself on the course of wholesome discipline to which i had forced my feelings to submit", ( Bronte, 184).

Jane's self restraint allowed to protect her untainted body, while Anoinette's reportedly promiscuous behaviour polluted her colonial body. This was the streak of understanding Jane's English moral superiority and Antoinette's moral and physical degradation. Thus Jane's self-control and Bertha's lack of restraint in regard to sexuality demonstrated Jane's Englishness and Bertha's otherness very clearly.

### ***The theme of Englishness creates its superlative wings to the post colonial writer's ideologies and the text***

Jean Rhy's postcolonial answer to *Jane Eyre* constructed to oppose Bronte's construction of Bertha as other to English superiority. But her own project was complicated because of her ideological contradictions. These contradictions within Rhy's work was the product of her own confusion as to the nature of Englishness. Jean Rhy's *Wide Sargasso Sea* in many ways served as Rhy's own colonial narrative. Rhy's inability to claim a solid national identity was reflected both in her depiction of Antoinette as a hybrid character and the implicit contradictions found within her discussion of Englishness. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhy who did fight against the troops of Englishness using what Homi Bhabha terms " colonial mimicry" and colluded with the colonial project by using black characters as props to the creole identity" just as Bronte uses the creole as a prop to the English identity. Throughout the novel, Rhy reflects the social hierarchy the British imposed upon the west Indies by displaying her protagonist Antoinette's constant, attempts to achieve Englishness. Here also in post colonial writing we can see the importance of English attributes taught by the British. It seemed that they did spell bound the colonial subjects who are under their subjugation. From the beginning of the novel Rhy depicted Antoinette as a person who got the

lacks a sense of belonging, due to a destructive racism that separates her socially from the Caribbean black population and also from the European white population. Antoinette liked to take foods like an English girl, thus she ate traditional English beef and mutton

In the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* Rhy tried to show the power of black nigger than the white British or white nigger but she was failure to present her stance in this issue and got merged with the English identity. Antoinette's physical appearance also played a role in her difficulty claiming Englishness because her skin colour was ambiguous. Antoinette's racial ambiguity contributed to her exclusion from an English identity as her description of having ambiguous skin made her inferior than the white people of Britain thus she was felt pity for her skin. This sense of pity destroyed the spirit of post colonialism which Jean Rhy's made mistake in her novel. As Rhy showed that Antoinette can not be truly English, she has been problematized the premise of post colonial theory and did uplift Jane's Englishness. In another part we could understand Antoinette's aversion towards the black skinned persons. This was the another elements of colonialism. When she saw a black servant kissed her mother she then expressed her disgust at the black servant by lashing out Christophine and calling her a damned black evil from hell", ( Rhy, 86). By associating Christophine with the black man, Antoinette proved that, the racial dyad of white and black which was roaming always there in the back of her mind. In the another scene, where Antoinette was chased by the biracial boy on her way to school, she described her fear at the child's hybrid features,

"he had white skin, a dull ugly face white covered with freckles, his mouth was a negro mouth, worst, most horrible of all, his hair was crinkled, a negro's hair, but bright red and his eyebrows and eye lashes were red". ( Rhy, 26). Antoinette's apparent fear of the biracial boy proved that she was expecting the pure white boy to see or that could sooth her mind, but when she saw a boy with ambiguous skin colour which made her afraid because he was not a true white boy but same as white. Antoinette's attempts to break out of her displaced role of the " other" and establish herself within one cultural group are continually thwarted, she was also having the urge to be like the English. When Antoinette attempted to identify herself as English that means she was frustrated by the nature of her position as a Creole. Antoinette was existed in an imperial system which simultaneously forced her to submit to the British nation. Hence made herself rejected by the Jamaican black community, and also got rejected by the white.

### **Acquiring wealth by slave trade proves the another significant issue of Englishness**

In the novel *Jane Eyre*, Jane was able to achieve wealth through her uncle's inherited property

"she is financially independent ( possessing a fortune of £ 5,000) and is able to quit her post as a teacher at St. John River's school in order to have the leisure time required of an upper class lady ( Bronte, 433).

The source of Jane's wealth, was achieved by her uncle's involvement in the slave trade in Madeira. In this way she did actually support the establishment of the slave trade and colonial project in the West Indies. Jane's very ability to claim Englishness through her new social class depended on her inheritance which was derived from the colonial project in the West Indies. This inherited money was Jane's colonial connections which did allow her to acquire the final stage of Englishness. Now she got the emblem of Rochester's social and intellectual equal when the couple were reunited at Ferndean. Jane was having the same status like Rochester who was tainted by her dirty colonial money and involvement in the colonial project.

### **Apt Religion of English people creates the significant markers of Englishness in both the texts**

In the two novels, where Antoinette did represent the colonial polytheism and Jane did represent English Protestantism. Both women did attend the Christian school during their adolescence but in different schools. while Antoinette did attend mount Calvary convent in Jamaica, Jane did attend Lowood in England. Antoinette's catholic education marked her as alien. Because Britain did reject Catholicism.

"They defined themselves as protestants struggling for survival against the world's foremost catholic power. Through her affiliation with cruel and miserly characters like Eliza from *Jane Eyre*, whose choice to enter the convent has more to do with a lack of residential options than religious vocation (Bronte, 272).

In this way Antoinette's connection with Catholicism contaminated her as she had familiarity with obeah that truly marked her as the colonial other. The practice of obeah was feared and outlawed by the English, who connected it historically with the Caribbean black inhabitants who used it as a source of power during the slave rebellions in Jamaica and Haiti. This historical aversion to obeah which causes Rochester to contact the English authorities when he discovered Christophine and Antoinette using it on him to try and make him love Antoinette again. As

Antoinette used to practice Catholicism and obeah simultaneously, she was then cast into the role of colonial other with the polytheistic black Jamaican community. Conversely, Jane's seamless Englishness was the evidence through her exclusive protestants as opposed to Antoinette's polytheism. She was introduced as a true English protestant, attending Lowood, a protestant school, as a child Jane has been asserted her Christian values through her refusal to become Rochester's mistress and the charity she has been shown to the Rivers by sharing her inheritance with them. While Jane rejected the type of Christian martyrdom Helen Burns subscribed to, saying, " I must dislike those who, whatever i do to please them, persist in disliking me; I must resist those who punish me unjustly"(Bronte, 68). She performed this act of Christian martyrdom with St. John Rivers later in the novel and described her unhappiness at being subjected to learn Hindostane and fulfilled all of St. John's lofty expectations, says: I found him an exacting master: he expected me to do a great deal; and when i fulfilled his expectations he, in his own way, fully testified his approbation. By degrees, he acquired a certain influence over me that took away my liberty of mind: his praise and notice were more restraining than his indifference. I could no longer talk or laugh freely when he was by; because a tiresomely important instinct reminded me that vivacity (at least in me) was distasteful to him. I was so fully aware that only serious moods and occupations acceptable, that in his presence every effort to sustain or follow any other became vain: I fell under a freezing spell when he said 'go' I went; 'come' I came; ' do this', I did it (Bronte, 443).

Yet Jane was willing to submit to St. John and travel with him to India as his missionary wife, despite her fears of colonial disease and her scorn for his " counterfeit sentiments" (Bronte, 454) as well as his person, " were I but convinced it is God's will," (Bronte, 466). Jane's martyrdom was evidenced in this desperate act of self- sacrifice in the name of God and Christianity. However, Jane's sacrificial act was interrupted by the sound of Rochester's calling out for her; a sound which Jane later discovered resulted from Rochester's praying to God when he called out for her name. Jane's ability to hear his prayer and grant them because a testament of her ardent faith and spirituality. This pattern of God rewarding protestants can also be seen in *Wide Sargasso Sea* when Antoinette observed that it isn't until Mr. Mason, the Englishman calls out to God to stop the blacks from yelling during the fire at Coulibri that " mysterious God heard Mr. Mason and answered him at once" ( Rhys, 22). Thus both texts

represented the value system where by the Protestantism was rewarded by God, while polytheism was coded for colonial other.

### **Englishness gets visible by the English people's appropriate education system than the colonized people's education system**

From the perspectives of education the colonizers and the colonized subjects were different as well like religious perspectives. Intelligence and appropriate education were also characterised inherently linked to Englishness within the two novels. Jane proved herself to be a competent governess while Antoinette seemed to lack any solid knowledge: "she was undecided, uncertain about facts any fact" (Rhys, 52). In *Jane Eyre*, Bronte extolled the virtues of the British education system saying "for after all, the British peasantry are the best taught, best mannered, most self-respecting of any in Europe" (Bronte, 434). For this reason Rochester wished Adele, to have an English governess: "I e'en took the poor thing out of the slime and mud of Paris, and transplanted it here, to grow up clean in the wholesome soil of the English country garden," (Bronte, 164).

Rochester's metaphor alluded to Bewell's discussion of medical geography once again where England was coded as clean and pure than anywhere outside the domestic English sphere that depicted as dirty and contaminated. Therefore Adele is to be colonized by English teachings and morals in order to eradicate any traces of moral contamination from her French mother Celine. The superiority of the English can be seen through Rochester's contemptuous description of all his mistress "each confirming to a national stereotype. The English woman Celine proved shallow and false, the Italian Ginevra unprincipled and violent, and the German Clara honest and quiet; but heavy, mindless, unimpressible," Jane's ability to rid Adele of the vestiges of her French defects" (Bronte, 500). By these lines Bronte highlighted her crucial role in the cultural battlefield of a creolizing nation". Thus, Jane's claim to Englishness are bolstered by her evident power to teach and convey Englishness to others.

### **CONCLUSION**

To sum up, it is clearly noted that, the colonizers from the west always keep their notion of holding dominating attitudes to others, which we can see through Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. The main messages of this paper was to unveiled the superiority of English texts of 19<sup>th</sup> century. In *Jane Eyre* Bronte was successful to create a strong binary between Bertha's creole otherness and Jane's white Englishness. While Jane was depicted as healthy, chaste, modest English and free. Bertha was

exhibited to be mad, blatantly sexual, violent, creole. Besides the novel *Jane Eyre*, *Wide Sargasso sea* was the creole answer to Bronte's English text, which has been generated a more comprehensive understanding of Englishness through the dual narrative voice of the colonizer and the colonized. Rhys attempted to resist the superiority of Englishness which we have been found in *Jane Eyre* by changing in what Homi Bhabha described as colonial mimicry. Her novel acted as the prequel of *Jane Eyre*. She has been tried to grab the similarity of Jane to Antoinette in every steps of life. By depicting Antoinette as a shadow of colonial project who did constantly endeavour to hide herself from the blacks on the islands and wished to make herself appear more white, more European, more English. In this way Rhys dealt with the ambiguous platform and made her character as complicated. Being a post colonial writer Rhys was also biased by the superlative traits of the English people and their Englishness, which was the proof of the British Imperialism and therefore their English literature was considered as superior and highest thing on earth.

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