HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION IN POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE: *FOE*, *WIDE SARGASSO SEA* AND *MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN*

AYŞEGÜL TURAN

BOĞAZİÇİ UNIVERSITY

2007

HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION IN POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE:

FOE, *WIDE SARGASSO SEA* AND *MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN*

Thesis submitted to the

Institute for Graduate Studies in the Social Sciences

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

English Literature

by

Ayşegül Turan

Boğaziçi University

2007

Thesis Abstract

Historiographic Metafiction in Postcolonial Literature: *Foe*, *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Midnight's Children*

This M.A. thesis aims to scrutinize the use of historiographic metafiction in postcolonial literature. The imaginative (re)construction of the past provides the opportunity to tell alternate stories/histories which place the oppressed and the colonized in the center rather than the margin. The examination of the primary sources, *Foe* by John Maxwell Coetzee, *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys and *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie, raises the possibility of a "new voice" which will enable the oppressed/the colonized to represent himself and establish his authority. The issue of representation and the struggle over the narrative voice(s) form the focal points for the examination of texts. Through these media, the answers for the questions "who represents whom?", "who *can* represent whom?" and "is it really possible to create a 'new voice'?" are searched.

Tez Özeti

Sömürge Sonrası Yazında Tarihyazımsal Üstkurmaca:

Düşman, Geniş Bir Deniz ve *Geceyarısı Çocukları*

Bu yüksek lisans tezi sömürge sonrası yazında tarihyazımsal üstkurmacanın kullanımını incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Geçmişin imgesel olarak (yeniden) kurgulanması, ezilenleri ve sömürülenleri merkeze oturtan alternatif öykülerin/tarihlerin anlatılmasına olanak sağlamaktadır. Birincil kaynakların – John Maxwell Coetzee'nin *Düşman*, Jean Rhys'in *Geniş Bir Deniz* ve Salman Rushdie'nin *Geceyarısı Çocukları* adlı eserleri– incelenmesi, ezilenlerin/sömürülenlerin temsil imkânı bulabileceği ve otoritelerini kurabileceği "yeni bir ses" olasılığını ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Temsiliyet konusu ve anlatıcı sesler arasındaki mücadele metinlerin incelenmesi sırasında ele alınan ana noktaları oluşturmaktadır. Bu ana noktalar aracılığıyla "Kim kimi temsil eder?", "Kim kimi temsil edebilir?" ve " 'Yeni bir ses' yaratmak gerçekten mümkün mü?" gibi soruların cevapları aranmaktadır.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Pursuing graduate study and finally writing a thesis have never been an easy process. I should gratefully acknowledge the help I received from my professors, my friends and my family.

Words will not be enough to express my gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Assist. Prof. Deniz Tarba Ceylan, whose expertise, understanding and patience enabled me to write this thesis. She provided me with direction and focus and became more of a mentor than a professor. I am indebted to her for her help in not only academic but non-academic matters as well. Prof. Cevza Sevgen has been of great importance during my undergraduate and graduate years and I am grateful to her for being in my committee. I would like to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Sosi Antikacıoğlu, Assist. Prof. Lamia Gülçur, Assist. Prof. Özlem Görey and Assist. Prof. Didar Akar for. Their valuable comments and enlightening questions assisted me for the final version of my thesis. I am greatly indebted to Prof. Aslı Tekinay for her faith in my academic studies and providing several academic opportunities. I owe a special thanks to Prof. Sibel Irzık who first inspired my interest in postcolonial literature.

I would also like to thank "asistors" at TB 455 (Beste, Betül, Burcu, Cihan, Eda, Evra, Gülfer, Hasan Mesut, Neslihan, Özlem, Süleyman) and Sema Yılgör who turn the office atmosphere into an enjoyable one with their laughters and warm friendship.

A special thanks also goes out to my flatmate and close friend Özge Baykurt, who has always been kind enough to share a cup of tea with me and listen to my nonsense chattering. Eda Dedebaş deserves more than a 'thank you'. My 'double', my travel mate, my co-sufferer and the patient party of my 'out of context' monologues; I doubt that I will ever be able to convey my gratitude to her fully. During all this process, my friends were incredibly understanding towards me, sharing my enthusiasm and lessening my stressful moments via telephone and the internet. I ask forgiveness of those not named here but not forgotten.

Last but not least my most sincere thanks are for my family. I would like to thank my aunt Servet Sezgin and my uncle Mesut Kasar for all their support during this painstaking process. I reserve my deepest thanks to two very special people in my life: my mother Hikmet Turan and my sister Nurgül Turan. I recognize that I would not have achieved anything without my mother's encouragement, love and support. Her belief in me has been of great value at times of desperation. My sister has always been the source of happiness and laughter even though she is miles away. Without her humor and cheerful spirits that eased my life, this thesis would not be possible.

Thank you all!

For my mother

and

For the memory of my father

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I:

INTRODUCTION……………………………………………………………………….1

CHAPTER II:

FOE: THE UNTOLD STORY OF SUSAN BARTON………………………………12

CHAPTER III:

WIDE SARGASSO SEA: THE UNHEARD VOICE OF ANTOINETTE……………..34

CHAPTER IV:

MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN: THE UNWRITTEN HISTORY OF SALEM…………..56

CHAPTER V:

CONCLUSION………………………………………………………………………..77

BIBLIOGRAPHY……………………………………………………………………..83

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Our era is marked with the emergence of *post* concepts such as postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism etc. which have intricate links to each other and influence each other in many different ways. This study will attempt to look at metafictional elements in three postcolonial novels. What places this study on the borderline between postmodernism and postcolonialism is that metafiction is generally defined as one of the basic characteristics of postmodern fiction. However, postcolonial literature also makes use of metafictional elements for various purposes and the specific subcategory *historiographic metafiction* is widely applied by postcolonial writers. Hence, this study will take postcolonial literature as its main frame and examine the use of historiographic metafiction in this context.

Although metafiction has been widely applied by several writers, the appearance of the term *historiographic metafiction* only dates back to the previous decades. Coined by prominent Canadian literary critic Linda Hutcheon, historiographic metafiction draws attention to a new form of historical novel that emerges with postmodernism. The arrival of postmodernism has influenced literary forms greatly, and it is no longer possible to talk about the historical novel of the nineteenth century when analyzing recent versions of this genre in the late twentieth century. Before moving into further discussion about historiographic metafiction and its uses in contemporary novels, it will be quintessential

to scrutinize the relationship between literature/fiction and history in a postcolonial framework.

The term *postcolonialism* has a long and complicated history with all its references to the colonization and the decolonization of countries and territories (India, South Africa, and The West Indies in this context) along with the present neocolonial era. It refers not only to the after-colonization or post-independence state of territories/countries but to the whole process which is initiated by the colonial contact. Bill Ashcroft defines the basic premise of postcolonialism as “the discourse of the oppositionality which colonialism brings into being” (117), hence pointing to the fact that postcolonialism should be taken into account as a whole, a process that begins with the very first colonial contact and one which still goes on after the independence. This partly explains how postcolonialism has existed for a long time, while the awareness of this condition in the *colonized* territories/countries is relatively new. Ashcroft relates the emergence of postcolonial theory to the moment when “colonized peoples had cause to reflect on and express the tension which ensued from this problematic and contested, but eventually vibrant and powerful mixture of imperial language and local experience” (1).

Once the emergence of postcolonial theory and postcolonialism has *officially* taken place, it has appeared as an umbrella term to cover a wide range of concepts, practices and experiences. However, to provide a focus point in postcolonial studies and prevent any kind of overgeneralization, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin in *The Post Colonial Studies Reader* state that postcolonial studies are based on the historical fact of European colonialism and the various material effects this incident caused (2). While they attempt to underline the basics of postcolonialism, John McLeod

tries the same thing in a literary context. He identifies three different types of texts that can be classified in postcolonial literary context: “texts produced by writers from countries with a history of colonialism, primarily those texts concerned with the workings and legacy of colonialism in either the past or the present […] texts produced by those that have migrated from countries with a history of colonialism [and] texts produced during colonialism: both those that directly address the experiences of Empire, and those that seem not to.” (McLeod 33) Instead of a direct classification, Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin prefer to define postcolonial literature as a result of interaction between the imperial culture and the complex of indigenous cultural practices (1).

While the general framework of postcolonialism and postcolonial literature is depicted in more general terms, Kumkum Sangari puts forward the characteristics of the postcolonial writer, whom he also labels as “the hybrid writer”. In his article “The Politics of the Possible”, Sangari describes the hybrid writer as being “open to two worlds and is constructed within the national and international, political and cultural systems of colonialism and neocolonialism.” (144) He regards representing as well as understanding and questioning this specific condition of postcolonialism as an inherent part of being hybrid (Sangari 144). Born into the complicated web of interactions, the postcolonial writer should undertake the *burden* of questioning his present state and, moreover, the already existing colonial concepts and strategies. The project of postcolonialism entails the dismantling of the center/margin binarism of imperial discourse. While doing this, it also tries to subvert the discursive strategies of the imperial process as well (Ashcroft et al. 117). Accordingly, the task of postcolonialism

is not only to define the existing state but to draw attention to the historical evolution of this state and to investigate its underlying premises from a different angle as well.

Postcolonial literature undertakes the arduous job of telling the *other* façade of official colonial history which is determined and written by the colonizers. What is expected from the postcolonial writer is to represent the colonization and decolonization process through the eyes of the oppressed rather than the oppressor and to create a new perspective. By shouldering this responsibility of describing the repressed, the postcolonial writer also steps into the realm of the oppressor. In order to depict the oppression or colonization process as a whole, one has to know about the strategies and discourses of the colonizer as well as the condition of the colonized. Linda Hutcheon states that writing in terms of reclaiming the marginalized, the blocked out means addressing the marginalizing, blocking forces in the first place (19). Through postcolonial literature, the writer faces the task of defining the various practices and experiences that have created the postcolonial state. These practices and experiences do not solely refer to those between the imperial power and the colonized but also to those within the postcolonial countries/territories. The hybridity and displacement within the nation, its people and its history should not be overlooked (Hutcheon 17). This is part of the postcolonial cultural reality and should be taken into consideration while approaching the postcolonial text.

Among all the notions that are closely interlinked with postcolonialism, history stands out as a fundamental pillar of the relationship between the (ex)colonized and the colonizer and the depiction of this relationship. As mentioned before, postcolonialism attempts to innovate ways of subversion to break the imperial dominance. The imperial

dominance does not reveal its social and cultural enforcements as obviously as the manifestation of its physical power. Through subtler techniques, it establishes superiority over its *subjects*. History can be regarded as the main path to mould the colonial experience and how it is transferred to generations as well as to other societies. To grasp the significance of history within the postcolonial context, it is vital to comprehend the *creation* process of history.

History, in its dictionary definition, is a *continuous, systematic narrative of past events as relating to a particular people, country, period, person, etc., usually written in as a chronological account*[1]. The word "narrative" here appears as a reminder of its resemblance to literature, thus its closeness to fiction. Derek Walcott defines history as "a kind of literature without morality" (371). Poststructuralists of the twentieth century claim that history is always narrated and it is constantly in the form of representations. In *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, it is manifestly stated that there is not a single "history" but discontinuous and contradictory "histories" (Selden 160). Hence, history can no more be described as a one solid formation but a sum of segmented, fragmented entities. In her book *Writing History as a Prophet*, Elizabeth Wesseling conveys how postmodernist writers invent "alternate histories"; these writers focus on subjects that were rendered insignificant by official history and thus enable the insignificant to gain a seat beside the so-called significant, at least on a literary scale. Raman Selden asserts that there is no stable and fixed "history" which can be treated as the "background" against which literature can be foregrounded (163). At this point, Linda Hutcheon's words encapsulate the postmodern attitude toward literature and history and their common ground: "[…] both history and fiction are discourses, that both

[1] Random House Unabridged Dictionary

constitute systems of signification by which we make sense of the past." From here she continues that what makes the meaning is not the events but the systems that turn these events into historical facts (Hutcheon 89).

Hence, the initial step to put "history" into the context of postcolonial theory is to remember that history is a constructed reality, like literature. While writing (or creating) history, some facts are chosen and some others are ignored; thus, making the notion of *objective history* a highly debatable issue. This aspect of history brings forth the possibility of *histories* written about the same event using one group of facts or narrative style over the other, hence creating alternative histories. Hayden White emphasizes the moment of choice between possible discursive options. Through this strategic choice, "a single narrative truth" is chosen as the closest representation of events (White 355). This strategic moment effaces the possibility of other histories that exist along with this one specific history. When the possibility of other history/histories rises within postcolonialism, a novel way of subversion is created through history/histories. According to Wesseling, the alteration of history takes place for "the losers of historical struggles for power" and these deliberate counterfactual stories of the past are created in favor of "the loser" (6).

If we restate Hutcheon's view on shared traits of literature and history:

> They have both been seen to derive their force more from verisimilitude than from any objective truth; they are both identified as linguistic constructs, highly conventionalized in their narrative forms, and not at all transparent either in terms of language or structure; and they appear to be

> equally intertextual, deploying the texts of the past within their own complex textuality. (105)

These can also be regarded as the basic implications of historiographic metafiction. Mark Currie outlines the characteristics of historiographic metafiction as "questioning the distinction between history and fiction, and articulating historiographical issues in narrative form" (104). The difference between historical method and historiography is worth stating; historical method is the process of critically examining and analyzing the records and survivals of the past whereas historiography is the imaginative reconstruction of that process (Hutcheon 92). Historiographic metafiction does not promise any objectivity or one single truth; on the contrary, it appears as a festivity of multiple truths and representations. Unlike classic historical novels, novels with historiographic metafiction play upon *the truth* and do not necessarily remain loyal to historical records or official history. They create their own histories through their own selection and narrative positioning.

The notion of truth gains a new dimension with postmodernism and this is reflected in historiographic metafiction as well. Postmodern approach underlines the possibility of multiple truths rather than one universal truth. By presenting alternative histories, historiographic metafiction challenges the authority of *the truth* and opens the ground for another truth(s). This awareness of multiple truths also paves the way for looking behind the already known/established stories to search for new interpretations and possibilities. As Brenda K. Marshall states: "Historiographic metafiction does not tell us how to think about a certain event; rather, it says: 'that is one way of looking at things, now here is another, and another, and another.'" (156) Thus, while revealing the

other possible perspectives; the narrative also points to how narrative strategies can manipulate the reader to direct his/her attention to one reading of the text or another.

The question of "who tells whose history/story?" is essential to grasp the notion of representation in historiographic metafiction and especially within the postcolonial context. As Hutcheon remarks the protagonists of historiographic metafiction are usually "the ex-centrics, the marginalized, the peripheral figures of fictional history" (114). Until then, their history/story is told by the center and now they have the opportunity to raise their voice and tell their version of history/story. Hence, the question of "who tells what/whose story?" gains a new dimension through this new situation. They are no longer the ones whose story is told, now they are the ones who tell the story. Historiographic metafiction enables them to take on an active role, participate in and question creation of the history/story (Marshall 151). Instead of remaining as subjects of history/story, they become objects.

The reciprocal nature of the relationship between the past and the present is foregrounded through the use of historiographic metafiction. Generally, the past is portrayed as overshadowing the present; however, through the study of the past, it no longer remains a monolithic, solid concept. By re-presenting, re-forming it, the past loses it status as an established, solidified whole. To rewrite the past in fiction and history prevents it from being conclusive (Hutcheon 110). It is not a closed system of signification anymore but an open field of possibilities, which will endow writers the opportunity to produce other histories/stories.

The primary texts of this study are three contemporary postcolonial novels: *Foe* by J.M. Coetzee, *Wide Sargasso Sea* by J. Rhys and *Midnight's Children* by S. Rushdie.

My choice of novel as a genre for this study finds its explanation in Dominick La Capra's sentences:

> The novel tends to be transformative – at least with reference to social and political contexts – in general, suggestive, and long–term respects. And it may have transformative effects more through its style or mode of narration than in the concrete image or representation of any desirable alternative society or polity. (4)

Foe by J.M.Coetzee, *Wide Sargasso Sea* by J. Rhys and *Midnight's Children* by S. Rushdie are distinguished texts of historiographic metafiction that call attention to the mode of narration and their style in order to grasp the entirety of their content. The workings of these novels, their styles and their narration techniques are as important as the subject matter and the combination of the two enhances the significance of the text. This study will attempt to examine how the use of historiographic metafiction enables the postcolonial texts to achieve a *voice* and means of *self-representation*. Historiographic metafiction, by opening the past into discussion, provides an opportunity to raise the voice which has been silenced for a long time. By raising his voice, the marginalized/underrepresented gets the chance to represent his own reality which has been represented by the others, namely the oppressor and the colonizer. A crucial point about this situation is how he represents his reality; does he remain within the limits of previous narrations or can he find a different voice that will reveal another domain of narration/history? This study will try to analyze how this different voice - if it exists - finds realization in the writings of postcolonial writers.

The choice of these three specific novels depends on various factors. These novels are written by writers from three different territories of colonial experience. Instead of an examination of postcolonial experience in one specific region, this kind of an approach enables the study to have a look at how postcolonialism is perceived in various regions. Besides, the writers – J.M. Coetzee, J. Rhys and S. Rushdie – exemplify, more or less, the postcolonial *hybrid writer* as it is previously defined by K. Sangari. Their identity and writings are shaped by practices of colonialism and neocolonialism. The fact that they spend most of their lives abroad and have Western education contributes to their hybridity and displacement within their own cultural systems. This ambivalent feature of their lives also finds its counterpart in their novels with the in-between protagonists or characters.

Another important aspect of these novels is their allusion to some well-known Western texts. This is especially relevant with respect to the first two novels, *Foe* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*. These are rewritings or reworkings of two classics of European literature, *Robinson Crusoe* by D. Defoe and *Jane Eyre* by C. Bronte respectively. However, this study will not focus on this aspect but their significance as presenting the untold history of the marginalized characters. Their relationship to *Robinson Crusoe* and *Jane Eyre* will be taken into account only through its relevance to the points discussed under historiographic metafiction. The last novel, *Midnight's Children*, bears only minor stylistic similarities to L. Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, yet this aspect will be disregarded as it does not affect the integrity of the novel and its quality as a piece of historiographic metafiction.

In this study, the notion of historiographic metafiction and the emergence of a *new voice* for the postcolonial will be examined through two major features: the narrative voice and the notion of representation in the novels. These notions form the focal points of authorial struggle. To establish one's own authority, the protagonists strive to have the primary narrative voice that has control over other voices in the novel. The first person narrative in all three novels appears as an important tool to steer the course of the narrative. When the protagonists get the upper hand in the narrativity, they also gain the power to represent themselves or represent the story/history from their perspective. The shifts in the narrative voice contribute to the subjectivity and the multiplicity within the texts, thus revealing other possible truth(s) and histories. The issue of representation or self-representation is closely linked to the narrative voice since the owner of the narrative voice acquires a superiority of representing not only his reality but others' reality as well.

Instead of a thematically comparative approach, each novel will be discussed in a separate chapter to keep their distinct qualities and examine them in their own integrity. To make the reader familiar with the colonial history of each territory, brief background information is given at the beginning of the each chapter. After discussion of each novel within its specific circumstances, the conclusion part will present a comparative study about how these two major features work for a *new* voice in postcolonial literature.

CHAPTER II

FOE: THE UNTOLD STORY OF SUSAN BARTON

South Africa, one of the most-well known centers of racial difference and segregation through its history, has not enjoyed equality and democracy but prolonged discrimination even after Independence at the end of the colonization period. The word *apartheid*, with its Dutch origin which roughly means "apartness" or "separateness", now alludes to "the official system of segregation and discrimination on racial grounds formerly in force in South Africa."[2] It should be noted that political and social turmoil of the last few decades did not cause South African literature come to a halt. On the contrary, South Africa has witnessed the rise of prolific writers such as Andre Brink, Nadine Gordimer and Alan Paton who have gained worldwide standing. Jean Maxwell Coetzee, awarded the 2004 Nobel Prize in Literature, is another distinct figure of South African literature with the peculiarities of his writing and critical standing. In order to grasp the sociopolitical environment in which South African literature has flourished and the reasons why J.M. Coetzee created a controversy among South African critics, it is vital to have a look at the political dimensions of being a "South African" writer in times of apartheid and injustice.

Like any other community facing inequality and undemocratic conditions, South African notion of writing entails the question of what the first and foremost responsibility of a South African writer is. Susan VanZanten Gallagher brings out two possible sides of this question and then poses another yet more significant question: "Is

[2] Oxford English Dictionary

the primary responsibility of a writer living under apartheid to write or to fight, to produce works of art or to struggle to eliminate injustice and oppression? Or are these false dichotomies?" (3) The writings of South African writers are shaped around the first question rather than the latter, which should also be taken into account with great care. While writing in/about South Africa, the racial background of the writer inevitably attains significance. The aforementioned categorization of postcolonial literature by McLeod becomes complicated in this respect. The identity of the writer, which group he/she belongs to – whether the (ex)colonizer or the (ex)colonized – becomes important as well. South African novelist Richard Rive points to basic physical differences that lead to the differentiation of white and black South African writers. "The writer who cannot vote, who carries a pass and who lives in a ghetto, must necessarily write qualitatively differently from the writer who can vote, does not carry a pass and lives wherever he pleases" (qtd. in Gallagher 5). While the black writers tend to integrate their artistic creation with the political and the social, the white writers are caught in their attempt to delineate the injustice within the country and avoid propagandist literature at the same time. According to Sue Kossew, one major problem for oppositional white writers of South Africa is the moral and/or ethical nature of their writing (2).

These fundamental concerns within their literary atmosphere initiate the emergence of social realism in the South African context. Black writers take over the role of exposing their readers to the difficulty of living under apartheid as a black person whereas white writers undertake to raise questions in people's – especially the whites' – minds about apartheid. Gallagher states that "if literature is to depict the lives of the

people of South Africa accurately, it cannot escape the political" (4). Nadine Gordimer, the first South African to be awarded Nobel Prize in Literature, shares the same opinion and continues, "My writing does not deal with my personal convictions; it deals with the society I live and write in. […] My novels are anti-apartheid, not because of my personal abhorrence of apartheid, but because the society, that is the very stuff of my work reveals itself" (qtd in Gallagher 7).

This is the literary as well as the political environment J.M. Coetzee began to write his novels in and became a center of attraction for critics from not only South Africa but the Western world as well. Kossew underlines the fact that J.M. Coetzee never defines himself as a kind of South African spokesman or even a South African writer (5). He rejects any kind of political role as a writer and through this quality he is distanced from other South African writers. His attitude draws the attention of critics, leading to the question about his book(s), "Where does this book fit into the political struggle?" (Gallagher 11)

J.M. Coetzee hardly sheds light upon his (a)political and (a)historical standing as a writer through his interviews and critical pieces of writing. He refrains from speaking about his role as a writer in a South African context. In fact, he is against any kind of assigned role to the writer and expresses this attitude in an interview: "As to the question of the role of the writer, there seems to be a model behind the question, a model of a social structure in which people are assigned roles to play, and I am not sure that I would agree with the model underlying the question." (Gallagher 16) Nonetheless, this does not mean that he denies his function as a writer dealing with South African reality. Yet, he rejects to the idea of "a particular function that all writers must fulfill"

(Gallagher 16). Rejecting being a part of social realism which highlights South African writers' works, J.M. Coetzee creates his own style of dealing with the reality of his country and his time. In their "Introduction" to *Critical Perspectives on J.M. Coetzee*, Graham Huggan and Stephen Watson depict his unique position which complicates interpretation and commentary on his works.

> Essentially, he is a first-world novelist writing out of a South African context, from within a culture which is as bizarre and conflicted as amalgam of first- and third-world elements as any on this planet. His is a body of work both highly realistic and subversive of realist aesthetics; in which police brutality and postmodernism cohabit; in which South Africa, his native land, appears at once central and marginal to his concerns. (1)

This seemingly ambivalent quality of his work enables critics to present diverse interpretations on his books. While some critics evaluate his work within universal themes of humanity, some others – especially of South African origin – criticize him for not paying due attention to the problems of his *own* people. Dick Penner combines these two distinct attitudes towards Coetzee's work and demonstrates its quality that makes his work different from other South African writers; "Coetzee's fictions maintain their significance apart from a South African context, because of their artistry and because they transform urgent societal concerns into more enduring questions regarding colonialism and the relationships of mastery and servitude between cultures and individuals" (qtd in Gallagher 12).

Coetzee himself is aware of the fact that his books are deemed too allegorical to be a potential threat for the welfare of South Africa. As the South African Board of Censors describes Coetzee's books "too indirect in their approach, too rarefied, to be considered a threat to the order", Kossew claims that this observation may spring from the apparent lack of political material and historical facts within his books (3). However, as it will be dealt in detail, this does not necessarily mean that his work declines to touch upon the political and the historical grounds. In Coetzee's work *how it is said* becomes much more significant that *what is said*; thus, declining to speak openly about the South African situation, he devises his own techniques to deal with the issues of injustice, colonization and slavery. At this point, Susan Gallagher's overall statement about modern literature perfectly applies to Coetzee's work: "Even literature that claims to be apolitical may contain political implications implicit in its technique." (13)

Coetzee's choice of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* as a backbone for his novel *Foe* is, undoubtedly, a political choice. *Robinson Crusoe* is considered not only one of the very first novels of English literature but one of the earliest texts of colonial literature as well. The novel's attempt to delineate the individual as a separate entity makes it a forerunner of the genre, enabling the emergence of character and its development. On the other hand, Crusoe's "adventures" on his island and his story of survival depict the workings of colonialism on a basic level. Defoe narrates the story of a man who is able to master his life along with the land and the native, expressing the power of the human. This realistic depiction of Defoe does not stem from actual experience of any kind. Hence, his descriptions can be described as "imagined colonialism" rather than factual accounts of colonialism. Brett C. Mcinelly claims that

Robinson Crusoe stands as an allegory or figure of colonialism, not an exhibit of it (3). Through *Robinson Crusoe*, it can be said that Defoe conveys his anticipation of the colonialism.

J.M. Coetzee's *Foe* is described as a postcolonial reworking of Defoe's classic. What we have in *Foe* is a female perspective that is entirely left out in *Robinson Crusoe*. The reader learns about the whole story from Susan Barton, the female castaway on Cruso's island. Coetzee's novel is not the story/history of Cruso but Susan Barton and partly Friday, the African slave on the island. Throughout the novel, the reader becomes a witness of Susan's landing on the island, their rescue and then their (hers and Friday's) life in England. The protagonist of Defoe's masterpiece, namely the male survivor on the island, is not a dominant figure in Coetzee's version of the story. Unlike Defoe's Crusoe, Coetzee's Cruso dies on the ship on their way to England and the reader is left with what Susan will tell about their lives on the island. Since Friday is unable to tell his own part due to his cutout tongue, Susan undertakes the role of narrator for both of them as well as the deceased Cruso. Her determination to tell the story/history of the island is strong enough to seek a professional writer, Daniel Foe, to compose a book of their lives on the island.

Coetzee's text evolves around the issues of representation, author/authority, power and silence-speech dichotomy as well as the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. Here, this relationship acquires a new dimension as the usually effaced female voice attempts to gain control over the male voice. The disappearance of Cruso from the scene enables Susan to speak up; yet, the problem of Friday's

voicelessness remains unresolved throughout the text. This problematic situation reveals itself through various dynamics of the text.

The question of "who writes whose history?" is an influential factor that gives its direction to narrative voice and narrative techniques. It is not only a problem of whether Susan could speak for Friday or not, but in an overall sense whether J.M. Coetzee could speak for the oppressed people of South Africa. As mentioned before, Coetzee is quite unwilling to be labeled the spokesman for the South African condition; however, this does not prevent him from exploring their silence and inability to speak for themselves. His choice of Susan as the narrator is the initial step to break down the dominant colonial discourse. Women are generally kept outside of the traditional narratives, rarely given the leading role in literary history. In this case, Susan is the one with the authorial power to tell her story from her own perspective. The narrative structure of the novel also corresponds with some of the aforementioned themes of the novel such as problems of representation and authorial power.

Foe consists of four parts and according to Susan V. Gallagher, these four parts represent four different narrative modes that can be parallelized with the historical development of the novel (186). Part I opens with a first person narrative that – seemingly – speaks to the reader. Although each paragraph begins with a quotation mark, paragraphs are not closed by quotation marks. The first impression the reader gets is that Susan Barton is telling the beginning of her story. Susan makes us realize that she is aware of the fact that she has an audience listening to her adventure: "I have told you how Cruso was dressed; now let me tell you of his habitation." (Coetzee 9) Until she mentions the name "Mr. Foe", the reader continues to think herself/himself as Susan's

sole audience. But the ending lines of Part I disclose the fact that she is speaking to Mr. Foe, “Do you think of me, Mr. Foe, as Mrs. Cruso or as a bold adventuress?” (Coetzee 45) The last paragraph ends with a quotation mark, signaling the closing of her story. Indeed, the narrative has folded upon itself once more within Part I when Susan repeats the first sentences of the novel. After recounting what had happened before she came to the island, she uses the same sentences, thus closing that part of her history and opening a new narrative that includes Cruso and Friday as well. Gallagher claims that this first part has an oral quality that can be suggestive of the oral tradition as the origin of English literature (186). Throughout the part, Susan is speaking to an audience (or one auditor, Mr. Foe) on her own, assuring us she is the only person who is capable of telling these stories.

Part II brings a new type of narrative, the use of letters. Labeled as the epistolary narrative by Gallagher, these letters only reveal Susan’s writings to Mr. Foe. While Part I has more of an oral quality, the fact that she “writes” to Mr. Foe is highlighted in this second part. However, the reader does not have Mr. Foe’s responses, if he gives any, to these letters. One party of the conversation is missing yet Susan is determined to have her story told and recorded, thus continuing to write her letters even though she does not know to whom she is writing. “To whom am I writing? I blot the pages and toss them out of window. Let who will read them.” (Coetzee 65) Letters appear with dates on them through the first half of Part II. After the appearance of the girl named Susan Barton, who also claims to be Susan’s daughter, letters do not have dates. This can be regarded as a signal of Susan’s losing control over the events and her confusion about reality and

fiction. She feels her authority challenged by (most possibly) Mr. Foe with his invention of a daughter.

In Part III, the reader has Susan as the first person narrative voice of the novel. Unlike the previous parts, she converses with other people and the reader learns about them through her descriptions. For the first time, Mr. Foe appears as a substantial being and their conversations on writing, representation and authority become visible to the reader not as a monologue but a dialogue. The quotation marks of Part I no longer appear in this part. Gallagher compares this part to nineteenth century writings in which first person narrative with the past tense is employed (188). Susan's self-confidence is much more evident than before; she does not hesitate to become involved in debates on writing with Mr. Foe. This part can be stated as the closing section with a, more or less, classical style before the problematic last part begins.

Part IV of only four pages is more than enough to confuse the reader with its narrative structure along with its content. In this final part, there is an unknown narrative voice visiting Mr. Foe's house. The narrative still continues in the first person, raising a question of his/her identity in readers' minds. This part is divided into two separate sections, presenting two possible endings to the reader. The latter occurs three hundred years later, yet in both endings the narrative voice attempts to reach for Friday's voice, which can be attained neither by Susan nor Mr. Foe. The dreamlike atmosphere of the last part steps forward as a postmodern approach to the impossibility of Friday's speech. He is unable to regain his voice under circumstances set by Susan and Mr. Foe, but through a dreamlike conclusion in which he is capable of making a voice, even on a different level of communication, Friday can appear as a narrator of his own story. The

novel does not end with the impossibility of his speech but rather with an opportunity to hear his voice, hence avoiding a full closure of his story.

The structural tension over assertion of one's own voice is a reflection of the underlying dynamics of the novel. *Foe* is, mainly, about the question of "who will represent/speak for whom?" and the reader becomes a witness to struggles to get the upper hand in the formation of story/history. In Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, readers are presented his journal which depicts his adventures, feelings and thoughts. In *Foe*, the counterpart of Crusoe, Coetzee's Cruso, does not show any desire to keep a journal or even to talk about his life on the island. Susan writes:

> What I chiefly hoped to find was not there. Cruso kept no journal, perhaps because he lacked paper and ink, but more likely, I now believe, because he lacked the inclination to keep one, or, if he ever possessed the inclination, had lost it. I searched the poles that supported the roof, and the legs of the bed, but found no carvings, no even notches to indicate that he counted the years oh his banishment or the cycles of the moon. (Coetzee 16)

However, we have another figure that is more than willing to tell about life on the island, Susan Barton. In this context, Susan has to speak not only for herself but Cruso and the tongueless Friday as well. By directing the focus of narration to a female voice, Coetzee aims to give back a silenced protagonist of history her due place. Yet, the other silenced figure of history, the African slave Friday, remains silent in the text.

Before moving to the unsettled issue of Friday's silence, Susan's effort to establish her own voice and authority over the narration deserves a close examination.

As she discovers that Cruso does not have any inclination to “leave a memorial behind”, she becomes more fervent to keep their memories, details about the island in her mind so that her story will be made of nothing but truth. The fact that Cruso is not willing to tell his story of the island, thus inscribing his authority over it, does not necessarily mean that he gives up his control and authority over the island. Susan is still an intruder on his island and she appreciates that she should know her limits and remains silent: “After years of unquestioned and solitary mastery, he sees his realm invaded and has tasks set upon him by a woman. I made a vow to keep a tighter rein on my tongue.” (25)

The first instant that Susan is encouraged by someone else to write her “story” takes place after their rescue. Her desire to tell the story is not shared by another soul on the island, but the Captain heartens her to have the story published: “‘It is a story you should set down in writing and offer to the booksellers,’ he urged – ‘There has never before, to my knowledge, been a female castaway of our nation.’” (40) The significant point here is that she herself should “set [it] down in writing”, not have it written by some other person. Captain’s proposal of having a professional to put some color to the story arouses Susan’s anger as a challenge to the truth of her story.

> ‘I will not have any lies told,’ said I. The Captain smiled. ‘There I cannot vouch for them,’ he said: ‘their trade is in books, not in truth.’ ‘I would rather be the author of my own story than have lies told about me,’ I persisted – ‘If I cannot come forward, as author, and swear to the truth of my tale, what will be the worth of it? I might as well have dreamed it in a snug bed in Chichester.’ (Coetzee 40)

Her insistence on the truthfulness of her story is connected with the fact that it is also "the history" of her life and the island. The words "story" and "history" are used interchangeably within the novel. She feels that until her story/history is written down, she will not find consolation and peace. "Will you bear it in mind, however, that my life is drearily suspended till your writing is done?" She asks Mr. Foe (Coetzee 63). Marni Gauthier draws attention to the autobiographical nature of Susan's book (57). What Coetzee believes is that "autobiography is usually thought of not as a kind of fiction writing but as a *kind of history writing*, with the same allegiance to truth as history has" (qtd. in Gauthier 57). Thus having her autobiography written down, Susan will also have the history of the island recorded and passed to next generations. Susan V. Gallagher asserts that Susan needs her story to be told so that she can gain the substance she lacks and appear as a complete human being (175). The reason she seeks help from Mr. Foe is not that she is incapable of storytelling. The fear that she may not tell the true story of the island leads her to Mr. Foe, but she does not leave her story/history to hands of Mr. Foe completely. At one point, she takes over the role of Mr. Foe as a writer.

> 'I sat at your bureau this morning (it is afternoon now, I sit at the same bureau, I have sat here all day) and took out a clean sheet of paper and dipped pen in ink – your pen, your ink, I know, but somehow the pen becomes mine while I write with it, as though growing out of my hand – and wrote at the head: "The Female Castaway. Being a True Account of a Year Spent on a Desert Island. With Many Strange Circumstances Never Hitherto Related."… [W]ill the day ever arrive when we can make a story without strange circumstances? (Coetzee 66-67)

It does not take long time for her to realize that though she has the material to form the story, she cannot realize this task of writing. Later on, she talks about how the Muse is always a woman, thereby allowing no chance to the women to write but only to the men. She asks for a man-Muse, "I wished that there were such a being as a man-Muse, a youthful god who visited authoresses in the night and made their pens flow" (Coetzee 126).

The authorial struggle over what is going to be told emerges as the focal point of Part III, in which Susan and Mr. Foe face each other. Susan is anxious to have her story told immediately as it will release her from the burden of the untold history. "'The history of ourselves and the island – how does it progress? Is it written?' 'It progresses, but progresses slowly, Susan. It is a slow story, a slow history.'" (Coetzee 114) This part, moreover, bears witness to Susan's determination to have the story written in her own way. As Mr. Foe inquires about her days in Bahia or her quest to find her daughter, she seems resolved to tell only the story of the island. Bahia's exclusion within Susan's story also signifies Coetzee's insistence on demythologizing of the "colonial experience". Instead of the exoticized stories of Bahia that Foe wants to tell, the writer – through Susan's insistence – desires the simplest form of colonial experience, the island story, to be written down. Mr. Foe's insistence to put the story of the island in a larger framework in turn results in a firm resistance on Susan's part and strengthens her decision to tell what she chooses. She is still "the father" of her story and has full discretionary power on it.

> 'I am not a story, Mr. Foe. I may impress you as a story because I began my account of myself without preamble, slipping overboard into the

> water and the striking out for the shore. But my life did not begin in the waves. […] I choose not to tell it because to no one, not even to you, do I owe proof that I am a substantial being with a substantial history in the world. I choose rather to tell of the island, of myself and Cruso and Friday and what we three did there: for I am a free woman who asserts her freedom by telling her story according to her own desire.' (Coetzee 131)

While Susan does have the capacity to tell her story, Friday does not. The silence of Friday overshadows the novel. Kwaku Larbi Korang describes this situation as "the narratological burden of an unresolveable silence" (182). Susan can speak up yet Friday has to be "spoken up" by others, in this case by Susan. While the presentation of her own story is problematic, the idea of presenting Friday's story/history becomes more than problematic, almost impossible. Problems about Friday's representation begin with the story of how he becomes mute.

> Gripping Friday by the hair, he brought his face close to mine. 'Do you see?' he said. 'It is too dark,' said I. 'La-la-la,' said Cruso. 'Ha-ha-ha' said Friday. I drew away, and Cruso released Friday's hair. 'He has no tongue,' he said. 'That is why he does not speak. They cut out his tongue.' 'I stared in amazement. Who cut out his tongue?' 'The slavers.' (Coetzee 22-23)

Susan believes this explanation at first but then she begins to question its truth and the possibility of Cruso's having cut out Friday's tongue. The fact that Friday is not born without a tongue but was mutilated is crucial. He is made not to speak, not to tell his

story/history. Richard Begam brings another perspective to Friday's muteness. He claims that Friday's inability to tell his true story is reminiscent of his status as a slave and this is the point where the postmodern and the postcolonial converge (119). The true story of an African slave can only be heard through the writings of the white. In other words, the oppressed can only be represented through his oppressor. This, inevitably, leads to the impossibility of a complete and true representation of Friday in the novel.

Through the novel, Susan is challenged with this difficult task of representation. When she finds the task of telling Cruso's story burdensome, telling Friday's story is unmanageable. What bothers her most is the impossibility of hearing Friday's story from his mouth. She craves to listen to his true story/history yet she is also aware of the futility of this desire. She does not even know how he really lost his tongue.

> On the island I accepted that I should never learn how Friday lost his tongue, as I accepted that I should never learn how the apes crossed the sea. But what we accept in life we cannot accept in history. To tell my story and be silent on Friday's tongue is no better than offering a book for sale with pages in it quietly left empty. Yet the only tongue that can tell Friday's secret is the tongue he has lost! (Coetzee 67)

The story of Friday is also the history of his mutilation and his oppression. The only thing Susan and Mr. Foe have is their attempt to give a meaning to his acts. That the story/history of the master will be different from that of the slave is obvious. However, the reader does not know how the understanding and value systems of Susan and Mr. Foe and those of Friday are different – if they really are. Through their personalities and their self-representations, it is possible to get an insight about Susan's

and Mr. Foe's characters. Yet, the problematic aspect of Friday's existence – his inability to represent himself verbally – generates another difficulty in understanding his difference and/or similarity to other characters. In *Foe*, Coetzee tries to avoid any attempt towards misrepresentation of Friday. Stephen Watson mentions a common characteristic of Coetzee's protagonists that applies to Susan and Mr. Foe as well, "To think and to think to no end, no purpose, is the typical fate of Coetzee's characters" (29). They only speculate about what should be done, lacking the power to act. Coetzee makes it clear that the narrator, Susan, feels incapable of telling Friday's story and knows the unattainable nature of this fact.

> The story of Friday's tongue is a story unable to be told, or unable to be told by me. That is to say, many stories can be told of Friday's tongue, but the true story is buried within Friday, who is mute. The true story will not be heard till we have found a means of giving voice to Friday. (Coetzee 118)

Dominick Head mentions the dual characteristic of Friday's silence. He states that this silence is both a product of the dominant discourse and a resistance to it (Head 121). Benita Parry remarks that Friday's silence is "an exemplary instance of a postcolonial writing where it is not an absence of or an incapacity of speech, but rather 'a different kind of speech' a muteness to be perceived as a form of self-protection or a gesture of resistance" (44). Through the colonial discourse, he becomes mute, unable to express his feelings, thoughts and ideas. This muteness can be literal as in Friday's case or figurative such as rejecting to state one's thoughts. At the same time, this is an attempt to stay outside the dominant discourse. By avoiding participating in this

discourse, one remains as he or she is, not as a part of it. In *Foe*, Friday is both a victim of colonization and a resisting figure in itself. He becomes mute either because of the slavers or Cruso, the oppressor. The text does not attempt to inquire how he is muted or by whom he is muted but aims to delve into what his present state, his muteness, causes. Through his silence, he manages to remain outside of the white domain. Any attempt to tell Friday's story will be an act of appropriation and misrepresentation (Head 121).

Derek Attridge qualifies Friday's tonguelessness as an impenetrable silence; it is "the sign of his oppression by which he appears to his oppressors, and by which their dominance is sustained" (86). Friday is only representable through his relation to Susan. She determines his life, his future, what or who he is. Friday does not have mastery over language but Susan does. His silence enables Susan to have control over his existence. Friday leaves the island for England upon Susan's and Cruso's decision; his life in England is shaped around what she decides to do. He subserviently obeys her; it is even Susan who determines whether Friday should go back to his people or not.

> Friday has no command of words and therefore no defense against being re-shaped day by day in conformity with the desires of others. I say he is a cannibal and he becomes a cannibal; I say he is a laundryman and he becomes a laundryman. What is the truth of Friday? You will respond: he is neither cannibal nor laundryman, these are mere names … [t]he silence of Friday is a helpless silence. He is the child of his silence, a child unborn, a child waiting to be born that cannot be born. (Coetzee 121-122)

For Mr. Foe, Friday's silence can be overcome through one medium of representation: writing. When he asks Susan whether she has shown him writing or not, her response is dubious about Friday's ability to write. She regards letters as "the mirror of words" and beholds teaching him to write as an almost impossible task (Coetzee 142). However, as a writer, Mr. Foe insists that he should be able to learn to write, "Speech is but a means through which the word may be uttered, it is not the word itself. Friday has no speech, but he has fingers, and those fingers shall be his means." (Coetzee 143) Friday's first "scribbling" consists of writing over Susan's words, yet on his own he draws "row upon row of eyes upon feet: walking eyes" (Coetzee 147). What these represent for Friday is incomprehensible for Susan and Mr. Foe. They are too loaded with cultural, political and social perspectives that prevent them from understanding Friday's realm of representation. The reader cannot become sure if a possibility of comprehending Friday's signification process exists. Signs are removed from their usual referents in this case (Huggan and Watson 7). Friday's and Susan's or Mr. Foe's signification chain cannot be expected to be the same. His drawings become subject to another context. They impose their interpretation on his signification system, which entraps him in another kind of silence. Even his "writing" process cannot liberate him from his silent realm as long as others dictate their own interpretation on it. In a poststructuralist view, it can be argued that Friday's silent "signs" present a multiplicity of "signified"s, with the never-ending possibility of interpretation. However, Brenda K. Marshall affirms that no matter how much Susan and Mr. Foe quibble over the words and stories, they could never approach a meaning Friday would provide (76).

The issue of authorship and power obtains a new perspective with the last part. Here, the enigmatic presence of Friday throughout the novel overwhelms the narrator (Attwell 104). The unknown narrator enters into the room where Susan and Mr. Foe lie dead in their bed. The narrator finds Friday sleeping the corner of the room. He puts his ear to Friday's mouth and waits:

> At first, there is nothing. […] I begin to hear the faintest faraway roar: as she said, the roar of the waves in a seashell; and over that, as if once or twice a violin string were touched, the whine of the wind and the cry of a bird. Closer I press, listening for other sounds: the chirp of sparrows, the thud of a mattock, the call of a voice. From his mouth, without a breath, issue the sounds of the island. (Coetzee 154)

Once Susan and Mr. Foe are silenced, the reader gets an opportunity to hear Friday's voice. Only someone outside the power can hear and listen to his voice. Stripped of pre-existing cultural bounds, this new narrator is able to hear Friday's inner voice, or at least is able to make a real attempt to hear it. While this first section of the last part seems to take place within the time of the novel, the second section takes place after three hundred years, namely in our era. Wandering in the house of Daniel Defoe, the narrator discovers not only Susan, Mr. Foe and Friday but also manuscript of Susan's recollections beginning with "Dear Mr. Foe, At last I could row no further" (Coetzee 155). The narrator dives into the wreck, meeting Susan, the Captain and Friday. This attempt is symbolic of Susan and Mr. Foe's metaphorical desire of diving into Friday's wreck to give back his speech. "… [W]ho will dive into the wreck? On the island I told Cruso it should be Friday … [B]ut if Friday cannot tell what he sees, is

Friday in my story any more than a figuring (or prefiguring) of another diver?" (Coetzee 142) By diving into the wreck, the narrator searches for his missing voice and history/story. Yet, as he figures it out this is not "a place for words but a place where bodies are their own signs" (Coetzee 157). Like the first section, this also ends with the narrator's attempt to communicate with Friday.

> His mouth opens. From inside him comes a slow stream, without breath, without interruption. It flows up through is body and out upon me; it passes through the cabin, through the wreck; washing the cliffs and shores of the island, it runs northward and southward to the ends of the earth. Soft and cold, dark and unending, it beats against my eyelids, against the skin of my face. (Coetzee 157)

The last part is intriguing in several aspects. While the narrator's identity is never revealed, some critics argue that it is J.M. Coetzee himself who is trying to find a way to represent the silenced souls of the colonized past. Whether it is J.M. Coetzee or not, the narrator of the last part provides the opportunity of hearing Friday's "voice". Visiting "the home of Friday", he moves one step further than Susan and Mr. Foe, who try to construe Friday's silence in their own terms. Through the narrator's effort, Friday's "voice" arrives to the outer ends of the earth. Marshall describes the final lines of the novel as "a postmodern openness" (78). The narrator is not to interpret Friday's signs but to listen to them. The novel does not have a final meaning or closure. Instead, it demonstrates the possibility of hearing "silenced voices" through a different medium to expose the untold history/story.

J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* is one of the distinguished works in which postmodern and postcolonial elements intermingle. Marni Gauthier observes the crucial point with regard to postmodernism and postcolonialism: "[T]he pith of the intersection of the postmodern and the postcolonial is their mutual concern with historiography, or the investigation of how events and people are represented, and who does the representing." (55) Issues of history and representation form the foci of Coetzee's novel. Centering a colonial masterpiece, *Robinson Crusoe*, to create an entirely postcolonial text, *Foe*, Coetzee questions the workings of colonialism as well as history. The (im)possibility of representation of the oppressed by the oppressor is revealed throughout the novel. The significance of a female narrator as the oppressor and the narrator emerges at that point. She finds an opportunity to speak up her previously unrepresented "voice" and to speak for Friday as well. That she belongs to the class of the oppressors/colonizers should not be overlooked here. Hence, what she tries to achieve – to give "voice" to Friday – is not very different from what the previous oppressors did. What differentiates Susan from other oppressors/colonizers and their attempt to depict the oppressed/colonized is her insistence to give voice to "the truth" of the oppressed and avoid any misrepresentation. The fact that our narrator, Susan, is aware of the difficulty of her task and her inner struggles to remain loyal to the truth is noteworthy within the postcolonial context. She asserts that the story/history will remain incomplete with Friday's part untold. She will never be able to present Friday's reality and world.

Benita Parry identifies J.M. Coetzee's attitude in *Foe* as an attempt towards "demythologizing the history" (37). Coetzee believes that history has granted immense power over fiction/literature and has a capacity to greatly affect it. By taking subversive

steps against history, he endeavors to alter the irrevocable status of history. In *Foe*, he bestows power to those who are excluded from history. However, empowerment of the silent figures of history can partially be realized. Coetzee achieves giving her voice back to Susan, the female voice, yet is unable to return Friday's voice. Within the postcolonial framework, representation of Friday and his reality cannot be achieved by the colonizing class. This situation is, somehow, a reflection of J.M. Coetzee's tendency towards the South African condition. He is not the one to tell the sufferings of the black; they should be the ones to tell it for the sake of truth. When one author speaks for another, a new and problematic layer of representation is added, causing the reader to move away from the truth (Gauthier 66). This applies both to Coetzee's own standing and Susan's condition in *Foe*.

What Coetzee brings about in *Foe* is the possibility of "other" stories and histories. His display of another perspective for a well-known colonial myth leads the reader to question the established historical "truths" and their mythical status. As power is the leading determinant of how history is written, one begins to think about stories/histories of those who are deprived of power by their oppressors/colonizers. The possibility of another story and history told by the oppressed/colonized paves the way for a discussion. It can be concluded that through his novel, J. M. Coetzee discloses to the reader the ambivalent nature of representation and how history can be (de)formed by power and authority.

CHAPTER III

WIDE SARGASSO SEA: THE UNHEARD VOICE OF ANTOINETTE

The West Indies region, consisting of more than 7000 islands, was the first piece of land European explorers came across during their journey to Asia. The name “West Indies” indicates Christopher Columbus’ misconception of this area as “Indies”, namely South and Southeast Asia. At present, the region is usually named the Caribbean – except for the English speaking parts of the area which still use the term “West Indies” and “West Indian”. Since its discovery, the region has witnessed power struggles of European countries to establish their own colonies. Most of the islands are former colonies or still exist as colonies of European powers.

The literature of the West Indies has gained recognition after the works of West Indian writers were published in Europe, especially in England. Since the 1940s, two West Indian writers, Derek Walcott and V.S. Naipaul have been awarded Nobel Prize for Literature. Samuel Selvon, Jamaica Kinkaid, Claude McKay and Jean Rhys can be enumerated as other prominent West Indian writers. Having a history loaded with colonization and power struggles, West Indian literature inevitably touches upon the issue of colonialism and its impact on peoples of the islands – Europeans, Creoles and Natives.

Jean Rhys is a Dominican writer who has gained considerable reputation with her last novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, published in 1966. Her previous novels focus on

victimized woman characters and through these novels Rhys looks at the concept of degraded womanhood (Mellown 118). *Wide Sargasso Sea* goes one step further in this depiction of victimized women and delineates a former literary figure in a new perspective. Generally described as "a prequel to *Jane Eyre*", this text narrates the story of Bertha/Antoinette, the first wife of Mr. Rochester in *Jane Eyre* who is kept in the attic. As Francis Wyndham argues *Wide Sargasso Sea* is in "no sense a pastiche of Charlotte Bronte" and does not solely depend upon *Jane Eyre* (qtd in Raiskin 6). What Bronte's novel does is to provide the initial inspiration for the writing of Bertha/Antoinette's story. In one of her letters to Selma Vaz Dias, Rhys tells what triggers her to recollect the story of this figure.

> I have re-read "Jane Eyre" of course, and I am sure that the character must be "built up". I wrote you about that. The Creole in Charlotte Bronte's novel is a lay figure – repulsive which does not matter, and not once alive which does. She's necessary to the plot, but always she shrieks, howls, laughs terribly, attacks all and sundry – *off stage*. For me (and for you I hope) she must be right *on stage*. She must be at least plausible with a past, the *reason* why Mr. Rochester treats her so abominably and feels justified, the *reason* why he thinks she is mad and why of course she goes mad, even the *reason* why she tries to set everything on fire and eventually succeeds. (137)

Born of a Welsh father and Creole mother in the West Indies, Rhys herself is aware of the concept of "Creole" and knows about the history of the region. She leaves the island at the age of sixteen and does not come back. Rhys participates in the

modernist movement that sweeps through Europe. Thus, some critics argue that her novels are under the influence of her life in Europe, especially in Paris, rather than her experience of the West Indies. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is her only novel that is placed in the West Indies and directly deals with its colonial history. Mary Lou Emery claims that literary truths and biographical facts of Jean Rhys have been shaped by three emerging canons, namely the female, European modernist and the West Indian canon (161). In this text, the reader has an intermingling of all these perspectives in her attempt to give voice to a long silenced literary figure.

Wide Sargasso Sea consists of three parts that coincide with three different phases of Antoinette's life. The narrative voice is subject to change in these parts, which can be regarded as a reflection of an attempt to establish one's own voice, either Antoinette's or the husband's. Part I recounts Antoinette's childhood days at Coulibri, the convent, her mother's marriage, the fire and their life after the fire. This part is narrated in the first person narrative, with Antoinette as the narrator. However, the text does not begin with an assertion of an "I" by Antoinette but a presentation of what "they" say. This should not be regarded as an attempt towards the objectivity of the narrator; the narration unfolds its highly subjective perspective through the novel. This opening, rather, foreshadows the powerful influence of society over Antoinette and her reluctance to assert her dominance. Instead of the strongly established status of a subject, Antoinette appears as an unapproved object of the society (Fayad 438). From the very first moment of the narrative, they – Antoinette and her family – are ostracized as outsiders. She is recollecting her memories along with her thoughts and feelings

about what happened in those days. Different critics agree that her overall narrative is broadly determined by the past. She is relating a time that will never come back and she is also aware of the fact that future will be entirely different from these past days in which she finds a kind of consolation. John Su claims that *Wide Sargasso Sea* establishes a past oriented narrative time (159). Thus, it brings forth the idea that this inclination of Antoinette also applies for the husband's narrative as well. While she is telling her story/history in Part I, she is in a hurry and reveals this to the reader: "Quickly, while I can, I must remember the hot classroom." (Rhys 34) She desires to tell "her" story while she still has the power to tell it. She is aware that when someone else narrates her story, it will become subject to intentional or unintentional distortion. Therefore, before the husband steps into the narrative and claims the narrative voice, she should present her story with her own voice (Su 167).

Part I ends with Sister Marie Augustine's words to Antoinette in the convent: "Soon it will be tomorrow" (Rhys 42); Part II opens with "So it was all over, the advance and retreat, the doubts and hesitations. Everything finished for better or for worse." (Rhys 45) by an unknown narrator. Soon, the reader finds out that the narrative voice belongs to Antoinette's husband. Thus, the narrative voice of Part I, Antoinette, becomes an object in her husband's narrative and loses control over what is told and/or how it is told. The husband remains unnamed throughout the text. Mona Fayad suggests that he is his own subject, thus not an object of others' stories, and also by remaining nameless, he becomes "the omnipotent, god-like creator" of Antoinette's narrative (443). The husband's narrative emphasizes his bewilderment in this "strange" land; he is

not quite sure of what he has been through in such a short period of time. Moreover, he is ready to put the blame on the fever for not fully realizing what has been going on.

> And when did I begin to notice all this about my wife Antoinette? After we left Spanish town I suppose. Or did I notice it before and refuse to admit what I saw? Not that I had much time to notice anything. I was married a month after I arrived in Jamaica and for nearly three weeks of that time I was in bed with fever. … I have had fever. I am not myself yet. (Rhys 46-47)

This shift of the narrative in favor of the male voice occurs at a critical time, namely after the marriage. The female leaves the control to the male perspective, enabling him to represent her voice too. Erwin states that this change in the narrative voice coincides with the nineteenth century novelistic traits in which marriage gives the husband the right to represent the wife. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, beginning with Part II, where the reader learns about the marriage, the husband's desires determine the course of the narrative (Erwin 210). Yet, it should not be overlooked that the second part does not continue under the full control of the husband. The reader comes across a narrative shift unexpectedly and the female voice interrupts male voice. This can be seen as a signal for a problem in their marriage as well as in the representation of Antoinette by her husband. Lee Erwin points out that the nineteenth century narratives for women have specific ways of closing their narrative; marriage is one of them while others are madness and/or death (213). In this regard, Antoinette's recovering her voice in Part II can be perceived as a foreshadowing of her end. She could not sustain her voice until the end of Part II; her husband regains his narrative voice and his power to represent

Antoinette. However, the reader, through the interruptive voice, senses that his narrative is not complete and secure (McLeod 165).

Part III begins in italics with Grace Poole as the narrator. After a few paragraphs, Antoinette appears as the narrator again. She is not sure of where she is or who she is. Her present reality depends on her past memories, dreams and dreamlike events where she lives now and also Grace's remarks about what she has done. Like the previous parts, this part is told in the past tense, highlighting the past oriented feature of the whole text. The fact that she reappears as narrative voice draws John McLeod's attention to a significant point about the problem of representation through narrative voice: "[…] she [Antoinette] is the first and the last narrator of the novel, thus her husband's narrative is contained in hers. No one has the control." (165) The last part is finalized in an open ending, alluding to Antoinette/Bertha's "end" in *Jane Eyre* but not fulfilling it and thus leaving the reader with her/his own interpretation of the end.

After this overall look to the narrative qualities of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, an in-depth analysis about its intertextual ties with *Jane Eyre* is called for. Some critics state that the relationship between two texts is quite problematic. In the first place, the fact that *Wide Sargasso Sea* can exist on its own, without any connection to *Jane Eyre* should be clearly stated. This novel cannot be treated as a complementary text to Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. The relationship between the two novels is much more dynamic and dialogic; Rhys' novel both engages and refuses *Jane Eyre* as authoritative source. (McLeod 162) It takes the starting point from it but does not fulfill the "duty" of a closure which will provide Bertha's end in *Jane Eyre*. Instead, this closure is given in a

dream, but the narrative remains open at the end of the text. Moreover, which text should appear as "mother text" is another problematic issue. The reader, generally, expects *Jane Eyre* to be the mother text that enables the existence of *Wide Sargasso Sea*. However, it can also be argued that since *Wide Sargasso Sea* narrates the events prior to *Jane Eyre*, it can be accepted as another kind of "mother text" that leads to the story of Bertha, Mr. Rochester and Jane Eyre in Bronte's novel.

Apart from their contextual affinities, these two texts bear similarities with respect to their characters. The protagonists of both novels endure material and psychological difficulties during their childhood. They suffer from loss of family members and spend time in convents where they try to find peace and consolation. Emery remarks that both Antoinette's and Jane's life as children is driven by "maltreatment or indifference" (176). Rhys makes the reader sympathize with Antoinette as they would feel for Jane in the other novel. In Bronte's novel, the reader does not hear the first Mrs. Rochester's voice or talk; she is reduced to some kind of a creature rather than a human being. All the readers hear from and about her are the discomforting noises and screams Jane hears. Emery notes that what Bronte does is to direct the reader to feel pity for her, without any effort to understand her as a human and a woman (176). However, in *Jane Eyre*, the reader senses fear of Bertha in Jane; the dominant feeling towards the unknown woman/creature is fear rather than pity. Rhys gives Antoinette her human traits that she is deprived of as Bertha. For instance, In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette/Bertha's biting her brother does not happen without a cause but due to a conversation, in fact a word. "[…] I didn't hear all he said except 'I cannot

interfere legally between yourself and your husband.' It was when he said 'legally' that you flew at him and when he twisted the knife out of your hand you bit him." (Rhys 147) G.C. Spivak states that by giving her a cause, "Rhys keeps Bertha's humanity and sanity" and drags her from "innate bestiality" (250). While doing this, she does not create an atmosphere of hatred or repulsion for her husband, namely Mr. Rochester of *Jane Eyre*. The fact that he takes over the narrative voice in Part II endows him with the chance to present his viewpoint and feelings about his new life and his wife. By giving him the opportunity to reveal his consciousness, Rhys enables the reader to have a sympathetic insight for him (Emery 173).

> He scowled at me then, I thought. I scowled too as I re-read the letter I had written to the lawyers. However much I paid Jamaican servants I would never buy discretion. I'd be gossiped about, sung about (but they make up songs for everything, everybody. You should hear the one about Governor's wife). Wherever I went I would be talked about. I drank some more rum [...] (Rhys 129)

As it can be understood from the struggle over the narrative voice in Part II, her husband has a strong desire to have control over Antoinette. Even before their marriage, he looks down upon her. This does not solely stem from the assigned gender roles but also her roots too, "I did not relish going back to England in the role of a rejected suitor jilted by this Creole girl." (Rhys 56) Moreover, that he has been paid for this arranged marriage results in a feeling of discomfort for him. He says "I have not bought her, she has bought me, or so she thinks" (Rhys 49), making the reader realize his discontentment about the situation. He already feels strange in this land of "too much"

and neither his wife nor people around him seem to do anything to ease his condition. He reveals thoughts of self-alienation while depicting their first meeting.

> It was all very brightly colored, very strange, but it meant nothing to me. Nor did she, the girl I was to marry. When at last I met her I bowed, smiled, kissed her hand, danced with her. I played the part I was expected to play. She never had anything to do with me at all. Every movement I made was an effort of will and sometimes I wondered that no one noticed this. I would listen to my own voice and marvel at it, calm, correct but toneless, surely. But I must have given a faultless performance. (Rhys 55)

In this foreign land, he does not feel secure or confident. The arranged marriage is one of the reasons for his discomfort. While his presence gives Antoinette a feeling of safety, he is disturbed to be in this "dreamlike" and "unreal" environment. Whether he loves her or not is dubious. It does not matter how much time they spend together and how intimate their relationship becomes; she still remains as "a stranger" for him. Their differences are revealed through conversations on various subjects. Coming from entirely different backgrounds, they vary in their worldviews, opinions and choices, which highlights her "strangeness" for him.

> 'You are safe,' I'd say. She'd liked that – to be told 'you are safe.' Or I'd touch her face gently and touch tears. Tears – nothing! Words – less than nothing. As for the happiness I gave her, that was worse than nothing. I did not love her. I was thirsty for her, but that is not love. I felt very little tenderness for her, she was a stranger to me, a stranger who did not think or feel as I did. (Rhys 69)

The significance of gender relations and role of patriarchy in *Wide Sargasso Sea* which deserves an in-depth analysis has been carried out by various prominent critics. In this study, I will touch upon these issues only within the context of colonization and the colonizer – the colonized relationship. Coming from England, Mr. Rochester is familiar with a male-oriented society and tradition that empowers him against women. However in Jamaica, he is deprived of this dominance through a group of women who, in his opinion, turn into a threat to his authority. Apart from the financial matter mentioned before, the female bonding between his wife Antoinette and Christophine bothers him as well. “She’d be silent, or angry for no reason, and chatter to Christophine in patois. ‘Why do you hug and kiss Christophine?’ I’d say. ‘Why not?’ ‘I wouldn’t hug and kiss them,’ I’d say” (Rhys 67-68).

In order to impose his control over Antoinette, he should separate her from this environment and her past identity. Antoinette takes his surname through marriage yet this is not sufficient to lessen her strangeness. In fact, the marriage is not the first time that Antoinette’s name undergoes a change. She is born Antoinette Cosway, due to her mother’s second marriage she becomes Antoinette Cosway Mason, then through her own marriage she is named Antoinette Cosway Mason Rochester. These multiple surnames allude to various phases of her life shaped by men. Rochester goes one step further and tries to remove her given name as well (Drake 198). The issue of naming proves to be a focal point in their marriage. The reader never comes across the husband’s name, neither through Antoinette’s talk nor by his own speech, yet labels him as Mr. Rochester from former knowledge about Bronte’s text. Whilst he exists as “the

husband", which means he only exists in relation to Antoinette, he attempts to make Antoinette exist in relation to him by stripping off her given name and past identity. Through this new name, Bertha, he will be able to enforce a new identity on her that will loosen her ties with her past life. In a similar fashion, Mardorossian claims that the renaming aims to "domesticate" Antoinette; through this act Mr. Rochester hopes to penetrate into her strangeness and moreover appropriate her otherness (81). Ciolkowksi relates this act of naming to the acts of the colonizer: Mr. Rochester behaves like "a slavemaster who assigns new and often ridiculous names to separate them from their exotic cultures and dangerously alien social structures" (349). Here, his preference of the name "Bertha" is not clarified; he says "Because it is a name I'm particularly fond of" but does not give any other explanation.

Mr. Rochester is not the only man who attempts to draw boundaries around Antoinette/Bertha's identity and story. Daniel Cosway, her half-brother, is another figure who tries to impose his power over her story and history. In his letter to Mr. Rochester, he tells another story of Antoinette/Bertha insisting that Rochester should believe what he says. When Mr. Rochester visits him, he implies that her family is prone to madness and he, Rochester, does not deserve a woman and an end like that. All this talk mainly focuses on Antoinette; however Mr. Rochester does not seem willing to hear her side of the story.

> 'I know what he told you. That my mother was mad an infamous woman and that my brother who died was born a cretin, an idiot and that I am a mad girl too. That is what he told you, isn't it?' 'Yes, that was his story, and any of it true?' I said, cold and calm. […] 'You have no right,' she

> said fiercely. 'You have no right to ask questions about my mother and then refuse to listen to my answer.' (Rhys 99-100)

Thus the male characters attempt to define and confine Antoinette's story and, as McLeod states, reconstruct her character and personality (164). Nevertheless, her narrative voice is strong enough to resist these impositions and she continues to exist on her own right. The reader is given hints that she is not what her husband tries to represent in his narrative. But it becomes unattainable to reach her genuine voice in this oppressive atmosphere.

Christophine is another strong female figure in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. She has been with Antoinette since her childhood and her influence over Antoinette is ineludible. She takes over the duties her mother neglects when she is growing up. Lacking a healthy and solid mother figure, Antoinette finds consolation in Christophine, who is trying to save her from the hostility of the outside world. What makes Christophine different from other native figures in the text is her self-assertive position against Mr. Rochester. Their first contact occurs in the bedroom when Christophine brings coffee in the morning. The bedroom can be regarded as the most private sphere of the house as it only belongs to the married couple, unlike the sitting room, kitchen or veranda which are open to everyone's use. Christophine's intrusion into this room and her insistence on waking them up – "I have sent Christophine away twice. We wake very early here." (Rhys 61) – differentiates her from any other servant within the household. Her speech is much more problematic for Mr. Rochester not only for her choice of words but due to her implicit intervention upon their behaviors.

> 'Not horse piss like the English madams drink,' she said. 'I know them. Drink, drink their yellow horse piss, talk, talk their lying talk.' Her dress trailed and rustled as she walked to the door. There she turned. 'I send the girl to clear up the mess you make with frangipani, it bring cockroach in the house. Take care not to slip on the flowers, young master.' She slid through the door. (Rhys 62)

In this first scene with Christophine and Mr. Rochester, she makes a gesture that challenges his manhood. "Taste my bull's blood, master" (62) she says, implying his lack of manhood and authority in her eyes. This can be noted as the initial proclamation of the power struggle that will take place between Mr. Rochester and Christophine over Antoinette. As Antoinette falls into pieces, Christophine is there to help her. The love potion and what happens afterwards make them come face to face and talk more openly than ever.

> 'I [Christophine] don't know all you did but I know some. Everybody now that you marry her for her money and you take it all. And then you want to break her up, because you jealous of her. She is more better than you, she have better blood in her and she don't care for money – it's nothing for her. Oh I see the fist time I look at you. You young but already you hard. You fool the girl. You make her think you can't see the sun looking at her.' It was like that I thought. It was like that. But better to say nothing. (Rhys 120)

Her voice exposes what he has done until now and this is too much for Mr. Rochester. As an Englishman, he cannot bear being insulted by a native woman. As noted before, he makes attempts to "domesticate" Creole Antoinette by renaming her and this kind of a behavior from a native woman is intolerable. Moira Ferguson makes an interesting observation about how Christophine comes into their – Antoinette's and Mr. Rochester's – household and her attitude towards him.

> Christophine destabilizes Rochester's power and empowers herself before his very eyes and in front of onlookers. She publicly humiliates him. That she is the one community member who manifestly makes a fool of him comes as no surprise, for her disrespect stands in inverse proportion to the treatment she received: she was presented to Antoinette as a wedding gift. (Ferguson 319)

Christophine's audacious remarks and behavior compel Mr. Rochester to seek an alternative way to cope with her. She is emblematic of the "otherness" he cannot deal with on his own. Her native origins and her involvement with "obeah" underline her status as "other" in Mr. Rochester's view. These are the areas in which he cannot compete with her, thus he looks for a new plan to invalidate her power and standing against him. The solution he finds is to challenge her on legal grounds. He confesses that he does not feel "dazed, tired half-hypnotized but [feels] alert and wary to defend [himself]" (Rhys 125) in their conversation and threatens her with reporting her to the police.

> 'Then I will have the police up, I warn you. There must be some law and order even in this God-forsaken island.' 'No police here,' she said. 'No

> chain gang, no tread machine, no dark jail either. This is free country and I am a free woman.' 'Christophine,' I said, 'you lived in Jamaica for years, and you know Mr. Fraser, the Spanish Town magistrate, well. [...] I read the end of Fraser's letter aloud: '*I have written very discreetly to Hill, the white inspector of police in your town. If she lives near you and gets up to any of her nonsense let him know at once. He'll send a couple of policemen up to your place and she won't get off lightly this time ...* You gave your mistress the poison that she put into my wine?' (Rhys 126)

Here, the classic dichotomy of West and non-West is at work. The Englishman Mr. Rochester is associated with reason, mind and legal procedures whereas Christophine becomes a symbol of the supernatural, sensual world. Christophine intensifies their different domains of control with her sentence, "Read and write I don't know. Other things I know." (Rhys 127) They belong to entirely distant cultures that shape their perception of the world. According to Spivak, Rhys allows Christophine to offer a hard analysis of Rochester's actions, "to challenge him in a face-to-face encounter (253)." Christophine has the upper hand in this environment, which is quite "unreal" for him. Yet, while giving a superior position to Christophine, Rhys still acts within the western notions on "other" cultures and pre-established dichotomies. Her disappearance from the text takes place "with neither narrative or characterological explanation or justice" (Spivak 253) This unexpected disappearance of Christophine may also allude to the tendency to exclude what one cannot domesticate. That Christophine cannot be "tamed" within the western notions and cannot be deprived of

her power are obvious. Hence, the only way to eliminate/erase her authority upon Antoinette – and the husband – is to exclude her from the narration entirely. After labeling her as the "other" from the beginning, the narration chooses to exclude her as she chooses not to internalize the western concepts.

This "othering" process is not only applicable to Christophine but Antoinette as well. She remains as "the stranger" for her husband throughout the text; yet, she is not of the natives either. Her "Creole" status gives her a distinct place within Caribbean culture and history. The dictionary definition of "Creole" involves two different applications of the word about humans; the first is "a person of mixed European and black descent" whereas the second is "a descendant of European settlers in the Caribbean or Central or South America"[3]. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette is classified under the second meaning, while her half-brother Daniel is under the first group. Her position is harsher. She is seen as a member of the colonizer class by natives while she is not accepted as a full member by the colonizers. Emery explains this ambiguous position of white Creoles in these words:

> White creoles are divided precisely within the context of the islands' histories and cultures. They descend from a class that no longer exists and whose history is morally shameful. They feel close to a black culture that they cannot be apart of and that can only resent them, and they may still look to a "mother" country that long ago abandoned them and still considers them inferior. (165-166)

[3] Oxford English Dictionary

This position leads to the in-betweenness Antoinette experiences in the text. Throughout the novel, she becomes subject to humiliation due to her white Creole origin, called "white cockroach" by a little girl when she is a child. Antoinette explains this pejorative term used for white Creoles by natives in Jamaica to her husband, who seems ignorant about her status as a white Creole. This illustration also puts forward the problems about her identity. Her dividedness between cultures and countries become obvious through her speech. She is both the colonizer and the colonized, which puts her into an irresolvable state.

> 'It was a song about a white cockroach. That's me. … 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. (Rhys 76-77)

The novel takes place after the Emancipation Act, which frees the slaves and leads to the destruction of planter families of which Antoinette's family is one. Their life is haunted by the image of slavery days. Although slavery has been abolished, hatred towards slave-owners still exists. "Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger." (Rhys 9) Her position alters when she gets married to an Englishman. In past days before the Emancipation Act, her white Creole position gave her superiority over natives and "colored" people yet this marriage causes her to be inferior in front of a man from the former "mother" country. Sandra Drake claims that her husband "initiates a kind of battle between his narration and hers, his vision and hers, his historical memory of the vice of pre-emancipation times and her cultivated forgetting" (340). Antoinette desires to stay away from reminiscences of

slavery days in an attempt to clear the blame which has been potentially laid on her. Asked about origin of a village name, she becomes irritated: "'And who was massacred here? Slaves?' 'Oh no'. She sounded shocked. 'Not slaves. Something must have happened a long time ago. Nobody remembers now.'" (Rhys 45)

It can be inferred from the previous paragraph that Antoinette's social status has undergone three phases. The first phase is before the Emancipation Act; at that time, her family used to be slave-owners with a wealthy and comfortable life. She used to belong to the class of "masters" and the colonizer. She was regarded as one of the "white". The second phase took place after the Emancipation Act: then her family lost not only its wealth and power but social status as well. They were not respected anymore and were subject to humiliation even by the natives. She became one of the "white niggers", which was worse than being the "black nigger". The last phase comes with her marriage to the Englishman. For her husband she is not white enough to be taken as "white" yet she is not one of the natives either. Her in-between position is highlighted through the marriage; her feeling of non-belonging becomes apparent for the reader as well as for the husband.

Jean Rhys says that Bertha of *Jane Eyre* seems "such a poor ghost" that she decides to write a life for her. This text gives voice to the creature-like figure of Bronte's classic. She appears as a character that is fighting to establish her own voice and identity. The text depicts her struggle against Mr. Rochester; this is not only a struggle between man and woman but a Creole and a white, too. This double differentiation affects the text at its core. Sandra Drake points to the fact that the struggle of Antoinette

can be perceived as "the survival of Caribbean against European patriarchy and empire, an attempt to reinscribe a past history and construct future out of genuine indigenous cultural materials" (195). However, this struggle is lost when Antoinette leaves the island and sails for England at the end of Part II. In England, there is no possibility of gaining a victory over Mr. Rochester. Drake, moreover, draws attention to the parallelism between literary intertextuality and Europe's historical narrative, "[I]n that narrative Caribbean since the voyages of European conquest is construed, and thus constructed, in the terms of a dominant literary and historical discourse that takes Europe as origin and reference point. So too does *Wide Sargasso Sea* have a European reference point" (194). Hence, Europe/European figures strive to remain as the dominant factor in the course of the events.

While *Wide Sargasso Sea* achieves to create a life for Bertha/Antoinette, the othering process continues in this text as well. In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha is reduced to a creature-like state, "the other". She does not have a self-representation but what others tell about her. In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette is "the other" for Mr. Rochester and "the in-between" for natives. This time, natives gain the status of 'the other" in her perspective. Another significant point about Antoinette's attitudes towards natives is that she ignores to perceive them as individual human beings. Except for those who work and live within the household, she stays away from them. The beginning of this attitude can be traced back to her childhood experience with Tia, her native friend. Their friendship collapses when Antoinette calls her "you cheating nigger" and finalized by Tia throwing a stone at her on the night of the fire. However, this incident itself is not

strong enough to affect her whole attitude towards natives. The basic determinant in her consideration of natives as "others" is her alienation from society. Her childhood and adolescent years are marked by her mother's lack of affection and her humiliation by people – especially natives – around her. Thus she isolates herself from the rest of society and keeps her communication with a limited number of people: those who show affection and sympathy towards her. This overall alienation and isolation also leads her to perceive natives as just a group of people rather than individuals on their own. She seems unaware of their differences and regards all of them under the name of "other". Ciolkowski argues that Antoinette elides the differences among natives (352). This becomes apparent with her description of the night of the fire, "There must have been many of the bay people but I recognized no one. They all looked the same, it was the same face repeated over and over, eyes gleaming, mouth half open to shout" (Rhys 24-25). Thus, she repeats the basic elements of imperialistic narratives (Ciolkowski 352). As a Creole, she cannot be innocent at all; she still belongs to the class of colonizers. Though she tries to differentiate herself from the shameful past and its burdensome heritage, traces of the colonial mind reveals itself through her approach to the natives – the "others".

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Jean Rhys undertakes the arduous task of giving a new life to an already existing literary figure. By re-presenting Bertha as Antoinette, she challenges not only literary history but also colonial history. As J. Su underlines the intricate relationship between Rhys' re-telling Bertha's story and re-creating her history, "The challenge for Rhys is not only to tell otherwise but also to provide a persuasive

alternative to the ways of reading and interpretative biases associated with British literature during the colonial era." (158) Having Caribbean roots but living in Europe for most of her life, she is in a similar situation to Antoinette with respect to her feeling of dividedness. Mardorossian portrays Rhys' situation as "standing on two worlds, adopting two contrasting points of view and 'becoming' as it were both Antoinette and Rochester" (85)

The text has been criticized by some critics for its ending. According to them, by bringing Antoinette to England, Rhys makes her end – her end and death in *Jane Eyre* – inevitable. However, the fire scene of *Jane Eyre* is not realized in *Wide Sargasso Sea* but remains a dream. The ending of the novel is open to any kind of interpretation. Yet, what makes the reader think of Antoinette as dead and the cause of a fire is our previous reading/knowledge of Bronte's text. Her real death takes place during her subjugation by Mr. Rochester, the slow process of reducing her to a mad woman who is devoid of a voice and identity (Drake 200). Rhys does not kill Antoinette/Bertha in her own text but the reader alludes to *Jane Eyre* in her/his memory and Bertha's story in that text. Hence, C. Bronte and the reader bear the responsibility of killing Bertha, not Jean Rhys (Rody 221).

Rhys attempts to alter the story and history of a well-known literary character by reconfiguring the narrative time. She succeeds in giving both Antoinette/Bertha and Mr. Rochester plausible reasons for their actions in Bronte's text. The reader becomes a witness to events that lead to Antoinette's projected end in *Jane Eyre*; however Rhys does not necessarily actualize it. Rhys refuses to serve what Spivak calls "the imperialist

narrativization of history" (244). The reader hears Rhys' voice in Antoinette when she says, "There is always the other side, always" (99). It is this other side that Rhys commits herself to in *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

CHAPTER IV

MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN: THE UNWRITTEN HISTORY OF SALEEM

India has become home for a variety of religions and cultural diversity as well as series of invasions through its long history. Even before the arrival of European powers into the subcontinent for commercial purposes, it experienced invasions from Central Asia and witnessed the rule of the Mughal Empire. Beginning in the early 18th century, England was established as a dominant power in the area; later on India became a British colony until it won its independence in 1947.

Being a center of cultural and religious intermingling for centuries, the literary history of India is profoundly rich and prolific. Apart from the wide range of subjects that the geography inspires, the fact that the subcontinent welcomes several languages (such as Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam and Urdu) turns India into a site for multilingual literary products. Having its roots in the oral tradition of story-telling and epics, contemporary literature still continues to nourish itself from its ancient sources along with the more recent Western traditions and concepts. After Independence, India has witnessed an increasing number of writers who are revered not only in India but also across the world. Salman Rushdie has a distinguished status among the contemporary writers of Indian origin. His significance is manifold with respect to his writing and his paving the way for other Indian writers coming after him. His works tend to blend Indian elements with Western notions and techniques. In his "Introduction" to *Critical*

Essays on Salman Rushdie, Keith Booker attempts to specify the qualities that make Rushdie postmodern and postcolonial at the same time:

> […] his use of irony, parody, and exuberant carnivalesque imagery and language have for many critics made him a paragon of postmodernism. At the same time, his cultural roots and the particular subject matter of his fiction have led many critics to see him as an exemplary postcolonial writer. His masterpiece – as regarded by most of the critics – *Midnight's Children* is a splendid example of a delineation of India through history, cultural and social reality with its political aspect by the use of Western literary techniques and the concepts along with Indian ones. (2)

Unlike most of Rushdie's other books, *Midnight's Children* takes place in the subcontinent – mostly in India and partly in Pakistan – and Rushdie recounts the "history" of his country which he left at the age of fourteen. Spending a great deal of his lifetime out of India, Rushdie keeps questioning his own status and its outcomes on his literary career.

> It may be that writers in my position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge – which gives rise to profound uncertainties – that our physical alienation from India almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will, in short, create fictions, not actual cities or

> villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands, Indias of the mind. (*Imaginary* 10)

Thus he creates the imaginary hometown of his childhood in *Midnight's Children*. However, the reader should not overlook the fact that even if Rushdie had not left his hometown/homeland and still lived in it, his writing would create some "other" city/country. The capacity to recreate or/and reform the existing reality is inherent in the writing process. In this context, the reader would still get an imaginary hometown even if Rushdie continued to live in India. His present situation, his being outside India, brings forth an additional distance and an additional alienation from his past and roots. This condition inevitably influences his creation process, paving the way for a narration with notions of nostalgia and memory. Rushdie insistently repeats that he has written "a novel of memory and about memory", and also disclaims the idea that his India represents the India of all: "[…] so that my India was just that: 'my' India, a version and no more than one version of all the hundreds of millions of possible versions. I tried to make it as imaginatively true as I could …" (*Imaginary* 10) He prepares the reader not to expect a wholly objective, linear and truthful depiction of India and its history but a subjective, fragmented one with an intentional tendency to omit or reshape some facts. The imaginative composition gains a new dimension with the writer's deliberate and intentional moves to construct/reconstruct the history. The claim for universal truth and accuracy leaves its place to the imaginative truth that will form the locus of narration and history/story.

The novel opens with the sentence, "I was born in the city of Bombay … once upon a time" (3). From this first moment, it is implied that the narrator is located in the

very center of the text with full control over it. Indeed, in this first page he states his unique position which can be regarded as the main source of the events leading to the novel.

> [I] had been mysteriously handcuffed to history, my destinies indissolubly chained to those of my country. For the next three decades, there was to be no escape. Soothsayers had prophesied me, newspapers celebrated my arrival, politicos ratified my authenticity. I was left entirely without a say in the matter. I, Saleem Sinai, later variously called Snotnose, Stainface, Baldy, Sniffer, Buddha and even the Piece-of-the-Moon, had become heavily embroiled in Fate – at the best of times of a dangerous sort of involvement. (*Midnight's* 3)

What causes the narrator's special status, his unbreakable tie to Indian history, is his birth date: Saleem Sinai is born on August 15th, 1947 at midnight, at the same moment that India gains its independence. This is what "handcuffs" him to history and turns his physical and psychological entity into a mirror image of his homeland. Before scrutinizing the particular relationship between Saleem and history of India, it is crucial to examine the words he uses to define his special condition. The narrator uses the notion of being "handcuffed" and "chained" to depict his affinity. These notions allude to not only unbreakable bonds but also violence and coercion. One does not become handcuffed and chained through his own will but through some other authority. Saleem does not have a possibility of rejecting this fate and becoming an ordinary person; "[he has] been public property" (*MC* 100) since the moment of his conception and has to carry out what destiny has befallen on him.

Midnight's Children uses this incident, the birth of an individual and an independent state simultaneously, to present another version of history of India, which is entirely different from the official history of the country. The official history is characterized by its objectivity, linearity and faithfulness to the truth. Moreover, it is regarded as an all-embracing history that tells the story of everyone, in this case every person in India. What the reader comes across in Rushdie's work is a highly individualized version of history. The narrator, Saleem Sinai, is determined to tell his history/story which he equates with the history of India. This determination is due to the fact that Saleem is literally falling apart; his body is collapsing and cracking. He aims to fulfill the duty of recounting his story before it is too late. He is thought to be in the center of the history and he believes everything that happens in India happens because of him or for him. In a way, Saleem holds himself responsible for the course of Indian history. Thus, he rejects the given, solidified version of history (Marshall 174) and creates/narrates his own version which is highly personalized, fragmented and liable to flaw.

Linda Hutcheon asserts that in postmodern writings of history and fiction, there is a deliberate challenge of "assumptions of historical statements: objectivity, neutrality, impersonality, and transparency of representation" (92). In *Midnight's Children*, quite explicit attacks on these notions unfold themselves through course of the text and they are repeated and highlighted with the help of the narrative voice. In fact, the narrative voice is the most problematic element against the impartiality of history in the case of *Midnight's Children*. By centering himself not only in the narration but in history as well, Saleem steps away from these concepts. His recollection will, inevitably, be a

subjective one and he never denies the fact that there will be other histories as well. He is conveying events from his perspective, thus invalidating neutrality and impersonality. What he tells is always personal; he decides how much importance will be given to this and that incident and his narrativity is influenced by his audience, Padma. For instance, because of their argument about the meaning of her name – Padma means "queen of dung" as well as "lotus flower" – Saleem adds a paragraph on dung, which tells its functions and necessity. His narration of history is interrupted due to his personal concerns and comments. More important than these are the factual flaws he intentionally commits and refuses to correct while talking about historical events.

> Re-reading my work, I have discovered an error in chronology. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi occurs, in these pages, on the wrong date. But I cannot say, now, what the actual sequence of events might have been; in my India, Gandhi will continue to die at the wrong time.
>
> Does one error invalidate the entire fabric? Am I so far gone, in my desperate need for meaning, that I'm prepared to distort everything – to re-write the whole history of my times purely in order to place myself in a central role? (*Midnight's* 229-230)

This is the ultimate position Saleem can reach; he – intentionally or unintentionally – makes a mistake concerning a historical fact, deliberately refuses to correct it and then questions himself how this will affect his position as a reliable narrator. This unofficial history is apparently shaped by his decisions rather than real historical events. Whether the reader will believe the narrator wholly or not is dubious

after this peculiar incident. At this point, Brenda K. Marshall's comment on a trait of characters of historiographic metafiction may be illuminating on Rushdie's practice:

> The character of historiographical metafiction, as a subject position, is constituted by culture, by society, by history, and from this subject position insists on her/his central role in telling his/her own story, that is, insists on constituting as well. As readers, however, we are cautioned against wholehearted acceptance of their versions of history simply by their outrageousness. (173)

Saleem does not conceal his attempts to distort history. Indeed, the fact that he himself questions his position as a narrator enforces the reader to question and doubt it. At this point, one important aspect of self-narration should be mentioned in order to grasp the extent of distortion in Saleem's history/story. Writing one's life or about one's life entails subjectivity by definition. The self-narration prevents the individual from putting a distance between himself/herself and the text. When the text tells the writer's own life story, thus becomes an autobiography, it becomes subject to unintentional distortions. One's own writing will be different from how others perceive and write about him/her. It is the writer's "version" of reality and history. These differences between perspectives and distortions of various writers are inevitable. Yet, what is striking about Saleem's text are his deliberate and intentional distortions. Besides unintentional deformation(s) of self-narration, Saleem commits intentional mistakes and distortions. This aspect differentiates *Midnight's Children* from other self-narrations.

The self-centered narration he assumes brings out the possibility of other narrations/histories that take other individuals as center(s). His claims that history is

especially designed for him or he is responsible for what happens in India are so unreasonable that the reader ultimately approaches the text with caution. This attempt of Saleem can also be regarded as a move by Rushdie to draw attention to the fact that no narrative or history should be taken for granted. Saleem creates and interprets history in his own way thereby challenging the official version. Yet if the reader begins to consider it as the one and only version of history for India then it becomes another model of "official" history. By revealing the flaws and subjective characteristics of Saleem's history, the writer enables the reader to notice other possible histories/narrations which may have other flaws and other perspectives. Rather than embracing "a history", the existence of multiple histories is emphasized.

That history of India finds its representation in Saleem's life implies an idea of the allegorical bond between them. The whole novel is shaped around how his life and history are intertwined according to Saleem. In fact, not only Saleem but other thousand children who are born at the stroke of independence are representative of this new "India". This condition, in the first place, alludes to the notion of "national allegory" as it is mentioned in Fredric Jameson's frequently quoted and highly debated essay "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism". In this essay, Jameson argues that "third world literature" differs from "first world literature" in that the former has not established the distinction between what is public and what is private. The connection between these two realms and experiences paves the way for national allegory in these texts.

> All third world texts are necessarily, I want to argue, allegorical and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call *national*

> *allegories*, even when, or perhaps I should say, particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly western machineries of representation, such as the novel. (Jameson 545)

Through this argument and the "very different ratio of political to the personal" in the texts, Jameson presents the basic difference between "first world" and "third world" literatures. In the case of *Midnight's Children*, his argument seems quite applicable at first glance. In particular, Jameson's statement about the individual and third world culture seems to point at Saleem and his so-called mission; "*the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third world culture and society*" (italics by Jameson) (546). When examined under the light of this argument Saleem is the embodiment of his culture and society. Beginning from physical qualities, his resemblance to India is so obvious: his nose is like a map of India, his skin cracks as the earth cracks during the times of drought, he loses parts of his body – such as his finger, part of his hair etc. – as his homeland loses land through the Pakistan war.

However, this kind of an approach to *Midnight's Children* is found problematic by some critics. Even before taking this novel into consideration, there are numerous objections to Jameson's statement about "third world literature". Aijaz Ahmad's response to his essay is probably the most well-known and strongest objection to the idea of "third world literature". Ahmad refutes Jameson's division of the world into three different categories, invalidating the method he uses to make this classification. Additionally, he maintains that his positioning of "third world literature" underlines these countries' position as "the object" rather than "the subject". His second objection

is to Jameson's implication that one can reach generalizations about all "third world literature" thus neglecting the differences among various countries and cultures (Ahmad 566-569).

When it comes to this text, a variety of counter arguments are laid. Firstly, Dubravka Juraga suggests that the content of *Midnight's Children* is far too unrealistic to be taken as a national allegory in Jameson's terms (177). The national allegory examples Jameson bases his arguments on are much more realistic and have less allegorical implications than the overt case of Saleem. Another critic takes his starting point from Rushdie's statement: "I [he] quite dislike the notion that what you are reading is really something else" (qtd. in Reder 236) and his criticism of overemphasis on allegory in Indian literature. Thus, Michael Reder points out that *Midnight's Children* overuses and abuses allegory (236). The abundance of allegorical bonds and their overtness lead to the idea that the writer mocks the notion of allegory and its taken-for-grantedness. He argues that this text should be read as an anti-allegory which "reveals the potentially repressive use of allegorical representations and readings." (Reder 232) Through this kind of a reading the reader gets another perspective of Saleem's story and history.

Saleem is not the only child who is born at the moment of Independence; there are thousand of other children all over India who are born at the same time. Of those, only five hundred eighty one survive and join Saleem's "Midnight's Children Conference". Like his talent of telepathy, all these children are endowed with different kinds of features or faculties. Saleem leaves the reader to decide what these thousand and one children symbolize.

> Midnight's children can be made to represent many things, according to your point of view; they can be seen as the last throw of everything antiquated and retrogressive in our myth-ridden nation, whose defeat was entirely desirable in the context of a modernizing, twentieth-century economy; or as the true hope of freedom, which is now forever extinguished; but what they must not become is the bizarre creation of a rambling, diseased mind. (*Midnight's* 278)

Though Saleem shoulders the role of representing history like a mirror of the country as stated by Nehru's letter, it later becomes ambiguous whether it is Saleem or someone else who is really addressed by this letter. He is not the only one who is born at the stroke of the midnight -- there is Shiva as well. The fact that their name tags – and thus lives – are switched by Ayah Mary Pereira evokes confusion about their true identities, and Michael Gorra asks the question: "Which of the children born at the midnight is in fact real Saleem? Which life will stand as the mirror of the nation?" (115) These two children with entirely different backgrounds and personalities confront each other throughout their lives. One from a rich Muslim family and the other from a poor Hindu family, they are bequeathed the gift of reading other people's hearts and minds and power of fighting, respectively. Midnight's Children Conference is the first place that Saleem's authority is challenged by Shiva. Saleem's attitude towards his rival reveals that he is underestimating Shiva's power. Saleem despises Shiva in that he is the founder of the MCC and finds midnight's children all over India. Yet, he also fears Shiva taking over his role, especially after he has learnt the truth about their real identities. In a way, his fears are realized; Shiva, under Mrs. Gandhi's order, causes the

destruction of midnight's children and does this via Saleem's power of reading minds. Hence, he not only makes Saleem devoid of his authority but also eradicates his idea of unifying these children under the MCC.

Through Midnight's Children Conference and *Midnight's Children* in general, Rushdie strives to depict a unified nation. He believes that with the establishment of Independence a new country without its old hostilities and discrepancies can be created. He envisions that peoples of this land live harmoniously with their differences and despite their differences. Gorra believes that his inspiration can be found in the Indian National Congress which claims to represent all Indians:

> And in evoking a similar congress, Rushdie attempts […] to provide a vision of country he wants India to be: an attempt to imagine a unifying form for the subcontinent as a whole, from Kerala to Kashmir, from Bombay to the jungles of Bengal, a country that has made a fresh start at the moment of independence, in which the differences between Hindu and Muslim and Sikh, Brahmin and beggar, are contained within a single structure. (113)

Saleem's congress gathers children from all parts of India. This is the multi-voiced India or as Saleem calls it "All-India Radio". Different voices, different ideas and views are heard disclosing the multiplicity of India. None of them, not Saleem either, can represent India on her/his own but their heterogeneity represent the true nature of the country. However, their resemblance to their parents – and their prejudices and world views – turns the MCC into a picture of India with its problems rather than a

harmonious, dream-like depiction and thus strikes another blow on the idea of "unified nation".

> [...] children from Maharashtra loathing Gujaratis, and fair-skinned northerners reviling Dravidian 'blackies'; there were religious rivalries; and class entered our councils. The rich children turned up their noses at being in such lowly company; Brahmins feel uneasy at permitting even their thoughts to touch the thoughts of untouchables; while among the low-born, the pressures of poverty and Communism were becoming evident [...] (*Midnight's* 353)

Despite the fact that *Midnight's Children* aims to tell Saleem's, hence independent India's story, the colonial traces and how they still influence people are so evident. Rushdie makes use of William Methwold to illustrate the latent attempts to preserve the colonial heritage. As the owner of Methwold Estate, which includes four villas named after famous palaces of Europe – Versailles Villa, Buckingham Villa, Escorital Villa and Sans Souci –, he decides to sell them at a very reasonable price yet on some conditions.

> Methwold's Estate was sold on two conditions: that the houses be bought complete with every last thing in them, that the entire contents be retained by the new owners; and that the actual transfer should not take place until midnight on August 15th. (*Midnight's* 126)

These bizarre demands of Methwold cause surprise in the new landlords however because of the "good price" they obey his wishes. The initial protests about wardrobes full of "moth-eaten dresses and used brasseries", "talking budgies" and "half-empty pots

of Bovril" leave its place to habituation. They do not notice that they are evolving into what Methwold has in his mind: deteriorating copies that will take his place when he has gone. The colonial past Methwold has embraced will remain in the Estate even after the sale is completed. The European atmosphere present in the Estate is assuming control over its new landlords:

> […] things are settling down, the sharp edges of things are getting blurred, so they have all failed to notice what is happening: the Estate, Methwold's Estate, is changing them. Every evening at six, they are out in their gardens, celebrating the cocktail hour, and when William Methwold comes to call they slip effortlessly into their imitation of Oxford drawls; and they are learning, about ceiling fans and gas cookers and the correct diet for budgerigars, and Methwold, supervising their transformation, is mumbling under his breath. Listen carefully: what is he saying? Yes, that's it. 'Sabkuch tictock hai,' mumbles William Methwold. All is well. (*Midnight's* 131)

Being born into this kind of an environment, Saleem gets an English-based education as well. He attends John Connon's Boys High School and his sister Brass Monkey attends Walsingham School for Girls. In these schools, they become familiar with European culture and its masterpieces along with some European students. When their secluded life in the Estate is also taken into account, it can be argued that Saleem is quite isolated from ordinary life in India and its troubles.

Of Saleem's encounters with Europeans, his relationship with Evie Burns is special. He feels threatened in her presence due to not only his feelings towards her but

also her ferocious and powerful personality. Her arrival in the neighborhood challenges the balance set by the children in the Estate. She becomes the leader of the group and nobody can question her supremacy and authority over them. That an outsider undertakes such significance finds its explanation in Saleem's words:

> In India, we have always been vulnerable to Europeans … Evie had only been with us a matter of weeks, and already I was being sucked into a grotesque mimicry of European literature. […] Perhaps it would be fair to say that Europe repeats itself, in India, as farce. (*Midnight's* 256)

Although colonial rule has ended and the country has gained independence, the prolonged effects of British rule are still observable. Apart from cases of Methwold's Estate and Evie Burns, Saleem's claim about his real father brings out a possibility of English blood in him. The novel vindicates that Saleem is in fact the son of Wee Willie Winkie, the street musician. However, the narrator somehow gets the idea that Vanita, Willie Winkie's wife, has had an affair with William Methwold and Saleem is the outcome. The reader cannot learn the truth about this matter, as Vanita died at child-birth and Methwold has gone abroad. The narrator bedazzles the reader through his description of the new-born baby – himself: "[…] with eyes as blue as Kashmiri sky – which were also eyes as blue as Methwold's – and a nose as dramatic as a Kashmiri grandfather – which was also the nose of a grandmother from France" (157). Since the reader knows that he does not come from a Kashmiri Muslim family but a poor Hindu family, the reader doubts Saleem's assertion about Methwold's being his father.

Saleem's attempts to confuse the reader about his parents are noteworthy in several aspects. These intriguing explanations about his origins complicate the issue of

positioning Saleem in the context of India. In the first place, his desire to be born of a British father is striking. The notion of an Indian fathered by a British may be paralleled to the condition of India under the British rule. British colonialism has officially ended however the British still continues to act as the “father” of the country. Methwold alludes to the never-fading Britishness in India: he not only dominates their houses – and their lives – in a subtle way but overshadows Saleem’s existence on earth as well. What is more interesting than Methwold’s appearance as a possible father figure is Saleem’s presentation of him as his father. He favors the idea of being fathered by Methwold without any substantial evidence for its accuracy. Through this position, he will be Indian and non-Indian, British and non-British, ultimately the in-between member of Indian society. His efforts to become the in-between mark his desire to be different from other Indians. In fact, when the whole novel is taken into account, it becomes more than obvious that it is impossible to talk about one Indianness. The diversity and heterogeneity are the basic components of Indianness. Saleem, by definition, is different from any other Indian as he/she will be different from him. However, he wants to strengthen his difference through this complicated family history which includes the possibility of British blood in him. This in-between position may bestow on him a new identity which entails Indianness, Britishness and none of the either at the same time. Whether Methwold is his father or not, Saleem’s attempt to announce him as his father establishes a link with the colonial rule of India even if it does not exists anymore. Apart from the issue of Methwold, Saleem’s parentage becomes problematic with respect to his story/history. It is difficult to decide whether he tells his story/history from the perspective of a Hindu or a Muslim. Since he recounts the

story after he has learned about his "real" family, the reader may question the effects of this revelation upon his story. The suspicions of the reader find a voice in Padma's reaction to the history of Saleem's parentage. Saleem puts light upon how he and his parents regard his past:

> 'An Anglo?' Padma exclaims in horror. 'What are you telling me? You are an Anglo-Indian? Your name is not your own?' 'I am Saleem Sinai,' I told her, 'Snotnose, Stainface, Sniffer, Baldy, Piece-of-the-Moon. Whatever do you mean – not my own?'
>
> […] when we eventually discovered the crime of Mary Pereira, we all found that it *made no difference*! I was still their son: they remained my parents. In a kind of collective failure of imagination, we learned that we simply could not think our way out of our pasts. (*Midnight's* 158)

Midnight's Children provides a wide range of material for narratological analysis. In the first place, the form of the narrative is striking. Rushdie makes his narrator act like a story-teller. Having his roots in the oral tradition of story-telling, he follows a similar path in constructing his main character's narration. Saleem is directly speaking to the reader and his only audience Padma. His overtly direct style is influenced by his audience's reactions to what he tells. The reader learns about this through the narrator's own sentences:

> When she is bored, I can detect in her fibres the ripples of uninterest; when she is unconvinced, there is a tic which gets going in her cheek. The dance of her musculature helps to keep me on the rails; because in autobiography, as in all literature, what actually happened is less

> important than what the author can manage to persuade his audience to believe. (*Midnight's* 376)

When the history/story Saleem is telling is taken into account, the importance of his power of persuasion is revealed. His highly unrealistic material and the relationships he establishes between seemingly disparate events necessitate a firm narrative power that will keep the reader reading on. In order to attract the reader's attention, Saleem makes use of the oral story-teller's tricks: "he interrupts his narrative, comments on it, introduces new characters, and throws up new marvels, all to keep us reading on, eager to see what will happen next." (Gorra 129) The unpredictability of his narration arouses interest in the reader. His interventions or Padma's unexpected comments change the steer of narration and direct it to another event or character.

The metafictional quality of the novel is more than obvious. Saleem is writing his autobiography to achieve meaning in life before his death. His moves within the text also display the painful process of writing and remembering the past: "No! – But I must. I don't want to tell it! – But I swore to tell it all. – No, I renounce, not that, surely some things are better left…? – That won't wash; what can't be cured, must be endured!" (*MC* 589) He not only endures but also exposes what they have been through in his writing of personal then public history. In his (re)creation of history, the reader comes across a powerful, controlling narrator and other voices that try to attain the center in the narration. Even though the narrator holds the ground, he is not powerful enough to prevent distractions in the text. As Hutcheon states the center of the text is constantly displaced and dispersed (161-162). Saleem struggles to achieve a unified, centered narrative as well as a depiction of a unified nation yet he cannot reach his aim in either

of them. The end of the novel is significant in this respect; while Saleem strives for unity throughout the novel, at the end of it he turns into "four hundred million five hundred six specks of voiceless dust" (*MC* 647) The impossibility of unity and strong center leaves its place to disintegration and millions of particles which will spread all over India and contribute to preserving its heterogeneity.

The use of language in *Midnight's Children* generates discussions for a variety of reasons. Primarily, the choice of language, English, appears as the problematic issue with the publication of the novel. The idea that Rushdie's choice of language favors the colonial past, its heritage and its remains in India encounters its opponent in that through English the novel reaches more people and is widely read. Michael Gorra gives extra information which can raise controversy: "English is the language in which Nehru announced the new country's very existence, the tongue through which India continues to present itself to the outside world." (134) When the English used in the novel is examined, it becomes self-evident that this is not standard, so-called BBC English but another version full of Indian words and phrases in Hindi. "Nakkoo, yara, aap, babaji, amma, arre" are just some of the words that are used frequently in the novel. Rushdie does not use them in italics or quotation marks, thus underlining their "normal" existence in the everyday English of India. The language of the novel presents the heterogeneous nature of English in India. Language changes and evolves through people's needs; and Rushdie portrays the evolution of English according to the Indian culture and life style via the use of phrases in Hindi.

One other interesting point about *Midnight's Children* is the overuse of ellipsis throughout the novel. Almost all pages have at least one ellipsis, and in most case more

than one. It is generally used to indicate an omission from a sentence or construction. The abundance of them in the text attracts attention: “And now my unreasonable suspicions ask the ultimate question…did Amina, pure-as-pure, actually…because of her weakness for men who resembled Nadir Khan, could she have…in her odd frame of mind, and moved by the seer’s illness, might she not… ‘No!’” (*MC* 116) In this sentence it is obvious that there are some thoughts that Saleem is afraid or hesitant to vocalize and instead of saying them aloud, he leaves the reader to fill in these blanks through his/her own interpretation. These marks point to gaps in his narration. When Saleem’s narration is reconsidered, the reader expects some gaps in it; this much of a personal history will include some gaps whether intentionally or unintentionally. The reader has only Saleem as a reference point. There is no other objective source that will provide information about these gaps. In Saleem’s version of history, these gaps will remain forever and, moreover, will remind the reader about other (possible) histories which may fill in these gaps.

Midnight’s Children stands out as the ultimate intermingling of public and private, Indian and non-Indian, Western modes of narration and traditional mode of story-telling. About to finish his story, history and life, Saleem reaches consolation and shares his “special blend of pickles and words” with the reader. This also appears as the summary of his efforts and his motive behind this difficult job.

> My special blends: I have been saving them up. Symbolic value of the pickling process: all six hundred million eggs which gave birth to the population of India could fit inside a single, standard-sized pickle-jar; six hundred million spermatozoa could be lifted on a single spoon. Every

> pickle-jar (you will forgive me if I become florid for a moment) contains, therefore, the most exalted of possibilities: the feasibility of chutnification of history; the grand hope of the pickling of time! I, however, pickled chapters. Tonight, by screwing the lid firmly on to a jar bearing the legend Special Formula No.30: 'Abracadabra', I reach the end of my long-winded autobiography; in words and pickles, I have immortalized my memories, although distortions are inevitable in both methods. We must live, I am afraid, with the shadows of imperfection. (*Midnight's* 642)

The novel ventures to portray public story/history through Saleem's individual story/history. In this arduous attempt to present an alternative history, it also brings out the possibility of other histories which are told from different angles by other individuals. The impossibility of "one single" history is foregrounded through depiction of historical incidents from an unusual approach. In his *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie says that "novel is one way of denying the official, politicians' version of truth" (14). Saleem rejects the supremacy of "one truth" via his multifaceted narration and representation of other possible "truths" along with histories/stories. No matter how doubtful the reader becomes toward Saleem's version of history, it is still one step against the authority of official history over people.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The one duty we owe to history is to rewrite it.

Oscar Wilde

The peoples of periphery return to rewrite the history and fiction of the metropolis.

Homi Bhabha

Coming from two "different" worlds, the so-called first world and third world, both Oscar Wilde and Homi Bhabha underline the necessity of rewriting/reshaping history. While the former thinks of rewriting history in general, the latter emphasizes the emergence of histories previously untold by the center. In order to empower the repressed, marginal and colonized, the "official" history/story should leave its place to multiplicity of subjective histories/stories. In this study, I look at how alternate histories/stories are created through the use of historiographic metafiction within the framework of postcolonial literature.

Foe, *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Midnight's Children* stand as outstanding examples to portray the complicated relationship between history and fiction. These works reveal the similar workings of history and fiction: what they choose to tell (or not to tell) determine the reader's perception of the text and interpretation of it. By making the

history/story writing process visible, these texts remind the reader that history is a constructed reality like fiction and both are open-ended. The classical view of history is that once the past is written down it is concluded. However, the "historiography" brings out the imaginative (re)construction of the past, which makes it open to new versions and new possibilities rather than a closed system. The possibility of new histories/stories gains considerable significance in terms of the marginal, repressed and colonized. Then the possibility of depicting the history/story from another perspective (or various perspectives) emerges. Hence, historiography becomes a center of attention in postcolonial literature. The untold, unrepresented histories/stories of colonial societies and individuals get an opportunity to raise their voice, tell their own history/story.

Chapter II focuses on the story of Susan Barton and Friday. *Foe* takes it starting point from the idea of a female castaway on Cruso's island. The excluded female protagonist (of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*) Susan acquires the power to tell her own story/history. Coetzee grants her the opportunity to tell one of the basic colonial writings of Europe from a different – and female – perspective. As she belongs to the class whose story/history is told and shaped by those in power, now she uses her chance to speak up her "true" story. Being a silenced character, she strives to establish her own voice and self-representation throughout the novel and achieves it. However, the problematic situation of Friday remains unresolved. With his cutout tongue, he does not have the ability to tell his story/history. No matter how hard Susan tries, it is impossible for her to represent Friday. Although she is labeled as the "other" and left outside narration and representation in the past, it is not possible for her to represent the "other" – Friday. Susan is aware of the pitfalls of (mis)representation of Friday and behaves cautiously in

her attempts to give Friday a "voice". Though she belongs to the class of colonizers, this aspect of her attitude differentiates her from previous attempts that try to represent the colonized.

Chapter III tells the story of Antoinette/Bertha and her efforts for self-representation. *Wide Sargasso Sea* displays the life of Antoinette before she becomes Bertha in *Jane Eyre*. The animal-like creature of Bronte appears as a young woman disclosing the events leading to her madness. Antoinette is an in-between character and becomes subject to the othering process of two different poles. Both the natives and her husband treat her as the "other" who belongs neither to the natives nor to the white class. Her Creole roots put her in an ambiguous position and pushes her for a constant search of a stable identity. The British husband considers her inferior and "not white enough" whereas the slave-owner past of her family distances her from the natives. Antoinette makes the reader feel the tension of the struggle over the narrative voice. She can exist on her own terms as long as she herself tells the story. When the husband takes over the role of the narrator, she knows that she will turn into someone else. The shifts in narrative voice point to the never-ending battle over Antoinette's representation. Her identity is divided into three phases: the slave-owner, the white nigger and the Creole wife. Her efforts to achieve a stable identity and peaceful state of mind reach a dead-end with her arrival in England.

Chapter IV is the history/story of Saleem, who claims that this is also the history/story of India. Saleem begins to tell his story/history to give a meaning to his life. While recounting the history, he aims to unify the nation and eventually his narration. This highly subjective chronicle of history appears as an opposition to the

official history. Saleem relates the story of independent India. Leaving the colonial past behind, India should appear at the very center of the narrative and not remain as a side figure. Saleem also tries to put forward himself in the narration; however, it is not so easy for him to have full control over the course of the narrative. His seemingly powerful position begins to dissolve with the arrival of several other voices and stories/histories in the novel. His so-called mission of "mirroring the nation" is realized through the depiction of heterogeneity and decentralized nature of the text as well as India. His overt interventions and distortions of history lead the reader to become skeptic about Saleem's story/history. However the fact that he openly confesses some of his flaws enables the reader to believe his sincerity. Indeed, this skepticism and subjectivity leads the reader to think of other possible stories/histories that will tell the history of India from different perspective(s).

The common characteristic of *Foe*, *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Midnight's Children* is their attempt to reform the official or the well-known history/story and to give voice to the formerly marginalized or silenced characters. In the first two novels the reader comes across the traces of classics of European literature. These two texts creates their protagonists from either a underrepresented character – like Jane Eyre's Bertha as Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* – or a non-existent character – as in the case of *Foe*'s Susan Barton. These texts make use of European classics as a starting point but they do not solely depend on the classics and exist on their own. The third novel, *Midnight's Children*, moves to create another history of independent India which finds its mirror image in the story/history of Saleem. The interventions upon the established stories/histories make them available for new interpretations and avoid the closure of the

past. When the past is no longer a closed system, it turns into a site for new possibilities and meanings. The recreation, reformation and transformation of history provide new opportunities for those who are repressed, marginalized or colonized. As the history is created in different hands it inevitably becomes subject to change.

These novels' attempt to voice the silenced characters is obvious; yet how successful this attempt is ambiguous due to several reasons. When each novel is taken into consideration, different levels of success in the representation of the colonized or the repressed are revealed. In *Foe*, Susan as a silenced female finds an opportunity to represent herself whereas Friday's situation remains problematic throughout the text. Eventually, the reader concludes that it is impossible to represent Friday within the domain of Susan and Mr. Foe. Susan's struggle to acquire the center in the narrative becomes successful, but Friday will continue to be the "other" because of unrepresentability by neither Susan nor Mr. Foe. The question of representation can be held in two different ways in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. If Antoinette is regarded as the silenced Bertha of *Jane Eyre*, she obtains a voice and real identity in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. She gets the chance of presenting herself to the reader who thinks of her as an animal-like creature in the attic. On the other hand, if Antoinette is taken into consideration as a Creole woman who is trying to establish a stable identity, her success is partial. She cannot hold full control over her own representation. Though she speaks up at times, her husband's interruptions over the narrative prevent her from preserving the center and cause an ongoing struggle. However, in an overall view Antoinette attains a voice and enables the reader to observe her self-representation. In *Midnight's Children*, what Saleem does is more than presenting his voice and his self: he presents the possibility of

multiple versions of history and how story/history can be distorted or deformed intentionally. His initial appearance as the omnipotent narrator fades away with the emergence of decentralizing voices and characters. The notion of a strong center and unity becomes futile; instead of a one powerful voice that holds the center, the possibility of dispersed, multiple voices emerges. Instead of the British colonial voice over India, the local heterogeneous voices appear and hold the ground.

One problematic aspect about these novels is their use of Western texts while trying to generate a voice for the ex-colonized. The two novels make use of European classics and the third one bear similarities to another classic, *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne, through its style. The fact that the novels allude to British novels of colonial period is both striking and controversial. Dipesh Chakrabarty states that Europe is a silent referent in historical knowledge and non-Western historians feel a need to refer to works in European history (284). In this case, a similar thing happens in fiction; these postcolonial novels carry ties to colonial texts. The use of or allusions to colonial texts makes the novel bound with the colonial discourse. Although they aim to change the positions determined by the colonial discourse, the novels consequently stay within it and underline the impossibility of remaining outside. At that point, the choice of these colonial texts may point to the writers' awareness about the power of colonial discourse. Having acknowledged the impossibility of breaking down the colonial discourse entirely – even in the postcolonial period –, they may choose to present the ambivalent position of the postcolonial state. Kumkum Sangari, while listing the characteristics of the hybrid writer, remarks that the writer should represent the pressure of this placement (the in-

betweenness) (144). Hence, these three postcolonial writers depict their in-between position through their portrayal of protagonists.

Foe by J.M. Coetzee, *Wide Sargasso Sea* by J. Rhys and *Midnight's Children* by S. Rushdie endeavor to tell the untold stories/histories of postcolonial individuals and societies. Being members of ex-colonized countries and having a Western education, they experience the in-betweenness and this first hand experience is reflected in their works. To efface the colonial history, they present alternate stories/histories that endow the ex-colonized a chance to (re)form her/his representation. However, the colonial traces reveal themselves at different points of narration and the implications of colonial discourse become inevitable. In these three novels, the explicit struggle for representation and a new voice is undermined by the implicit attacks of former colonial past. The effort to break the colonial discourse and its "voice" is apparent yet the success or the possibility of a "new voice" remains ambiguous. The impossibility of remaining outside the colonial discourse prevents the ex-colonized from conquering the center and asserting her/his voice.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ahmad, Aijaz. "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory'" in *Postcolonialism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* ed. Diana Brydon. London; New York: Routledge, 2000.

Ashcroft, Bill et al. ed. *The Post-colonial Studies Reader.* London; New York: Routledge, 1995.

Attridge, Derek. *J.M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Attwell, David. *J.M. Coetzee: South Africa and the Politics of Writing*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Begam, Richard. "Silence and Mut(e)ilation: White Writing in J.M. Coetzee's *Foe*" *The South Atlantic Quarterly*. 93:1, 1994. 111-129

Booker, M. Keith ed. *Critical Essays on Salman Rushdie*. New York: G.K. Hall, 1999.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for Indian Pasts?" in *A Subaltern Studies Reader 1986-1995* ed. Ranajit Guha. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

Ciolkowski, Laura E. "Navigating the *Wide Sargasso Sea*: Colonial History, English Fiction and British Empire" *Twentieth Century Literature* 43:3, 1997. 339-359

Coetzee, J.M. *Foe*. London: Penguin Books, 1986.

Currie, Mark ed. *Metafiction*. London; New York: Longman, 1995.

Drake, Sandra. "Race and Caribbean Culture as Thematics of Liberation in Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea" " in *Wide Sargasso Sea/ Jean Rhys: Backgrounds, Criticism* ed. Judith L. Raiskin. New York: W W Norton, 1999. 193-207

Emery, Mary Lou. "Modernist Crosscurrents" in *Wide Sargasso Sea/ Jean Rhys: Backgrounds, Criticism* ed. Judith L. Raiskin. New York: W W Norton, 1999. 161-173

Erwin, Lee. "History and Narrative in Wide Sargasso Sea" in *Wide Sargasso Sea/ Jean Rhys: Backgrounds, Criticism* ed. Judith L. Raiskin. New York: W W Norton, 1999. 207-217

Fayad, Mona. "Unquiet Ghosts: The Struggle for Representation on Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea". *Modern Fiction Studies* 34:3, 1988. 437-452

Ferguson, Moira. “Sending the Young Son across the Wide Sargasso Sea: The New Colonizer Arrives” *Postcolonial Discourses: An Anthology* ed. Gregory Castle. Oxford, UK; Malden MA: Blackwell, 2001. 309-331

Gallagher, Susan V. *A Story of South Africa: J.M. Coetzee’s Fiction in Context*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991.

Gauthier, Marni. “The Intersections of the Postmodern and the Postcolonial in J.M. Coetzee’s *Foe*” *English Language Notes*. 34:4, 1997. 52-69.

Gorra, Michael E. *After Empire: Scott, Naipaul, Rushdie*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Head, Dominick. *J.M. Coetzee*. Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1997.

Huggan, Graham and Stephen Watson, eds. *Critical Perspectives on J.M. Coetzee*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 1988.

---- and Mario J. Valdes eds. *Rethinking Literary History: A Dialogue on Theory*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Jameson, Fredrick. "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" *Postcolonialism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* ed. Diana Brydon. London; New York: Routledge, 2000.

Juraga, Dubravka. "'The Mirror of Us All': *Midnight's Children* and the Twentieth Century Bildungsroman" *Critical Essays on Salman Rushdie* ed. K. Booker. New York: G.K. Hall, 1999. 169-188

Korang, Kwaku L. "An Allegory of Re-Reading: Post-colonialism, Resistance, and J.M. Coetzee's Foe". *Critical Essays on J.M. Coetzee* ed. Sue Kossew. New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1998.

Kossew, Sue. *Critical Essays on J.M. Coetzee*. New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1998.

LaCapra, Dominick. *History, Politics and the Novel*. Ithaca; New York: Cornell University Press, 1987.

Mardorossian, Carine Melkom. "Double (De)colonization and The Feminist Criticism of Wide Sargasso Sea" *College Literature* 26.2, 1999. 79-95

Marshall, Brenda K. *Teaching the Postmodern: Theory and Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Mcinelly, Brett C. "Expanding Empires, Expanding Selves: Colonialism, the Novel, and *Robinson Crusoe*" *Studies in the Novel*. 35:1, 2003 1-21.

Mcleod, John. *Beginnings Postcolonialism*. Manchester; UK, New York: Manchester University Press; St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Mellown, Elgin W. "Character and Themes in the Novels of Jean Rhys" in *Comtemporary Woman Novelists* ed. P.M. Spacks. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1977.

Parry, Benita. "Speech and Silence in the Fiction of J.M. Coetzee" *Critical Perspectives on J.M. Coetzee* eds. Graham Huggan and Stephen Watson. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

Reder, Michael. "Rewriting History and Identity: The Reinvention of Myth, Epic, and Allegory in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*" in *Critical Essays on Salman Rushdie* ed. Keith Booker. New York: G.K. Hall, 1999. 225-250.

Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea/ Jean Rhys: Backgrounds, Criticism* ed. Judith L. Raiskin. New York: W W Norton, 1999.

----. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. London: Penguin Book, 1968.

Rody, Caroline. "Burning Down the House: The Revisionary Paradigm of Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*" in *Wide Sargasso Sea/ Jean Rhys: Backgrounds, Criticism* ed. Judith L. Raiskin. New York: W W Norton, 1999. 217-225

Rushdie, Salman. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. London: Granta Books ; New York, N.Y., U.S.A. : In association with Viking, 1991.

----. *Midnight's Children*. London: Vintage Books, 2006 (c1981).

Sangari, Kumkum. "Politics of The Possible" *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* ed. B. Ashcroft et al. London; New York: Routledge, 1995.

Selden, Raman and Peter Widdowson ed. A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory. Lexington, Ky. : University Press of Kentucky, 1993.

Spivak, G.C. "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" *Critical Inquiry* 12: Autumn, 1985. 243- 261

Su, John J. "'Once I Would Have Gone Back … But Not Any Longer': Nostalgia and Narrative Ethics in *Wide Sargasso Sea*" *Critique* 44: 2, 2003. 157-174

Walcott, Derek. "The Muse of History" *The Postcolonial Studies Reader* ed. B. Ashcroft et al. London; New York: Routledge, 1995.

Watson, Stephen. “Colonialism and the Novels of J.M. Coetzee” *Critical Perspectives on J.M. Coetzee* eds. Graham Huggan and Stephen Watson. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996.

Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction*. London ; New York : Methuen, 1984.

Wesseling, Elizabeth. *Writing History as a Prophet: Postmodernist Innovations of the Historical Novel*. Amsterdam ; Philadelphia : J. Benjamins Pub. Co., 1991.

White, Hayden. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990, c1987.