



An Analysis of the Representation of Hybrid Culture and Transculturalism in Jean Rhys's "Wide Sargasso Sea"

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Abstract: The current investigation utilizes textual analysis approach on Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* in the light of Transculturalism theory proposed by Jeff Lewis (2012). This study paves the way to provide hybridity as a product of culture and touches the theme of transculturalism which is compatible with globalization. This analysis explores the complexity of hybrid culture and how this culture prompts the racial identity. It is shown that hybridity is an alleged myth on which western culture is dominant. *Wide Sargasso Sea* gives the complete depiction of West Indies and it tells about the emancipation act of 1833 as well. It also describes few deep elements by mentioning characters who become the victim of this complexity. Doubtlessly transculture frees the human from boundaries and make the human as boundless entities with unique cultures but this concept "having no boundary" creates a lot of problems and the most imperative fact is "complexity of identities". This study concludes with the assertion that hybrid culture prompts the racial identity.

Introduction

The great novelist in mid-twenty century, Jean Rhys, (1890 – 1979), was a Dominican by birth. She was successful in becoming popular as a writer who was not European rather a black West Indian. This background made her to lead life of her own and she did not bother about stereotypical role as a women. The Caribbean soil provided her with robust frame of mind as a novelist. Crushed by the harsh nickname of the "White cockroach", Jean mirrored the West Indian heroine of her chef-d'oeuvre, *Wide Sargasso Sea*. She once declared "I have only ever written about myself" [6]. In her study of Rhys's life and work, Carole Angier asserts that *Wide Sargasso Sea* is Mrs. Rochester's story; but it is also, of course, Jean's story. It is

Jean's whole story" [2]. Like Antoinette, she also bent under the pressure of the colonial "Centre", England.

The novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* is divided in three parts. Each of the part explains the very renovation of characters in that way, when intermingling of culture begins. *Wide Sargasso Sea*'s beginning scene describes the background of the novel and provides the reader related information so he/she may understand the main character, Antoinette, who is struggling in hybrid culture and trying to find his identity. The reader encounters white daughter of ex-slave owners who has been living with her widowed mother and

brother. This beginning scene describes the surrounding and portrays the line between Antoinette, Annette who are disliked and got unjust attitude by others due to their race.

Hence from this first part of the novel, one can very much know that how the inter mingling or the hybridity of culture causes problems for the main characters, because it is said that “culture is rooted in soul” (45) from this quote we can describe that character of Antoinette faces trouble after her mother gets married to the English man, which is hit for the black culture. Although this time emancipation act of 1833 has been held and under this act British has outlawed slavery in all its colonies. So is in the Jamaica, the place whereby *Wide Sargasso Sea* has been written. Thus it can be said even though acts have been passed and world is being globalized but it is very difficult to accept the diverse culture. Although hybrid culture is introduced with positive vibes but it is very tricky to get mix in the new culture. Therefore for the Antoinette’s surrounding it is being hard to accept that her mother has get married to an English man. Consequently the first part of the novel depicts this complexity of hybridity.

Second part of the novel opens in the voice of Antoinette's anonymous spouse, talking about a wedding service and special first night. This man exposed that he wedded Antoinette just two or three days before. Her better half becomes awkward and vigilant within the sight of the slaves. This pressure develops when he gets a letter from Daniel Cosway, cautioning him of the threats of the family and Antoinette's enthusiastic shakiness. Because of the developing pressures, Antoinette approaches Christophine for an enchantment love elixir to make her significant other quit despising her and begin cherishing her. In any case, she and her significant other get into a warmed contention about her biography, driving him to think he has been harmed and is debilitated. To feel much improved, the anonymous man chooses to engage in sexual relations with a hireling young lady.

Antoinette can hear everything from the following room that she is sitting in. At some point, Antoinette appears at the house totally frantic, and nibbles into her significant other's arm subsequent to declining to pass by the name of "Bertha". Her better half settles on the choice to leave Jamaica with her. This also gives the indication of hybrid culture as complex. The way Antoinette shows the emotional instability and at the end she shows up at the house completely mad. It is also proved the stance of complex hybridity provokes the identity.

Third Section of the novel Section 3 opens with Antoinette's portrayal indeed, however this time from over the Atlantic Sea in Britain. She winds up secured a dim room in her significant other's home. A weird lady named Effortlessness Poole looks out for her and thinks about her. Unfortunately, Antoinette is suffering from poor memory. This is demonstrated when she assaults her stepbrother, with a blade yet has no memory of it. Subsequent to having a few rehashed dreams of setting the chateau burning, Antoinette at long last chooses to follow up on it. The tale closes with her holding a flame and sliding from her repression upstairs. The criticalness of this last scene is vital; with *Wide Sargasso Ocean* being a friend novel to *Jane Eyre*, the pursuer is completely mindful of what disaster comes straightaway. Antoinette is planning for her last bounce and will settle on a choice that demonstrates to be life changing for everybody. Many accept that this last scene is the place Antoinette encounters genuine opportunity and through and through freedom. The flame where she consumes could symbolize her contained displeasure and dissatisfactions that she utilizes as a device for retribution. Thus brief introduction of the novel tells that whenever globalization has been prevailed over the world then doubtlessly hybrid culture has been produced which is also called transculture. As cultures become globalized then it is obvious that it causes complexities including inferior complex, identity crises, alienation etc.

Statement of the Problem

Wide Sargasso Sea received literary criticism which made Rhys's novel as an exemplary model of writing back. Each of the part explains the very renovation of characters in that way, when intermingling of culture begins. Wide Sargasso Sea's beginning scene describes the background of the novel and provides the reader related information so he/she may understand the main character, Antoinette, who is struggling in hybrid culture and trying to find his identity. Elaborating the processes of becoming that Deleuze's third synthesis depicts, Antoinette's fate emerges not as a violence against an original identity. Rather, what the reader witnesses is a series of becomings or masks, some of which are validated, some of which are not, and it is in the rejection of certain masks, forcing Antoinette to become-Bertha, that the greatest violence lies.

Objectives of the Study

- To gain familiarity that how chaos of identity prevails in hybrid culture.
- To analyze transculture perspective of two distinct societies
- To highlight the portrayal of *Wide Sargasso Sea* in fiction revealing plurality of Culture

Research Questions

1. What are the nuances of hybridity and the complexities regarding identity in progressive system of the world?
2. How does the cooperation in two distinct societies create hostility?
3. How does the portrayal of *Wide Sargasso Sea* in fiction reveal plurality of Culture?

Literature Review

In his Location of Culture, Bhabha argues that "Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that

secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority)" [4].

This paper will contemplate on the features of setting of the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*. It will talk about the complexities of hybridity in the characters with respect to transcultural literary theory. In which all the perspectives of the transculturalism will be discussed. It will also make link this concept with the international nationalism which is the key concept of international relations. Here researcher will try to reference from the novel which will make the stance authentic that complexities of hybrid culture creates very problems in identity and even on the consciousness of the man as well.

With the privatization wave of globalization, even written works on national level seems the squeeze that discover new game plans of structure and substance to adjust to a changed social and social worldview (see Thomsen, Mapping). As such, a transformation is in progress inside the worldwide ecumene of letters where new thoughts of having a place, just as meanings of selfhood and character are externalized through new innovative masterful and artistic procedures. (Dagino 2)

From above mentioned quote it can be said that with this transculturalism and globalization, numerous vacillating problems of economy, politics and security has been solved. This subject has made this world a global village and home to many people. Doubtlessly it can be also added up that third world countries has been recognized by this very transculturalism and new thoughts has been invoked. But researcher stance is that, with this globalization and wide concept of the trans-nationalism, the very identity of self-hood has been demolished. For getting the very rich culture and putting the tag of "more civilized nation" takes us away from grasping our own culture. Therefore all the writers of transculturalism are in chaos because within this budding and evolving cultural, social, and fictitious and literary background, authors sensitize the need to figuring out contemporary pertinent literary

patterns; particularly while associating with the so-called "New Literatures in English". Thus, it can be said that our own identity has been complicated, which causes identity crises and even takes the man to the paranoid situation.

Transcultural English analysis represents a truly transnational and transcultural point of view that is equipped for incorporating both the scholarly routine with regards to journalists who can never again be identified with one specific "national abstract gap" with gigantic perplexing enunciations which connect individual works of writing, however not exclusively with neighborhood and local contemporaries that are associated with communal, phonetic, moreover social groups of stars, yet in addition to the overall discipline of English as language and literary works of explicit types with informative cooperation and political clash incited by it. Thus the stance of complex hybrid culture can be seen that writers of this subject also in chaos and try to reach the very approach of the modernities, they deprive themselves from their selfhood. As in the Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the Ocean is determined to two Caribbean islands, Jamaica and a "special night island". This isn't named however resembles Dominica, where Jean Rhys born. These are only two from an archipelago of islands assembled as the 'West Non mainstream players' or 'Caribbean. The terms 'West indies' and 'Caribbean' veil wide social and recorded contrasts between the islands. These distinctions are an item of topography as well as their contrasting encounters of colonization and strife. It is one of the natural qualities of Wide Sargasso Ocean that Jean Rhys cautiously finds her Caribbean characters to explicit islands and interlaces their characters with specific societies and accounts. She additionally makes the scenes and spots of the novel indicate covered narratives. Spot names convey chronicled affiliations, similarly as the scene contains remnants of a previous past.

Thus, from the above explanation we can say that a different location which has been

mentioned denotes the cultural difference. These distinctions are an item of landscape as well as their varying encounters of colonization and struggle. It is one of the natural qualities of Wide Sargasso Ocean that Jean Rhys cautiously finds her Caribbean characters to explicit islands and interlaces their characters with specific societies and chronicles. Thus the stance on the hybrid culture can be described by mentioning the different landscapes. And Wide Sargasso Sea is complete depiction of these complexities of hybridity.

Mardorossian discusses Wide Sargasso Sea's articulation of identity "in the context of a debate that has been waged within feminist postcolonial studies around the representation of racial otherness".

So, the contention of this paper is that even though transculturalism goes beyond the boundaries and free humans from all obstacles but to somehow boundless entities cause complexities in human nature, due to this transnationalism and transculturalism, complete identity and self-hood has been sacrificed. And for seeking complete representation and getting complete identity human psyche has been disturbed which causes paranoid situations, as in the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, in which at the end the character of Antoinette becomes paranoid because it becomes difficult for her to maintain a balance between two cultures. Thus hybrid culture provokes the very intricacies of human being.

Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This study is qualitative in nature and utilizes textual analysis in the light of Transculturalism theory proposed by Jeff Lewis (2012). According to him, this theory endeavors to highlight certain features which combine to produce culture and then various communities in society create and distribute their culture, archetypes, beliefs and practices and a discourse is produced on the basis of their interaction. Transculturalism also focuses

on the subtle use of language which shapes the whole ideology. It exhibits cultural fluidity and change. There are diverse ingredients which shape it as variant types that exchange their culture stories, symbols, values, meanings and experiences. It gives individuals to acculturate in new meanings, values and ideas. It asserts that culture is not static rather it remains changing and seeking new meanings.

Data Analysis

The Complexity of Identity in Hybrid Culture

Nuances of hybridity and the subtle progressive system of Jamaica's social set up adopt an integral role in the amelioration of the novel's primary subjects. Whites who got birth in Britain are identified and considered the white Creoles and kith and kin of Europeans who have resided in the West for a long time. Moreover, confounding the social strata is inhabitants in dark ex-slaves who enjoy their own confidence in society. Christophine feels isolated from the Jamaican hirelings because she hails from French. Moreover, there is a mixed population with their own racial issues as white slave was notorious for attacking and abusing sexually female slaves. Alexander Cosway's two ill-conceived children are involved this center ground among highly contrasting society.

These two hybrid groups are not in good terms rather hostile. Antoinette and her mom are totally different from the rest of inhabitants residing on the island. These two female characters rely on the dark workers who are friendly and care for them. As such, this stratification of race consistently seems, by all accounts, to be on the very edge of inversion.

By "venturing to" author Jane Eyre or "saving" character Bertha from quietness, Rhys "passes to limits." How she re identify this character demonstrates another manner by which the novelist moves past different sorts of cutoff points, because to some extent she is giving the

indication of hybridity, thus for this situation, those related with the demonstration of account development. Bertha Artisan isn't just the result of the novelist's fixation on Bronte's tale yet in addition of Rhys' own investigation into the accounts of Creole beneficiaries of the nine tenth century. But it is about the complexities which are being caused by hybridity of cultures. Her reality, at that point, is the consequence of the author's trips into the domain of writing and history. In this character two diverse realities or better, portrayals of the real world, one envisioned the other, lived come together. The character in this manner possesses a zone of "in between," (3) as proposed by the very name Rhys gives her. It all indicates that the identity lies in between, and there is no complete identity. In *Wide Sargasso Ocean*, Bertha Bricklayer progresses toward becoming Antoinette Cosway: "Antoinette" is Bertha's genuine name in *Jane Eyre*, yet "Cosway" is the author's own expansion. That Rhys calls the character by a name Bront, she picks, yet it does not effectively utilize further recommends how she is recognizing Bronte's impact on her. Simultaneously, Rhys changes that handle with a sur name that originates from Bertha's white Creole dad as opposed to her English stepfather. This also shows the chaos of identity. This exhibits how the author is likewise endeavoring to split away from absolute distinguishing proof with what Bront? What's more, her work symbolize: English culture from one viewpoint and inferred acknowledgment of English imperialism on the other. The sort of concurrent situating in which Rhys connects here uncovers how the author herself is additionally gotten in an "in the middle." In spite of the fact that she unmistakably demonstrates that her work gets from Bronte's, she likewise shows a longing to stay consistent with both her frontier character and foundation, the two of which exist in a luminal region neither completely English nor completely Caribbean. Thus, contention of this paper has been proved that complete identity is being missed due to this hybridity of cultures.

Consciousness is the Product of Multicultural Heritage

Wide Sargasso Sea is in this manner “in-between” not just in light of the fact that fiction and history effectively meet inside its limits, yet in addition since it is simply the result of an awareness that is itself a result of a multicultural legacy. The content is additionally “in-between” on the grounds that Rhys tries to explain a story that of Antoinette's adolescence and existence with Edward Rochester before her constraints at Thornfield Hall which exists “between the lines” of another account, *Jane Eyre*. In this manner, the author can propose different motivations to represent Antoinette's plunge into frenzy. The first of these is youth dismissal by her mom, Annette, a self-assimilated white Creole lady who just checks out two things: her child Pierre and her dissolving economic wellbeing as a slave proprietor in a post-liberation culture. Therefore, Antoinette never gets the opportunity to see herself comprised all in all, self-governing self in her mother's eyes for and goes rather to Christophine, a dark Martinican house-worker, to discover the sustain and feeling of individual finishing Annette can't give her. Despite the fact that Christophine unmistakably thinks about Antoinette, hybridity of culture and class contrasts keep them isolated: Antoinette is consistently in chaos that either she is white or white Creole she will be consistently in paradoxical situations. The primary character is in this manner gotten between and estranged from two “moms” who have themselves experienced the logical inconsistencies and savageries of a social framework that powers contrasts together just to break them separated into inflexible classes and pecking orders and it all due to complexities of hybrid culture.

Hybrid Culture causes Psychological Break Down

Antoinette's insanity can be connected to oblivious desires she considers her marriage with Edward Rochester as utter fiasco in her life. Unfit to locate a brought together feeling of self in her associations with Annette and Christophine,

Antoinette endeavors to search for it in her new spouse. It's all owing to chaos of hybrid culture. This thought is strengthened by the couple's special night retreat to a little domain once claimed by Annette, which Ronnie has been seen as a representative come back to the belly. At the point when Rochester takes a gander at Antoinette, however, what he sees is an excellent and colorful player in a dramatization of baiter and trade: “when finally I met her,” he reviews, “I bowed, grinned”, kissed her hand, hit the dance floor with her. “I filled the role that I was relied upon to play” (76). Marriage is the thing that he offers to pick up the financial security she speaks to and which he has been denied to her by native law.

Antoinette is in this manner minimal in excess of an unfortunate chore, what stands among him and what he wants. This also goes to the complexities, which is due to transculturalism. When his underlying interest with her distinction has worn off and he finds out about her family ancestry, he draws from her, leaving Antoinette edgy to win back oneself asserting “reflect” she thought she had in Rochester. When she sees this is outlandish and that she can't accomplish the wholeness and relational association she wants as a result of her social and monetary in the middle of, she step by step starts her descending winding. She starts gradual weakness and loss of memory and Antoinette's close relationship is called into question and the pronouncements that characters in *Jane Eyre* make about the origins of Antoinette's insanity.

This is woven dexterously in this narrative by the writer as he treats the issue of the character's mental illness but provides the reader with no clue and reason behind that madness. It was asserted by Christophine that Annette became insane and mad due to her inability to assimilate in new culture. These are the havocs of transculturality which causes problems. Daniel Cosway is of the opinion and has different claim from what Rochester says about her in *Jane Eyre*: that “... she came of a mad family; idiots and

maniacs through three generations!" (327). Rhys's depicts mother and as well as daughter as stuck between these characters' assertions which create an such a social environment which takes them to the point where mother and daughter become mentally ill. The writer implies and suggests that deterioration of mental health is due to culture. The fact changes perspective of the reader as colonial society forces Antoinette and her mother to become insane and psychic characters. The depiction of fire scene in the novel symbolizes Bertha's insanity and all interaction among characters is nonsense and of no meaning. *Wide Sargasso Sea* portrays the same event with much intensity. The writer relates the incident with a similar one that occurs in the beginning of story, the burning of Coulibri, the place where Antoinette has been residing as a kid. The blaze of fire symbolizes modern black underclass's resentment on having been forcibly expatriated and then mercilessly exploited. Antoinette thoughts of having fire to Rochester's house at the end of story implicates and suggests, the author utilizes the fire imagery to give vent the anger she feels at having been exploited and used like ex-slaves. Rhys proposes that the fire at Thorn field Hall not only symbolizes Antoinette's insanity except her quest to take revenge by the one who has used and abused her.

Thus, the stance has been proved that transculturalism and transnationalism, which make the humans free from all the boundaries, in reality they just do physically free and not the mentally. In actual the people who become the victim of this transculture, know that how much sacrificed they have been done to get their own identity back, but unfortunately they are unable to get it back , because this subject is being popularized on the global level, and the very global identity is being prevailed and dominant over all the identities . Apart from this due to inter mingling of the culture the very relations have been demolished and create ambiguity. As in the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, at the end of this situation of hybrid culture, people start live in chaos which cause mental breakdown.

Conclusion

This paper explored those complexities of hybrid culture which causes paradoxical situations with respect to transculturalism as subject. It has proved that how Jane Eyre has been concealed the mechanism and effects of British colonialism, which is dominant culture in all the colonized areas. The analysis reveals transculturalism as a devastating phenomenon which yielded identity crisis rather bringing peace. It required amalgamation of cultures that resulted in the conception of a anxious and troubled middle space. For those like the main characters who live in the space of in between, no finality, as claims were made by this concept because they are not at ease rather far from their complete identity. The study comes with final conclusion that Rhys's vision of colonialism is disguised in cultural hybridity is a dark one.

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