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Narrating from the Margins: Self-Representation of Female and Colonial Subjectivities in Jean Rhys's Novels

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1. The Concern for Self-Possession

'Smile please' the man said. 'Not quite so serious.'
He'd dodged out from behind the dark cloth. He had a yellow black face and pimples on his chin.
I looked down at my white dress, the one I had got for my birthday, and my legs and the white socks coming half up my legs, and the black shiny shoes with the strap over the instep. (Rhys 1979: 19)

I quote the above passage from the opening of Jean Rhys's unfinished autobiography *Smile Please* as the narrative depiction of an instance of self-consciousness and self-assessment, an instance of a woman looking at herself, which will be the central theme under scrutiny in this study! The young girl is urged by the outside voyeur, in this case a black male photographer, to reframe her facial expression, to temper her mood and this leads to a physical self-scrutiny. Rhys's oeuvre, on the whole, is concerned with these moments of self-awareness and shows how her heroines react to such intervention from the outside. Rather than focusing on the ontological need for self-possession (which would be beyond the ambitions of this investigation), this study looks at how the social order one finds oneself in necessitate one to define, construct, in effect to possess one's self. Self-possession requires a taking stock of who one is; a process that, as John Paul Eakin puts it, is crucial for the "everyday business of living" (1999: 127).

Self-possession (along with self-awareness and self-consciousness) is a term that literary critics have investigated in relation to the nature of subjectivity. In her study of subjectivity Ruth Robbins (2005: 8) puts a very interesting spin on the whole discussion by drawing attention to the puns and ambivalences that the use of these terms give rise to:

¹ Even before the unfinished autobiography was published, Rhys's work was being read with particular attention to the parallels with her own life. The similarities between the predicament of her heroines and herself have long been the prevalent mode of reading Rhys's work, however this study considers her writing as depicting a more general predicament. The autobiography is invoked here not to draw parallels to Rhys's life, but to draw special attention to the central concern of self-possession in her writing.

To be conscious of oneself is part of what subjectivity appears to mean; and from that self-knowledge all other personal traits proceed- self-consciousness can mean self-possession, poise, confidence. At the same time, however, self-consciousness also means awkwardness and embarrassment, clumsiness and discomfort, which may also rob us of our self-possession, suggesting in fact that self-possession is a fragile property. (All the potential puns here intended).

This understanding of self-consciousness is very fortuitous for my study because it highlights the connection between becoming aware of one's bodily presence, and (in some cases) the almost natural consequence of uneasiness that follows from that awareness. The two possible consequences of self-consciousness, that are self-confidence and awkwardness, very much depend on the situatedness of the subject, and it is the situatedness of Rhys's self-narrators that I explore in this study with a view to understanding its narrative consequences.

The founding assumption of this thesis is the explanatory and descriptive power of narratives in constructing identities. We can conceptualize narrative as a cognitive instrument that helps an individual impose coherence on the otherwise chaotic nature of experience. Narrative helps the individual to take control of or to possess his/her life and to 'act in character'. As many narrative theorists agree, the ability and authority to speak for and of oneself is the first step towards constructing a viable identity and in his study of self-narration Eakin (1999: 126) suggests that self-narration is the sine qua non of identity. Drawing from Eakin's findings concerning the difficulties and discomfort that the subject may face when engaging in self-narration, this study investigates how Rhys's heroines negotiate the prescribed modes and discourses of self-representation. The self-narration I am dealing with in Rhys's writing, it is to be made clear, is not the self-narration of Rhys, but that of the fictional selves that she creates in her writing:² a study of characters when they narrate themselves. I believe that in order to give the right due to the narrative devices formulated in Rhys's novels we need to frame our reading differently than the pure autobiographical angle.

In Rhys's novels the need for self-possession gets manifested in the heroine's quest to possess a socially accepted subject position, or to find herself a 'pose'. We

² A further warning comes from Rhys herself. In her letter dated 22.06.1960, to Maryvonne Moerman she writes: "You know, I would like to send you a very short story and implore you to type it for me. It is not (repeat *not*) autobiography, and not to be taken seriously. But the people here are terribly narrow minded and they gossip like crazy. Really- this is true! I found it out in the Bude and I assure you. For them "I" is "I" and not a literary device. Every *word* is autobiography!" Francis Wyndham and Diana Melly, eds. 1984. *The Letters of Jean Rhys*. New York: Viking/Elizabeth Sitton Books

are given to understand that for women in the England that Rhys depicts, not fitting any of the categories for women leads to an exclusion from the society. The chronotope of the novels is thus defined by the quest to possess the subject position of a socially recognizable category. The obstructions and the ultimate failure that Rhys's heroines face in this quest lead them to define themselves without the bounds of social hierarchies and adopt their own idiom while narrating their trials. Through Rhys's heroines' trajectories we can follow the various states of self-consciousness; the discomfort that Robbins talks about gradually leads to self-knowledge through self-narration.

Self-Narration:

I take self-narration to be, to borrow from Leigh Gilmore (1994: 40), a discourse of self-definition and self-possession in which identity is preserved.³ Indeed, many narrative theorists have argued that subjectivity cannot be experienced as in any way other than narrative.⁴ In Chapter 3.1. I will give an overview of the relations that have been mapped out between narrative and identity, focusing on the ones that'll be fruitful for the discussions of the selves represented in Rhys's work. Eakin (1999: 102) underlines that self-narration is the method of organizing experience in order to construct a viable self and he questions what the consequences for identity are when narrative practices are interrupted, function irregularly or are never engaged in the first place. The 'narrative practices' that Eakin talks about is none other than self-narration, the act defined by Smith as making a coherent story out of 'amorphous subjectivity' (1987:5). That subjectivity is amorphous is also made evident in Rhys's novels as the characters move through various subject categories by their own volition or social pressure. I argue that the aim of social order is to obliterate this

³ Also see Gilmore's concept of the origins of plot (1994: 89) "[P]lot is inherited, determined by memory and circumstance; personae are extrinsic to autobiographical discourse."

⁴ See the entry by Andreea Deciu Ritivoi "Narrative and Identity" in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (2005: 231-235).

amorphousness, to 'subjectivate'⁵ the individual in a certain way so that he/she won't commit 'delinquency of space'⁶

Any ellipses or irregularities in narration will make the protagonist's story seem dysfunctional to those around her and in clinical terms, as Eakin underlines, this is conceptualized as *dysnarrativia*. This is a term I want to explore in this study as to its usefulness when referring to the self-narrations that Rhys's heroines engage in. I will look at why and how narrative characteristics such as fragmentation and dysphoria can be grouped under this term and informed by these dynamics I will conceptualize modes of narration such as exhausted and dysphoric self-narration. I will also conceptualize 'third person narration' which I posit to be the coalescence of these conditions at the level of narrative transmission - which I claim to be a surrogate place for narration for silenced protagonists.

Although this study is not an autobiographical reading of Rhys's work, it still recognizes the fact that the formal aspect of her novels was informed by their moment, that is, modernism. Representation of character through the subjective consciousness of the figures represented was a core concern for modernist writers as they negotiated ways of representing the external environment along with what goes in the minds of their characters. This focus on the 'mind script' was a distinguishing technique of the modernists and each writer gave a different inflection to this representation in accordance with their thematic concerns and relation to the cultural archive. In that sense Rhys has been considered among the school of literary impressionism, a mode of narrative that relegates facts to second place in order to convey immediacy of experience.⁷

⁵ The term 'subjectivation' was introduced by Foucault, referring to the construction of the individual subject. I use the verb 'subjectivate' with strong undertones of 'interpellation', a construction of subjectivity that is strongly influenced by social constraints. For further information see Sebastian Harrer (2005).

⁶ In his article mapping out the relations between narrative and autobiography "Autobiography and Geography: A Self-Arranging Question" Frederic Regard speaks of a "delinquency of the autobiographical narrative", as a narrative that doesn't obey conventions. Similarly, and since Regard convinces us of the intricate relation between space and narrative, I argue we can speak of "delinquency of space" when the subject does not agree to stay in the 'space' that the society has prescribed for him/her.

See Todd K. Bender's (1997) *Literary Impressionism in Jean Rhys, Ford Madox Ford, Joseph Conrad, and Charlotte Bronte*.

Rhys's Modern Postcolonial Heroine

Leigh Gilmore (1994: 42) argues that whenever someone engages in self-narration different discourses such as the legalistic, literary, social and ecclesiastic vie for supremacy in the construction of the 'I' of self-narration. All these competing discourses are made evident in Rhys's narratives as the protagonists try to lay the foundations of their own subjectivity. Ulrike Erichsen (2000: 195) also recognizes that there are contending identification schemes for any individual and that the self sifts through various elements through a 'grammar of identification'. In Chapter 3 I will look closely at the different grammars of identification that are available to Rhys's heroines within the colonial and patriarchal orders. I will tease out tropes and narrative tools that Rhys makes use of to point to the various allegiances that her heroines profess. The following observation made by Helen Carr (1996: 5), I believe, summarizes the discursive field that Rhys's work is situated in, drawing our attention to the tension of dispossession and self-possession that her heroines experience:

What Rhys constructs through her fiction is, I would argue, a feminine colonial sensibility, becoming aware of itself in a modernist European context, where a sense of colonial dispossession and displacement is focused on and translated into gendered terms, so that all these conditions coalesce, transformed into her particular version of feminine pain.

Although Carr does not problematize the subject positions of 'female' and 'colonial' as this study sets out to do, she provides a good picture of whose 'self-possession' Rhys deals with in her novels. I argue that in Jean Rhys's 'worlding', to borrow Sue Thomas's phrase (1990), both the colonial and the female subject can inhabit a continuum of positions, a continuum I will be discussing in Chapter 3. 'Colonial dispossession' may mean various things and the claim for a subject position may manifest itself differently depending on where in the colonial divide the heroine lies. The same is true for the female subjects who could be variously placed along the axis of social respectability. Taken together Rhys's novels enable us to observe the movement of her heroines through some of these categories as they are juxtaposed with subjectivities that are much closer to the Ideal.⁸

⁸ The 'Ideal' is a term I borrow from Jose F. Buscaglio-Salgado (2003) who uses it in a colonial context. In Chapter 3.2. I discuss the term's wider implications and how it can be applied in context where the subject is in constant motion and the Ideal presents a fixed standard.

In chapter 3 I also look at how the narrator's conception of space affects her mode of articulation, along with how she reacts to being excluded from the holy English family⁹. The chapter underlines the similar dynamics of displacement and dispossession that Rhys heroines face in patriarchal and colonial orders that aim to subjectivate them according to their own norms. The idea of the holy English family is treated in 3.1. in its incarnation in middle class England with a view to locating where the heroine is situated within this family. In 3.1. my investigation concentrates on the category of the *amateur* as outlined by Thomas, exiled from the English family due to sexual promiscuity and possible threat of racial impurity. I look at how discourses of the time conceive of the amateur as a racial and social threat, usurping given female roles. The amateur as a body that disturbs the order demonstrates characteristics similar to the abject; signalling the breakdown of the distinction between subject and object, resulting in certain narrative choices on the part of the self-narrator such as the third person narration.

Chapter 3.2. posits the condition of being a colonial as a determining factor for the self-narrative project, a project that is carried out, in the case of Rhys, against what Gayatri Spivak has called the 'subject-constituting project' (1988) of the Empire. I will look particularly at the creole predicament, how the creole subject oscillates between cultures and how this motion defines him/her as a 'transitional subject'. The chapter also pays close attention to the creole's connection to space, the concept of 'reverse passage' and how he/she experiences the Metropolis. Chapter 3.3. looks at the idiom that Rhys heroines develop, reading for the cultural experience of white creole women using Bakhtinian concepts such as carnival, chronotope and heteroglossia. I outline narrative voices that Rhys develops such as the madwitch and the zombie narrative voice. The use of these narrative voices facilitates the deconstruction and reconstruction of certain subject categories.

When we consider the violence with which subject categories are delimited and kept in the patriarchal and colonial orders, it is the work of decolonization, and indeed, emancipation, to introduce subjectivities that can travel through these categories. This strong intervention from the outside under the conditions that are 'problematic', as has previously been argued, provides the contact point between

⁹ The ideal of the English family as representing the various sections of English society, with members obeying its rules, including the one in the colonies. A extended discussion of this family can be found in Chapter 3.3.

female and colonial self-narration. If, as this study has set out to do, we consider Rhys's work to be an exercise in dissolving boundaries between different subjectivities through laying bare and working against essentialist tendencies in social categories, then we need to look at how this de-essentializing project is reflected in the narrative tools she makes use of.

Unfavourable Narrative Conditions

In each of the novels Rhys formulates different ways to deal with the particular situatedness of her heroine and the conditions of narration that go with that predicament. The effects of being excluded from the holy English family which can be observed in all Rhys's novels is made a central concern in the novels with a Caribbean theme. In *Voyage in the Dark*, we see how white creoles are treated in the Metropolis as second class members of the family. We see the protagonist discover the real referents of the images of England she has grown up with in the Caribbean and how her allegiances mark her as a transitional subject. Her transitionality also has an effect on the way she remembers her childhood, memories that elicit a variety of emotions and meanings. In the novel the madwitch and zombie narrative modes alternate and the white female colonial body itself becomes a means of articulation.

In *Good Morning, Midnight* intersubjectivity is instrumentalized to facilitate female and postcolonial narration through what I have termed creating a 'community of life stories'. The novel is an 'I' narration in which the narrator embeds stories of others to form a background against which hers takes on further meaning. These embeddings work like surrogate narration, helping the narrator displace her own unpleasant experiences and emotions to other marginal characters. The story of a mulatto character especially helps her voice her feelings of abjection. The way the story is embedded into the narrative presents a palimpsest of agencies that foregrounds the issue of a 'legitimate speaking position'. The novel thus forges 'an archive' when the narrator fails to find stories that she can adopt as a model to tell her own, raising questions of access to established ways of story-telling.

In *Quarlet*, Rhys chronicles the making of the amateur and demonstrates that 'third person consciousness' need not happen in colonial space; revealing the similarities between the discourses concerning the peripheries of the Metropolis with the peripheries of the Empire. She sketches the modern alienated female identity of

the amateur that seems to mimic the 'flaneur' but is different from it in crucial ways. The amateur's abject position is emphasized in the novel, with respectable characters intervening in her life-choices. The novel lays bare how these interventions are finally internalized by the subject, but how, at the same time, in a 'third person narration', narrative transmission can be used as a surrogate place for confrontation with social discourses.

After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie also employs the method of 'third person self-narration', but added to this is the very modernist concern of permeability of consciousness which Rhys stages by using both the protagonist and other subjectivities as focalizer, especially the protagonist's 'mirror other' - her sister. The novel's two locations reveal that different geographic spaces lead to different discursive spaces as the heroine needs to tackle two different constellations of subjectivities in London and Paris. There is a marked difference between the subjectivities of those who represent 'the Law' and those who are denied agency. The juxtaposition of subjectivities prepares the ground for the confrontation of different world views as the characters locate themselves within different discourses.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea* transitional identity of the white creoles and their self-articulation is explored further, as we see the various influences and 'voices' that temper their self-narrative. Intersubjectivity is a prominent element in the novel, this time achieved through two self-narrators within the space of a single novel- and two very different narrators at that: one the female creole and the other the white male settler. The novel stages colonial hierarchies with different figures interpreting the island for Antoninette and Rochester differently. Different epistemologies and different narrative voices are thus juxtaposed, blurring roles of dependence and agencies. The intimacies that happen between the characters, especially the two narrators are reflected at the level of narrative transmission and point to the greater strategy of deessentialization that Rhys achieves throughout her work.

The analysis of the narrative in the novels will be carried out with a view to delineating the social norms that each of these heroines have to abide by and each narrative will offer a way of resisting the roles that are offered to the protagonist. what is perceived as dysnarrativia by the social world created in these fictions will be examined not solely as the psychological symptoms displayed by the protagonists, but will be used as a means of cultural interpretation. Thus, the intricate relationship between life-story telling and the cultural archive will be laid bare and the absence of

the stories of creole white women's narratives in this archive will reveal the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion with which the English family operates. This will enable us to understand Rhys's strategy in constructing such self-narrators, suggesting that the obstruction placed by way of female colonial agency can be overcome only through pushing on with self-articulation by all means possible, in physical action, verbal retribution or where all else fails, by using narrative transmission as a space of surrogate narration.

2. Self Narration: Conditions, Representations and Consequences

In their *The Self We Live By: Narrative Identity in a Postmodern World* (2000 : 215), James A. Holstein and Jaber F. Gubrium put narrative at the very centre of our everyday lives and identify three elements of narrative that are foundational to the formation of identity: "the process of storytelling, the resources used to tell stories, and the circumstances of narration". The elements cited by Holstein and Gubrium are concurrent with the elements that I identify in the title of my chapter, especially with my focus on 'conditions of self-narration'. Accordingly this study focuses on the mutual rules that apply to constructing identity and self-narrative and the field in which these two operations interact. The present chapter identifies four prominent elements of self-representation which condition the self-narrations in Rhys's work; firstly, the self narrative impulse; secondly, the relationality of self-narration; thirdly, already established ways of telling and fourthly, the nature of obstructions posed in the way of self-expression. I argue that these four elements of self-narration in Rhys's novels interact to bring about particular consequences and narrative practices that help us gain an understanding of the social conditions under which the self-narrator speaks.

The first, self-narrative impulse, is a term I have borrowed from Janet Varner Gunn who speaks about the ontological and temporal aspects of this impulse. She identifies what she calls 'the autobiographical impulse', contending that it "arises out of the effort to confront the problem of temporality and can be assumed operative in any attempt to make sense of experience." (1982: 12) The need to order past and future events in one's mind, and to account for the passage of time by recounting past events is an impulse people give in to by means of narrative in various social

contexts.¹⁰ 'The problem of temporality' is one that is to be tackled with the help of 'the extended self', in Ulrich Neisser's definition (quoted in Eakin 2001: 114) "the self of memory and anticipation, the self existing continuously across time". The extended self is what holds memory together and helps the individual anticipate future events.¹¹ This self, through extending and refining its viewpoint over time, provides what Eakin calls (1999: 102) "a temporal armature that supports and sustains our operative sense of who we are". It is through this extended self that the narrator can claim its position as the autobiographical 'I' referred to by Gilmore (1994) and Gunn, and simultaneously inhabit the 'I' it is writing about. The concept of the extended self is very pertinent to a discussion of self-narration in Rhys, for it is a concept through which one can observe the dynamics, and in Rhys's case often the conflation, between the narrating and narrated I and between memory and anticipation.

While Gunn's focus on 'the problem of temporality' informs this study in explaining why subjects engage in self-narration, I also consider the social aspect of this operation. As underlined by Eakin, self-narration is 'necessarily relational' (1999: 52) and in his definition relational self-narration is a narrative through which an individual consciously constructs his/her identity through his/her relation to the chosen other. (Eakin 1999: 48) How the other participates in the construction of the self varies,¹² and Eakin (1999: 62) puts the stress on social interaction and forms of address: "the capacity to be addressed as a 'you' by others is a preliminary to the ultimate capacity of being able to say 'I' of oneself'. There are several ways in which the subject will (or not) be addressed as a 'you'. More often than not this 'address' takes place through 'the gaze' which disturbs and aims to regulate the subject's behaviour, as in the case of colonial gaze that triggers postcolonial self-narration (Doring 2002). Representations of the gaze and the heroines' reaction to it in Rhys's

¹⁰This 'accounting' for one's life, or even one lived day can also be read for its moral implications. One's day can be measured by how productive one has been and how much one has contributed to the society or a cause- such as resistance to hegemonies, decolonization, etc. Apart from the quality of what has been achieved, the emplotment of the action (the planning and recouping thereof) can also be monitored as to its morality. As Michele L. Crossley reminds us (2000: 47): "story-telling is a pervasive activity and can be traced back to the ancient and still common practice of guiding moral behaviour through the reciting of parables and fables."

¹¹This, for Eakin, is one of the fundamental uses of memory, and the extended self is the operative element (2001: 114): "as an adaptive system, the general function of memory is to predict and prepare for future encounters, actions and experiences". It is when the extended self does not function properly that these two operations fail and lead to what we perceive to be "narrative disorders".

¹²The relational aspect of life stories continues after the story is told, as Ritivoi (2005: 234) argues: "once an experience has been related, it enters public discourse and multiple participants in the discourse determine the meaning it requires."

novels emphasize the role that perceptions of others have on the way we engage in story-telling. As such, the gaze can be conceived of as part of the equation of relationality and/or intersubjectivity as George Butte explains (2004: 27)

We can usefully describe the fundamental components of this intersubjectivity as the body and the gaze of one subject and of the Other(s), and then the consequent appropriations negotiated among these consciousnesses and intentionalities, appropriations that the gaze, the body, and their discourses enact.

Reading the body and the gaze as fundamental components of intersubjectivity will be one of my analytical approaches. I argue that in Rhys's novels the narrative weaves in and out of the bodies and gazes of characters, with the heroines' bodies as the receptacle of various forms of patriarchal gaze and discourses. Social interaction in the novels is also enacted through the 'meeting' of bodies and gazes, emphasizing that these two are the two fundamental elements in social interaction. These interactions, in turn, alter the meaning of these 'bodies' and 'gazes'.

The third element of self-narration that I want to look at are the established ways of telling a life story which play an important role in the way that any given subject tries to tell his/her own story. As Eakin argues: "What we talk of as our experience of our reality is constituted for us very largely by the already established ways in which we must talk in our attempts to account for ourselves" (1999: 62) The established ways are comprised of the choice of vocabulary and accent along with established story emplotments for each category of subject. These established emplotments and/or stories are available in the cultural archive and even before the experience, such received narratives give the subject an idea of what he/she will be going through in a given situation. The narrative that is to accompany a certain event is thus determined or suggested at the very start, in the same way that the way we experience events such as sad, lucky or successful is already determined by the narratives we have come in contact with in our cultural environment.

However, when the subject's experiences do not converge with received narratives, nor do his/her ways of telling and this is where the Rhys heroine transgresses. Not only does the Rhys heroine try to fit her experience to some culturally accepted form of emplotment after the event, but she also tries to plan out

her days so that they will have some kind of a recognizably 'respectable order'.¹³ As David Carr puts it (1986: 62): "in planning our days and our lives we are composing the stories or the dramas we will act out and which will determine the focus of our attention and our endeavours", and of course these stories are composed along the lines of stories we are already familiar with. This crucial use of the cultural archive of life-stories is emphasized by Robbins (2005: 147) as well: she suggests that our stories make sense to ourselves and others when they are placed within an archive. It is the singularity of Rhys's heroines' experience that leaves them devoid of previous patterns to follow. When the narrator, upon consulting the cultural archive of narratives, can find none that corresponds to her own experiences, then the very yardstick that she depends on is taken away from her:

[N]arratives have real effects: readers seek themselves in the stories (and histories) they read; they empathize and identify with the characters (and historical personages) they encounter in texts; they measure their own achievements and failings against those stories and histories. And the problem with this is that some kinds of experience are actually absent from the very narratives where the reader has most right to expect their presence. (Robbins 2005: 147)

Thus Eakin's question of consequences for identity when narrative practices are interrupted or not even engaged in the first place can also be asked from a historical perspective: what if selves similar to the one in question haven't engaged in self-narration in the past, or what if their self narration has never been recorded/registered? The reason a certain type of subject might not have been represented or accounted for in the already established ways of telling also has to do with the agency that the social discourses ascribe to that subject, or with what Gilmore (1994: 35) calls

the mutually reinforcing networks of value which credit some and not others as authors, as persons having a story worth telling - that is of possessing a life worth remembering and of being sufficiently representative to have their texts matter.

Such stories that are 'not worth remembering' are lacking in the written cultural archive and the self-narrator is faced with the challenge of either conforming her life and practice to a category that has already been 'accounted for' or the challenge of formulating her own idiom. In Rhys's work both the moments of conformity and newly

¹³ For instance, in *Good Morning Midnight*, the heroine Sasha feels she has to ask for the nearest cinema in order to justify her being alone in a cafe, so that it fits into the narrative of a lone woman going to the pictures, rather than sitting alone in a cafe - the former seems more respectable in Sasha's worldview than the latter.

formulated articulation are staged, revealing to the reader how one complication feeds into the other. Internalizing culturally available forms of life story telling will inflect available forms due to the new content introduced by a previously unarticulated subject. In the absence of the archive, the narrator can also try to create her own community of stories, bringing in similar life-stories into her own narration.

The narratives in Rhys's novels, I argue, show the symptoms of a subjectivity that does not fit categories and that has now found voice. The employment of the moral structures of these life-stories do not fit established forms, and Rhys builds up a poetics for them. The loyalties or the goals of her heroines seem to be open to various possibilities. Is it a postcolonial voice they're striving for or is it a feminist one? How much do we expect them to champion the anti-imperialist cause? How much at home do they feel in the English language? What will define the quest or direction in these narratives, what will be their chronotope? Each time the Rhys heroine engages in self-narration all these questions arise. When the subject does formulate a new or inflected mode of self-narration, more often than not her interlocutors do not know how to make sense of it, and respond to it with obstructions and prohibitions.

Transgressions and Obstructions:

Eakin suggests that the experiencer/protagonist has to organize her experiences according to the way that a person of her standing is allowed to talk: he reminds us that "only certain ways of talking are deemed legitimate". (Eakin 1999: 62) Indeed, the inflections to established forms that arise due to situatedness are tolerated only up to a point. The limits of transgression are set by the society, and the punishment that is considered meet for those who cross the line can vary from social exclusion to institutional confinement. Often, the Rhys heroine crosses the limits of transgression, by not obeying certain rules pertaining to conversations across classes, by voicing stories that are not supposed to be spoken publicly and even by her usage of the wrong accent at the wrong time. Her transgressions put her on the periphery of society, confined, if not to institutions, to small spaces where she keeps contact with the outside world at a minimum.

Eakin (1999:62) contends that the subject learns how to be this or that sort of person "in conversation with others"; therefore the most effective obstruction to self-narration is robbing the subject from social interaction. Being socially ostracized deprives the subject from self-expression, leading him/her into a world of solipsisms, as is evidenced by the narratives of Rhys heroines:

Sharing memories with others is in fact a prime social activity [...] learned in early childhood, and the result of this learning is the establishment of a store of memories that are shareable and ultimately reviewable by the individual, forming a personal history that has its own value independent of the general memory function of prediction and preparation for future events. (Eakin 1999: 109)

When an individual is deprived of the opportunity to share her story - to our purpose, of self-narration - he/she then has no easily accessible personal history that comes to one's aid in when one is speaking of one's self. Eakin here underlines the connection between memory and anticipation, as the two important operations that the 'extended self' engages in. Sharing memories reiterates memories, anchors them in our minds, makes it easier to tell them next time there is recourse to those memories. And naturally, depending on how often one gets a chance to share these stories, they take on a more retrievable form, ready to be referred to each time the subject is faced with a question concerning who she is and how she got to be where she is.

If we put the emphasis on the *shareable* quality of memory, we can imagine certain limitations that the subject may impose upon herself for fear of not being understood or accepted. Certain stories of childhood may not be appropriate to share, and when these memories are invoked, the subject may resort to unconventional modes of telling, or rather, un-telling. The resulting ellipses and bends in the narrative test the boundaries of the leeway the listener gives for incoherence and absences: these may well lead the narrator to be perceived by the 'other' as dysfunctional. This dysfunctional way of narration is dubbed *dysnarrativia* in narrative psychology and it proves a very useful term when categorizing narration that is marked by dysphoria, fragmentation and unsynchronicity. I will look at how these narrative symptoms manifest themselves in more detail in the analytical chapters, but in order to be able to do that, I first need to look at the various possibilities and limitations that certain usages of the narrative voice offer to a self-narrator.

Narrative Voice in Self-Narration: Possibilities and Limitations

Rhys uses a variety of narrative voices and tenses in her novels, each indicating a different articulation of the female and colonial selves that she is interested in.

Voyage in the Dark, *Good Morning Midnight* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* are all written in the first person, allowing for an easy categorization of these works under the heading of self-narration. These novels, however, have different ways of going about the business of self-narrating, which is marked first and foremost in the tense used by the narrative voice. *Voyage in the Dark* is told in past tense, whereas *Good Morning Midnight* is told in the present. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is also told in the past tense, yet differently from her other novels, there are two narrators, in effect, two self-narrations, separate, but complementary. The other set, *Quarlet* and *After Leaving Mr. McKenzie* are written in the third person, in which the narrator is totally covert and the story is represented almost exclusively through one focalizer. I propose, within the space of this dissertation, to read these last two novels as self-narration as well basing my reading on the psychological depictions of the heroines in the said novels.

My investigation of narrative voice is informed by the models proposed by Franz K. Stanzel and Gerard Genette and I locate self-narration, particularly the types that we encounter in Rhys's work, within both these models. In order to explore the mechanics of literary staging of the self different ways of representing subjectivity need to be considered. As evidenced by his term "narrative situation", Stanzel's categorization puts the stress on the location of narrative transmission, the vantage point from where the narrator observes the events. In Stanzel's model, self-narration corresponds to a first-person narrative: naturally not any first-person narrative but those in which the "I" tells its own story, the mode that Manfred Jahn calls "I-as-protagonist"!⁴ In similar terms Genette refers to the narrator who tells his/her own life story as "autodiegetic narrator", that is, a homodiegetic narrator who is identical with the main protagonist. In Genette, the taxonomy favours the "auto" aspect, that is to say, the self-reflexive character of this sort of narration!⁵ Stanzel, however, rather than reflexivity (or the ways in which the temporal gap is bridged), is interested in the split that is inherent in first person-narration: the splitting of the "I"

¹⁴ See Ni.inning and Ni.inning (2004) and also Stanzel's concept of 'story of initiation'.

¹⁵ There is also what Genette terms "simultaneous narration", done in the present tense, where this reflexivity would be reduced a minimum.

into a narrating and narrated self. The split allows for narrative distance which can either be collapsed or stretched, depending on the effect that the author wants to achieve. Both the self-reflexivity suggested by Genette, and the split emphasized by Stanzel are very relevant to my study of Rhys's novels. Both these categories deal with "I" narrations, but I argue that the self may also represent its subjectivity, that is her consciousness, through the use of "she" narration.

Representations of Subjectivity and Consciousness Content

One of the ways in which the narrative voice develops its own character in a given text, I argue, is the way it represents subjectivity. Marion Gymnich (2000) proposes literary description of consciousness as a medium of identity construction, and drawing upon her model, I'd like to link the representation of subjectivity to the representation of consciousness, or what I would call, consciousness content. The descriptions of consciousness, especially when various narrative methods are used together to convey the feeling of reading the transcript of a mind is usually referred to as "mimesis of cognition".¹⁶ I argue that the mimesis of cognition goes hand in hand with the mimesis of memory, and that the rhetorical ways of introducing 'consciousness content' coincide with those introducing memories. The style in which a self-narrator takes diversions to recount feelings or memories is the trademark of the narrator, a piece of evidence by which we can identify that protagonist (indeed, if it is an autodiegetic narrator as in the case of majority of Rhys's novels) and attribute to it the status of a self!¹⁷

Not only the stylistic way in which the consciousness of a self is represented on the page - such as passages of stream of consciousness or shorter injunctions to the self in italics - but also the content of these passages help us recognize a particular person/character. When we try to locate elements that allow a narrator to depict the consciousness of a self (in Rhys usually the narrator's own self), there are a number of markers we can concentrate on. Gymnich (2000: 68) offers the narrative description of perceptions, thoughts and feelings as three markers we can work with

¹⁶ See Birke and Basseler "Mimesis der Erinnerung" in A. Erll, A. Nünning (Hgg.): *Gedächtniskonzepte der Literaturwissenschaft: Theoretische Grundlegung und Anwendungsperspektiven*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter 2005. 123-147.

¹⁷ The switch from the story to remembrances in narrative can be signalled in a couple of ways on the page. The most straightforward is what Loschnigg (Gymnich 2003: 126) calls a 'rhetoric of remembering' and it is to be found in 'I' narratives where the narrator is consciously telling her story.

when we explore how a consciousness is being portrayed. Representation of a given subjectivity will be through the representation of these elements that can best simulate the goings on in the mind. In Gymnich's model consciousness content is in a dynamic relationship with one another, one dominating the other, or one giving cause to the other according to circumstances. Different elements of consciousness will dominate the narrative at a given point of time, and the dominance of perceptions, thoughts or feelings can illuminate the psychological or social difficulties that person is going through - such as a marked lack of trust in ones' perceptions. In many instances the emotions that arise in given circumstances may be corrected or even censured by the 'rational' thought processes of the subject. Incidental emotions may or may not be found in accordance with previous feelings, and this could well be a manifestation of some dysfunction in the character.¹⁸

In this context, iteration of feelings and perceptions becomes a key element in the formation of subjectivity, and the repeated cognitive functions by a literary character will help up recognize who he or she is.¹⁹ For instance, if we are introduced into the stream of consciousness of a character within which encounters with unsympathetic characters cause a fear that is associated with confrontation with predatory animals, we'll recognize that to be the mind-script of a character who's engaged in such ruminations before. Perceptions concerning the world around us vary from person to person and equally, through time, the mental responses of a character to given situations are changed; these, however, are usually accounted for by changes in the circumstances. It is through such changing attitudes reflected in narrative that one can trace the development of the narrator's self.

The development of the self is, in short, both the impetus for and the result of self-narration. This intricate dynamics between self and narration is defined by Gilmore as *autobiographies* (1994: 42), and as a tool of analysis she focuses on both the cognitively and socially determined aspects of the 'I' used in self-representations:

¹⁸ The representation of thoughts, according to Gymnich's model, is relevant to this study because there we can find the self-conception of the subject. It is there that we can observe the discrepancy between one's self-image and how one gets treated by the society: it is there the self comes to terms with its predicament.

¹⁹ It is through repeated cognitive functions of a given character that we recognize him as who he is - only through a certain amount of iteration can a self be perceived as a self. As in Butler's explanations of gender identity iteration is a key element in the formation of a subjectivity. It does not have to be exact, but it at least will present a pattern.

I offer the term autobiographies to describe those elements of self-representation that [...] mark a location in a text where self-invention, self-discovery and self-representation emerge within the technologies of autobiography - namely, those legalistic, literary, social and ecclesiastical discourses of truth and identity through which the subject of autobiography is produced. Autobiographies as a description of self-representation and as a reading practice, is concerned with interruptions and eruptions, with resistance and contradiction as strategies of self-representation [...] The "I" is multiply coded in a range of discourses: it is the site of multiple solicitations, multiple markings of "identity", multiple figurations of agency. Thus, autobiographies avoids the terminal questions of genre and close delimitation and offers a way instead, to ask: Where is the autobiographical?²⁰

The idea of an 'I' solicited by different view points, and marked by different identities, or social categories is a very fortuitous way of considering the 'I' used in Rhys's novels. This reading of the self-representational narrative, by focusing on the location from where it is generated allows 'I' to be conceptualized as a space where the self confronts the social discourses that seem to pre-empt its self-definition. As such, 'I' can become the space of resistance against these discourses. Different aspects of one's identity contend for dominance in this constrained space of the 'I' in an attempt to formulate itself in this field of tension. Self-narration de/reconstructs (as needs be) the various discourses in which the subjectivity has been formed and within this framework resistance, contradiction, and de-essentialization become strategies of self-representation in Rhys's novels.

Fragmentation of the 'I'

The investigation into the narrative agency of the subject reveals the power relations between the narrated and narrating 'I', or the self and the narrative medium through which it chooses to represent itself. Apart from the context of conflictual discourses as cause for the fragmentation and the instability of the 'I', Gilmore also draws our attention to the constraints of linguistic reference. The ability of the 'I' to inhabit the subjectivity of both the narrated and the narrating 'I' provides the author with challenges and possibilities. Trying to locate the 'I' between the two can be almost vertiginous, and only through certain markers can the reader be assured of what it is that he/she reads in the continuum of the narrated and narrating 'I'. Through repeated use of punctuation the narrator can develop her own lexicon of how she switches from one level to the other, and thus avoid the need for the stock usages of

²⁰ This understanding of the autobiographical, I argue, allows for the autobiographical to be read in other genres as well.

'rhetoric of consciousness' and/or memory which may draw uncalled for attention to mediation^{2,1}

Accordingly, the tense in which narrative transmission takes place and in which memory is presented is of great importance: through use of tense a feeling of distance or immediacy can be conveyed. The tense of narrative transmission may stay the same; the tense for remembrances may vary. The tense, or even the system of punctuation in which the memory is transmitted tells us something about the function of that memory in the narrative. For different ends, through the use of tense, the narrated and narrating 'I' may be made to conflate, or to split. Whereas the conflation strengthens the sense of continuity of the self, the splitting "makes possible both the alienation and nostalgia for the fictional unity of an 'I'" (Gilmore: 66) Thus, choice of tense reflects preferences for the staging the temporal gap between the two 'I's and can be instrumental in depicting a character as stable or alienated.

The psychological circumstances of the self-narrator can be further distinguished through the use of a pronoun other than 'I': the creative tension and distance that self-narration draws upon helps us understand how the use of different pronouns may facilitate the articulation of a subject. Painful experiences may be recounted more easily when the self-narrator uses another pronoun, pointing to the abjection and alienation the self feels when experiencing sensations or emotions that are too much to bear. When the need to express these emotions are as strong as the intensity of the emotions felt, the self will bring forth self-evidence rechristening the location of speech 'she'. I argue that the third person 'she' is yet another space where self-representation can happen, also because not all subjects are allowed to speak with equal authority from the location of 'I', due to patterns and practices that assess the value of speech according to race, gender and class. Indeed, historically, 'I' has been inhabited by white, imperial males or a plethora of good housekeeping wives, or indeed, as in *Jane Eyre*, hard working single women who know their place in the order of things. Thus, the subjectivities in Rhys will have a different relationship to this 'I', bending it out of recognition, or even, as the case may be, renaming it as 'she'.

^{2,1} One of these methods is 'simultaneous narration'. Further methods will be discussed in the analytical chapters. Sylvie Maurel (1998:114) draws our attention to one of these in her analysis of *Good Morning Midnight*: "She uses a mode akin to free indirect speech as speech tags like "he says" or "I say" are deleted [...] the omission of the quotation marks displaces the origin of discourse: it is hard to decide whether this is actual dialogue or Sasha's stream of consciousness".

In order to categorize the 'she' narratives as self-narration, we first have to qualify the third person narrations Rhys presents in her novels. The categories of "figural narration" offered by Stanzel²² and "fixed internal focalization" by Genette, where the fictional world is presented from the perspective of a character who is involved in the action^{2,3} can serve to describe the method of narrative transmission in Rhys's 'she' narratives. Whereas the concept of "fixed internal focalization" (Genette) seems more concerned with the unity of the medium for the perception of events, in the figural narrative situation the perceptions and feelings of the 'reflector' are central and these also determine, to a great extent, what gets narrated. That the reflector is the centre of orientation, and on top of that, an agent in what gets told, makes this category suitable as expressing self-narration. Of the two, figural narration with its concern for distance and knowledge raises more pertinent questions to my investigation. In Rhys the distance manifests itself not always through the temporal gap between the narrated and the narrating 'I', but I argue, also through the use of a third person pronoun for the self, exacerbating the distance between the self and its articulation.

I have argued above that 'she' presents another space from where a female can speak. It is of course, not any third person narrative that I propose to read as self-narration. In the narratives I speak of, the narrators are covert, to the degree that they are indiscernible, as in the definition of figural narration.²⁴ The use of third person comes into its own, as shall be explained in 3.2., in post-colonial literature especially when we consider what Franz Fanon calls 'third person consciousness' (as quoted in Doring 2002: 120) incurred in the colonial by the colonizer's gaze.

²² "The generic characteristic that distinguishes the act of transmission in fiction from that in drama and poetry as well as in film is mediacy (*Mittelbarkeit*) of presentation. Narration, in the traditional (not the semiotic) sense, is always mediated, indirect, presupposes the presence of a transmitter or mediator, a narrator who may be personalized, visible, or unpersonalized, practically invisible to the reader. This was the main theoretical basis of my original definition of three narrative situations: first-person narration, whose narrator is personalized, visible as a character within the fictional world; authorial narration as in *Tom Jones* or *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, where the narrator is personalized, visible and outside the fictional world; and finally figural narration, where, as in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* or in *Mrs. Dalloway*, the narrator has become invisible and his or her place is taken by a figural medium or reflector-character (Stephen Dedalus, Clarissa Dalloway)." (Stanzel 1978: 249)

²³ For more information see Vera and Ansgar Nunning (2004: 113).

²⁴ Be it the experience of others, or the experience of one's self as it once was, as Butte aptly points out (2004: 24) "[...] subjectivity is fundamentally intersubjective. Embodied experience, with its kind of presence and fullness, takes its shape in primordial ways by contact with others."

Narrative Disorders and Terminology

It is clear that a representation of one's self in the third person is a signal of pathology, indeed, as Gymnich points out, the use of third person pronoun can be a heuristic tool for depicting psychologically disturbed characters, especially when the third person is used alternately with the first-person to indicate alienation. Because of the strong link between narrative and identity this is one of the many markers that suggest to the reader that the narrator is 'not normal'. As I have suggested earlier, the shifts in narrative voice are tolerated up to a point. In fact, narrative practices are continuously monitored for signs of disorder. Self-narrative has been perceived as an operation within which the individual can be caught in her/his inconsistencies and non-conformities, and also within which, through narrating these petty crimes, he/she can attain some therapeutic benefit. As Gilmore (1994: 55) has pointed out:

The talking cure has been used by some critics as a metaphor for the autobiographical process of forming the chaotic elements of life into a narrative that replaces and transcends those experiences in a healing and restorative way. Autobiography scholars who take this view would agree with Freud that the events themselves are subordinated in analysis to the process of forming a therapeutic narrative. In other words, the subject moves, via autobiography, from hysteria to historia.

When the subject cannot move to historia in a socially accepted way, hysteria will remain, or indeed, the unconventional historia of the subject will be perceived as hysteria. 'Hysterical speech' breaks the rules of conventional or understandable narrative and as such is used as proof of the subject's abnormality or indeed reason for clinical treatment and/or confinement:

In addition to global amnesia, which produces the familiar "arrested narrative" (autobiographical recall "up until, or a few years before the injury") they [cognitive psychologists] describe other, subtler malfunctions that manifest themselves in a variety of narrative deformations - confabulation, "under-narration", "denarration". "Individuals who have lost the ability to construct narrative" they conclude, "have lost their selves". (Eakin 1999: 124)

Clinical findings and branding that Eakin reveals here provide very fortuitous terms for the ways in which psychological problems affect narrative structures. I believe terms like "arrested narrative", "confabulation", "under-narration" and "denarration" can provide us with points of reference when trying to define the narrative modes that Rhys employs in her novels. These are narrative traits that are at once recognizable and call our attention to the circumstances in which they arise - which is one of the

guiding questions of this study. These forms of speech are clinically branded *dysnarrativia*, and looking at the diagnosis Eakin (2001 : 125) returns ones again to the conditions that not only lead to such kind of narration, but the cultural framework within which such narrative is considered dysfunctional:

This sense of something missing, an inner chill or deadness, seems to be associated with a "dysnarrativia" that bespeaks a damaged identity. Who can say, for sure, however, that the identities in question are truly damaged? It is the fact that those who observe such individuals should think so that interests me, suggesting that we live in a culture in which narrative functions as the signature of the real, of the normal.

Thus, the reactions that Rhys characters get to their stories reveal the nature and values of the culture in which they speak, reveals to what an extent 'delinquencies of space' (Regard 2002) are tolerated and how societies develop ways to monitor the borders of their subject categories. In the following chapters I will sketch the constellation of these subject categories in patriarchal and postcolonial contexts with special emphasis on the borders of centre and periphery.

3.1. Female Self-Narration and the Category of the Amateur

When we set out to investigate the dynamics between identity and self-narration Eakin's question (2001:112) "What are the prerequisites for having a self and on whose terms do you have it?" becomes very pertinent. Rhys lets us observe the identity of her heroines emerge in the often conflicting gravitational fields of social positioning and self-narration, her narrative representations informed by the reaction or internalization of the way the subject is 'recruited' by society.²⁵ In this chapter I will present an outline of the subject positions that the patriarchal world in Rhys's novels allows her heroines and the relation of these positions to narrative categories already delineated by gender-oriented narratology. I propose to look at how forms of self-hood are negotiated by women by virtue of their being female; through their body and sexuality. While doing so I am fully aware that it would be misleading to treat gender as 'hermeneutic key' to women's narratives. Still, where a woman is placed within a particular set of female categories will affect the way she articulates herself. Building

²⁵ This is a term that Catherine Belsey (2002: 53) uses in her discussion of Foucault: "Societies recruit us as subjects, subject us to their values, and incite us to be accountable, responsible citizens, eager, indeed, to give an account of ourselves in terms we have learned from the signifying practices of those societies themselves".

on categories of narrative voice as proposed by gender oriented narratology I will draw up a Rhysian poetics of female-self narration, looking at the particular conditions that the female subject finds itself in in Rhys's novels. The difficulty of possessing a subject position, both as a woman and a white colonial, will exhibit itself in certain inflections in narrative voice and these inflections will be investigated in detail in the analytical chapters.

Helen Carr (1996: 5) has also considered the narrative voices that Rhys makes use of from a gendered perspective and has come to the following conclusion about the subjectivity that she depicts in her novels:

Her texts are all versions of a *fragmented female subjectivity*, as Rhys shows her heroines trying to construct an identity for themselves in radically unstable situations where traditions and social conventions prescribe certain rituals but are emptied of meaning.

The unstable condition that Rhys heroines find themselves in is the atmosphere of post-Empire Metropolises of Europe in which new nationalities and identities are being formed, with women participating in these formulations, but mostly becoming members of these new groupings still by male proxy (such as lovers and husbands). The identity that Rhys heroines negotiate is usually a post-colonial female one in which different grammars of identification are at work all at once.

The categories of gender and race also work as grammars of identification, and are used as metaphors through which to describe the other. The metaphor and the target get so interlinked that as Irene Gedalof (1999: 109) points out "what appear as separate categories are revealed as the conditions of articulation for each other." Gender provides the necessary metaphors with which other categories such as class, race and community are founded. As such, the definition of the category of woman becomes important not just for the construction of the category of female, but also other categories of subjects along with the narrations they engage in. As narrative theorists who work on gender oriented and postcolonial narratology have shown, subject categories defined by gender and race have a bearing on narrative voice just as reliability, the use pronoun and time, all, clearly, interacting with each other.

Marion Gymnich (2002: 35) underlines the three gender-oriented elements that need to be correlated with aspects of narration when we want to investigate conditions of women's self-articulation through a feminist perspective: sex, gender

and sexuality.²⁶ Understandings of gender, sex and sexuality play a very important role in the demarcations between gender roles. I argue that these roles are allocated by the respectable members of the society as in the following, in relation to the 'English family':

Women's lives are fragmented; they start as young women and are successively transformed from without into either spinsters, demimondaines, wives, mothers, or matriarchs. The process is not one of growth, of evolution; rather, they enter each stage as a failure of the previous stage. (Pomerleau 1980: 37)

These positions call to mind the character judgements that Rhys heroines have to suffer from people around them. What interest me particularly are the borders between these categories that are set up for women, in the case of Rhys's heroines, at a period of high modernism and the advent of consumerism. I argue that among the categories stated above wife and mother are the two unfailed states towards which social conventions dictate that all women should aspire.

For Rhys's heroines, the judgement passed by wives and mothers can be just as injurious- these are women who have not 'failed' in their roles and therefore are socially authorized to pass judgement on the Rhys woman. This judgement is passed, more often than not, through 'the gaze'. To varying degrees the male gaze²⁷ and the gaze of respectable women are a technology of patriarchal intervention in the self-invention of the female. The gaze of the 'audience' affects the heroines' performance of their identity directly,²⁸ as it is used as a policing tool to keep gender and race categories intact. Pertinent to my discussion is also the 'colonial gaze' delineated by Doring and Fanon, of which I'll talk about in 3.2. As Doring (2002: 121)

²⁶ Gymnich also calls attention to the reception of narratives by women and how it is determined by gender categories: "Das primäre Anliegen der feministischen Narratologie besteht darin, bei der Analyse von Erzählverfahren in literarischen Texten in konsequenter Weise die geschlechtsspezifischen Implikationen der Produktions- und Rezeptionsbedingungen zu berücksichtigen und Korrelationen zwischen narratologischen Aspekten und den soziokulturellen Kategorien sex, gender und sexuality aufzuzeigen."

²⁷ Laura Mulvey (1975) identifies the action of 'possessing' a gaze as being an intrinsically male, hence "the male gaze". Her discussion centers on the agency of viewing, whereas the concern I highlight here is the transformative effects of this gaze on the subject thus turned object. The gaze conveys to the heroine what is expected of her and in turn, the heroine internalizes the category that she has been put in. As such, the gaze is a site of struggle and addressing its power, Beth Newman (quoted in Butte 2004: 32) has formulated a 'defusing of the gaze', an attempt to remove the agency of the gaze away from the male to the female. One way of defusing the gaze is introducing the idea of female gaze, where the female objectifies the male through her own viewing.

²⁸ As Judith Butler (1990: 140) suggests, gender itself is the result of reiterated behaviour: "[T]he tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions - and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them."

puts it, in the colonial context the violence of viewing is "transformed into the counter agency of self-invention" and similarly the patriarchal society's gaze on the marginalized heroine can be decisive.

The *amateur*

Gender oriented narratology focuses on the differences that female narrators display when compared to male ones, however as I have said my interest lies in the distinctions between female subjectivities, especially in narratives where they are pitted against one another as opposites. In her investigation into female subjectivity and 'figures of desire' in the 18th and 19th centuries, Nancy Armstrong (1987) calls for a focus on the historical landscape of the gendered subject. Such a historical focus on Rhys reveals certain aspects of the modern predicament that touch her heroines particularly. Sue Thomas (1990: 26) compares Rhys's heroines to male protagonists of the modern period:

Like Ulysses or *The Waste Land*, Rhys's fiction has a sense of isolation and psychic fragmentation, together with the multiple voices of male and female characters, the voices of memory and history, snatches of popular songs and literary allusions, interweaving past and present so that boundaries dissolve. However in Rhys's female version of modernism there are no myths for reassurance, no fragments to shore against her ruins, for she is always referring to literary and cultural traditions from which as a woman she has been exiled.

Though we may try to read these women's lives in the plot-muster of the modern flaneur, the stories do not hold the revelations that are available to the male modernist hero.²⁹ Instead the heroines' access to the bohemian- sexually or otherwise- life that the city offers to the flaneur is here laid bare with all its discomforts. Epiphany, or gratification is sought elsewhere, many times by answering the calls for consumerism.

As Thomas (1990: 70) states, the 'social police' of the period condemned and feared such behaviour because it opened up "new forms of subjectivity for women, whose intimate needs, desires, and perceptions of self were mediated by public representations of commodities and the gratifications they promised." Exiled as she is from respectable society, or the 'English family' as I shall conceptualize it in detail in

²⁹ The *amateur* is in a sense a failed flaneur, a woman who fails "to emulate the sexual nomadism of the bachelor" (Thomas 1990: 21), who has failed to enact and fulfil the modern male desire for epiphanies.

3.1. , her desires were dictated by consumerist calls, rather than satisfied within the confines of marriage. This kind of female subjectivity , as Thomas (1990: 68) reveals, was named the amateur:

[the amateur] was constructed as a national and racial threat *from within* [...] The discourses around her focused on her disease or dis/ease and racial health; the fitness of the mother body, her own or that of her partners' wives or future wives; and her lack of self-control , understood in moral or psychological terms, and the difficulties of regulating it.

The racial and biological discourses within which the category of the amateur is defined point to the importance of the categories of sex, gender and sexuality in attaining a subject position. Firstly, it is the amateur 's sex, her female *body* that is of concern here: it is a vessel that can transmit disease and can give birth; both acts potentially harbouring great risk for racial health. It is, on the other hand through her uncontrolled sexuality that transmission of disease or conception may take place. Thomas (1990: 69) sets the amateur apart from the prostitute by pointing out that unlike the amateur "[t]he prostitute has a vested interest in maintaining a healthy body". Inherent here is also that the prostitute would take care not to get pregnant and thereby does not threaten the general soundness and purity of race , unlike the behaviour of the amateur who seems to have abandoned all care for her well-being , or as one of the male characters in *Good Morning Midnight* puts it "self-preservation ". This sexual recklessness is reflected in the constant -sometimes fulfilled- fear of the unmarried Rhys heroine that she might be expecting a child.

Naturally, the unchecked fertility of the amateur threatens the borders of that most respected institution of the wife, possibly the gender category par excellence. Childbearing is the wife's domain, and not only does the amateur threaten to bring disease into the household, but also threatens to upset all sorts of gender practices of the time, including inheritance. Sexuality is the aspect that makes the position of amateurs and colonials (esp. creoles) similar: they 're both perceived as possessing unbridled sexuality which will lead to racial impurity. They are vessels for disease and hence it is in the interest of society to keep them at the margins. Just as racial categories are bolstered by gender discourses , here a gender category is defined through the threat it poses to racial categories. The female body, when not operating according to rules, becomes monstrous: it becomes an anti-body that enters the social flow of conventional gender relations and upsets them.

In that sense, the amateur body tends towards the abject, described by Kristeva (1982: 4) as "what disturbs identity, system, order, what does not respect border, position, rules". It is the heroine's own body becomes that disturbs system and order, that disturbs the identity that is allocated to her. The protagonist herself does not know where to place her own body in the social order so that it may have meaning. She starts to perceive herself through the eyes of others as 'representing a problem', is forced to relinquish her status as a legitimate subject and perceives herself as an object. This leads to the breakdown of the distinction between subject and object, hurling her into the space of the abject. This kind of alienation towards one's own body, conflation of the subject and object is observed in the predicament of the white colonial as well and leads to 'third person consciousness' on which I will extrapolate in 3.2.

Rhys's Heroines and Narrative Voice from a Gendered Perspective

As readers of female self-narration it should be our concern, as Gilmore (1994: 44) insists "to discern, in the discourses of truth and identity, those textual places where women's self-representation interrupts (or is interrupted by) the regulatory laws of gender and genre". Women's self-representation or self-narration will inflect the established ways of telling a life story, in other words the genre, both in thematic and formal terms. The genre of life-writing which is supposedly self-valedictory becomes, in the case of Rhys's heroines, chronicles of failures marked by dysphoria rather than euphoria- returning to the idea of the amateur as a failed flaneur. Dysphoric self-narration can be said to be the realm of Rhys's heroines, in opposition to their modern male counterparts pursuing and fulfilling their quest for epiphanies. Apart from the *mood* of narration, for the purposes of this study I will look at two distinctions that are usually drawn in gender oriented narratology when it comes to voice: that of the autonomous and relational, and emotional and professional. I argue that these divisions are the very borders that Rhys's narrators try to negotiate in order to gain access to authority to tell their personal stories.

The idea of autonomous self-narration is based on the assumption that the (male) self-narrator is the sole possessor of his life story, that he is the autonomous instigator of events. As Sidonie Smith has observed (1987: 13), there is a general understanding that "males represent experiences of self, others, space, and time in

individualistic, objective, and distant ways, while females represent experiences in relatively interpersonal, subjective, immediate ways." While Smith here depicts the conventional understanding of how male and female narratives work, various critics have suggested that the preoccupation with the other, which is deemed to be a "female" characteristic, can be found in male narratives as well and recuperates relationality for the understanding of self-narration in general. An analysis of ways in which female self-narrators engage in narration reveals the dynamics of this operation and thus gives us the tools to read relational narration in male self-narratives as well. The need to understand and even to represent the worldview of others, the need for intersubjectivity, even in self-narration, is one shared by all sexes. Eakin calls our attention to the relational aspects of self-narration in general suggesting that what Smith (1987: 18) terms "the preoccupation with the other" acts as a corrective to how "the model of imperial masculinity-providential or secular- reads out the self's passionate, vulnerable attachment to the other." (Eakin 1999: 49)

The objectivity that is usually attributed to male writing, as pointed to by Smith, is the working assumption of 'authorial narration', with the (male) narrator knowing the complete truth about the characters and relating it to the reader. Susan Sniader Lanser proposes 'personal narration' as an alternative to the male authorial one when she considers the legitimacy with which male and female narrators can assume to know the universal truth and penetrate the subjectivity of others (especially those of the other sex). Lanser (1992: 19) argues that the concept of 'personal narration' is "less formidable for women than authorial voice, since an authorial narrator claims broad powers of knowledge and judgement, while a personal narrator claims only the validity of one person's right to interpret her experience."³⁰ Thus personal narration focuses on the experience of the self, however, it doesn't necessarily rule out intersubjectivity, as I will be demonstrating in the analytical chapters. The narrator is more aware of the scope of her understanding and error of judgement. Her narrative is a sharing of confidences with the narratee rather than making what seem to be 'public' statements.

³⁰ Lanser (1992: 19) points out that the authorial voice has traditionally been assumed to belong to male narrators and that in order to partake of the authority that is ascribed to authorial voice, female narrators have been pushed to conform to a "manly" voice, which in turn, reinforces the value attached to "male speech". Then the question would be what would happen when a female narrator refuses to speak like "men" even if it means abstaining from a claim to authority and when even the right to speak about one's own experience is precarious.

The opposition between 'public statements' and 'private confidences' takes on an interesting dimension in Rhys's novels. For the self-narrators that Rhys constructs there is little space for 'taking into confidence' since, I argue, they all lack a private space, a space that they can call their own. For lives that are lived in public spaces or rented hotel rooms the conception of the personal becomes problematic. Rhys's heroines' love affairs and lives in general take place in public places such as restaurants and hotels, putting a strain on what one may call a 'narrative intimacy'. So the different tones reserved for the emotional and the professional ('feminine' or 'matter of fact') are not kept to in these narrations. This affects the mood of the narration and amorous moments can be experienced and recalled in a matter-of-fact language, whereas some petty financial circumstance may be expressed in the most emotional terms. The personal and the professional, according to Jellinek, is a very important divide that effect female writing:

Women are writing about their world of family, friends and issues crucial to women's survival. If they write less about their professional lives it is because it usually matters less to them than their personal/emotional accomplishments.

Rhys's narrators usually have no immediate family, few friends, and more importantly for my discussion, making the two spheres personal and professional very difficult to tell apart, no domicile to thematize in their narrations. Due to this very reason of homelessness, for instance, the amateur's sexual and amorous exchanges inhabit an ambiguous space between the personal and professional, and this affects the way both the narrators and other characters in the novels characterize the heroine's sexual relations. As a kept woman Rhys's heroine's emotional accomplishments provide for her daily maintenance and matter all the more because for the amateur, the anti-professional, these amorous exchanges comprise all that is 'crucial to women's survival' both financially and emotionally. In Rhys, the sphere of domesticity, emotions and monetary exchange all seem to merge and the accomplishments in these fields can no longer be treated separately. However, Rhys's narrators work around this in interesting ways and I believe their problematic relationship to 'private space' makes the question of whether a narrator has a home a question that gender oriented narratology could ask.

3.2. Colonial Subject and Self-Narration in Rhys

In Chapter 3.1. I have spoken about how the 'recruitment' by the patriarchal order effects female self-narration. A similar process of recruitment and negotiation happens in the colonial context. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (1989: 30) recognize that within her poetics Rhys has: "drawn an analogy between the relationship of men and women and those of the imperial power and the colony."³¹ Two seemingly different grammars of identification, one for the patriarchal and one for the colonial order use the same the syntax of deprivation, dispossession and displacement.³²

In *The Intimate Empire: Reading Women's Autobiography*, Gillian Whitlock (2000: 5) argues that "colonialism impacts at the very point where our sense of the possibilities for self-definition is concerned". This chapter posits the condition of being a colonial as a centrally modifying factor for the self-narrative project since colonialism effects deeply the subject's connection to space; raising questions of ownership and belonging. While the colonial order monitors the subject's entry to real spaces (such as church, school, hospital, club etc), it also monitors its entry to discursive spaces such as 'the imperial English family'³³ Kathleen Renk (1999: 8) quotes George Lamming's description of the English family as "a metashrine as a transmitter of English culture and as an apparatus that exerted control over what the patriarchy considered the "unmanageable", the Other, white women, slaves of both sexes, and the colonies". Thus the English family becomes a technology that keeps the subjects in line with the imperial social and political project. When Rhys's heroines fail to fit the requisites of this family and to adopt domestic familial roles as

³¹ Apart from Jean Rhys, Doris Lessing, Toni Morrison, Paule Marshall and Margaret Atwood are mentioned as those writers who draw this analogy. The study of self-narrative acts of Rhys heroines serve to reveal the similarities between the dynamics of deprivation, dispossession and displacement that they face in both colonial and patriarchal orders. (ibid)

³² These identifying schemes work through race and gender categories, which, I have argued in 3.1., are used as metaphors for one another.

³³ Ansgar Nunning (1996) convincingly demonstrates that family and kinship metaphors were widely used in colonial accounts of the British Empire in order to foster a feeling of unified community of the ruler and the ruled, the imperial centre expecting filial loyalty from the colonies.

inscribed in Victorian discourses,³⁴ they find themselves excluded from the English family, or at least from roles that are central to its conception.

The power-relations that arise from the colonial system effect the whole apparatus of the society and various kinds of subjects develop within the colonial space according to how far removed or how close they stand in relation to the imperial power. The subject's relation to the imperial power changes with historical developments, and he/she formulates new grammars of identification for relating to the centre through the newly defined gender, race, class, religious and professional allegiances. These changing methods of identification create what Homi Bhabha (1994: 87) calls 'the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity'. Different identities and subjectivities develop along with historical events, with conquests and emancipatory acts. While the power of the settler 'white body' gets diffused, it also gives birth to certain other racial and social categories such as creole, white creole and mulatto, as a result of the 'miscegenation' caused by what Sara Suleri (quoted in Whitlock 2000: 5) calls 'necessary intimacies'.³⁵ These categories have very ambivalent borders which have not so much to do with race in conventional terms but with, as mentioned above, complex grammars of identification.

One aspect of the grammar of identification in the colonial world is the use of European languages and the social structuring that comes with it. In the Caribbean, due to the effects of Middle Passage, both the colonizers and most of the colonized are at the same remove to the landscape, however it is now the English language

³⁴ In her discussion of Woolf's work Deborah Parsons (2007: 84) also points to the existence of these domestic, familial roles, especially that of 'angel in the house': "When women refuse their culturally assigned domestic role, however, assert their own independence and dare to criticize male psychology and ways of life, as by the end of the nineteenth century they were beginning to do, he responds with angry panic. [...] Woolf's concept of the 'angel in the house' refers to a popular nineteenth century poem of the same name by Coventry Patmore, which eulogises the influential Victorian ideal of deferential, supportive and domestic womanhood. [...] For Woolf the 'angel' becomes a 'phantom', who appears when she begins to write and tries to control the opinions of her pen. To kill the angel of the house, she declares, was crucial to the profession of a woman writer.

³⁵ Whitlock (2000: 5) quotes Sara Suleri on the necessary and at the same time inescapable interaction between the colonizer and the colonized "the binarism in the study of colonial discourse has obfuscated the "necessary intimacies that obtain[ed] between ruler and ruled", which created a "counter-culture not always explicable in terms of an allegory of otherness". Suleri maintains that "to interpret the configurations of colonialism in the idiom of such ineluctable divisions" is to overlook and deny the "impact of narrative on a productive disordering of binary dichotomies".

through which the islands have to be administratively interpreted.³⁶ Though this may at the first instant seem to favour English epistemology, one cannot overlook the insufficiencies it inescapably runs into. The predicament of Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a case in point; as a white creole she is dependent on the information provided by the natives of the island, or indeed, those who toil on the land and therefore have a more immediate understanding of the place. Creoles such as Antoinette are very well aware that a purely European epistemology won't get them very far when tackling the issues raised by the islands. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (2001: 9) point to this awareness and reveal its consequences for a differentiated identity on the part of the white settler:

After all, why should the free settler, formally unconstrained, and theoretically free to continue in the possession and practice of 'Englishness' also show clear signs of alienation even within the first generation of settlement, and manifest a tendency to seek an alternative, differentiated identity?

The vivid presence of the myth of the English family in the colonial psyche and the lack of words to describe the immediate environment exacerbate the feeling of alienation and displacement. Just as they are considered unsuccessful in continuing in English ways, the settlers' access to local cultures and the cultures they come in contact with through indentured labour is also curtailed through a devaluation of these cultures perpetrated by the centre. While this devaluation affects the subjugated cultures primarily,³⁷ they also have consequences for the Europeans who are settled in these lands. Fanon's description of the slave predicament corresponds in part to the experience of the settler:

A valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by *dislocation* [...] or it may have been destroyed by *cultural denigration*, the conscious or unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by supposedly superior racial or cultural model" (Ashcroft et al, 1989: 9)

³⁶ Doring (2002: 9) draws from Walcott to point out that the English language has a great impact on the semiotics of the Caribbean, when one considers the fact that the very name of the place, the West Indies is a result of "a historical misreading."

³⁷ "Colonialism is not satisfied with merely holding a people in its grip and emptying the Native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it. [...] the total result looked for by colonial domination was indeed to convince the natives that colonialism was to drive into the natives' heads that if the settlers were to leave, they would at once fall back into barbarism, degradation and bestiality." (quoted in Doring 2002: 10)

The following generations of settlers, or creoles, also feel the oppression of this superior model in their aspiration towards the Ideal. What I mean by following generations is those white colonials who have witnessed, not the conquest, but the regression of imperial power and have come to be seen as, in Rhys's wording, 'horrid colonials' as the Empire wanes and eventually comes to its end. Both in the colonies and the motherland they are recognized as being bad copies of the 'real thing' due to their imperfect reproduction of English culture.³⁸ In the Metropolis they are recognized by their accents and in the colonies by the colour of their skin as 'white cockroaches'. The radical question then is whether the white colonial is 'othered' by the centre and his own practice to such an extent that he/she may in social terms be moving towards the colonized rather than to the colonizing power. This is part of what is meant by 'necessary intimacies', the necessary shift of the white colonial from his/her place of power towards dispossession, to share in the predicament of the colonized. It is these intimacies that Rhys's oeuvre on the whole invites us to contemplate, through its juxtaposition of various subjectivities representing the colonizer and the colonized.

As such, the self-narratives of Rhys's postcolonial heroines will provide a counter reading to those of Victorian colonizers that focus on acquisition of land and peoples and highlight instead the dispossession of the 'colonized' and later the creole. The Victorian Bildungsroman takes the imperial English family as granted and it is the disenfranchised members of this family that provides a counter reading to these 'histories'.³⁹ As Renk (1999: 62) points out, Rhys was an 'early critic' of the imperial family.

The Making of the Creole

The rules that govern the membership to or exclusion from imperial families are very complex and seem to be subject to change with time as revealed in the semantics of the word creole. In her study of the white creole woman's place, Martina Ghosh-

³⁸ The unfortunate predicament of the colonial is that his mimesis of the ideal Homi Bhabha points out is doomed to be incomplete. His concepts of 'almost the same but not quite' (1994: 86) and 'almost the same but not white' (ibid: 89) I argue, apply equally to the white colonial as can be observed in Rhys's narratives.

³⁹ This question is what informs Doring's (2002: 21) discussion: "Both *Man Friday* and *Bertha Mason* [...] figure in plots of self-assertion: plots that gain their plausibility and some of their narrative propulsion by setting up a New World double to their English subject."

Schellhorn looks at the origins of the word 'creole' which gives us both its historical development and the later pejorative meaning it has gained. The semantic change of the word reveals the different grammars of identification at work here and provides an excellent example of Bhabha's 'perverse colonial palimpsest', in which layers of meaning attached to the word all but erase its origin:

'Creole', from the Spanish 'criollo' was originally a designation for the children of Spanish settlers in South American colonies. Later, its referential scope was extended to include the descendants of the French and Spanish migrants to Louisiana, those of European settlers in the West, as well as the mulattoes. This later usage was probably instrumental in stigmatizing the term of reference as applied to those who were 'not quite right' due to a possible contamination of 'pure' European blood.

The colonial preoccupation with miscegenation becomes obvious ; it is a preoccupation that borders on paranoia, a mentality that holds anyone in close contact with the slaves suspect. The trajectory of the word creole gives us an idea about how distances from the Ideal are conceptualized and the greed of discourse to use up meaning. First, the category creole goes through a geographic displacement, and then a racial one. It is a testimony to how the white colonizer is in time clearly subsumed within the denigrated races. The mistrust with which especially the Latinate settlers are held by the Anglosaxon powers manifests itself in how their categorical name is transformed to mean mixed-race subjects. Thus the category of the creole comes to encompass the mulatto, becomes porous and multifarious, more than any other category defined by colonial relations.

Responding to the porousness of creole identity and its representations in Rhys's novels, Ghosh-Schellhorn formulates what she calls 'transitional identity'.⁴⁰ In conceptualizing transitionality as part of the experience of (not exclusively) colonial subjects, Ghosh-Schellhorn demarcates her own theory from previous scholarship, especially that of Bhabha. She delineates transitionality from its possible analogue, 'hybridity', calling 'third space' to task through questioning "the presupposed implicit monolithic originacy of space one and two" (Ghosh-Schellhorn 1998: 180). Indeed, her definitions try to forego origins, conceiving transitionality as a free-floating state, with the focus on the motion itself rather than the distance covered: "'Transitional identity' strives to reflect the chaos of states always in flux, incessantly open to the

⁴⁰ Rhys's understanding of the white Creole woman's position in society (whether in the former colonies or at the centre) as "a permanent state of shipwreck" (Ghosh-Schellhorn 1998: 180), is typical for transitional identity.

influence of motion, hence constantly modified by the experiences which act on them." (ibid: 181) She proposes 'transitional identity' with emphasis on its political character, in a way that is applicable to a variety of subjects wider than the scope of colonial relations:

Not as a grand recit of post-colonial identity but, rather, in the sense of offering a tentatively new perspective on the state of transition within which I see identity exposed to colonial ideology [...]. Transitionality, a term incorporating 'exile', 'emigration', 'immigration' and 'displacement' is undeniably political in its origins. (ibid)

What Ghosh-Schellhorn calls transitional identity with its political rather than ontological undertones finds perfect expression in the mulatto, a category which colonial discourse later puts in the same semantic field as creole, in its perpetual state of movement towards the white body. In his *Undoing Empire*, Jose Buscaglia-Salgado (2003) discusses the position of the mulatto in 18th century Spanish colonies, and reads mulatto subjectivity as a function of the distance from the ideal of whiteness. Buscaglia-Salgado (ibid: 183) equally points to the difficulties that the 'subject constituting project' (Spivak 1988) runs into when dealing with the mulatto:

[T]he mechanism for measuring the degree of variance of a person's figura from the Ideal Body and the deviation of a person's *genio* from the European Ideal always ran against a practice of everyday life that resisted enforcement and thrived precisely in variance and deviation from all such ideals.

Though the 'project' tries to measure the mulatto's distance from the Ideal body, his origins are just too ambivalent to pinpoint. Thus, as in transitional identity defined through movement, the mulatto thrives on movement as well, which in its perpetuity guarantees the deviance from the ideal. That this is just as much a political act becomes clear when Buscaglia-Salgado (ibid: 194) considers the various positions that a mulatto could choose to adopt: "From the vantage point of the mulatto, who moved toward the ideal, black and white were exclusively ideological positions to be assumed or to be eschewed." Thus, the consideration of mulatto subjectivity helps view race as a social construct, the borders of which are open to interpretation and appropriation. Consequently expressions of mulatto subjectivity are an exercise in breaking the essentialist attitude towards race⁴¹ I argue that Rhys's writing is

⁴¹ Buscaglia-Salgado (2002: 195) conceptualizes the mulatto as the subjectivity that is a function of difference: "In the mulatto world there is no greater pleasure than difference and no greater violence than the one implied in the possibility of bridging it in the direction of the European". What is important

informed by the possibilities opened up by the mulatto subjectivity, and she uses it as a spectre throughout her oeuvre.

The Creole in the Metropolis

As I have suggested in 3.1. the English family from which the Rhys heroine feels herself excommunicated operates not just in the colonies but also in the Metropolis where the lone Rhys woman is continuously confronted with it. In Rhys, the colonial subjectivities that we encounter have all made the 'reverse passage' (Doring 2002: 7) and are now speaking from the centre, comparing their experience in the colonies with those in the metropolis. According to Doring (ibid: 18) where the subject is writing from is crucial due to change of the type of intimacies that are now involved: "With the trajectory of travel turned around, the contact zones are displaced to England, a foreign yet familiar place that the migrants must remap when trying to insert their presence".⁴² A new method of meaning making is thus opened up for the post-colonial: "He unexpectedly encounters the real English referent of a sign long familiar from peripheral circulation [...] a semiotic reversal of the exploration discourse" (ibid: 128). England becomes the place to be explored and verified against the discourse that the colonial is already familiar with.

These remappings are made possible by giving meaning retrospectively, by remembering the colonial space in relation to the Metropolis which has now been experienced at first hand. This retrospective meaning-making is one that is fraught with various tensions. Whitlock (2000: 179) argues that "the memory, vision or myth making about colonial spaces represents them as sites of longing and ambivalence, held in utopic/dystopic tension". Through these moments of utopic and/or dystopic remembering triggered by the experiences in the Metropolis the postcolonial redefines images and events - in Rhys's case images and events that pertain both to England and the Caribbean - through a double perspective.

in the mulatto is how he/she appropriates certain attributes of the white people to become 'white', or more precisely, to make people perceive him/her as white.

⁴² We have to note that where the subject finds itself at its moment of self-definition has an evident impact on the concerns voiced in self-narratives. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (1989: 8) also point to the importance of "the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place" in postcolonial writing.

Doring (2002: 128) says that this process of exploration results in "moments of recognition and wistful reconnection", which is a common theme in Rhys's novels, especially in *Voyage in the Dark*. As Doring (ibid) points out the self-narrator: "comes to the mother country in search of meaningful experience, but finds himself observing how meaning itself is produced."

Thus the colonials' travels in the Metropolis reveal the mechanics of the production of meaning. The 'reverse passage' familiarizes the colonial subject with the social circumstances under which subject categories are drawn and what is at stake when respectable or fully enfranchised members of society fight to keep borders of these categories intact. I have already argued that the gaze of respectable members of society to be a tool of 'border policing'; the same is true for the 'colonial gaze' that negates and whose effects have been discussed by various postcolonial critics, and crucially by Fanon:

[Frantz Fanon] asserted in *The Wretched of the Earth* that colonialism, because of its consistent negation of the human other as person 'forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: "In reality who am I?"' (Fanon 1965: 203) If this question is raised and reworked in writing, the emerging genre must indeed be seen as postcolonial autobiography, a genre in which colonial determinants are both acknowledged and redressed. (Doring 2002: 120)

Thus, as Fanon argues "the violence of viewing is transformed into the agency of speaking" (Doring 2002:121). Doring draws our attention to the way in which the colonizer prompts the colonized to account for himself/herself and the ways in which the (post)colonial self responds to how he/she has been viewed and depicted by the centre. As Fanon underlines here, it is the experience of colonialism, of denigration and dislocation that give way to the 'autobiographical impulse' (Janet Varner Gunn 1982), experiences which are, as I have argued, shared by all the subjects that colonialism governs. The particular unease caused by this gaze is very well documented in the narrations of the Rhys heroine, especially the colonist's blind gaze in *Wide Sargasso Sea* in Rochester, a gaze that leads to Antoinette telling her life-story.

The consistent negation or the blind gaze of the colonizer which refuses to recognize a fellow human in the colonized produces an acute sense of alienation in the colonial subject, from both his/her surroundings and his/her own body. The consequences of this negation are further explicated by Fanon (as quoted in Doring

2002: 120): "In the white world the man of colour encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third person consciousness". This negating gaze is exercised not solely by the colonizer in the colonies, but also by the inhabitants of the Metropolis on the postcolonial, whether white, black or of mixed-race. It is this negating gaze that makes the Rhys heroine acutely aware of her physical presence and other people's perception of it. It leaves the Rhysian subject yearning both for visibility and invisibility because once this unruly subject is seen what follows is the equally unsettling condemning gaze: "As a matter of course, coercive systems of heteronomy, distorted self-perception resulting from the ambivalent situation of being subject and object at the same time, repressed rage and violence are decisive aspects of the experience inflicted by colonialism." (Heike Harting 1996: 290) Continually confronted with representations of himself/herself as a denigrated other, the colonized also develops a view of himself/herself from the outside, from the viewpoint of the colonizer, an understanding that leads both to abjection and incurs violent resistance at the same time. I will look at the ways in which such repression is addressed through narrative terms in Rhys's novel in 3.3. by way of narrative voice, namely through madwitch and zombie narration.

The colonial body also gains importance when we consider the fact that in many instances it is considered or rendered agencyless flesh that is to be moulded by the imperial subject constituting project. The body is still the last refuge for agency and articulation: "In a social environment which deprives the characters of their language and autonomy, physical presence becomes signifying text, materializing what both women and men are thinking" (ibid : 291). In the absence of a legitimate language, physical presence becomes a means of articulation, and the subject constitutes its subjectivity through claiming agency over his/her own body, testing its limits as a means of expression. Harting (ibid) gives the example of anorexic starvation from certain postcolonial texts and reads it as a "painful process of dissociation and reappropriation of the body as a means of self-determination and cultural production". In that sense, anorexia is a manifestation of the female body becoming abject, repulsive and therefore fit for diminution. This sense of diminution is one that can be observed both in physical and verbal terms in the self-narratives of Rhys heroines, in the way that they are economical with words when they speak.

This 'diminution' can also be read in connection with the zombie persona of which I'll speak in 2.3.

Thus Fanon and Harting spell out the alienation and abjection that the post-colonial feels towards his/her body and surroundings. This 'being subject and object at the same time' resulting in 'third person consciousness' is an alienating state in which the heroine has a perfect idea of what others think of her and feels totally incapable of redressing the misconceptions. Sometimes she finds it easier to play up to the misconceptions (internalizing them) in order to flee the exhausting task of explanation. As I have argued, the sheer weight of the gaze and expectations of society lead the self-narrator to resort to various forms of articulation, including violent bodily gestures as in madwitch narration which I will be talking about in the next chapter. Thus we have, along with the deessentializing of colonial categories, the deessentializing of narrative categories, where unconventional modes can be used to counter the violence of the colonizers' gaze.

3.3. Narrative Responses to 'Exile from the English Family': The Zombie and the Madwitch

In this chapter I will be looking at how the conditions I have outlined in 3.1. and 3.2. help the Rhysian subject gain or lose 'access to the place of speech' (Jean Marc Ghitti 1998: 17). In Rhys's novels the process of gaining access to the place of speech and being 'spatialized according to discourses' (Regard 2002: 17) happens in a particular colonial and patriarchal context. Having concentrated on where these subjects are situated within the 'English family' I refer to this discursive spatialization of Rhys's heroines as 'exile from the English family' and argue that this 'exile' is the primary experience that effects Rhys's heroines' self-narrations. In identifying the effect of the (post)colonial and modern cultural experience on Rhys's narrators, I will make use of Gabriele Helms's method of 'cultural narratology'⁴³ with her emphasis on

⁴³ "In alliance with a cultural view, [cultural narratology] enables us to identify and understand cultural experiences translated into, and meanings produced by, particular formal narrative practices." (Helms 2003: 10) Helms's approach aids in conceptualizing cultural narratology as a two-leg process. Firstly, cultural experiences are articulated through a set of formal choices, and once these are made public, these choices produce further meaning, including further cultural experiences for the reader. Various meanings such as resistance and subversion can be read into the formal outcome of this articulation. The method of cultural narratology will reveal how formal aspects of narratology are influenced by cultural experience, and how the resulting tropes or motifs may open up further readings.

Bakhtinian concepts of heteroglossia, carnival and the chronotope to analyze and conceptualize narrative voice.

As 'the cultural experience that is translated into narrative' (Helms 2003: 10), Caribbean literature critic Evelyn O'Callaghan (1993:12) focuses on the process of emancipation in the Caribbean islands and after a narratological analysis delineates "syncretism, multiplicity, adaptability, openness and a refusal of consolidation" as the narrative characteristics of these novels. While Rhys is only obliquely of this post-emancipation tradition, these characteristics ring true for her work as they help forge a direct link between a Bakhtinian and a modernist reading of the narrative tools that she uses.⁴⁴ If we take carnivalesque not as a descriptive category but as a structural form we can correlate certain elements of the Carnival, like masks, to certain narrative devices, like the narrative voice. Carnival masks are the medium through which the critique against social order is articulated, and in Rhys's use of carnival the masks correspond to the personas that the narrative voice takes on when narrating the story. I argue that the two masks, or personas through which Rhys's narrators speak are the 'madwitch' and the zombie, terms that have already been used to describe certain kinds of writing that has come out of post-emancipation Caribbean.

As many critics have argued, the chief literary representative, or proxy of the Carnival in contemporary times is the novel, with its "polyphonic contest of discourses, with one form of signification relativising and decentring another, one kind of idiom invading, subverting, citing, framing and dismantling those around it." (Eagleton 2007). Accordingly, aspects of the topsy turvy world of the carnival can be correlated to aspects of the novel as Cobley (2003: 27) also underlines:

The novel, more than any other form of poetic discourse, is manifestly heteroglossic because of its ability to present numerous characters and situations, its ability to report or reproduce

⁴⁴ According to Bakhtin the novel carries on the tradition of heteroglossia from the spectacles of middle ages, where masks and clowns were used to voice different 'languages' or discourses of the time. According to Paul Cobley's (2003: 233) reading of Bakhtin, language is "divided up into languages which represent interests within dialogical relations such as the specific language uses which facilitate exchanges between humans within particular social groups, within professional groups and within particular genres." Although the carnival allows for the inversion of social positions, 'the specific language use' normally regulates social interaction; for those subjects who cannot reproduce the correct usage these specific uses divide up not just the language, but also the social and professional classes. As such, aspects of heteroglossia may be investigated not only with regards to multiplicity and richness as suggested by the carnivalesque, but also through the tensions inherent in that structure of plurality.

speech and, especially, its ability to parody different language uses by embedding them within the general narratorial, or 'authorial' or 'poet's' voice.

This reproduction of speech is exactly where the dynamics of power relations and representation can be observed. What Cobley draws our attention to here is that the author or narrator is, by nature of heteroglossia, parodying as he/she reports or reproduces others' speech. The reproduction of other's voices may happen in various ways; through reported or free indirect speech, the latter sometimes aided by 'the carnivalesque rotation among focalizers' (Helms 2003: 11). In the spirit of the carnivalesque, a member of the spectacle can swap one mask for another. The masks that allow these parodic and illegitimate articulations can be related to the particular narrative voice in the text considered, which the author can adopt for certain strategies and/or certain political ends, with a view to challenging or reorganizing hierarchies.⁴⁵

The Zombie

As Murfin and Ray (2003: 48) argue that "carnival is substantially concerned with the body, with eating, with sex, and with death, its images infused with an obvious sensuous character and a strong element of play. In carnivalesque discourse, as well as in actual practice, matters of the body are treated with a kind of profound humour".⁴⁶ Stallybrass and White (1986) also contend that unseemly bodily functions are considered to be the realm of the lower classes and marginal groups. With the parading of the zombie - a carnivalesque figure that reveals the concern for the disintegrating body in all its mortality - it is the common public that enacts death for the benefit of the ruling classes. Apart from death, the zombie mask also enacts silence or arrested and unintelligible speech. In this regard, postcolonial critics have considered both the ontological and narrative implications of the use of the zombie as a narrating persona. As many post-colonial critics have pointed out, the imperial

⁴⁵ The carnival and carnivalesque have a special resonance with texts that hail from the Caribbean. Lou Mary Emery (1990: 67) draws attention to the relevance of Bakhtin's conceptualization of the carnivalesque for the Caribbean context: "While Bakhtin discusses the European festivals of the Middle Ages, his descriptions parallel those of Caribbean carnivals, similarities due in great part to the cultural interdynamics of conquest that brought European peasant influences to the Caribbean".

⁴⁶ Modernism is equally concerned with these acts; however rather than humour, it introduces skepticism or even a mistrust of these functions. This, naturally, has repercussions for the way that the amateur uses her body- the mistrust towards the amateur body then becomes equally a modernist approach.

order is organized towards rendering its subjects into mere flesh without agency, towards hollowing out the colonial subject of dignity, or even, in ecclesiastical terms, a soul. As Renk (1999:90) points out, colonialism achieves this drilling through colonial education:

Because colonial education inscribed dualisms that separated the soul from the body, the colonized [...] experience what Carolyn Cooper terms *zombification*. Through colonial education, the colonized are physically and spiritually "possessed by forces beyond [their] control".

The pertinent question then becomes what kind of a self-narrative these zombified subjects can produce. The forces beyond one's control, for instance, the rules of the English family, inscribe themselves unto the colonized's worldview, shutting out other epistemologies that the subject may at one time have subscribed to. The aim of the imperial subject constituting project, as Tiffin points out, is to hollow out the colonized through denigration in cultural terms. Once the colonial is made to question and abandon his/her own culture or way of living, he/she is already rendered mere flesh or automaton that is ready to 'take directions from someone'. The zombie narrating persona also demonstrates this characteristic, operating like an automaton, engaging little with the world outside and responding in mere reflexes; in narrative terms through stock phrases or unintelligible short words. The white colonial is similarly possessed by forces beyond his/her control, or forces that (s)he cannot master anymore. As Edna Aizenberg (1999: 461) puts it, creole narratives "exhibit the displacement that turns white women into 'hybrid zombies', that makes in-betweenness and doubling the heritage of whites."

There is also a linguistic aspect to the doubling that Aizenberg speaks of here. As part of the imperial subject-constituting project the English language (and the English family), through its exclusivity, is used as technologies to subjugate other 'languages'. It acts as a social instrument that regulates exchange between different sections of the social body, condemning certain subjects to silence. The zombified colonial with her imperfect reproduction of this language is made to doubt the validity of his/her own speech and it is only by a critique of the exclusivity of the language and the family can the colonial subject, white or black, assert his/her agency to varying degrees. The state of being hollowed out through cultural denigration is a predicament that goes beyond the lot of the subjects that go through a colonial

education. The individuals living on the peripheries of society in the Metropolis are also at a remove from the English language and family and they too may be subjected to cultural denigration. The speech of the subjects from the periphery is devalued, however, through their very act of speaking they 'parody' the language of the centre and upset expectations- this is how the self-narration of the periphery, through the mask of zombie, cites and invades the centre.

The Madwitch

The process of zombification, which I have tried to outline above, is only one moment in the self-narratives that we witness in Rhys's novels. It alternates with, or is supplemented by the narrative of the madwitch, which, I argue, on the whole triumphs over the mode of the zombie in carnivalizing language in Rhys's novels. This laughing and cursing female figure is a very felicitous one for it provides a fruitful antonymous image to the Victorian 'angel in the house' that colonial and non-colonial girls would have been taught to aspire towards late into the new century that Rhys's heroines inhabit. The madwitch who does appear in Victorian narratives as a cautionary figure, seldom allowed to tell her story, captures the sense of the 'unmanageable' (See 3.2.) which the colonial discourse conceives as detrimental to the social order.

Renk (1999: 93) says that contemporary Caribbean women's writing transforms the madwoman figure we know from Victorian texts "into a figure of rebellious, socially transformative power, a figure who does not stagnate in madness but rather uses her unconscious mind to educate and transfigure herself and others." As such, Caribbean women's narratives dissociate stagnation from the madwoman and point to her mode of articulation as an unofficial, alternative resource for power and agency. Choosing the madwitch as a mode to tell a story, rather than the voice of the docile, supportive, house-keeping 'angel in the house', is thus a way of resisting the metashrine of Englishness in its female Victorian incarnation. The 'mad' characters resist subjectivation by the English family, as O'Callaghan (1993: 13) argues, by refusing to accommodate themselves to the options offered them:

It can be argued that such texts demonstrate both the pernicious influence of certain stereotypes and the inadequacy of available models, *and* represent the ir radical deconstruction via an 'opting out' of *all* models/roles/images of womanhood by the 'ma d'

characters. Paradoxically, the choice of an often self-destructive option signifies a survival strategy in the woman's search for self-definition.

'Opting out' is more often than not, as O'Callaghan point out, a self destructive option, however, the process is also iconoclastic. This 'opting out' can be observed in the way in which the madwitch refutes the established modes of telling I've talked about in Chapter 2. For the marginalized subject whose access to these established modes is limited, construction of a new idiom or restitution of speech involves retribution for the hitherto unacknowledged moments of silencing. Renk (1999: 18) identifies the madwitch voice in contemporary Caribbean women's texts and conceptualizes it in the following way:

[C]ontemporary women's text often uses fantastic supernatural elements as a discursive strategy. Obeah witches with beneficent and deadly power and old, coarse storytelling hags driven by anger and vengeance are commonplace in these texts. These female figures often act as spiritual guides who remember the past while they magically transform the present. The "mad" witch storyteller perhaps best represents the iconoclastic power of this literature. Her story seems to emanate from a broader, non-transcendent vision that reshapes the solipsistic, fragmented view of the world. The use of the storyteller's method that simultaneously destroys and rebuilds is at the heart of the narrative strategies of contemporary Caribbean women's writing.

Though usually tainted with anger and vengeance, the telling is, as Renk suggests, governed by a two-way motion: of destroying and rebuilding, in other words of iconoclasm and reconstruction. The iconoclasm is enacted by irony and parody, which finds its narrative expression in repetition and imitation and the reconstruction is enacted through introducing neglected voices⁴⁷ and chronotopes into the narrative. As O'Callaghan points out calling conventional ways of meaning making comes at a high price, to the point of self-destruction. However, whilst the self is broken into smithereens, conventional narrative is also broken to make space for a new idiom. This new idiom for a new epistemology favours fragmentary and impressionist forms of narrative, destroying the linear story-telling mode.

The mad woman, thus, rejects the role of angel in the house and searches for self-definition, however having been denied access to language and history, she will seek other sources for both making sense of experience and articulating her worldview. To be able to function fully, the disenfranchised colonial (or other) madwoman needs new hermeneutic powers to make sense of experience. Colonial

⁴⁷ As in 'embedding others' stories, as I shall discuss in analytical chapters.

education leaves much to be desired, especially when it comes to teaching the 'English language', meaning a whole body of semiotics, from oral communicative skills to dress codes that need to be understood and emulated. In this reign of signs, the madwitch introduces her own epistemology and semiotics, where she transforms things into symbols which are not in the English lexicon. Not only can the madwitch read the signs such as accents in speech or particular material used in clothing in order to place herself and those around her, she herself uses an idiom in which certain symbols are hollowed out, or parodied to mean something else. Thus, she seeks restitution in alternative meaning/signifying systems and telling, such as dream logic⁴⁸ and the fantastic.

According to Renk, the madwitch mode is where the narrator 'reveals' rather than 'tells' where revealing means tuning into what has been silenced and making unheard stories public, facilitating the 'public narration' of a more often than not painful story. The madwitch voice conjures up other voices and figures out of the woodwork whatever environment she is telling her story. She brings together different viewpoints and stories only to cannibalize them, appropriating both other plots and styles, creating a community of lie-stories within which her own makes sense. Like the heroine's own story these are stories that are marked by syncretism and a refusal of consolidation, both of which are equally modernist concerns.

Thus it can be pointed out once that Rhys's worlding offers a simultaneous reading of female and colonial predicament in a modernist setting, in a way to juxtapose how these subjects are exiled from the Centre through similar policing tools. This 'exile' in turn manifests itself in similar ways of responding to it in self-narrative. Refusing the models offered them; the displaced and dispossessed heroines construct their own idiom, making use of marginalized world views. These include the worldview of the amateur that holds not social advancement, but emotional and when that fails, consumerist fulfilment as the central motive for the subject's behaviour. Secondly it includes the worldview of the colonial which is always 'transitional' and positions itself through his/her placement within the English family and his/her desire to both emulate and resist the English family's codes. Rhys translates these world views into narrative through certain tools she devises, most

⁴⁸ Renk (1999: 25) discusses the way in which 'dream logic' is instrumentalized in Caribbean narratives: The artist probes the realm of the world's consciousness, delving into dream logic, in which opposites coexist and consciousness remembers a time when all things were united, not yet divided by European conquest, empirical science, and classificatory reason.

notably, that of 'third person consciousness' and the madwitch and zombie narrative voices I have conceptualized in this chapter. In the following chapters I will look at how these tools become the lexicon of the self-narrators Rhys creates in her novels and how each of them make it their own according to their particular circumstances.

4.1. White Female Colonial Self-Articulation in *Voyage in the Dark*

In this chapter I will be looking at white female colonial self-articulation in *Voyage in the Dark*, a novel that depicts the life story of Anna who leaves the Caribbean to go and live in London. Anna's trajectory from the Caribbean to England makes the narrative of *Voyage In the Dark* a postcolonial narrative in which, in Doring's (2002: 18) terms "the contact zones are displaced to England". Just like the colonies themselves, England too has already been described for the post colonial 'explorer' through colonial education. As Doring argues, the postcolonial subject in England discovers the real referents of certain signs he/she has grown up with (See 3.2.). As can also be observed in Anna's narration, this discovery brings not a deeper understanding of life, but a wistful recollection, or a half-hearted recognition of the images she has been led to revere. In that sense, Anna's quest in England involves confronting these referents to find out how meaning is made at the Centre to be transported as a method of policing the peripheries - both the peripheries of London and the peripheries of the Empire.⁴⁹

The novel charts Anna's struggle to find her own voice and place in society, a feat that is complicated by the fact that the epistemology she has lived by in the Caribbean does not reign in London. She works as a chorus girl in dingy theatres and England itself appears different from what she has been taught and led to expect. Her narrative voice alternates between that of the expectant and inexperienced Anna and the Anna that has experienced England at first hand. In fact the moment of confrontation with real England comes as a rude awakening, as the 'reverse passage' seems to sever her ties with the Caribbean and the image of England she had nurtured back home. This is how the novel opens:

⁴⁹ The two spaces are similar in the sense that they are conceived of being at a distance from the Centre and the Ideal. Both spaces are heavily policed as to their reproduction of respectable English life and value, and are always found as lacking in their mimicry.

It was as if a curtain had fallen, hiding everything I had ever known. It was almost like being born again. The colours were different, the smells different, the feeling things gave you right down inside yourself was different. Not just the difference between heat, cold; light, darkness; purple, grey. But a difference in the way I was frightened and the way I was happy. I didn't like England at first. I couldn't get used to the cold. (7)

It is thus made clear at the very beginning of the novel that Anna experiences the world in a different way in England. Things she has known all her life are distant, obscured as if behind a curtain and she has to find her bearings in a new world. She has to leave the ways of meaning making, or hermeneutics, of the Caribbean behind and makes sense of the signs and meanings of England. Like a newborn she has to learn what it means to be cold, and even what colour corresponds to which name. While she has to relearn the signs and meanings in England, she makes recourse to her experiences in the Caribbean in order to assess her new experiences in London; the heat of an English fire makes sense to her only in comparison with the heat of the sun in the Caribbean:

Sometimes I would shut my eyes and pretend that the heat of the fire, or the bed clothes drawn up around me, was sun-heat; or I would pretend I was standing outside the house at home, looking down Market Street to the Bay. When there was a breeze the sea was millions of spangles; and on still days it was purple as Tyre and Sidon. Market street smelt of the wind, but the narrow street smelt of niggers and wood-smoke and salt fishcakes fried in lard [...] It was funny, but that was what I thought about more than anything else- the smell of the streets and the smells of frangipani and lime juice and cinnamon and cloves, and sweets made of ginger and syrup, and incense after funerals or Corpus Christi processions, and the patients standing outside the surgery next door, and the smell of the sea-breeze and the different smell of the land breeze. (7)

The above passage provides us with a description of the world order that Anna has left behind. The vivid smells and colours of the Caribbean are mixed with European cultural imports such as Corpus Christi processions and colonial institutions such as the venerable 'surgery'. This is the constellation in which Anna has grown up and in which her epistemology has been shaped.

It is clear that Anna's attempt to bring her two experiences together are of little avail as we see her mourn her efforts: "Sometimes it was as if I were back there and as if England were a dream. At other times England was the real thing and out there was the dream, but I could never fit them together" (7-8). The difference between her two experiences, she attests, is as vast as the difference between dream and reality. She offers evidence about the difference between the two places, to better illustrate the difference in her experience in the two islands. The fateful passage of her first

visual impressions of England starts with three dots after the reiteration of the statement "A curtain fell and I was there":

... This is England Hester said and I watched it through the train-window divided into squares like pocket-handkerchiefs; a small tidy look it has everywhere fenced off from everywhere else- what are those things- those are haystacks- oh are those haystacks- I had read about England ever since I could read- smaller meaner everything is never mind- this is London- hundreds of thousands of white people white people rushing along and the dark houses all alike like frowning down one after the other all alike all stuck together- [...] -oh I'm not going to like this place I'm not going to like this place I'm not going to like this place- you'll get used to it Hester kept saying I expect you feel like a fish out of water but you'll soon get used to it- now don't look like Dying Dick and Solemn Davy as your poor father used to say you'll get used to it... (15)

In this passage of retrospective self-narration Anna anticipates, experiences and assesses England pointing to the multi-faceted nature of this narrative act. It reveals her initial observations about England in hyphenated sentences: the fragmented passage functions as the mind-script of Anna as she observes England for the first time on a train, looking onto her doom. Her encounter with the haystack resembles a conversation in a classroom with question and answer. The guide here is her stepmother Hester who, having been brought up England, despises the colonies and patronizes Anna with her knowledge of the Metropolis. Just as the text is framed in between two sets of three dots, her view of England from the train-window frames what she sees like a tableau fit for educative purposes, as she is confronted with various referents of the myth of the England she is familiar with. Throughout the text Rhys introduces passages of memory through this textual method of 'framing' within three dots.

Reclaiming Body and Voice in the Metropolis

The initial account of Anna's experience of England reveals to the reader that what she needs to get used to is nothing short of a new epistemology and semiotics. She needs to revise and re-learn her 'English vocabulary'. The most important signifier she has to redefine, however, turns out to be her own white female colonial body as she finds out her subjectivity has already been written into discourses in a particular way. As Maurel (1998: 89) argues "London, the imperial metropolis, is the seat of an imperialistic sign system which, far from simply standing for the extra-linguistic, tends to annihilate it". London is where meanings are inscribed onto her body in such a way

to obliterate her own agency. The imperialistic sign system inscribes not only the bodies of colonials in this way, but also those living on the peripheries of the Metropolis, such as the category of the amateur as I have outlined it in 3.2. Anna, apart from being a (post)colonial, also fits the category of the amateur as an occasional chorus girl.

That the subjectivity of the single young female in the Metropolis is one that has already been described by male novelists is made evident early on in the novel when we see Anna reading *Nana* in a hotel room during a tour of their troupe.⁵⁰ She is "sad, excited and frightened" (9) by what she is reading but as she admits it's not so much the plot of the novel, which is predictable enough, but that this predictable story is now set in writing that depresses her: "It wasn't what I was reading, it was the look of the dark, blurred words going on endlessly that gave me that feeling" (9). It is the weight of the written word, the patriarchal sign system that makes her sad and frightened, because it reveals to her that, she is subjectivated, or in Coral Ann Howells words, "already en-gendered/en-cultured" (1991:100%) in society in a way she has had no say in; the cultural archive is used to regulate the subjectivation of women like Anna.

The conscription of having been written into discourse elicits a different reaction from Anna's friend Maudie who is quick to charge back at the writer of *Nana* while she advises Anna: "I know; it's about a tart. I think it's disgusting. I bet you a man writing a book about a tart tells a lot of lies one way and another. Besides, all books are like that- just somebody stuffing you up." (9) It is obvious to Maudie that Anna has not yet acquired the quick-wit and quick-tongue of the chorus girl, who should be able, to a certain extent, to fend for herself. Maudie recognizes that Anna has not yet fully adopted her position and tells her that Anna "always looks ladylike" (10);⁵¹ a trait she will have to get rid of if she is to become one of them. Indeed, sharing the same profession does not guarantee that Anna will be accepted in the chorus-girl fold. While her demeanour earns her the epithet, 'ladylike', her West Indies background earns her the name Hottentot; either way she doesn't fit in with the idea of a chorus girl of good English stock.

⁵⁰ Maurel points out that Anna's name is an anagram of *Nana* (1998:103).

⁵¹ Emery (1990: 72) analyzes the various ways in which the word lady is applied to Anna. "A lady-some words have a long thin neck that you'd like to strangle" (*V/D*, 120)

Maudie introduces her to the world of making a living through sexual favours. With Maudie, she picks up a young man and considers spending the night with him: "*You can now and you can see what it's like and why not?*" (20), the italics signalling that now the text has switched to stream of consciousness. Anna is portrayed as having a conversation with herself throughout the novel, assessing various options in these passages of what I have termed 'mimesis of cognition' (see Chapter 2), signalled here by italics. We have the experiencing 'I' urging itself on in the present tense with what Maurel calls 'Anna's voice of expectation' (1998: 101%).⁵² The text then switches to normal font and the narrative switches back to past tense, and Anna speaks of how she pushed her prospective lover away finding him too patronizing, at the same time still wishing she "could go back and be just as it was before it happened and then happen differently"(20). Just like her general experience of England, she wants the real experience of intimacy to fit the one she has envisioned in her head. However, she gradually realizes what her lot is likely to be:

'It would be too awful if it were always going to be like this. It isn't possible. Something must happen to make it different.' And then I thought, 'Yes, that's all right. I'm poor and my clothes are cheap and perhaps it will always be like this. And that's alright too.' It was the first time in my life I'd thought that. (23)

Anna believes that her predicament is inscribed on her clothes, and it is the prospect of buying better clothes that gives her new hope. The man whom she's refused to sleep with sends her a note with money to consolidate their relationship in a bid to take it further. The note makes Anna feel emotionally satisfied and also financially saved; it entangles Anna's two fields of experience, the professional and the personal as is typical for the amateur:

I took the money[...] and put it into my handbag. I was accustomed[...] to it already. It was as if I had always had it. Money ought to be everybody's. It ought to be like water. You can tell that because you get accustomed to it so quickly. All the time I was dressing I was thinking what clothes I would buy. I didn't think of anything else at all, and I forgot about feeling ill. (24)

The passage emphasizes the connection between Anna's sense of wellbeing and clothes. Her need for new clothes is so incipient that her voice of expectation directs

⁵² Savoury (1998: 102%) points to the several voices that are inherent in the narrating voice with respect to discourse and that the "narrative juxtapositions of several voices, all spoken from Anna's first person point of view, delineate the powerful cultural conflicts that Anna internalizes." This is in line with Gilmore's (1994) observation that in self-narrative accounts the 'I' is solicited by various discourses.

her towards these consumer goods: "A dress and a hat and shoes and underclothes" (24), and she finds herself in a clothes shop. The rows of dresses and the fabric give her a sense of hope to the extent that she accepts it as the beginning of her expected experience of England: "*This is a beginning. Out of this warm room that smells of fur I'll go to all the lovely places I've ever dreamt of. This is the beginning*" (25). The articulation of this hope comes in italics, her voice of expectation displaying the subjectivity of the inexperienced Anna who still believes that the real referents and what she has read about England can match one another. The beautiful clothes and the kind attention she gets because she has money make her a participant of the consumer society in which she normally finds herself at the margins.

The way Anna's desires are shaped reveal the vulnerability of young women like her towards these commercial calls and this vulnerability is what Sue Thomas underlines in her description of the category of amateur.⁵³ Amateur women form part of a newly rising consumer culture with advertisements for various products that make women look 'desirable', such as a neck thickening lotion that Anna also considers buying. Her most 'personal space', her body has become interpellated by consumer culture and thus has become a commodity. Her lover Walter also points to the importance of the desirability of her body, as Anna's body is assessed through qualities that make her attractive to men:

Then he started talking about my being a virgin and it all went- the feeling of being on fire- and I was cold.
'Why did you start about that?' I said. 'What's it matter? Besides I'm not a virgin if that's what's worrying you.'
'You oughtn't tell lies about that.'
'I'm not telling lies but it doesn't matter, anyway,' I said. 'People have made that all up.'
'Oh yes it matters. It's the only thing that matters.'
'It's not the only thing that matters,' I said. 'All that's made up.' (31-32)

Walter's comment again blurs the boundaries between her emotional and professional spheres, reducing her to a body that has to perform both on stage and in the bedroom.

In this passage Anna tries to hold on to the right to attribute meaning to her own body. She realizes that the first space she has to claim discursively in her new

⁵³ This vulnerability is emphasized in the following passage as well: "The clothes most of the women who passed were like caricatures of the clothes in the shop-windows, but when they stopped to look you saw that their eyes were fixed on the future. 'If I could buy this, then of course I'd be quite different.' Keep hope alive and you can do anything, and that's the way the world goes around, the way they keep the world rolling" (110).

epistemological environment in England is her very own flesh . She tries to claim that virginity does not dictate who she is, however, it is not her but 'public' or even 'market' forces that determine meaning. The above passage is reminiscent of a conversation between Marya and Heidler in *Quartet* in which Heidler also puts the stress on Marya's being 'intact'. Whereas in *Quartet* the amateur figure listens and does not react, here Anna answers back, to identify the importance of sexual promiscuity as a social construct.

Walter responds to Anna's statements with a laugh and proceeds to make love to her, emphasizing the primacy of the flesh in male-female relationships: "When I got into the bed there was warmth coming from him and I got close to him. *Of course you've always known, always remembered, and then you forget so utterly, except that you've always. Always - how long is always?*" (32) . Here Anna's expectant voice in italics gets transformed into a voice of caution. Her love for Walter gets the better of her and she abandons her project of claiming her rights to self-determinacy, and she's fully aware of the meaning of this giving in. This self-abandonment with Walter gets stamped in her memory as the moment that defines who she is in the Londonian constellation: "I thought 'When I shut my eyes, I'll be able to see this room all my life'" (32). Thus she becomes the amateur who gives herself and belongs in the hotel room and as Walter has suggested, the sexual act defines her body and her relationship to England. It is the hotel room that has witnessed her communion with Walter who metonymically becomes England as bearer of meaning . Her relationship to the 'mother country' which has hitherto been an anticipation of arriving transforms into the anticipation of seeing Walter, the anticipation of his visits in her room:

My new rooms were in Adelaide Road, not far from Chalk Farm tube station. There wasn't anything much to do all day. I would get up late and then go out for a walk and then go back home and have something to eat and watch out of the window for a telegraph-boy or a messenger. Every time a postman knocked I would think, 'Is that a letter for me? [...] I would think about when he made love to me and walk up and down thinking about it; and that I hated the looking-glass in his room - it made me look so thin and pale[...] Of course, you get used to things, you get used to anything. It was as if I had always lived like that. Only sometimes, when I had to go back home and was undressing to go to bed, I would think, 'My God, this is a funny way to live. My God, how did this happen?' (34-35)

She forges no identifying personal relationship to the room; in fact she can hardly recognize the image that the room throws back at her. She is alienated from her own image to such an extent and her envisioned life in England is so different from what she now experiences that she cannot piece together how it is that she got to be in

such a state. This perpetual movement and lack of fixed abode draws attention to the fact that in order to understand and construct one's own life story, possessing a solid private space is crucial.

Remembering the Colonial Past

Anna's relationship to the rooms she stays in also reveals that space and the feelings it engenders can be conducive to remembering or forgetting. The 'Sunday feeling' that she gets cooped up inside her small room on a rainy Sunday in London reminds her of the similar feeling she had in the Caribbean and functions as motor for remembering:

I thought about home and standing by the window on Sunday morning, dressing to go to church, and putting on a woollen vest which had shrunk in the wash and was too small, because wool next to skin is healthy. And white drawers tight at the knee and a white petticoat and a white embroidered dress- everything starched and prickly. And black ribbed-wool stockings with black shoes. (The groom Joseph cleaning the shoes with blacking and spit. Spit- mix- rub; spit-mix- rub. Joseph had heaps of spittle and when he spurted a jet into the tin of blacking, he never missed) And brown kid gloves straight from England, one size too small. 'Oh you naughty girl, you'e trying to split those gloves; you're trying to split those gloves on purpose.' (36)

The need to dress up on Sundays, the concern for outer appearance and appropriate clothes she's had in both spaces forge the link between London and the Caribbean. The passage starts with a rhetoric of remembering "I thought about home" but after this conventional opening, it goes into the more fragmented mode of stream-of-consciousness. She remembers how in the Caribbean her body was interpellated from the outside through the spectre of the 'lady', an Ideal (See 3.2.) that haunts her in London as a nickname.

As I also pointed out in Chapter 3.1., colonial self-narrative subjects are both potential agents and victims in the colonial order and as Whitlock (2000: 179) argues these memories are "sites of longing and ambivalence, held in utopic/dystopic tension". While childhood memories harbour a utopic, pure enjoyment of life and innocence, when these memories take place in a colonial environment, this enjoyment of memory becomes fraught with being implicated in the colonial oppression apparatus. Anna, too, starts with recalling a utopic moment of childhood happiness to give Walter a feeling of what the Caribbean means for her and in what ways she associates with it:

'I wish you could see Constance Estate,' I said. 'That's the old estate - my mother's family place. It's very beautiful. I wish you could see it.'
'I wish I could,' he said. 'I'm sure it's beautiful.'
'Yes,' I said. 'On the other hand, if England is beautiful, it's not beautiful. It's some other world. It all depends, doesn't it?' (45)

Just as the lushness and the climate of the island are things Anna longs for, details about slaves reveal that remembrance of her Caribbean past does not always help her escape her present predicament. Remembering colonial spaces with their power structures are problematic because the self has to be positioned within the structure of the ruler and the oppressed. She speaks about a slave list she once saw on their estate: "It was hand-written on that paper that rolls up. Parchment, d'you call it? It was in columns - the names and the ages and what they did and then General Remarks." (45). So far she is speaking to Walter, reciting to him a common enough circumstance from her colonial history as a child. Then the three dots arrive to signal Anna's stream of consciousness and she remembers details about the slave and the way her family is implicated in the slave's predicament:

... Maillotte Boyd, aged 18, mulatto, house servant. The sins of the fathers, Hester said are visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation- don't talk such nonsense to the child Father said- a myth, don't get tangled up in myths he said to me... (46)

This instance of remembering calls to mind Whitlock's argument (2000 :185) that in self-narrative accounts of the colonial past, the child-narrator is used strategically to induce an oppositional reading, since they are white subjects that, on the face of it, have no agency when addressing the injustices of the system. However, even as a child Anna is made to feel responsible and implicated and her mind offers this 'curse' as the explanation of her current situation:⁵⁴

White Female Colonial Idiom

Anna feels this utopic/dystopic tension strongly, as she is torn between the need to share her past with Walter and knowing certain things can never be put into words in the correct way. Sensations, geography and indeed, semantics are completely different in the two spheres. When Anna talks about her Caribbeanness she has to

⁵⁴ She identifies with the slave just as she is getting into bed with Walter: "*Maillote Boyd, aged 18. Maillot Boyd, aged 18... But I like it like this. I don't want it any other way but this*" (48)

check herself, rethink and try to relate it in English terms: "I suppose it was the whisky, but I wanted to talk about it. I wanted to make him see what it was like. And it all went through my head, but too quickly. Besides, you can never tell about things." (46) Anna admits that she has difficulties in transcribing what is fleeting through her head, giving the reader to understand that the various textual forms the reader encounters is a manifestation of this difficulty. This assessment and rethinking is the route to finding a new idiom, however, in practical terms, to the interlocutor they appear as ellipses, contradictions and fragmentation.

Anna's attempts to explain herself are met with even less understanding by her step mother with whom she is supposed to share some of her Caribbean history. When they meet in England Hester assumes the voice the 'English lady' using it to put Anna in her place. If anything, her time in the Caribbean has sharpened Hester's sense of who belongs where:

She had clear brown eyes which stuck out of her head if you looked at her sideways, and an English lady's voice with a sharp, cutting edge to it. Now that I've spoken you can hear that I'm a lady. I have spoken and I suppose you now realize that I'm an English gentlewoman. I have my doubts about you. Speak up and I will place you at once. Speak up, for I fear the worst. That sort of voice. (50)

Once Anna speaks, reveals her unimproved accent and her accompanying life-style, there is no escaping from the categorization that Hester is going to subject her to. Here the gaze of Anna's respectable step-mother is coupled with her voice to produce a very forbidding effect: although the order is to 'speak' Anna will do so at her own peril. Speech, then, transforms into an instrument of class-policing: rather than be an act of self-discovery, in the presence of Hester, it threatens to be self-incrimination. As a result of this threat Anna recoils and decides to stay silent, robbed of one of the essential elements of self-construction.

As John Shotter reminds us established ways of speaking are already set and our speech will be judged accordingly (Eakin 1999: 62). For Hester, for instance, Anna's speech when she was a young girl was certainly not within the bounds of legitimacy, a fact she mentions in relation to why she does not feel obliged to provide for her, making it clear that family obligations are kept only when members show complete allegiance to its rules. As Mary Lou Emery (1990: 74) suggests, Hester's

attempts to maintain the prevailing order concentrate on the voice,⁵⁵ and Anna has already crossed the boundaries of speech, even before coming to England:

I tried to teach you to talk like a lady and behave like a lady and not like a nigger and of course I couldn't do it. Impossible to get you away from the servants. That awful sing-song voice you had! Exactly like a nigger you talked- and still do. Exactly like that dreadful girl Francine. When you were jabbering away together in the pantry I never could tell which of you was speaking. But I did think when I brought you to England that I was giving you a real chance. And now that you're beginning to turn out badly I must be made responsible for it and I must go on supporting you. (56)

Anna's laxness in keeping to the rules of speech and accent incriminates her and puts her outside the borders of the respectable English family. Since, as a child, Anna spoke like Francine and adopted the 'nigger' language Hester considers Anna as miscegenated, a degeneration that, for her, explains why Anna has 'turned out badly' in England. Anna's trespass of speech and behaviour put her beyond the pale and she can no longer claim a legitimate position in the English family, cannot account for herself as a respectable English lady.

Hester makes it clear that as a white Creole Anna has to be very careful or else she runs the risk of conflation with categories that are 'below' her position. She draws the line between herself as an Englishwoman born in England and Anna born and educated in the colonies. In the above interaction we see two different colonial subjects pitted against each other: that of the English settler in Hester and the Creole in Anna. The new settler is the bearer of legitimate English culture and takes it upon her to educate the Creole whose connection to the island is too strong. Where she cannot educate, she censors as can be seen above. 'Cultural denigration', which is described as part of the motor forces for the creation of a post-emancipation postcolonial identity is at work here. (See 3.2.)

The importance of the English family and its intactness is emphasized by Hester as she rails against Anna's uncle. Just as she chides Anna for spending too much time with Francine, Hester criticises Anna's uncle's involvement with the slaves, suggesting that he has an element in himself which is 'nigger-like' and which endears to him the illegitimate coloured children he has:

⁵⁵ "Hester battles with Francine over Anna's voice, while Anna, through her memories of Francine's stories, songs and laughter, struggles to maintain the multiplicitous language of Carnival, using its principles to resist the reduction of her self to a one-dimensional identity." (Emery, 74)

'With illegitimate children wandering about all over the place called by his name- called by his name if you please. Sholto Costerus, Mildred Costerus, Dagmar. The Costeruses seem to have populated half the island in their time it's too funny. And you being told they were your cousins and giving them presents every Christmas and your father had got slack that he said he didn't see any harm in it. He was a tragedy your father yes a tragedy and such a brilliant poor man. But I gave Ramsay a piece of my mind one day I spoke out I said, "My idea of a gentleman an English gentleman doesn't have illegitimate children and if he does he doesn't flaunt them." "No I bet he doesn't," he said, laughing in that greasy way- exactly the laugh of a Negro he had - "I should think being flaunted is the last thing that happens to the poor little devils. Not much flaunting of that sort done in England." Horribleman! How I disliked him! ... ' (55-56)

The outrage here is not so much that he consorts with the blacks but that he actually gives his family-name to them, violating the borders of the English family which is open to whites, and a particular sort of white at that.⁵⁶ Thus Uncle Bo through acknowledging his illegitimate children and Anna being of Uncle Bo's blood and by mixing with Francine forfeit their tie to the respectable English family.

Conflation with Francine, however, does not seem to bother Anna all that much. The uncouth qualities, such as the 'jabbering' that Hester ascribes to Francine, are in fact memories that Anna cherishes and seeks comfort in. This apparent lack of manners is taken up by Anna in a later passage as she relates a memory of Francine eating - but the lack of manners here suggests a sensuousness, an enjoyment of life, an altogether positive experience. Francine's life here is described as an embodiment of the carnivalesque, enjoying bodily sensations and being comfortable with what the likes of Hester will find distasteful:

Her teeth would bite into the mango and her lips fasten on either side of it, and while she sucked you saw that she was perfectly happy. When she had finished she always smacked her lips twice, very loud- louder than you could believe possible. It was a ritual. (58)

The mango and Francine become one in this ritual of eating, an act that makes both her and the watching Anna happy. Francine is also shown to be more at one with the life on the island and its cycles and accommodates her body easily to its movements. One such cycle that bonds Francine to the physical world around her is menstruation which she explains to Anna:

I don't know how old she was and she didn't know either. Sometimes they don't. But anyhow she was a bit older than I was and when I was unwell for the first time it was she who

⁵⁶ Anna understands Hester's criticism for her uncle as an insinuation that her side of the family has black blood, and despite previous claims that she enjoys the company of blacks, Anna feels the urge to refute such Hester's claims that her mother's had mixed blood with vigour. "Mou were always trying to make out that she was black" (56)

explained to me, so that it seemed quite all right and I thought it was all in the day's work like eating or drinking. But then she went off and told Hester, and Hester came and jawed away at me, her eyes wandering all over the place. I kept saying, 'No, rather not. ... Yes, I see Oh yes, of course.....' But I began to feel awfully miserable, as if everything were shutting up around me and I couldn't breathe. I wanted to die. (59)

It is when Hester gets involved in the 'explanation' process that Anna feels uneasy and experiences her physical maturity as a burden. She becomes aware that in Hester's world, sexual maturity is problematic, an issue to tackle, rather than the natural occurrence in Francine's epistemology. It is learning the gravity of such things that constitutes Anna's English education within the English family^{5,7}.

Madwitch Articulation

Anna's exile from this family is embodied here by her stepmother pretty much disowning her and refusing to help her financially. As I have argued in 3.2. 'exile' from the English family manifests itself in various narrative modes and forms in Rhys's novels, for instance in the madwitch narrative persona in which bodily actions enter the narrator's lexicon. Such is the case when Vincent, Walter's cousin, is teasing Anna for the way Walter has picked her up in Southsea. It appears neither her words nor her will can stop them laughing and so Anna resorts to violence:

'Shut up laughing,' I said.
I thought, 'Shut up laughing,' looking at Walter's hand hanging over the edge of the mantelpiece.
I said, 'Oh, stop laughing at me. I'm sick of it.'
'What's the joke?' I said.
They went on laughing.
I was smoking, and I put the end of my cigarette down on Walter's hand. I jammed it down hard and held it there, and he snatched his hand away and said 'Christ!'
But they had stopped laughing. (74)

Here we see the retributive articulation which is one of the markers of the madwitch narrative voice. After Anna's physical intervention they stop laughing and the girl that Vincent is with applauds her afterwards. Anna's bodily articulation has indeed been more effective than her words.

⁵⁷ Hester's reaction demonstrates the passage into another signifying mode, where the natural repetition of a biological rhythm is subjected to the "socio-symbolic clockwork" (Maurel 1998: 88) of the English family, a clockwork that represents dangers of promiscuity and miscegenation. According to Maurel (ibid: 89), this is the point where Anna loses her "semiotic virginity" and her "gendered narrative" begins.

Another aspect of madwitch narration is the way **it** draws on from other stories and thus creates a community of stories within which the one that belongs to the narrator makes sense. Just as **it** reveals the dynamics and functions of remembering, the passage about Maillote Boyd the mulatto slave girl also serves to highlight the madwitch method of incorporating or embedding other stories into the narrator's own. In a similar way, Anna embeds the following story of the king of the indigenous people of the Caribbean - to whom she connects through the sense of failure and the seemingly fruitless acts of defiance. The story is in inverted commas and the tone suggests an entry from an encyclopaedia:

The Caribbean Sea. 'The Caribs indigenous to this island were a warlike tribe and their resistance to white domination, though spasmodic, was fierce. As lately as the beginning of the nineteenth century they raided one of the neighbouring islands, under British rule, overpowered the garrison and kidnapped the governor, his wife and three children. They are now practically exterminated. The few hundreds that are left do not intermarry with Negroes. Their reservation at the northern end of the island, is known as the Carib Quarter.' They had, or used to have, a king. Mopo, his name was. Here's to Mopo, King of Caribs! (91)

This passage that Anna seems to be quoting from a book declares the Caribs to be 'practically exterminated' sealing their failure discursively. As another subject of 'sealed fate' Anna rejoices at Mopo's defiant failure and subversively reads it as something to be celebrated. She reminds us that there are ways to describe or celebrate lives, other than building stories in the manner of Bildungsroman, listing a string of successes. For Anna individual acts of defiance against the system that may or may not have successful outcomes are every bit worthy of notice.

Right after Anna realizes that she is pregnant⁵⁸ she recalls the story of Miss Jackson, an illegitimate white woman from her home town. Once again we see how 'remembering' is instrumentalized to make sense of present circumstances. Just as Anna fears she will be giving birth to an illegitimate child, she considers the social positioning of illegitimate members of society in the Caribbean. The three dots signal the start of a long passage of stream of consciousness:

... Miss Jackson used to sing that in a thin quavering voice and she used to sing By the Blue Alsatian Mountains I Watch and Wait Always - Miss Jackson Colone I Jackson's illegitimate daughter - yes illegitimate poor old thing but such a charming woman really and she speaks French so beautifully she really is worth what she charges for her lessons of course her

⁵⁸ 'Like seasickness, only worse, and everything heaving up and down. And vomiting. And thinking, 'It can't be that, it can't be that. Oh, it can't be that. Pull yourself together; it can't be that. Didn't I always And besides it's never happened before. Why should it happen now?' (138)

mother was - it was very dark in her sitting-room the shabby palm-leaf fans and yellow photographs of men in uniform through the window the leaves of the banana tree silken torn (tearing a banana-leaf was like tearing thick green silk but more easily and smoothly than you can tear silk) (138)

The yellow photographs are juxtaposed with withering banana leaves, European heritage with the always lush, always decaying nature of the Caribbean. Miss Jackson is a genuine Creole with both English and French cultural heritage, providing another aspect of the lives of the white creoles in the Caribbean, putting Anna's into context. What is interesting in Miss Jackson is that she has turned her dubious Latinate heritage⁵⁹ into a way of making a living through teaching a language, and for all purposes, seems to be an independent woman.

There are also other women in the novel making their living off their colonial experience. Anna remembers Anne Chewett who practiced obeah, a character who seems to be madwitch incarnate. She is the one that imparts knowledge of the island to Anna, who educates her into Caribbean epistemology, such as informing her of souciant - a figure that finds much resonance in Anna's experience of London as a trope of dependence:

[...] Morne Diablotin its top always covered with clouds it's a high mountain five thousand feet with its top always veiled and Anne Chewett used to say that it's haunted and obeah - she has been in gaol for obeah (obeah-women who dig up dead people and cut their fingers off and go to jail for it - it's hands that are obeah) - but can't they do damned funny things - Oh if you lived here you wouldn't take them so seriously as all that - Obeah zombies souciant - lying in the dark frightened of the dark frightened of souciant that fly in through the window and suck your blood - they fan you to sleep with their wings and then they suck your blood - you know them in the day-time - they look like people but their eyes are red and staring and they're souciant at night - looking in the glass and thinking sometimes my eyes look like a souciant's eyes ... (139-140)

The souciant as a soulless, agency-less creature driven on only through its insistence to be in the world of the living is thus similar to the zombie. Identifying herself with zombies and souciant Anna allows her speech to be read along these lines as well; truncated and hollow as is expected from zombies (See 3.3.). As Aizenberg argues, the double heritage of white colonial women turns them into 'hybrid zombies' and caught between two ways of meaning making they feel misinterpreted by both, as the following scene with Walter demonstrates:

⁵⁹ See Chapter 3.2. for Ghosh-Schellhorn's discussion on the etymology of the word 'creole' and how it is thought to be suspect.

I was thinking. 'You don't know anything about me. I don't care any more.' And I didn't care any more.

It was like letting go and falling back in water and seeing yourself grinning up through the water, your face like a mask, and seeing the bubbles coming up as if you were trying to speak from under the water. And how do you know what it's like to speak from under water when you're drowned? 'And I've met a lot of them who were monkeys too,' he said (84).

The signs of 'narrative exhaustion' are clear in the above passage: after she has tried various ways to relate to him her experience in the Caribbean, Anna feels there is no way Walter can understand her. After hearing Walter's opinions about her she no longer has the stamina to refute him, even the will to stand up to his definitions of her is gone. She explains how she feels, yet again, through bodily sensations, in which her speech is obstructed through suffocation by water, which of course is a very strong metaphor in Anna's idiom, for it is a great body of water that has separated her from her past and epistemology.

At one point when someone else jokingly makes up a stereotypical colonial life-story for her, Anna rages and shrugging off the burden of explaining her colonial past says that she was born in Manchester and everything she's said about herself so far is a lie. After this negation of her own identity and self, she is, once more, physically exhausted. She lies on the bed and when her new lover is nice to her and tries to make love to her, she hardly has the energy to speak, however, when she does, it is in 'borrowed utterance' (Maurel 1998: 103%):

'Some other night,' I said. '<a sera pour un autre soir.'

(A girl in a book said that. Some girl in some book. <a sera pour un autre soir.)

He didn't say anything for a bit and then he said, 'Why do you go around with Laurie? Don't you know she's a tart?'

'Well,' I said, 'why shouldn't she be a tart? It's just as good as anything else, as far as I can see.'

'I don't get you,' he said. 'You're quaint, as they say over here.'

'Oh God,' I said, 'do leave me alone, do leave me alone.'

Something came out from my heart into my throat and then into my eyes. (109)

The prospect of defying the image of women in books here is obliterated as Anna speaks in the tongue of 'a girl in some book'- pointing to the narrative exhaustion that she is experiencing. She first parrots what she has read in a novel and as the conversation goes on she doesn't have the energy to even reproduce others' speech. She wants to be left alone with her thoughts, and doesn't want to have to translate into articulated speech what goes on in her mind. Her unwillingness to speak, her

silences in which she recoils into her inner world all are construed as dysnarrativia by those around her.

Eakin reminds us that 'dysnarrativia' is a category that is imposed from the outside and that the narratives of marginalized characters such as Anna reveal just as much about those who listen and judge her story. According to Anna's landlady Ethel who strives hard to put up a facade of respectability to her shady business, Anna's speech is 'dysfunctional'. She starts railing at Anna for not cooperating with her on the massage enterprise she has set up in the house:

'I wanted a smart girl,' she said, 'who'd be a bit nice to people and the way you seemed I thought you were the sort of kid who'd take the trouble to be nice to people and make a few friends and so on and try to make the place go. And as a matter of fact you're enough to drive anybody crazy with that potty look of yours. [...] You're going to say that you paid for a month, but do you know what it cost me to put in the gas-fire because you said you couldn't stand your bedroom without it, of all the damned nonsense? And always going on about being tired and it's being dark and cold and this, that and the other. What d'you want to stay here for, if you don't like it? Who wants you here anyway? Why don't you clear out? [...] 'The thing about you,' she said, 'is that you're half potty. You're not all there; you're a half-potty bastard. You're not all there; that's what's the matter with you. Anybody's only got to look at you to see that. (124)

The passage reveals that all the respectable accretions of her home and business are actually a show, that respectability is really important as an image, just as Hester doesn't mind illegitimate children as long as Uncle Bo doesn't flaunt them. The above passage almost suggests that as long as you have the respectable cover you are *expected* to behave in a sexually promiscuous manner. Here, as Eakin suggests, the judgement that Ethel passes on Anna reveals much concerning the expectations of society from such a girl. Ethel expects her to play along, and offer a plausible narrative as well as physical niceties to the clients who come to the apartment for a massage. But Anna is cold, and the pieces of narrative that she offers is that she is cold and misses the Caribbean. These are of course completely out of place for the sort of establishment that Ethel wants to run. Anna's stories have no value or relevance for her, thus she sentences Anna as mad, revealing, in the process, how judgements on narrative turn into judgements of identity. With their gazes and judgements, Anna feels society asks her to obliterate herself because she lets everyone down:

The inevitable, the obvious, the expected..... They watched you, their faces like masks, set in the eternal grimace of disapproval. I always knew that girl was..... Why didn't you do this? Why didn't you do that? Why didn't you bloody well make a hole in the water" (140).

Seeking a different sign system

After thus parodying society's voices, Anna starts to dream that she is on a ship and is going towards an island which turns out to be England rather than her native island. The use of the dream sequence reveals that her gradual 'loss of voice' slowly leads her to follow other ways of signification and meaning making. However, even in the dream she cannot escape the confines of her own situation. She sees the coffin of a child, revealing her plans to abort the child. Thus the dream itself brings no solace but more of a feeling of dejection: "And the dream rose into a climax of meaninglessness, fatigue and powerlessness, and the deck was heaving up and down, and when I woke up everything was still heaving up and down." (141) a sensation pointing to the pregnancy sickness she's suffering from. Her powerlessness over her own body is exacerbated by the commercial calls that suggest she can take control, such as the pills that are supposed to facilitate a miscarriage:

And all the time thinking round and round in a circle that it is there inside me, and about all the things I had taken so that if I had it, it would be a monster. The Abbe Sebastian's Pills, primrose label, one guinea a box, daffodil label, two guineas, orange label, three guineas. No eyes perhaps.... No arms, perhaps Pull yourself together. (143)

The fear of a malformed baby is a good metaphor for the bond that she has forged with England, incomplete, a monster. When the miscarriage happens, she starts losing blood and in that hallucinatory state it is the *Masquerade*⁶⁰ that haunts her. Her mind is filled with images from the Caribbean carnival, especially the masks which she perceives as tools of derision, paralleling the mocking faces she has had to put up with in London. While the italics function to signal both memory and stream of consciousness, the hyphens reveal the fragmentation in her subjectivity, of how several voices intervene to make sense of the situation she is experiencing. Anna is a voyeur at the scene of this Caribbean ritual with her step mother wanting to stop it. Thus, rather than engaging in it, Anna has to contend with looking at it, forbidden from a real communion with the traditions of the island:

⁶⁰ Elaborate Mardi Grass celebrations with parades that take place in the Caribbean.

I was watching them from between the slats of the jalousies- they passed under the window singing- it was all the colours of the rainbow when you looked down at them and the sky so blue- [. . .]- the masks the men wore were a crude pink with the eyes squinting near together squinting but the masks the women wore were made of close-meshed wire covering the whole face and tied at the back of the head- the handkerchief that went over the back of the head hid the strings and over the slits for the eyes mild blue eyes were painted then there was a small straight nose and a little red heart-shaped mouth and another slit so that they could put their tongues at you- I could hear them banging the kerosene-tins. (156)

This passage points to Anna's longing for and distance to the carnival, mirroring her relationship to England. In her failure to become a member of the carnival *or* the respectable English family, Anna's white Creole 'hybrid zombie' subjectivity comes into its own - just at the time when she is losing her baby, a tie that might have made her bond to England stronger. The passage also connects women's predicament in both Caribbean and English culture. Emery (1990: 77) likens the description of the above mask to the scold's bridle through which "black women confront white "ladies" with their own subordinant and silenced condition". Indeed, the masks described are highly symbolic of the silencing of not only black but also white women, implicated through the blue eyes and small noses; the carnival magically transforms black slave women to middle class white women.⁶¹ As such, this image is a palimpsest of female silencings- silencings which we have seen Anna work against throughout the story and which Rhys has staged through different formal techniques at the level of transmission.

In conclusion it can be said that the whole novel demonstrates how Anna uses different methods of articulation in order to get her meanings across, meanings that are hard to convey for her due to the shift in epistemology that she has just been through. She takes on the mission to revise previous conceptions of colonials but realizes she doesn't have the necessary tools to do. She tries various forms of self-articulation, only to be pigeonholed to categories to which she doesn't feel she belongs. At the end of the novel she is lying on her bed being treated by a doctor who makes fun of her state as being 'too na"ve' and that she would no doubt be 'ready to start all over again'. In her catatonic state, the prospect of 'starting all over again', of following another trail of displacements and explaining one's life story all over again seem too much for Anna:

⁶¹ "There is evidence that the three days of Masquerade is an occasion for deep-seated racial antagonisms to come to a head: while the Blacks parade dressed up as grotesque whites, sticking their tongues out at them, the Whites, apprehensive and acutely aware of underlying violence of the Masquerade, disapprovingly watch it from inside their house." (Maurel 1998: 99)

When their voices stopped the ray of light came in again under the door like the last thrust of remembering before everything is blotted out. I lay and watched it and thought about starting all over again. And about being new and fresh. And about mornings, misty days, when anything might happen. And about starting all over again, all over again.. ." (159)

It is when "their voices stopped" that she can consider her position and possibilities. As such, the ending reveals the most important force that Anna has had to contend with when telling her story- that is the voices of others, interpellating her own subjectivity. Her narration has revealed, however, that she still can connect to her past Caribbean experiences to have an alternative reading of London society's norms and her experiences. And although Anna's life reads as a failure, Rhys manages to point to another epistemology, and the possibility of a reading that assesses the lives of marginal characters such as Anna in a different way.

4.2. Postcolonial Creatures: The Community of Life-Stories in *Good Morning, Midnight*

As I have argued in Chapter 3, when the self-narrator can find no life story that corresponds to her own upon consulting the cultural archive of narratives, he/she will be faced with the challenge of either conforming her practice to a category that has already been 'accounted for' (Eakin 1999) or formulating her own idiom. This chapter looks at possible resources available to a self-narrator who does not have immediate access to established forms of story-telling and the ways in which he/she may remedy this lack of access through other methods of telling. If we regard the concept of life-story, as David Carr (1986: 75) does, to be a project in which the individual brings separate 'stories' together to forge connections between them and then to call them his or hers, then the same can be said to hold true for the project that the protagonist of *Good Morning, Midnight*, Sasha embarks upon, drawing on stories that belong not only to herself but also to other individuals that are similarly situated. Sasha's self-narration embeds stories of individuals who have been subjectivated through dehumanization and creates a community of life-stories marked by power relations and dependencies.

In *Good Morning, Midnight* the protagonist Sasha chronicles her 'failed flaneur' (see 3.1.) life-style in Paris as she draws near to the end of her career as a

demimondaine. She gets in and out of jobs and has affairs with disprivileged men, revealing her lack of sense of self-preservation, one of the traits that are common to Rhys heroines and allow us to designate them as amateur. Almost all the men she picks up have had close encounters with the colonies or colonials and these encounters figure heavily in their self-definition. If we take the word postcolonial to denote a historical period when various empires of the world, including the French and the Russian, were dissolving or devolving, the characters depicted in *Good Morning, Midnight*, including Sasha, the autodiegetic narrator, can comfortably answer to the name of '(post)colonial'.⁶² Accordingly, for my reading I take the colonial experience to have been effective in the way that individuals, including the whites, define themselves in the Metropolis. I choose to refer to the particular (post)colonial characters I will be looking at as 'creatures' due to the fact that they are more often than not perceived and treated as something less than human, condemned to silence by society.

Frantz Fanon underlines that the negation of the other as human is the modus operandi of the colonial order. This dehumanization, as Tiffin convincingly argues (1989: 9) is directed not only at the indigenous people but equally at the white colonials, especially those who have had too close an interaction with the indigenous in the colonies. Interracial and interclass interaction results in the privileged member of society losing his/her standing since both colonial and patriarchal orders operate so as to prevent miscegenation: the centre is to be protected from the periphery. The notion of the periphery, of course, applies not only to the colonies but also to the margins of metropolitan society. Third-rate hotels and cheap restaurants depicted in *Good Morning, Midnight* are such peripheral spaces in the urban context of Paris where illicit affairs take place, raising concerns of miscegenation of both race and class. As I have argued above the lack of a 'solid background', or private space inflects self-narrative in crucial ways since it interferes directly with the narrator's self-perception, influenced largely by the society's reluctance to address such subjects as legitimate conversation partners.

⁶² Emery (1990: 155) also draws attention to this aspect of the novel's characters defining a European milieu that has to deal with the detritus of the Great War: "The Great War, of course, involved more than single opposing communities, as did the Second World War. In their international scope, they created thousands of homeless gypsies like Sasha, her husband, the gigolo and the Russian Jews she meets, even the travelling stranger in the white dressing gown."

In *Good Morning, Midnight* Rhys this predicament of the self-narrator gets translated into a simultaneous narration scheme, in which the narrator addresses, at least her textual audience directly, using narrative transmission as a surrogate space for self-articulation.⁶³ Self-narration, as I have argued in Chapter 3 can entail all the aspects of anticipating, experiencing and assessing a situation and simultaneous narration lays bare, I argue more than any other mode, the relationship between these operations. Passages of memory break the present tense flow of the 'time of narration' and there are changes in the tense of remembering corresponding to the changes in the intensity in feeling or sincerity of the narrator. Casparis (1975 : 77-85) who sees simultaneous narration as testimony to the fact that the narrator has not yet come to terms with the events that she is narrating, considers the aspect of emotions and sincerity through the concept of 'performing narration'. This 'performative', almost stand-up-like narration facilitates the cannibalization of others' stories in *Good Morning, Midnight*: as Sasha's narrative drive is checked and blocked by the society, she displaces her need to represent her emotions by narrating other's stories. Borrowing from Heinz Heine Sasha says "aus meinen grossen schmerzen, mach ich die kleinen lieder" (21)⁶⁴ from her own and others' agonies, she makes these small sad songs to sing or 'perform'. The name of the book itself is a quote from a poem by Emily Dickinson^{6,5} or somebody else's Schmerz.

The performative element is made evident from the very start of the novel when Sasha assesses the space she finds herself in as if she were negotiating stage instructions: "Quite like old times,' the room says, 'Yes? No?'" (9) and then gives us a description of the hotel room she's staying in in the present tense. The important connection between narration and space is made evident in the way Sasha seems to be asking permission for entry, to put this space into the use of remembering. It is after she familiarizes herself with the room with all its accretions that she starts to tell the reader an anecdote, or a vignette that reveals to us her milieu and her

⁶³ In modernist literature, texts written in the present tense are readily found, especially in stream of consciousness and interior monologue. Simultaneous narration is marked by the synchrony of language and event, where the narrator relates her experiences in present tense.

⁶⁴ Emery (1990: 149) puts stress on the fact that Heine was Jewish suggesting, drawing attention to fascism extant in Europe at the time and which influences Sasha's perceptions as events as someone living on the margins of society.

⁶⁵ Epigraph to the novel "Good Morning, Midnight! / I'm coming home, / Day got tired of me - / How could I of him? Sunshine was a sweet place, / I liked to stay - / But Morn didn't want me - now- / So good night, Day! Emily Dickinson"

weaknesses, in short her character. This is one of the many instances in which Sasha goes into long embedded sequences of retrospective narrating :

Last night for instance. Last night was a catastropheThe woman at the next table started talking to me- a dark, thin woman of about forty, very well made-up[....] The friend arrived - an American. He stood me another brandy-and-soda and while I was drinking it I started to cry. I said: 'It was something I remembered. The dark woman sat up very straight and threw her chest out. 'I understand.' She said, 'I understand. All the same.... Sometimes I'm just as unhappy as you are. But that's not to say that I let everybody see it.' Unable to stop crying, I went down into the lavabo. A familiar lavabo, and luckily empty. (9)

The passage is symptomatic of Sasha's narration throughout the novel, setting the scene in present tense and then going back to tell a story. 'Rhetoric of remembering' takes on different forms in *Good Morning, Midnight* to fit the course of simultaneous narration. This flashback to 'last night' also reveals several concerns that Rhys picks up in the novel. Sasha assesses it as a catastrophe because she has given way to emotion, has lost her self-possession and cried. She has been checked by another woman to contain herself and has been told that it is not acceptable to let other people see one's emotions, just as it is not appropriate to share one's story with everyone:

Lavabos.... What about that monograph on lavabos- toilets-ladies?A London lavabo in black and white marble, fifteen women in a queue, each clutching her penny, not one bold spirit daring to dash out of her turn past the stern-faced attendant. That's what called discipline The lavabo in Florence and the very pretty, fantastically dressed girl who rushed in, hugged and kissed the old dame tenderly and fed her with cakes out of a paper bag. The dancer-daughter? ... That cosy little Paris lavabo, where the attendant peddled drugs- something to heal a wounded heart. (9-10)

The ellipses signalled by three dots help distinguish between the 'now' of simultaneous narration and the interior monologues or memory sequences she goes into, as in the above paragraph . After the crying incident, her observation in the 'lavabo' reveals her eagerness to know other people's stories, trying to place the pretty girl she sees and attaching to her movements a suitable life-story. The whole episode ends with 'That was last night' (11) and we return to the 'present' of the hotel room as she explains to the reader her motions before she goes to sleep. Her dream is also related in simultaneous narration and we enter with her into her dream-world:

I take some luminal, put the light out and sleep at once. I am in the passage of a tube station in London. Many people are in front of me; many people are behind me. Everywhere there are

placards printed in red letters: This Way to the Exhibition, This Way to the Exhibition. But I don't want the way to the exhibition- I want the way out. (12)

The dream reflects the way she feels suffocated by society and her fear of exhibition, of being exposed to this unforgiving multitude. Mary Lou Emery finds her reading of the *Good Morning, Midnight* of this and other references to the Great Exhibition, which help place Rhys's work within the modernist tradition.⁶⁶ When Sasha wakes up the first person she comes in contact with, almost in keeping with the dream sequence, is a 'skeleton' (13), her neighbour the commi voyageur whom she extremely dislikes. After speaking about her dream and her dream-like encounter she has on the landing, Sasha's narrative voice weaves in and out of 'the time of narration' with interior monologues and memories, and also injunctions to the self, or what I refer to as the voice of expectation in *Voyage in the Dark*:

But careful, careful! Don't get excited. You know what happens when you get excited and exalted, don't you?... Yes... And then , you know how you collapse like a pricked balloon, don't you? Having no staying power.... Yes, exactly So no excitement. This is going to be a quiet, sane fortnight. Not too much drinking, avoidance of certain cafes, of certain streets, of certain spots, and everything will go off beautifully. (14)

Again, Rhys emphasizes the crucial relationship that Sasha has with space, so much so that she is shown to be almost afraid of certain locations, because, presumably, they are too emotionally charged with previous experience and they are places where society exercises its gaze on her to vicariously.

Unsynchronic or Surrogate Narration

Sasha's interjections to herself sometimes reach such urgency that even the predicate is dropped as in the following: "Planning it all out. Eating. A movie. Eating again. One drink. A long walk back to the hotel. Bed. Luminal. Sleep. Just sleep- no dreams" (15). This sounds like a rigid programme which she wills herself to keep, and

⁶⁶ "Published in 1939, its scenes are set in Paris of 1937, the place and year of the Exhibition Internationale des Arts et des Techniques Appliquées à la Vie Moderne. The novel opens and closes with significant allusions to the exhibition, allusions which set the novel firmly with a Paris of intense social and political conflict, symbolized best perhaps by the two major buildings of the exposition which confronted one another directly on each side of the Champs de Mars- that of the Soviet Union [...] and that of Nazi Germany." (Emery 1990: 144) This reading is interesting especially in the way it positions *Good Morning, Midnight* within modernist concerns, especially when one considers the fact that the Exhibition included the Modern Art museum at the time. The dream continues with Freudian references to patricide with someone shouting at her that he is her father.

forbids her to get emotional about her status. This forbidding of emotions also manifests itself in the way she transfers her feelings and rightful reactions unto other people and creatures whose stories she shares with her audience. According to Maurel (1998: 109) it is self-exposure to pity and ridicule that Sasha is trying to avoid through her 'performative' narration.

Before she moves onto embedding others' stories, Sasha first engages with the social discourses at the time, practicing what Maurel (ibid: 105) calls "parodic mimicry of the master discourse". For instance as a diversion from the time of narration, she offers the story of the visit of the English owner of the company she works for in the present tense, a vignette with its own interior monologue citing her abilities as a saleswoman, providing 'reasons' that justify her recruitment that parody conventional professional ones. Although the question of how she got to be there is never put to Sasha bluntly, the way her boss looks at her urges her to provide information about how she has come to be under his employment:

'She speaks French' Salvatini says 'Assez bien, assez bien.

Mr. Blank looks at me with lifted eyebrows.

'Sometimes I say idiotically.

Of course when I am a bit drunk and am talking to somebody I like and know, I speak French very fluently indeed. At other times I just speak it. And as to that, my dear sir, you've got everything all wrong. I'm here because I have a friend who knows Mr. Salvatini's mistress, and Mr. Salvatini's mistress spoke to Mr. Salvatini about me, and the day that he saw me I wasn't looking too bad and he was in a good mood. Nothing at all to do with fluent French and German, dear sir, nothing at all. I'm here because I'm here because I'm here. And just to prove to you that I speak French, I'll sing you a little song about it: 'Si vous saviez, si vous saviez, si vous saviez comment ça se fait.' (18)

As the above stream of consciousness demonstrates, in self-narration, as Frederic Regard (2002: 32) points out, the question of 'where am I?' is quite as foundational as 'who am I?'. Sasha provides the answer herself, refuting the apparent explanation of her linguistic abilities. Accounting for where one has come can amount to accounting for one's life and she does not want to leave this exercise to anyone else. Although she doesn't actually voice her explanation in the narrated world, her inner contemplation lays bare how respectable society functions, exploiting the inefficient and illegitimate members.

Sasha continues this war of meaning making, or epistemology later in her encounter with Mr. Blank at the level of narrative transmission. This is how she believes he sees her: "He looks at me with distaste. Plat du jour- boiled eyes, served cold..." (25). These boiled eyes could be either hers, or his, as he doesn't show any

emotions. The three dots lets us know that Sasha will now part from the story and go on a diversion, as she turns this gaze of Mr. Blank's into a motor of self-narration through interior monologue. The diversion reveals her understanding of the social order and a railing directed her boss. Rhys's naming of the boss as Mr. Blank suggests that he is more a tool or an officer of society than a real person. Sasha reveals that Mr. Blank fulfils his duty to regulate and police society, not simply to keep the order and allocate funds as fit, but more for the sake of policing itself, for the satisfaction of exercising the gaze of ridicule, the gaze of denigration:

Well, let's argue this out, Mr. Blank. You, who represent Society, have the right to pay me four hundred francs a month. That's my market value, for I am an inefficient member of Society, slow in the uptake, uncertain, slightly damaged in the fray, there's no denying it. So you have the right to pay me four hundred francs a month, to lodge me in a small, dark room, to clothe me shabbily, to harass me with worry and monotony and unsatisfied longings till you get me to the point when I blush at a look, cry at a word. We can't all be happy, we can't all be rich, we can't all be lucky - and it would be so much less fun if we were. Isn't it so Mr. Blank? There must be the dark background to show up the bright colours. Some must cry so that the others may be able to laugh more heartily. Sacrifices are necessary... Let's say that you have this mystical right to cut my legs off. But the right to ridicule me afterwards because I am a cripple - no, that I think you haven't got. And that's the right you hold most dearly, isn't it? You must be able to despise the people you exploit. But I wish you a lot of trouble, Mr. Blank, and just to start off with, your damned shop's going bust. Alleluia! Did I say all this? Of course I didn't. I didn't even think it. (25)

We can clearly see that Sasha believes Mr. Blank to represent society and to be invested with superhuman power.⁶⁷ Sasha speaks about her 'market value' making a clear connection between racial and class categories, which will be even more evident when she introduces the story of the mulatto⁶⁸ This is also reminiscent of the way the value of Anna's body is assessed in *Voyage in the Dark* through 'intactness'. Within the pathos of her narrative performance Sasha ironizes her own tirade by ending it with a profane 'Alleluia', just as she has ended the previous one by singing a ridiculous French song. This kind of interior monologue, self-narration at the level of narrative transmission, hardly fulfils the serious job of self-narration as 'prime social activity' (Eakin 1999: 62). Although the reader gets a very good idea about the argumentative and rebellious character of Sasha, she is mute towards the various Mr. and Mrs. Blanks who pass judgement on her. She speaks at another level: one

⁶⁷ As the self-narrator Julia does Mr. Mackenzie and Legros in *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie*

⁶⁸ Possibly, the most incisive mention is that of "unsatisfied longings" which, in mulatto subjectivity, can be read as the longing for being perceived as 'white' (a promise that starts with miscegenation but which is not fulfilled), and which, for Sasha, translates as the longing to be a respected member of the middle class.

may even call her self-narration mislocated or unsynchronic, not when the situation calls for it, but as an afterthought. For self-narration to be pragmatic for the 'business of living' (Eakin 1999: 127), not only does it have to fulfil the needs of the individual in a given circumstance, but it also has to be engaged in the forms that are already deemed legitimate in a given culture. The kind of language that Sasha adopts in her interior addresses is one that can hardly be deemed legitimate and thus reveals why it is that she doesn't air her ideas publicly, in the face of those who wield power over her.

Sasha herself contemplates on the mislocated or unsynchronic nature of her engagement with the policing gazes that she has to confront. As the following passage shows, however, this inability to respond to people's judgements incurs a need for violence in her which she fantasizes about how to put to practice:

I would give all that's left of my life to be able to put out my tongue and say: 'One word to you,' as I pass that girl's table. I would give all the rest of my life to be able even to stare coldly at her. As it is, I can't speak to her, I can't even look at her. I just walk out. Never mind... One day, quite suddenly, when you're not expecting it, I'll take a hammer from the folds of my dark cloak and crack your little skull like an egg-shell. Crack it will go, the egg-shell; out they will stream, the blood, the brains. One day, one day... One day the fierce wolf that walks by my side will spring on you and rip your abominable guts out. One day, one day... Now, now, gently, quietly, quietly... (45)

Sasha starts the passage with 'I would give all that's left of my life' to point to the impossibility of voicing or acting out the emotions she contemplates about, for (as Rhys reveals in the life-story of another of her heroines, Antoinette) not abiding by a society's mode of narration or emplotment may have serious consequences such as institutionalization or incarceration. The self-narration that Sasha engages in here, at the level of narrative transmission, is symptomatic of madwitch narration, both in its retributive violence and the several roles she takes on during the passage; as the oppressed who can't 'stare', as the violent retributor, as the wolf and then her own imaginary keeper who tries to calm her down. Here the voice of expectation that foresees the confrontation slowly turns into a voice of caution with 'gently, quietly' as it does elsewhere in Rhys's fiction.

Madwitch Narrative Voice and Collecting and Embedding Stories

As the novel chronicles how Sasha has kept silent, we are introduced to other subjects with relatively better or worse fates. In a way her self-narrative catalogues

the unfavourable conditions under which the disprivileged members of society have to engage in self-narration. This mode of life-story telling, with a back up of a plethora of others' stories, can be seen as a way of counteracting the unfavourable conditions for self-narration that Eakin draws our attention to. Within the community of life-stories that belong to down-and-out French singers, German commercial travellers, Russian emigres and Jews are also those of a number of animals. As part of this project, madwitch narrative voice makes itself apparent in its retributive fantasy of violence and the way it recruits other stories to consolidate her own. The community of life stories will serve to lessen Sasha's feeling of loneliness and lend a measure of legitimacy to her aggressive behaviour as the mouthpiece of subjects positioned like her. While she speaks of the fantasy of engaging in violence, other stories help devolve some of her resentment and abjection to other characters and animals. The sources of these stories and the way Sasha encounters them before embedding them into her own self-narration reveals the ways in which the self can look for self-validating stories elsewhere in cases where the cultural archive provides no ready models.

The animal stories that Anna's narrative voice resorts to are marked by persecution and homelessness as she attempts to distance these feelings from herself in order to be able to speak about them without being overwhelmed. The dehumanizing gaze that postcolonial creatures are subjected to find perfect expression in these animal stories; parallels with human experience are made explicit with Sasha likening herself to these figures explicitly. Sasha says that her favourite novel is *The Autobiography of a Mare* and quotes from it as the expression of her solidarity with beings who have a story to tell but are condemned to silence, and who, even if only through the mediacy of others, find a way to get heard. Sasha herself acts as mediator for the more detailed story of a kitten that belonged to her one-time neighbours and relates it in the past tense:

This happened in London, and the kitten belonged to the couple in the flat above- a German hairdresser and his English wife. The kitten had an inferiority complex and persecution mania and *nostalgie de la boue* and all the rest. You could see it in her eyes, her terrible eyes that knew her fate. She was very thin, scraggy and hunted, with those eyes that knew her fate. Well, all the male cats in the neighbourhood were on to her like one o'clock. She got a sore on her neck, and the sore on her neck got worse. 'Disgusting,' said the German hairdresser's English wife. 'She ought to be put away, that cat.' (47)

The story encapsulates the discourses on amateur as I have outlined in 3.1 in its promiscuity that results in its marginalization. The cat displays all the symptoms: it is incapable of saying no to the male of the species and this promiscuity results in her getting sick and transforming into an eye-sore that must be put away from sight.⁶⁹ Sasha takes the cat into her apartment only to shoo her out afterwards. She then regrets having abandoned it and asks around for what has become of it: "Oh, haven't you heard?' they said. 'She got run over. Mrs. Greigner was going to take her to the chemist's to be put away, and she ran right out into the street.' Right out into the street she shot and a merciful taxi went over her" (47). Later we hear Sasha saying: "In the glass just now, my eyes were like that kitten's eyes" (48). Through the telling of this story we first see Sasha take on the role of the 'good samaritan' as exercising power over the fate of the creature, and then, when it meets its tragic end, we see Sasha change sides, or rather experience a reversal of roles as she identifies with the fate of the kitten, leaving her position of power and agency as the person who can offer safety.

Another role reversal happens when the gigolo Rene tries to chat Sasha up. She is disappointed that all the care she has put into her appearance has ended up in making her look like a woman who would be willing to pay to be made love to. However, out of this misfortune, she creates an opportunity for retribution for all the times she has been the one trying to ingratiate herself: "Shall I tell him to go to hell? But after all, I think, this is where I might be able to get some of my own back. You talk to them, you pretend to sympathize; then, just at the moment when they are not expecting it, you say: 'Go to hell'" (61). Having gone through them herself many times, Sasha catalogues the motions which the outcast has to go through till the moment of utter rejection. Having been subjected to the English family's tools of policing and denigration, Sasha knows how hurtful such treatment is and considers visiting it upon Rene in retaliation. The gigolo's speech as reported by Sasha below also mirrors the way in which both Sasha and other Rhys heroines have the impulse to speak and the way their stories fall on deaf ears, if they get articulated at all:

⁶⁹ The kitten's almost allegorical story also harks to one of Mr. James's observations in *ALMM* that men and women are up against very different circumstances and that one need only to look at the animal kingdom to understand that. (See *ALMM*) In this story, on the other hand, it is Sasha, the amateur self-narrator that takes on the role of the 'good Samaritan' about whom we are warned in *Quartet*.

I had meant to get this man to talk to me and tell me all about it, and then be so devastatingly English that perhaps I should manage to hurt him a little in return for all the many times I've been hurt.... 'Because I think you won't betray me, because I think you won't betray me.....' Now it won't be so easy. (62)

Sasha wants to gaud Rene on, but then gets softened when he says he believes she won't betray him. She is reminded that although male, Rene isn't of the privileged class who sets the rules. She continues to taunt him in little ways, perceiving him as only flesh as she has been perceived by men or a slave, as she assesses his teeth: "'Very nice, very nice indeed. Beautiful teeth,' I say in an insolent voice" (62). Rene's efforts strike her so very much like her own that she comes to a true realization of her own life. "There we are, arm in arm, outside the Closerie des Lilas and when I think of my life it seems to me so comical that I have to laugh. It has taken me a long time to see how comical it has been, but I see it now, I do" (65). It is after she sees herself in the mirror that Rene provides that she can assess her life story and be distanced from it sufficiently enough to be able to perceive it as comical rather than completely tragic.

The mulatto and the amateur

After Rene Sasha also befriends a couple of Russian emigres in whose company, due to their similar circumstances, she can let herself go, lose her self-possession and cry. They even discuss crying philosophically, Serge declaring that women find it easier giving the example of a woman he met, who knocked on his door and crying, asked him for a drink. Sasha instantly identifies with the woman but Serge checks her and sets her apart from this woman he encountered on the basis of race: "No [...] Not like you at all [...] She wasn't a white woman. She was a half-negro - a mulatto. She had been crying so much that it was impossible to tell whether she was pretty or ugly or young or old" (79). The mulatto is described to be almost featureless because she has been crying so hard; her face and her identity is impossible to fathom for Serge. As such 'crying' is one of the states that makes the social contract neigh impossible, it is not sanctioned as a way of articulation because it robs the subject of individuality,

of identity.⁷⁰ Although himself speaking from the peripheries as a jobless artist, Serge seems to participate in the dehumanizing discourse concerning the mulatto:

She was drunk too, but that wasn't why she was crying. She was crying because she was at the end of everything. There was that sound in her sobbing which is quite unmistakable- like certain music ... I put my arm around her, but it wasn't like putting your arm round a woman. She was like something that has turned into stone. She asked again for whiskey. I gave it to her, and she started a long story, speaking sometimes in French, sometimes in English, when of course I couldn't understand her very well. (80)

While he cannot register her face, he can still hear the emotions in her sobbing which strikes a chord with him, like 'certain music' that captures true emotion. The text suggests that for someone else to be able to hear this music it must first be deciphered by a man who speaks different tongues and thus made available for public consumption. Serge, though marginalized himself as a Russian emigre in Paris, is, as a white male, closer to the 'absolute standard' and he translates not only the mulatto's words but the meaning of her gestures as well. Thus, the mulatto's authority has been devolved into the mediacy of this painter, who himself is not a native speaker of the English language.

For the mulatto, dependence on the white male is of course not limited to the deciphering of the story. She is a kept woman and her story reveals that she has been dependent on an Englishman for her sustenance. This can be seen as a parody of Sasha's own living circumstances, for although she makes no direct reference to it, we understand that she has also led the life of the kept woman in her younger years:

She came from Martinique, she said, and she had met this monsieur in Paris, the monsieur she was with on the top floor. Everybody in the house knew she wasn't married to him, but it was even worse that she wasn't white. She said every time they looked at her she could see how they hated her, and the people in the streets looked at her in the same way. At first she didn't mind - she thought it comical. But now she had got so that she would do anything not to see people. She told me she hadn't been out, except after dark, for two years. When she said this I had an extraordinary sensation, as if I were looking down into a pit. (80)

The above description of the mulatto experience coincides completely with that of the amateur: the mulatto epitomizes the fears of sexual promiscuity and racial

⁷⁰ That the crying, featureless woman is a mulatto is crucial when one considers the dynamics of mulatto subjectivity as outlined by Jose Buscaglia-Salgado in his *Undoing Empire* (2003). Salgado discusses the position of the mulatto in 18th-century Spanish colonies, and reads mulatto subjectivity as a movement towards the ideal of whiteness. Although Buscaglia-Salgado's case study is two centuries and oceans away from the society that Rhys is depicting, just like the mulatto, the subjects whose stories we get are at variance from the 'Ideal Body', and their sense of self, like that of the mulatto, is influenced by their distance from the 'centre'.

miscegenation that the category of amateur is defined by. That is why people hate her and push her even more to the margin, forbidding her movements and in a way incarcerating her. The social order leaves her no alternative but to act as if she had inherent psychological problems, such as going out only after the dark, whereas it is just a practical choice to avoid the glares of the neighbours.⁷¹

As Eakin (1999: 141) points out, judgements concerning people's narratives lead to judgements we make about their identities: Serge judges the Martiniqueuse through the story she tells and becomes alienated from her as a person. She lives like a zombie, and indeed, haunts Serge as a zombie would haunt one:

All this sounds a little ridiculous, but if you had seen this woman you'd understand why it is I have never been able to forget her. [...] It was difficult to speak to her reasonably, because I had all the time this feeling that I was talking to something that was no longer quite human, no longer quite alive. (80)

The painter puts the mulatto beyond the pale and reads her predicament as failure to conform, not only to the Ideal of whiteness, but to requisites of being human.⁷² The pit that is conjured up in the painter's mind indicates that he perceives the mulatto as almost speaking from the grave: the mulatto's story and the way she tells it imply that in the culture that she lives in, she is as good as dead:

She told me that that afternoon she'd felt better and wanted to go out for a walk. 'Even though it wasn't quite dark,' she said. On the way out she had met the little girl of one of the other tenants. [...] She said to the little girl: 'Good afternoon....' It was a long story, and of course, as I said, I couldn't understand everything she said to me. But it seemed that the child had told her that she was a dirty old woman, that she smelt bad, that she hadn't any right in the house. 'I hate you and I wish you were dead,' the child said. And after that she had drunk a whole bottle of whiskey and there she was, outside my door. Well, what can you say to a story like that? I knew all the time that what she wanted was that I should make love to her and that it was the only thing that would do her any good. But alas, I couldn't. I just gave her what whiskey I had and she went off, hardly able to walk..... (81)

Serge is unable to connect to the mulatto as a human being, or a woman, though hard he tries. He sees her as completely dehumanized and he admits he can't even

⁷¹ Whereas in *ALMM* possession of a private space is denied to the amateur, here, it is access to public space that is denied, which equally has consequences for the way the subject expresses herself.

⁷² The mulatto leading the nocturnal life of a zombie has crossed the border into the zone of what Slavoj Žižek discusses under the Lacanian concept of the undead. For a further discussion of the 'insistent' nature of this sort of 'undead' entities see Žižek (2006: 62)

make the most rudimentary connection to her through a sexual act. His "Well, what can you say to a story like that?" strengthens the sense that this particular story of dejection is not one of the life-story templates he is familiar with. It is too extreme: just as the story is difficult to put into words for the mulatto, it is difficult to 'read' for the painter. To save the reader from confronting the pit that Serge describes, this story is told thrice removed. The mulatto narrative at the heart of the novel is one that must be covered in layers of narration. As such, it functions as the unseemly core of the colonial palimpsest that Rhys depicts in her novels.

Serge witnesses the mulatto's further humiliation when she is treated as if she had not much more humanity than the kitten described earlier: "Once I saw the child putting her tongue out at the poor creature. Only seven or eight, and yet she knew so exactly how to be cruel and who it was safe to be cruel to. One must admire Nature." (81) In the little girl, one reads the judgement of the society, in its sheer, unadulterated form. Thus the story of the mulatto serves as a cautionary tale as Serge rethinks the position he himself stands in in that apartment:

I got an astonishing hatred of the house after that. Every time I went in it was as if I were walking into a wall- one of those walls where people are built in, still alive. I've never forgotten this. Seriously, all the time I was in London, I felt as if I were being suffocated, as if a large derriere was sitting on me. (81)

Just as space can generate certain feelings as I have already argued, in turn, feelings can get inscribed onto space. Serge's friend tells Sasha that Serge has not had a very easy time in London either. He reveals that Serge has gone through a depressive period from which he has only recently surfaced, to take up painting again.

Serge is also interested in the stories of the downtrodden as is revealed by the subject matter in his paintings. Sasha describes these paintings in detail and in that sense they function as another medium of narration for postcolonial creatures. Sasha ends up buying one of the pictures that depicts a Jewish street-musician, on whose face she again recognizes her own. Like the kitten's and the mulatto's, it is another story that fits into her own life-story and with which she creates a community of stories: "The pictures walk along with me. The misshapen dwarfs juggle with huge coloured balloons, the four-breasted woman is exhibited, the old prostitute waits hopelessly outside the urinoir, the young one under the bee de gaz" (84) Thus,

she carries these stories around in her head; with them she feels at home and her own story does not seem to out of the ordinary. However, their presence does not insulate her quite enough, for she still feels the intrusion of the scrutinizing gaze of those around her and feels she has to explain herself:

I call the waiter, to pay. I give him a large tip. He looks at it, says 'Merci,' and then 'Merci beacoup'. I ask him to tell me the way to the nearest cinema. This, of course, arises from a cringing desire to explain my presence in the place. I only came in here to inquire the way to the nearest cinema. I am a respectable woman, une femme convenable, on her way to the nearest cinema. Faites comme les autres- that's been my motto all my life. Faites comme les autres, damn you. (88)

That she wants to spend time sitting alone in a cafe just to escape the confines of her small hotel room is no story to be shared with respectable members of society. Sasha feels she has to insert her actions into a feasible story, a story that will be accepted by 'les autres'. Again, the voice of expectation transforms to one of caution: she gives injunctions to herself, tries to train herself to act like others. This need takes its toll on her nerves and while on the surface she follows rules of respectability, what she really wants to say comes again in interior monologue, the surrogate place for confronting social discourse:

Please, please, monsieur et madame, mister, missis and miss, I am trying so hard to be like you. I know I don't succeed, but look how hard I try. Three hours to choose a hat; every morning an hour and a half trying to make myself look like everybody else. Every word I say has chains round its ankles; every thought I think is weighted with heavy weights. Since I was born, hasn't every word I've said, every thought I've thought, everything I've done, been tied up, weighted, chained? And mind you, I know that with all this I don't succeed. Or I succeed in flashes only too damned well..... But think how hard I try and how seldom I dare. Think- and have a bit of pity. That is, if you ever think, you apes, which I doubt. (88)

The above are the words one expects the Martiniquese to speak: the rhetoric that Sasha uses here is very worthy of a postcolonial creature, with the images of slave bondage applied to her uneasy use of the English language. The dress code and facial expression are part of the language which she has not quite mastered. Although the painter checks Sasha when she identifies with the mulatto due to Sasha's being white, in the society that she lives in, being white is not enough to lay claim onto a face, or a legitimate speaking position. Although white, Sasha too is at

variance from the 'Ideal Body'; she tries to imitate the respectable misters and misses who are totally oblivious to her efforts and ignore her moments of mimicry.⁷³

The profound effect of stories on the psyche of the subject and how they effect one's perception of one's self is made evident in the way Sasha makes recourse to cultural archive, not in order to cannibalize, but to set as background to the stories she has been collecting. In a flashback in which she remembers her time with her ex-husband when their house attracted all sorts of postcolonial creatures, Sasha seeks refuge in master narratives :

There is a bookshop next door, which advertises second hand English novels. The assistant is a Hindu. I want a long, calm book about people with large incomes - a book like a flat green meadow and the sheep feeding in it. But he insists upon selling me lurid stories of the white-slave traffic. 'This is a very good book, very beautiful, most true.' But gradually I get some books that I do like. I read most of the time and I am happy. (111)

There is no criticism of the master discourse here; in fact, the master narrative offers a calm space of retreat for Sasha. Another postcolonial creature intervenes in her pursuit of a calming narrative and proposes accounts of lives that Sasha is more familiar with. The theme of body-trafficking continues to haunt her later when Renee starts telling her about a rich American woman he plans to frame. He flirts with Sasha but Sasha doesn't want to take him to her room. When he surprises her in the landing after they have parted, she changes her mind, and when she finds him too sure about how she must be in need for his love, she changes her mind again. He almost rapes her and then takes her money. This is reminiscent of the ways in which the professional and personal fields of experience gets mixed up for amateur subjectivity. However, in this instance, it is the amateur who ends up 'paying' for sexual favours as Serge usurps her role with violence. After her retreat into 'a flat green meadow and the sheep feeding in it' - the official picture of respectable England - she is thus pulled once again into 'the lurid story' that the Hindu shop assistant wanted her to buy in the first place. The direct physical violence leads to a dramatic split in her consciousness, one experiencing, and the other looking on and passing judgement:

⁷³ Moments of mimicry are parodied elsewhere in the novel as well. When speaking about what they call 'a cerebrale' Serge and Sasha start passing judgment on 'intellectual' women: "So pleased with herself, like a little black boy in a top-hat.....'In fact, a monster. '" (GMM 137) Thus, the black boy aspiring to be a white master is deemed just as monstrous as a woman trying to be an intellectual, with both acts of mimicry condemned at the same time.

When he has gone I turn over on my side and huddle up, making myself as small as possible, my knees almost touching my chin. I cry in the way that hurts right down, that hurts your heart and your stomach. Who is this crying? The same one who laughed on the landing, kissed him and was happy. This is me, this is myself, who is crying. The other- how do I know who the other is? She isn't me. Her voice in my head: 'Well, well, well just think of that now. What an amusing ten days! [...] Now, calm, calm, calm, say it all calmly. You've had dinner with a beautiful young man and he kissed you and you've paid a thousand francs for it. Dirt cheap at that price especially with the exchange way it is. Don't forget the exchange, dearie- but of course you wouldn't, would you?' And you've picked up one or two people in the street and you've bought a picture. Don't forget the picture, to remind you of- what was it to remind you of? Oh, I know- of human misery.....' (154-155)

This split is much more fundamental than 'the voice of expectation' that appears now and then. The 'other' voice in her head patronizes Sasha, listing all the troubles she has managed to get herself into in the last ten days and reminds her why she has bought the painting of the Jew - to remind her of human misery in general and locate her own woes in the general picture. In her hour of need, it is this painting that offers her a sense of community, and it is an instance of madwitch eclecticism that interprets images as narratives:

He'll stare at me, gentle, humble, resigned, mocking, a little mad. Standing in the gutter playing his banjo. And I'll look back at him because I shan't be able to help it, remembering about being young, and about being made love to and making love, about pain and dancing and not being afraid of death, about all the music I've ever loved, and every time I've been happy. I'll look back at him and I'll say: 'I know the words to the tune you're playing. I know the words to every tune you've ever played on your bloody banjo. Well, I mustn't sing any more- there you are. Finie la chanson. The song is ended. Finished.' (155)

Sasha underlines her affinity towards the Jew, and she feels each of his tunes, each of his sad stories of failure. She decides to stop singing along, gives up reciting her or others' misfortunes. As her narrative enters an area of experience where she is violated, she is more and more reluctant to speak of the events as she experiences them, but resorts to dream sequences. This is another instant where the madwitch persona takes on the narrative: what she has lived through and what society expects of her gets articulated through (day) dream-logic in rather unconventional terms:

All that is left of the world is an enormous machine, made of white steel. It has innumerable flexible arms, made of steel. Long thin arms. At the end of each arm is an eye, the eyelashes stiff with mascara. When I look more closely I see that only some of the arms have eyes- others have lights. The arms that carry the eyes and the arms that carry the lights are all extraordinarily flexible and very beautiful. But the grey sky, which is the background, terrifies me..... And the arms wave to an accompaniment of music and song. Like this: 'Hotche-hotcha- hotcha... .' And I know the music; I can sing the song..... I have another drink. Damned voice in my head, I'll stop you talking.... (156-157)

She perceives the world as having innumerable arms and eyes, conjuring a sense of policing both through physical means and through the gaze. The eyes with the mascara point to the gaze of respectable women who she has come into contact with. Sasha says she knows the music and can sing along, that is, she can act as is expected of her, but she is no longer willing to do that and will 'stop the music', will stop interaction with the world outside. Indeed, this is where madwitch narration turns into that of the zombie, the automaton-like narrative voice that hardly reacts to what happens to her. In keeping with this decision to stop talking, the novel ends with her catatonic on the bed in capable of saying no to the man who lives next door who comes in to make love to her.

Sasha's last state can be read as a commentary on her strategy to resist prevailing discourses about women situated like herself, by over-narrating, by calling the stories of others' to her help. Rhys shows Sasha as being beaten by these discourses at the end; she is an amateur and will always be perceived by others as such, and her last violation by her neighbour points to her inevitable fate. However, Rhys suggests that Sasha doesn't give up without a fight, and through her process of resistance, though it may end in failure, the workings of the social order is exposed and the reader is given to understand that the 'underdog' is not a generic failed figure but a subject with a story to tell, if only the society will listen. Sasha, in her narration becomes the mouthpiece for these stories which master narratives tend to leave out. Those pushed to the margins of society are made to suffer from a discourse of dehumanization, and accordingly, the best way to counter this discourse is to reject the muteness that one has been ascribed to. Recourse to others' stories becomes a way of remedying the lack of access to established ways of telling a story. When it comes to how these stories are formally embedded into Sasha's narration, we see that Rhys makes use of simultaneous narration, incorporating elements of 'performing narration' and the vignette.

Thus, in Sasha's construction of her narrative, telling her own life story as accompanied by similar others' creates a surrogate community or archive within which her story makes sense. Sasha's simultaneous narration facilitates the cannibalization of others' stories: as her narrative drive is checked and blocked by the society, she displaces her need to represent her emotions through narrative to other's stories. The embedding of these stories provides at times a chance for the reversal of roles, but more importantly, the stories she tells shapes the mood of her

own story. Through this narrative strategy, the category that Sasha consolidates is that of the postcolonial, as I have tried to frame it in this chapter. Throughout the novel, we are introduced to unfavourable narrative conditions and Rhys demonstrates how Sasha tackles them or at times gives into them. While Sasha uses a racial rhetoric that resonates with that of a mulatto, she also draws parallels with animal stories as further testimony to the lot of dumb and mute subjects. However, it is the mulatto's story that is the most unpalatable of all the stories of rejection and marginalization in the novel. It is the dark pit that the other postcolonial creatures are trying to avoid.

4.3. *Quartet*: Making of the Amateur and Third Person Self-Narration

Jean Rhys's first novel *Quartet* tackles the very modernist issue of how to represent subjectivity in writing and uses a third person, figural narration (See Chapter 2) to achieve that aim. Rhys develops a way of representing consciousness that is in keeping with the predicament of her heroine and accordingly *Quartet* offers a female subjectivity that is markedly different from the male modern subject. The narrative tools used to represent the consciousness of *Quartet's* heroine consequently bear the trace of Rhys's effort to forge a modern female idiom. The modern female subject category that is represented in the *Quartet*, I argue, is the amateur on which I have extrapolated in 3.1. Although the protagonist of *Quartet* is married, she no longer lives with her husband; the way she perceives herself and the way the society positions her reveals similarities between her predicament and that of the amateur's. In this chapter I will be looking at the narrative mode in which Rhys chronicles how the married Marya is made to become 'an amateur' and how this state shapes her engagement in self-narration at both the level of story and narrative transmission. I argue that the extreme sense of alienation that Marya is made to feel results in a subjectivity that conceives of itself as an object, as an other, and thus results in what Franz Fanon has so aptly dubbed 'third person consciousness'.⁷⁴ This third person consciousness is then represented on the page in third person narration, bearing witness to the abjection that Marya is made to feel.

⁷⁴ I discuss the meanings of the change of pronoun in narratives as symptomatic of a pathology (Gymnich 2000) in the self in Chapter 2.

Quartet is the story of Marya, an expat British woman who is trying to survive in Paris after her husband is put in jail. We meet her in a very modernist setting, strolling through the streets of the metropolis, coming in and out of cafes, engaging in the rituals of the flaneur without achieving any of his tasks of recognition and epiphany⁷⁵. Her alienation which gradually leads to abjection is a result of the discrepancies between how Marya sees herself and how the society recruits her as a subject, intervening in Marya's identity performance⁷⁶ in crucial ways. The articulation of an identity that is prescribed by society, in Marya's case, that of the amateur, is shaped by the conditions of self-narration, such as the narrative impulse, access to established ways of story-telling and the effects of obstructions. I argue that the sum of all these conditions coalesce into the third person self-narration in the shape of figural narration with Marya as focalizer.

The novel can be considered Marya's self-narration to the extent that she performs her identity through it. *Quartet* chronicles how, starting off as a married woman, Marya slowly transforms into an amateur, sliding down the scales of subjectivity categories from a gendered perspective, as extrapolated by Pomerleau (See 3.1.). In Pomerleau's description the 'figure of desire' that all women aspire towards or the ideal to be attained for a woman is normally the wife. Throughout the story Marya faces the choice of adopting several positions such as kept woman, petit femme, a nude and an artist's model. The way she exercises her sexuality and adopts certain gender roles is central to the way she conceives and speaks of herself and I argue that all these gender positions invoke different relations to space and narrative possibilities.

As I have pointed out in 3.1., 'private space' is a condition that needs to be taken into account when we do narrative investigations through a gendered perspective. I suggest that lack of private space - a common characteristic to all subjectivities that seem to be on offer for Marya - leads to a confusion of demarcations such as the personal and the professional spheres, which are very important to a subject's performance of identity. This is made evident when Marya considers her own position early in the novel as lacking a groundedness, her own private space:

⁷⁵ See Chapter 3.1. for a discussion of the figure of the flaneur and how the amateur differs from him.

⁷⁶ Informed by Butler's (1990) understanding of gender performativity, I look at Marya's identity performance with emphasis on reiteration and subsequent sublimation.

Not that she objected to solitude. Quite the contrary. She had books, thank Heaven, quantities of books. All sorts of books. Still, there were moments when she realized that her existence, though delightful, was haphazard. It lacked, as it were, solidity; it lacked the necessary fixed background. A bedroom, balcony and cabin de toilette in a cheap Montmartre hotel cannot possibly be called a solid background. (10)

Marya here conceives of herself as a sort of vagabond with no solid background and the impersonal space and the 'lack of solidity' has consequences for her mode of narration. The above assessment of Marya's situation is mediated in the text with 'she realized', a rhetoric of consciousness that is used very economically in the novel. The general statements made after this sort of rhetoric device can be read as extension of Marya's free indirect discourse. Her life being 'haphazard' and lacking a background present an existentialist problem as she considers herself as an object that is hard to place within the grander narrative. This perception of the self as both subject and object at the same time, which is a symptom of abjection, is mirrored in the way the narrative is constructed. There are no discursive distinguishing features between the narrator and the protagonist; the protagonist is the continuous focalizer. This, I argue, allows a conflation of the two and a reading of the text as the self-narration of Marya herself.

Marya's fundamental lack of a fixed or legitimate background presents problems in her social interactions: most of the time people abstain from conversation with her not knowing her 'origins', her 'class' and what sort of 'language' they should take up with her. Private space, belonging to or possessing a private household gives one a social standing, and a background on which to cultivate stories pertaining to the self, in effect, to cultivate a functional self that will be considered equal to others'. Her dubious origins put her out of the pale, out of the range of legitimate conversation partner, as if like an animal she wouldn't understand normal conversation. As a result she is not addressed directly; a group of expats with whom Marya socializes with in Paris start talking about her in her presence, as if she weren't there:

Miss de Solla, looking more ascetic than ever, agreed that eating was jolly. They discussed eating, cooking, England and finally, Marya, whom they spoke of in the third person as if she were a strange animal or at any rate a strayed animal- one not quite of the fold. (12)

The lack of private space, home, or 'address' has its narrative consequences both in terms of the way Marya articulates herself and in terms of the 'narrative' response she gets from others. As Eakin (1999: 62) argues: "the capacity to be addressed as a 'you' by others is a preliminary to the ultimate capacity of being able to say 'I' of oneself". When the subject is not being addressed as a legitimate 'you' by the others, then the question of whether the narrator finds it difficult to speak of himself/herself as 'I' arises. As can be seen in *Quartet*, Marya is now and again not addressed directly when she should be, and this in turn makes it difficult for her to adopt the 'I' herself, a state of affairs that facilitates a reading of the novel being Marya's self-narration spoken in the third person. The third person consciousness I suggest is of course not a direct corollary of being spoken of in the third person; as in the case of Marya, I argue that third person narration is the result of having one's self described without being able to contribute what is being said, of being subjectivated according to someone else's moral codes. Here, being spoken of in the third person goes together with not being 'of the fold' or a member of the English expat family, in certain ways similar to that of the colonial English family.⁷⁷

From the very start of the novel Marya is described as being depressed and unhappy, as we follow how she interacts with the modernist, bohemian circles of Montparnasse. Miss Esther de Solla, a painter, looks "downwards at her with a protective expression" (8), assessing Marya's position through her gaze. In one of the few moments where Rhys gives us the mind script of a character other than Marya, this is how Esther polices Marya's movements: "Is she really married to the Zelli man, I wonder? She's a decorative little person - decorative but strangely pathetic. I must get her to sit for me." (8). Esther feels obliged to find Marya a niche in bohemian society and considering Marya's pathetic and unresponsive way, she thinks her suitable for an artist's model. As part of this 'recruitment' she decides to introduce Marya to the Heidlrs, Mr. Heidler in particular who "made discoveries, he helped young men, he had a flair" (10). Heidler does indeed discover Marya, however, not as an artist, but as Esther suggests, 'a decorative little person', or indeed, a petite femme. Thus Esther initiates Marya into a series of states that she will travel through till she reaches the desperate situation at the end where she loses her husband and

⁷⁷ The family members' desire to define themselves as different from both the countries they come from and the local population can be seen in both these groups.

is dependent upon Heidler, no longer able to differentiate between her professional and emotional fields of experience.

Making and Breaking of the Amateur

Having been recruited by society as an artist's model and the prospective mistress of an accredited member, Marya realizes that in order to have a legitimate place in society, she has to perform gender and class in a certain way. Her in-betweenness, as a married and yet man-less woman is threatening for the strict categorization of female subjectivities and in order to have a legitimate voice, she tries to adopt the mannerisms of a recognized category.⁷⁸ In order to speak across classes, indeed, in order to speak and be heard at all as a responsible citizen, she has to comply with the already recognized ways of giving an account of oneself and the established ways of telling. As Eakin (1999: 62) reminds us one learns to be this or that sort of person "in conversation with others". Marya's identity formation is also subject to the 'conversations' she has with the people around her. These conversations serve to reproduce the ideologies current in that society and act as founding moments in which she is placed in certain discourses and hence knows how she is expected to behave:

She learned, after long and painstaking effort, to talk like a chorus girl, to dress like a chorus girl and to think like a chorus girl - up to a point. Beyond that point she remained apart, lonely, frightened of her loneliness, resenting it passionately. She grew thin. She began to live her hard and monotonous life very mechanically and listlessly. (15)

In order to be able to hold a conversation with others in which she is taken seriously and addressed as a 'you', she performs a particular identity, learns to become the chorus girl through these conversations. The options that are open to Marya are either complying with the already set norms, i.e. learning both the verbal and bodily signification practices of a chorus girl or stay silent. Heike Harting suggests (1996: 170) that "[i]n a social environment which deprives the characters of their language and autonomy, physical presence becomes signifying text, materializing what women and men are thinking". Marya loses weight in what seems to be a self-effacing act

⁷⁸ Her in-betweenness is also in parallel with the transitional identity that I have outlined in 3.2. While the transitional identity I speak about in 3.2. occurs in a postcolonial context, the transitionality of the amateur, moving from the status of the respectable young woman to that of prostitute harbours a similar sense of flux.

signifying her silencing. While the emaciated body signifies the nervous condition of marginalization, her dresses also become signifying textures, as she tries to sell one of them to her landlady:

'It's not a practical dress,' said Madame Hautchamp calmly; 'it's a fantasy, one may say. Therefore if it is bought at all, it will be bought by that kind of woman. Fortunately, as I have told you, my sister in law has several clients...'
Madame Hautchamp was formidable. One heard the wheels of society clanking as she spoke. No mixing. No ill feeling either. All so inevitable that one could only bow the head and submit. (31)

In this 'transaction' it is clear whose meaning-making has more currency.

Hautchamp, as an accredited member of society, passes judgement on Marya, condemning her dress, and condemning all those who may want to buy the dress to the state of the 'that kind of woman', or *amateur*, assigning Marya to a particular subjectivity.

The comments after this interaction are constructed in a way that makes it evident that we are getting the focalizer's (and the 'experiencer's) judgement on Hautchamp. The text makes references to the emotional and immediate interaction between the two with 'ill feeling' and one having to 'bow' in front of the other. Judgements such as the above trigger an almost 'emotional' response in the narrative; the narrative voice leaves the location of 'she' and starts using the general pronoun 'one' to implicate the reader in the experience as well, in a bid for sympathy. Then we are given descriptive statements concerning society with clearly Marya as focalizer.

Marya gets subjectivated through similar other conversations in which society tries to make sure that she stays put in one, controllable position and doesn't commit 'delinquencies of space' (See Introduction). Lois, Heidler's wife, who, having understood her husband's infatuation with Marya tries to get her to accept her impending position as *petite femme* and live with them in the proverbial attic of the Heidler establishment:

She said when she came back: 'You don't want to come and stay with us, do you? Now, why? What's the fuss about? If you really mean that you're afraid of being a bother, put that right out of your head. I'm used to it. H.J.'s always rescuing some young genius or the other and installing him in the spare bedroom. [...] Well,' said Lois, 'what will you do?' She looked at Marya with a dubious but intelligent expression as if to say: 'Go on. Explain yourself. I'm listening. I'm making an effort to get your point of view.' (41)

This 'as if to say' reverts to Marya; it is through her eyes that we are watching the scene and it is made clear that it is she, rather than the narrator who's deciphering Lois's gaze for us. What Marya deciphers is that Lois is daring her to speak and account for her behaviour, to explain her causes why she doesn't want to live with them. Although Lois's words and gaze read almost as a prohibition of speech, it is up to Marya to turn it around, and indeed meet Lois's gaze with her self-narration. The narrative impulse occasioned by Lois's inquisition is checked by Marya's access to established ways of story-telling and she finds it difficult to relate her reasons for refusing to live with the Heidlers and considers it a bad job even before she starts:

'I've realized, you see, that life is cruel and horrible to unprotected people. I think life is cruel. I think people are cruel.' All the time she spoke she was thinking: 'Why should I tell her all this?' But she felt impelled to go on. 'I may be completely wrong of course, but that's how I feel. Well, I've got used to the idea of facing cruelty. One can, you know. The moment comes when even the softest person doesn't care a damn any more; and that's a precious moment. One oughtn't to waste it. You're wonderfully kind, but if I come to stay with you it'll only make me soft and I'll have to start getting hard all over again afterwards. I don't suppose,' she added hopelessly, 'that you understand what I mean a bit.' (42)

As Marya is trying to reject Lois's proposition of living with them she tries to resist Lois's discursive, as well as physical spatialization of herself, but she undermines her own agency by saying she may be 'completely wrong'. There is no 'archive' within which her story can be read and understood, still she feels 'impelled to go on'. Elsewhere in the novel, we get similar views concerning the cruelty of mankind that do not begin with rhetorical devices or punctuation marks to mark the passage as Marya's speech or stream-of-consciousness. When uttered by the narrative voice these views are so recognizably Marya's : as focalizer she doesn't just function as the filter through which events are recounted but also as the authority through which we are introduced to other characters . Such is the case when we are given a depiction of Lois's power of persuasion, and the power that respectable women wield over *amateurs*:

Lois was extremely intelligent. She held her head up. She looked at people with clear, honest eyes. She expressed well-read opinions about every subject under the sun in a healthy voice, and was perfectly sure of all she said that it would have been a waste of time to contradict her. And in spite of all this, or because of it, she gave a definite impression of being insensitive to the point of stupidity - or was it insensitive to the point of cruelty? Which? That was the question. But that, of course, is always the question. (48)

Comparing portions of text that are explicitly Marya's free indirect discourse or speech and that seem to revert to the narrator discloses their similarity and helps us locate the origin of the discourse of the narrative voice in the novel. The sentence after this passage is "Marya admired her benefactress..." which again helps the above observation to be read as Marya's thoughts, although it is not prefaced with 'she thought' or 'she realized'. If we take these to be Marya's thoughts, we see how she proffers power to Lois, saying it would be "a waste of time to contradict her". Thus, when Lois suggests that she live with them, Marya has to say yes, when she says that Marya must take up a job as a mannequin she has to consider it. We see that respectable female members of the English expat family may do the 'policing' for the establishment just as vigorously as their male counterparts.

Lois, representing society, confesses concern for Marya's body in its capacity to upset the assignments of social space and modes of cultural production. Having listened to Marya's objection as to why she doesn't want to accept kindness after already having been hardened, Lois tells her to consider her options:

That's all very well, but, getting down to brass tacks, what exactly do you think of doing? I feel a certain responsibility for you. I don't see why I should. I suppose you're the sort of person one does feel responsible for. (42)

Seeing that Marya doesn't do the planning and deciding that is crucial for a respectable citizen, Lois feels it 'her responsibility' to place her as a member of that very society. However, as we are warned at the start of the novel with the poem about the Good Samaritan,⁷⁹ this is no selfless act on the part of Lois. It is Marya's carelessness about her body and the consequences thereof that alarm the Heidlers both. Rather than let it loose on the stage, in contact with other 'bodies' Lois tries, subversively, to contain Marya's body within her marriage, almost as a co-wife, rather than let her be an amateur who may have a multiplicity of partners. She is aware that her husband is in love with her and the pending sexual relations between Marya and Heidler would, if Marya is let loose on stage, by proxy bring Lois in contact with other bodies. The fear of this sort class miscegenation or exposure to disease is a

⁷⁹ The novel opens with the following epitaph:
"... *Beware*
Of good Samaritans- walk to the right
Or hide thee by the roadside out o sight
Or greet them with the smile that villains wear.
R.C. Dunning"

particular one that the amateur incurs, paralleling the threat of miscegenation that the colonial is always suspect of. Lois lays out the possibility of becoming a kept woman as well, and cautions Marya to make her choice carefully, a consideration that Marya finds too mercantile and distasteful for her amateur subjectivity:

'I don't think I'd ever plan anything out carefully,' said Marya, 'and certainly not that. If I went to the devil it would be because I wanted to, or because it's a good drug, or because I don't give a damn for my idiotic body of a woman, anyway.' (43)

Clearly, it is not her body or sexuality that she places value on but the meaning that a relationship has for her: she doesn't, as yet, see her own body as currency to bargain with. To discuss her move to the Heidler apartment she visits her husband in the prison and lets him do the deciding for her. When he also suggests that she should live with the Heidlers, she relinquishes her agency to him willingly.⁸⁰ The amateur is then incorporated not so much 'into' the family but as a satellite to the family, living in the attic room, a body whose sexual and other acts have been put under control. Thus the discursive and spatial distance to the English family, represented in her complex relationship with the Heidler couple, becomes one of the technologies that keep Marya in her designated place.

The Heidlers devise a home arrangement in which they act as Marya's surrogate family. All the motions she goes through are typical domestic and familial ones, reserved for the wife or the obedient daughter. The fact that she is neither makes this a travesty of the middle class English family:

When Marya went down to the studio she would find Lois lying on the divan. Heidler sat in a big armchair near the stove opening his letters, and when the last letter was read he unfolded the *Matin* and asked for more coffee. Marya always brought the cup and the sugar, for he was very majestic in a dressing gown, and it seemed natural that she should wait on him. He would thank her without looking at her and disappear behind the newspaper. He had abruptly become the remote impersonal male of the establishment. (47)

Again it is clear that we see the scene through Marya's eyes, as she goes down to the studio and 'finds' this particular spatial arrangement that is elicited by the hermeneutic patterns that the Heidlers exercise: Lois languishing, Heidler seeing to the business of the house and the world and Marya waiting on them. It is Marya who

⁸⁰ "All right!" she said. She would have agreed to anything to quieten him and make him happier, and she was still full of the sense of utter futility of all things. As she walked back to the tram she wondered why she had thought the matter important at all." (46).

ascribes majesty to Heidler's stature and then reads his position as 'the remote impersonal male', like a kind of deity. She goes through her actions without much thinking like a hollowed automaton. She is, in a way, acting out a zombie persona, and the narrative transmission is equally lacking in the emphatic gestures found elsewhere in the novel. Although I have conceptualized zombie narration within a colonial context, the dynamics of membership to or exclusion from the expat community in Paris operates on similar grounds. In this constellation certain subjects have to surrender their agency to more assertive and respectable people, like Lois who is perfectly sure of all she says, or Heidler, 'the remote impersonal male of the establishment', 'zombifying' (See 3.3.) Marya's subjectivity .

The zombie persona is at once countered by the madwitch narrating voice, charged with aggression when Lois goes further and advises Marya to give up her husband Zelli. For Lois, it is only economical that Marya should leave her husband and find herself another, since loyalty can only be towards the respectable, for what can take you further in life. For Marya, however, loyalty is determined by what you have lived through together; she finds it difficult to write off her husband just like that. When Lois asks Marya to leave Zelli, she's effectively asking her to give up the one tie that Marya has achieved, to become totally enmeshed in the scheme of things that Lois is trying to create:

'No I can't,' said Marya. She repeated with violence: 'I can't. I don't think about things in that way.' Words that she longed to shout, to scream, crowded into her mind: 'You talk and talk and you don't understand. Not anything. It's all false, all second hand. You say what you've read and what other people tell you. You think you're very brave and sensible, but one flick of pain to yourself and you'd crumple up'. She muttered: You don't understand. (51-52)

Again, Marya tries to resist her assigned role by refuting Lois's worldview and the way she conceives of Marya's circumstances. She needs 'to shout, to scream' and somehow display violence in retribution to Lois's assumptions of Marya's state of being. In madwitch narration this retribution takes the shape of iconoclastic gestures or violence which Marya admits she wants to engage in. Although Marya doesn't voice her resistance to Lois, her need for retribution is reflected in the text with madwitch gestures finding space at the level of narrative transmission.

Marya suggests that although she is the one who seems agency-less and weak, Lois is equally subjectivated by what she has read and that all her knowledge which gives her such apparent power is in fact second hand. Marya challenges the

Heidlers' hypocrisy concerning the situation by naming the arrangement that they have made concerning her presence in the house. However, the Heidlers know how to use this second hand or otherwise discourse to silence Marya's attempts at explaining, in her own idiom, why she wants to leave:

'You mustn't think... ' Her breath had gone again and her voice trembled. 'You mustn't think that I don't realize... that I haven't realized for a long time the arrangement that you and Lois have made about me.'

'You're mad,' said Lois with indignation.

'You have made an arrangement!' said Marya loudly. 'Not in so many words, perhaps, a tacit agreement. If he wants the woman let him have her. Yes. D'you think I don't know?'

Heidler got up and said nervously: 'Don't shout. You can hear every single word that's said at Madame Guyillot's next door!'

'Tant mieux!' screamed Marya. 'Tant mieux, tant mieux' (80-81)

In the crucial exchange above, Marya's breath first 'goes' and then her voice trembles. She still manages to shout out the truth to the Heidlers before they drown her speech once again with their practiced discourse of where people belong in society. When Lois names her as mad one more time Marya moves onto a more assertive tone, shouts, and despite Heidler's caution revels in the fact that the neighbours may hear - thereby threatening to destroy the respectability of the English family (metaphorical and Heidler's in particular). Heidler, concerned about this 'private' affair becoming 'public', stops Marya and asks Lois to leave, saying she doesn't know "how to deal with this sort of woman" (81). He lets Marya know once again that he speaks the law about what kind of woman she is or can aspire to be. Obviously, she's different from Lois, who has to be spared Marya's excesses in behaviour - which Heidler doesn't hesitate calling hysterical:

'Don't be hysterical,' he told her with contempt, 'talk calmly. What do you want? What's it all about?' But every vestige of coherence, of reason had fled from her brain. Besides, however reasonably or coherently she talked, they wouldn't understand, either of them. If she said: 'You're torturing me, you're mocking me, you're driving me mad,' they wouldn't understand. (81)

The strength of her feelings juxtaposed with the fact that she has trouble uttering them shows the extent of the obstruction she faces and reveals Rhys's strategies in making this obstruction felt through the narrative mode she employs for Marya's subjectivity. Marya feels tortured and mocked and yet doesn't trust the Heidlers to understand how it is that they drive her to these emotions. The one thing that Heidler understands, as is revealed later, is Marya's financial dependence on him. When

Marya tries to acknowledge that she is still dependent on him economically, Heidler does not need too long an explanation. He cuts her short, for when it comes to financial matters he's very discerning:

She muttered: 'I'm not going to live with Lois and you any longer. I- am- not! And you must arrange...'
'Ah!' said Heidler, 'it's a question of money. I rather thought that was what you were getting at.' She jumped forward and hit him as hard as she could. 'Horrible German!' she said absurdly. 'Damned German! *Crapu /e !*' She stood panting, waiting for him to drop his arm that she might hit him again. (81)

Marya resorts to violence at last when Heidler confronts her with her most ontological problem, her inability to keep the professional and emotional fields of experience apart. This reaction emphasizes once again the connection between private space and narration, and how for the amateur lack of distinction between the emotional and the professional leads to an arrestation of narration where only bodily gestures can convey meaning. She hits him and curses him, however, soon calm returns to all three of them as they return to the place allotted to them in the previous scene. It is this erratic motion that Marya contemplates, as if they are being ruled by forces they cannot see:

When she woke next morning the whole thing seemed very unreal and impossible. But even while it was going on it had seemed unreal. She had felt like a marionette, as though something outside her were jerking strings that forced her to scream and to strike. Heidler, weeping, was a marionette, too. And Lois, anxious-eyed in her purple dressing-gown⁸.¹ (82)

Marya realizes they are all acting out their role in the geography of social relations, that all of them, including the respectable Heidlers, are subjected to social norms that are beyond their control. She suggests that the emotions given way to are part of a role learned by rote, rather than the active reaction of the consciousnesses represented: they become like zombies, possessed by rules of social signification. In a scene typical of Rhys's other heroines as well, Marya lies on her hotel bed, turns the events round in her head trying to find a meaning to it all. Then she gets up and has to face her own corporeality. She looks at herself in the mirror and we get her own assessment of herself which serves as a metaphor for the whole novel: Marya looking at herself and conceiving of herself as an other:

⁸ The passage continues with "'Anyhow,' thought Marya, 'I'm going away. I'll stick to that.'" (82), again directing the reader to read the observations about the Heidlers as her judgements, cushioned as they are between rhetoric of consciousness, starting with 'it seemed to her' and finishing with 'thought Marya'.

Then she would get up and look at herself in the glass thinking: 'Good Lord! Can that be me? No wonder people think I'm a bad lot.'
Her eyelids were swollen and flaccid over unnaturally large, bright eyes. Her head seemed to have sunk between her shoulders, giving her a tormented and deformed look. Her mouth drooped, her skin was greyish, and when she made up her face the powder and rouge stood out in clownish patches.
She would stare at herself, feeling a horrible despair. A feeling of sickness would come over her as she stared at herself. She would get back into bed and lie huddled with her arm over her eyes. (97).

Dissociation from the body manifests itself in 'not caring for it' and letting it wither away, while it is being inscribed from the outside as having certain meanings. The sickness and despair Marya feels correspond to the feelings of abjection that Kristeva describes as the following: "The corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life. Abject" (1982: 4). Marya's body is not quite a corpse, but its degradation towards one makes Marya despair and what she experiences when she looks at her own body is at once alienation and horror. She looks devoid of life, or indeed a soul and her first reaction is to resort to a godly invocation to make sense of what has happened to her. The painful process of trying to wrench herself away from Heidler's emotional and economic influence has left traces on Marya's body which she only now perceives. Marya's body has become the texture on which her experiences have been inscribed; the swollen eyelids attest to her bouts of crying, and the whole effect is a 'tormented and deformed look'. Where Marya fails to convey in words the real extent of her suffering, her body articulates what she has been through.

Her state of abjection reaches full expression when, in a last attempt, she tries to re-forge her relationship with Heidler. The following is indeed too degrading a description to be announced in the first person, and explains how a third person narration could serve to express experiences too painful and disconcerting to attribute to the name 'I':

She opened her eyes and said: 'I love you, I love you, I love you. Oh, please be nice to me. Oh please say something nice to me. I love you.' She was quivering and abject in his arms, like some unfortunate dog abashing itself before its master. (102)

This is a moment when Marya uses her body as a means of self-determination, snuggling up to Heidler, placing herself there, as his lover, in what Harting (1996: 171) calls a 'female aesthetic of anticipation'. However, Heidler denies her this

position and consolidates her abjection by admitting the sort of emotions that she provokes in him. Marya's behaviour, which is deemed hysterical and at times unclever, totally lacking in self-preservation, makes her an uncontrollable, unpredictable entity:

Heidler was saying in a low voice: 'I have a horror of you. When I think of you I feel sick.' He was large, invulnerable, perfectly respectable. Funny to think that she had lain in his arms and shut her eyes because *she* dared no longer look into his so terribly and wonderfully close. *She* began to laugh. After all, what did *you* do when the man *you* loved said a thing like that? *You* laughed, obviously. (115) [My italics]

At the most emotional moments of the figural narration the pronoun changes from 'she' to 'you', simulating a first person narrator taking the narratee into confidence: This mode of conveying observation calls attention to the ways in which Rhys develops the dynamics of experiencing and speaking in *Quartet*. The dissociation between the two leads to a reappropriation of personal pronouns, putting a comfortable distance between the pain of experiencing and that of articulation. Rather than be chastised, she laughs in the face of being considered hysterical. Marya's unconventional mode of speech is part of what gives Heidler the horror, stemming from a way of seeing the world which he seems not to be able to fathom. He is afraid of this unpredictable quality: it is through this unpredictability that she exercises resistance to the subjectivation that Heidler has thought fit for her. Such behaviour that makes the interlocutor feel uneasy, as Eakin (1999: 63) argues, is usually considered as 'dysnarrativia':

This sense of something missing, an inner chill or deadness, seems to be associated with a "dysnarrativia" that bespeaks a damaged identity. Who can say, for sure, however, that the identities in question are truly damaged? It is the fact that those who observe such individuals should think so that interests me, suggesting that we live in a culture in which narrative functions as the signature of the real, of the normal.

For Heidler, Marya's is a dysfunctional identity that doesn't comprehend the rules of self-preservation or the rules of love as a transaction that differ for males and females. Her narrative of longing and abandonment doesn't make sense to him - it does not function as 'the signature of the real', but as mere confabulation. Marya doesn't know how to make her narrative fit the 'facts' and go on with her life story accordingly. Similar exchanges with others, failing as they do to reconstruct the

discourses at the time, disclose what constitutes the real or acceptable in the expat community.

Marya slowly becomes aware of what is expected of her and starts to sublimate the role that is being presented to her. She starts acting not out of love, but out of concern for self-preservation. She considers their relationship with Heidler, and, again, her thoughts come unmediated through rhetorical devices. It is again as if she is taking the reader into confidence, as she divulges about their love life:

He wasn't a good lover, of course. He didn't really like women. She had known that as soon as he touched her. His hands were inexpert, clumsy at caresses; his mouth was hard when he kissed. [...] He despised love. He thought of it grossly, to amuse himself, and then with ferocious contempt. Not that that mattered. He might be right. On the other hand, he might just possibly be wrong. But it didn't really matter much. What mattered was that despising, almost disliking, love, he was forcing her to be nothing but the little woman who lived in the Hotel de Bosphore for the express purpose of being made love to. A petite femme. It was, of course, part of his mania for classification. But he did it with such conviction that she, miserable weakling that she was, she found herself trying to live up to his idea of her. She lived up to it. And she had her reward. (92)

It seems as if, devoid of love, Heidler is indeed performing the role of the lover so that Marya may reach her destination of the 'kept woman', which the society, as a result of this 'mania for classification' has already deemed fit for her as a woman whose husband is in prison. Marya perceives Heidler here not so much as an individual, but as a tool of the society that makes sure she ends up where she should be. Previously she had tried to adopt the mannerisms of a chorus girl but had managed only 'up to a point', but now she 'lives up to' Heidler's expectations of her. It is made clear that constructing an identity in opposition to society's expectations is a battle of wills, and Marya admits she is much weaker when compared to Heidler, who represents society.

The moral workings of society become clearer in the way people react to Marya after she has made a couple of scenes concerning her relationship with the Heidlers' and now their 'arrangement' is known 'openly' to everyone revealing the hypocrisy of those who encouraged her to live with the Heidlers in the first place. When Marya displays enough agency to name the situation, she no longer is seen to be complying with society's rules:

She persisted. 'Everybody cuts me dead all along the Boulevard Montparnasse, anyway. Even De Solla cuts me. I'm the villain of the piece, and they do know. They say that Lois picked me up when I was starving and that the moment I got into her house I tried to get hold of you. And

that there are limits. Or they say - shall I tell you what else they say, the ones who have lived here long enough?

'Oh I know the sort of thing,' said Heidler. 'But what if they do? They can't be sure. You must live it down, believe me, if you keep your head down and don't give yourself away.' (94)

The society expects Marya to accept her position quietly and not make any scenes. They will turn a blind eye so long as she 'lives it down' and 'doesn't give herself away', which is completely antithetical to Marya's code of behaviour. It is clear that she herself doesn't care for a 'good name' and it is not so much because she has 'stolen' Heidler from Lois, but because of her greed for being loved by him and her indifference to conventional forms of respectability that the community turns against her. Much as she is ready to surrender her subjectivity to Heidler and be 'object' in his arms, she rebels at the idea of being an object of ridicule to Lois and her friends:

'Why should I be a butt for Lois and her friends?' Marya went on excitedly. 'She wants me there so that she can talk at me. She wants me there so that she can watch out for the right moment to put her enormous foot down.'

She began to laugh loudly. There was a coarse sound in her laughter. Heidler looked at her sideways. [...] His eyes were very hostile. When she saw his hostile eyes she stopped laughing and her lips trembled.

'Alright. Very well. Just as you like,' said Marya. 'What's it matter anyway?' (94-5)

Marya asks for her right to be addressed as a 'you', her crucial accusation is that Lois talks 'at' her rather than *to* her. She punctuates her request with laughter, not tolerated by Heidler, who is always monitoring her for such errant behaviour. He meets her expressive laugh with just as equally expressive a gaze which stops her in her tracks, indeed, arrests her way of articulating herself, bringing her near to tears. Thus, the power of the gaze to put people in their place transforms Marya's laughter to tears which then leads to an indifference on her part, once again underlying the fact that Marya and Heidler speak different idioms.

According to Heidler's hermeneutics, laughter doesn't count as intelligent speech, for him it is a symptom of dysnarrativa. However, in what I have conceptualized as madwitch narration, along with other gestures, laughter can be a retributive mode of articulation when speech is prohibited to those coming from the margins. Marya is by now aware of the differences between their worldviews and the futility of trying to get the message across in conventional terms - terms which will always privilege Heidler's way of attributing meaning. While the prevailing epistemology keeps raiding her private space, Marya resists reproducing the code of

the behaviour that the Heidlars expect and abides by her own semiotics and 'worlding' :

As she walked back to the hotel after her meal Marya would have the strange sensation she was walking under water. The people passing were like the wavering reflections seen in water, the sound of water was in her ears. Or sometimes she would feel sure that her life was a dream - that all life was a dream. 'It's a dream,' she would think; 'it isn't real' - and be strangely comforted.

A dream. A dream. 'La vie toute faite des morceaux. Sans suite comme des rêves.' Who wrote that? Gauguin. 'Sans suite comme des rêves.' A dream. Long shining empty streets and tall dark houses looking down at her. (96)

In the above quote Marya starts to perceive reality in an unconventional way, associating different feelings with the everyday acts of walking, seeing and hearing. She seems to experience life through another semiotics, similar to what Renk has termed 'dream logic' which is one of the strategies attributed to the madwitch narrative voice. As in madwitch narration, her subjectivity becomes eclectic, using French quotes and then anthropomorphizing inanimate objects.

Again, in keeping with the madwitch voice, as an iconoclastic gesture Marya considers meeting the Heidlars' mode of silencing her with another way of silencing them, physically, with violence: "And Marya, watching her, silent, would think: 'One of these days just when she's thought of something clever to say about me for her friends to snigger at, just when she's opening her mouth to say it, I'll smash a wine-bottle in her face.'"(97). Marya's narration in dream logic continues as she closes her eyes and acts out a scene in her head that could serve as an explanation of the epistemology that Heidler abides by, an epistemology that makes her an outsider and writes her off as a hysteric:

She lay back and shut her eyes and saw Heidler kneeling down to pray in the little church and looking sideways at her to see if she was impressed. He got up and walked out of the church into the room. 'God's a pal of mine,' he said. 'He probably looks rather like me, with cold eyes and fattish hands. I'm His image or He's in mine. It's all one. I prayed to Him to get you and I got you. Shall I give you a letter of introduction? Yes, I might do that if you remind me. No trouble at all. Now then, don't be hysterical. Besides, Lois was there first. Lois is a good woman and you are a bad one; it's quite simple. These things are. That's what is meant by having principles. Nobody owes a fair deal to a prostitute. It isn't done. My dear girl, what would become of things if it were? Come, come to think it over. Intact or not intact, that's the first question. An income or not an income, that's the second.' (125)

This rendition of Heidler's epistemology as imagined by Marya reveals the dynamics of the expat community she lives in. Although there is an assumption of bohemianism, the old rule of God as male prevails, and it is only the men who have

been made in his image. Women, then become the objects of desire, or the currency with which God conducts business with the men, Heidler offers prayer, and in turn gets Marya. The objects of desire in themselves are also categorized as the good and the bad, as those who are to be taken as lawful wives and those who are doomed to be loose women - and these women are beyond the pale, they are outside the Law and hence have no rights to claim ("Nobody owes a fair deal to a prostitute"). Through Marya's assessment, Rhys gives us a reading of the way that 'respectable' society functions, be it expat in Paris, or London as this constellation of man, woman and God reminds the reader of the state of affairs in other Rhys novels. This is the order that the likes of Heidlers are there to protect with their policing of sexual practices and wealth.

Throughout the novel Rhys experiments with the boundaries of literary convention to represent not only consciousness but also the modes in which a female subject category, the amateur, articulates herself. In the above sequence Marya's discourse at last reproduces the ideology of the expat society in Paris in narrative terms. Her 'conversations', which should serve as the basis of her identity construction in her new environment, are part of her identity performance, and accelerate her estrangement. Thus, the prevailing social discourse becomes an important condition of the narration Marya engages in, and along with her lack of access to established forms of storytelling coalesce into a third person narration. The discourse that dominates the novel is that subscribed to by the amateur: that people are hostile, that people with money decide on other people's station in society, that it is futile to resist this order. While this is the discourse reconstructed by the narrative voice of the novel, it is also the discourse employed by Marya when she speaks and when we are introduced to her thoughts through rhetorical devices. The focalizer's resistance to the dominant discourse manifests itself through adopting madwitch narration, reflected both at the level of the story and narrative transmission underlining the organic link between the narrator and Marya as focalizer.

Marya's story reveals the social and sexual dynamics through which the expat community regulates the relationship between its members and polices its borders. The criteria of respectability which their behaviour towards Marya exposes is similar to the way that the colonial order also polices the behaviour of its subjects in order to prevent miscegenation. In the nuclear family of the Heidlers, the English family reasserts itself, expecting all subjects to place or define themselves in relation to it,

and nothing else. Thus, while the Heidlere and other members of the expat community are living the modernist bohemian life, Marya's place in the community is determined by them, subjectivized as she is by those who have stronger wills than hers. As such Marya doesn't come across as a modern 'heroine', but her responses to being situated by others manifests itself in an unconventional female modernist idiom, unconventional both in terms of the subjectivity she ends up adopting as an amateur, and the formal expression of her self-articulation. Marya's special situatedness prevents her from assuming the already heavily inscribed space of the 'autobiographical I' as we see her feeling weak and abject before the pillars of society, represented here by the Heidlere. The amateur thus becomes a modernist sign in an epistemology in which the roles of man, woman and God are no different than that of English middleclass society. Thus, despite the pretensions of Bohemia, the expat community reproduces the structure of the holy English family and Marya's chronotope turns out to be her journey towards being some sort of satellite of that family, in the expat universe.

4.4. Intersubjectivity and Self-Arrangements in *After Leaving Mr.*

Mackenzie

In her study *Theorists of the Modern Novel*, Deborah Parsons (2007: 80) focuses on the various narrative devices that modernist writers use to represent the content of the consciousnesses of their characters. Parsons focuses on with two different examples for the innovations that especially the female modernist idiom developed at the time: Dorothy Richardson's method of using a single subjective consciousness through which the reader is introduced to the fictional world created, and Virginia Woolf's method of favouring permeability of consciousness, weaving in and out of the minds of her various characters. While *Quartet's* mode as a third person narration is largely similar to Richardson's in presenting the world solely through the protagonist's eye, *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie* tends towards Woolf's notion of permeability of consciousness, developing a particular method of intersubjectivity that maintains a central focalizer. In *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie* the central subjectivity is strategically juxtaposed with a number of other subjectivities to facilitate a comparison and a contrast between ways of perceiving the world in relation to social

status. This juxtaposition is maintained by embedding other male and female subjectivities into the text alongside the central focalizer, thereby revealing the kinship or enmity between the subjectivities in question by facilitating a 'conversation' between them. The conversation between these subjectivities takes place both in the fictional world as articulated speech and through representation of their consciousnesses on the page as they clash or interpenetrate as they make sense of the world.

The primary mode in which Rhys's protagonists make sense of the world and their life story is, as I have argued already, self-narration and in this chapter I continue the exercise of reading a third person narration as self-narration. Frederic Regard (2002) conceives of self-narration as a spatial practice calling it an exercise in 'self-arranging', a process of generating meaningful spaces for oneself to inhabit. As we can see in *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie* these spaces can be both physical and social. The importance of possessing a physical private space for narration has already been discussed in the chapter on *Quartet*. Equally, the social space and the position that a female subject is expected to speak from has consequences for self-narration. In *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie*, the protagonist is trying to find her new 'position' after having been abandoned by her lover Mackenzie. She finds herself having to relocate herself in the social networks of two countries in which she has spent her life. Her plight reminds us once again that female subjectivities such as Julia's have to fight for the right to interpret their own experiences. Like with so many Rhys heroines, the need to challenge discourses of others does not get voiced at the level of the story but are shared with the reader. Rhys deals with Julia's burning question of 'who am I?' through juxtaposing her subjectivity with others' - by staging an intersubjectivity which addresses the female preoccupation with the other and which demonstrates how consciousnesses interpenetrate.

That for female subjects space is very important for self-articulation is revealed at the very beginning when we meet Julia as she is trying to forge a relationship with the dead-end of a room she finds herself in. We see that her consciousness is interpellated at once by her lover and her surroundings. The reader is given access to a private conversation she seems to be having with herself assessing the situation after she has been left by her lover, translated in the text in the form of free indirect discourse :

Julia had come across this hotel six months before- on the fifth of October. She had told the landlady she would want the room for a week or perhaps a fortnight. And she told herself it was a good sort of place to hide in. She had also told herself that she would stay there until the sore and cringing feeling, which was the legacy of Mr Mackenzie, had departed." (9)⁸²

Julia perceives the room as the space that will facilitate her flight from the consequences of her abandonment, as the space that can remedy her sense of being exposed to the effects of Mackenzie's behaviour. She constructs herself as someone fleeing from emotional turmoil suggesting that the room is quite temporary. However, the reader is given to realize in a telegram script a few pages later that the legacy of Mr Mackenzie is not only emotional but also financial and that he will be cutting off her allowance. In Rhys's rhetoric of male-female relationship economics this signals the severance of the ultimate tie. Because her relationship to space is a function of her relationship to her significant other (who determines her social position as kept woman), Julia's former perception of the room collapses and she has to reconfigure it. For Julia, the hotel room is the stage for both her emotional accomplishments and failures, and the financial consequences of these actions.

The hotel room as an ambiguous space between the personal and the professional shapes the ways she narrates her experiences; and in turn her amorous and commercial exchanges shape her perception of the space of the room. "The room already had a different aspect. It was strange - as a place becomes strange and indifferent when you are leaving it." (15) Her need to flee these constrictions get articulated in the way she tries to transform the space of the room. This is made clear as we learn how she feels about the Seine, and her hotel room in Paris:

When she looked at the river she shivered. She felt certain that the water made her room much colder. It was only at night that she loved it. Then it seemed mysteriously to increase in width and the current to flow more strongly. When you were drunk you could imagine that it was the sea. (12)

Julia feels comfort only when she can block out the space in the dark and imagine the river as the sea; signifying freedom and boundlessness when compared to her

⁸² The card of the hotel is introduced on the very first page, the text circumscribed in a rectangle simulating a real card, making the four sides visible, suggesting the four cornered confinement that Julia is feeling

HOTEL ST RAPHAEL QUAI DES GRANDS AUGUSTINS PARIS, 6ME CHAUFFAGE CENTRAL. EAU COURANTE CHAMBRES AU MOIS ET A LA JOURNEE
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constricted hotel room in Paris. It is only through an altered vision, in the dark, that Julia can transform the space into one in which she feels more comfortable and reveals that a chemically altered mind - that is a drunken state - facilitates this transformation. It is this altered consciousness that helps her perceive of space differently. A subjectivity thus transformed to transform a space to feel more comfortable in order to facilitate speech is reminiscent of Rhys's other heroines, especially Julia's yearning for the sea. The 'dream logic' that Marya displays in *Quartet*, which bends the conventions of reproducing the perception of reality in narrative surfaces here, in the shape of the workings of a drunken mind. Again, as in several passages in *Quartet*, the pronoun shifts from 'she' to 'you' allowing Julia to address the reader directly, taking them into confidence and thus consolidating her point of view, her focalization as the primal one in a narrative that accommodates other voices and worldviews as well.

Positioning and Embedding Subjectivities

The first subjectivity other than Julia's to be represented in the novel is Mr. Mackenzie's, the lover who has left her. Before introducing Mackenzie's subjectivity Rhys gives us Julia's assessment of him, so that we know what kind of importance Mackenzie's judgements, to which we'll soon be introduced, carries for Julia and the society at large. The following gives us a constellation of subjectivities and Julia's place within it through what seems to be her own perspective, again through the conflation of narrator and protagonist typical of third person self-narration:

At the sight of him Julia's heart began to beat furiously and her legs trembled. She was excited to an almost unbearable degree, for added to her other emotions, was the fact that she was very much afraid of both him and of his lawyer. When she thought of the combination of Mr Mackenzie and Maitre Legros, all sense of reality deserted her and it seemed to her that there were no limits at all to their joint powers of defeating and hurting her. Together, the two perfectly represented organized society, in which she had no place and against which she had not a dog's chance (17)

Julia portrays herself as completely at the mercy of Mackenzie and Legros, to the extent that as practitioners of the Law they seem to own reality and therefore can subject Julia to any fate they see fit. Julia's reaction to the sight of Mackenzie reveals that the way she positions herself in terms of authority has a tremendous impact on her body: her heart beats faster and her legs tremble. She almost dissociates

Mackenzie and his lawyer from the human sphere and perceives them as the embodiment of the symbolic order, as the Big Other - organized society objectified as a deity.

Mackenzie's subjectivity is staged after he is put in such a constellation of power and his discourse is presented in the text as the representative of the symbolic order against which Julia's subjectivity is portrayed becomes very important. His 'consciousness content' is introduced differently from Julia's; whereas Julia's subjectivity gets conflated with the narrator's, Mackenzie's is ironized at the level of narrative transmission distancing it from the discourse of the novel:

A feeling of caution and suspicion which almost amounted to hatred had entirely overcome him. He had definitely suspected her of hoarding some rather foolish letters which he had written and which she had insisted that she had torn up. One of the letters had begun, 'I would like to put my throat under your feet.' He wriggled when he thought of it. Insanity! Forget it; forget it. [...] She haunted him, as an ungenerous action does haunt one, though Mr Mackenzie persisted in telling himself that he had not been ungenerous. Ungenerous! That was all nonsense. (21-22)

The way Mackenzie calculates the gains and losses of their relationship sets his worldview apart from Julia's, his mercantile tone contrasted with Julia's amateurish approach. Here Mackenzie is the focalizer and the passage is peppered with exclamation marks, rhetorical questions and Mackenzie's inculcations to himself and I suggest that this is a transmission of subjectivity through a membrane of irony. Although the narrator describes Mackenzie's reaction as the haunting 'of an ungenerous action', Mackenzie is shown to refute that, as if his subjectivity is getting into an argument with that of the narrator's. Rhys embeds Mackenzie's subjectivity here to highlight the contrast between the way Julia and respectable members of the society she lives in perceive reality. Thus, Julia's focalization is interrupted by Mackenzie's idiom, and the irony with which it is represented bolsters the reading of the text as a third person self-narration, through its treatment of the two subjectivities.

The way other subjectivities are introduced point to the kind of relationship between the self-narrator and the characters she comes in contact with. Accordingly, the embedding of Mackenzie's focalization and subjectivity serves to reveal ways in which the identity of the amateur is interpellated from without:

Almost he was forced to believe that she was a female without the instinct of self-preservation. And it was against Mr. Mackenzie's code to believe that any female existed without a sense of self-preservation. She was irresponsible. She had fits of melancholy when she would lose the

self-control necessary to keep up appearances. He foresaw that the final stage of her descent in the social scale was inevitable, and not far off. She began to depress him. (20)

Mackenzie reveals the nature of the relationship he has had with Julia - an interdependence that should have revolved around her sense of self-advancement while preserving Mackenzie's sense of propriety. Mackenzie's embedded subjectivity offers us a reconstruction of public discourses, in this case concerning unmarried young women's relationship to money. Mackenzie, as the proclaimer of public discourse on unmarried young women, finds it difficult to accept that Julia as a designated dependent, i.e. as someone from the category of women who bargain with their sexuality and then capitalize on their gains, has no sense of self-preservation. Julia has not considered the money that Mackenzie has been giving her as 'capital', something to build a living on; rather, she has used it 'irresponsibly', taking it for granted, meeting her immediate needs.

Julia's status as 'dependent' becomes apparent to Horsefield, her lover-to-be, when he witnesses her last meeting with Mackenzie. It is through this predicament of dependence that Horsefield formulates an 'understanding' between himself and Julia, as he appears sympathetic to her plight. Horsefield's is the second male subjectivity that Rhys introduces; this time not through irony, but through a measure of distrust, as he fulfils the requirements of the epithet of 'good Samaritan' that Rhys extrapolates on in *Quartet*. Julia accepts Horsefield's help without questioning and this adds to his general air of unease concerning their immediate 'bonding'. Horsefield demonstrates the stages that men go through in their relationship with her: seeing her helpless state they act the 'Good Samaritan' in exchange for the feeling of power it gives them (along with possible sexual favours), and when they see that she accepts this help without any show of distress, they are repelled in a certain way:

In one of the rooms opposite the light was on and he saw a young man and a girl embracing each other passionately. He felt impatient. You couldn't get away from that sort of thing for a moment in this place. He turned from the window and said: "Tell me, are you stuck for money? Is that it?" She opened her bag and took out two ten-franc notes and some small change. 'This is all I've got. I had a cheque for fifteen hundred francs but I went and gave it back.' [...] Then he thought that after all there was only one end to all this, and as well first as last. He opened his pocket-book. [...] He took out the five hundred and one of the thousand notes. They were creased carefully into four. He put them in her hand and shut her fingers on them gently. When he had done this he felt powerful and dominant. Happy. He smiled at Julia rather foolishly. [...] she said 'Thank you. You're very kind. You're kind and a dear.' But he noticed that she took the money without protest and apparently without surprise, and this rather jarred upon him. (36)

This 'jarring' feeling is because Julia doesn't display any pretence of being coy and hard-to-get. She doesn't play according to the code proclaimed by Mackenzie, a code that subjugates not only Julia but also Horsefield. The scene Horsefield has seen between Mackenzie and Julia has signalled to him that she is an *amateur*, and he has been *impelled* to act as he has done, since the cultural script dictates that men of his station act as 'protectors' to such women with possible sexual favours in return. However, the signals have not accounted for Julia's idiosyncratic behaviour which puts Horsefield in awkward positions as it has done Mackenzie: "*He felt embarrassed. You gave way to an impulse. You did something you wanted to do - and then you were enmeshed in all sorts of complications.*" (36-37) [My italics]

Rhys uses a similar rhetoric to Julia's when representing his consciousness; he is allowed to use the sympathetic 'you' as if taking the reader into confidence to indicate that he's also quite alien to the rules of the 'code' which Mackenzie abides by quite easily. Horsefield's subjectivity is not ironized like Mackenzie's since he seems to be recovering from an unfortunate past himself like Julia.⁸³

Self-Narration and Interpellation:

The text switches back to Julia's focalization when Horsefield warns Julia to get out more and talk to people. Julia contradicts him saying "it doesn't always help to talk to people" (38). She then relates to Horsefield a recent 'useless' conversation she has had with the painter Ruth for whom she poses. Rhys gives us Julia's long speech in quotation marks, sustaining Julia's focalization as central largely through the use of punctuation. The following is taken from a three page section where Julia is speaking to Horsefield about her interaction with Ruth. The whole three pages are the transcript of Julia addressing Horsefield with only a few interjections from him and no interruption by the narrator:

"Well, all the time I was talking I had the feeling I was explaining things not only to Ruth - that was her name - but I was explaining them to myself too, and to the woman in the picture. It was as if I were before a judge and I were explaining that everything I had done had always been the only possible thing to do. [...] I wanted her to understand. I felt that it was awfully

⁸³ "The habit of wanting to be alone had grown upon him rather alarmingly. He wondered whether it had been worthwhile to spend the only legacy he ever had, or was ever likely to have, in travelling about Spain and the South of France because he had a vague idea that the sight of sun would cure his ills and would develop the love of life and humanity in which he felt that he was lamentably deficient." (28)

important that some human being should know what I had done and why I had done it. I told everything. I went on and on[...] (40)

In the above quote apart from Horsefield and Ruth, Julia also gets into conversation with a figure from cultural archive, a reclining nude from Modigliani. The woman in the picture obviously does not change her expression, however, her very presence is a harsh enough comment for Julia and as she admits, she feels she has to explain herself as well. The Modigliani picture serves both as a mirror image and a judge that sizes Julia up alongside Ruth. This double inquisition provokes Julia's self-narrative impulse at the level of narrative transmission. The 'gaze' that Julia reads in the picture and in Ruth reveals how her subjectivity is interpellated from the outside and how indeed subjectivity is always dependent on the intersubjective element.⁸⁴

Julia's experience of self-narration in the presence of Ruth reveals, once again, the vital nature of this act. As she is telling her story she feels this should help explain things 'not only to Ruth' but primarily to herself. As I have discussed previously, it is in conversation with other people that we learn to be ourselves (Eakin 1999). However this conversation with Ruth doesn't deliver and exacerbates Julia's need to share her memories, an act that Eakin (1999: 103) calls 'a prime social activity'. Julia's need for self-narration, a meaningful exchange of stories, is thus deferred to her conversation with Horsefield; she tells him how she told her life story to Ruth. Thus we have a palimpsest, or even differance⁸⁵ of self-narration, where Julia's self-narration gets played repeatedly, on different levels. What is important is that at every level the addressee is different, eliciting different responses and different intersubjective dynamics. Julia narrates her experience of self-narration to Horsefield and portrays Ruth as indifferent, Horsefield, in turn, feels sorry for her.

It is only through a meaningful exchange of stories with fellow humans that the subject can form a personal history that is 'reviewable' and has its own ontological value. Indeed, when ontological value is not gained from the conversation, dysphoric mode of narration is not avoidable. Because she doesn't get any meaningful

⁸⁴ Although this approach may seem to give too much say to the interlocutor in the subject's self-fashioning, these conversations are an essential operation- and it is left to the subject whether or not to work it towards their own end.

⁸⁵ Murfin and Ray (2003: 93) explain differance in the following way, pointing to the 'deferral' inherent in the concept: "Derrida argues that all language is constituted by difference, a word coined that puns on the French verb *differer*, which means either "to differ" or "to defer." He uses the term to demonstrate that words are only the deferred presences of the things they "mean," and the meaning of words is grounded in their difference from other words."

response to her story, Julia, too, starts to doubt whether what she has just said signifies at all:

It was a beastly feeling I got- that I didn't quite believe myself, either. I thought: "After all, is this true? Did I ever do this?" I felt as if the woman in the picture were laughing at me and saying: "I am more real than you. But at the same time I am you. I'm all that matters of you." 'And I felt as if my life and all myself were floating away from me like smoke and there was nothing to lay hold of - nothing. And it was a beastly feeling, a foul feeling, like looking over the edge of the world. It was more frightening than I can ever tell you. It made me feel sick in my stomach. I wanted to say to Ruth: "Yes of course, I never did all that. But who am I then? Will you tell me that? Who am I, and how did I get here?" Then I had just sense enough to pull myself together and not to say anything so dotty.' (41)

The way Julia perceives her life is as disintegrating, as 'floating away like smoke', is a rather dysphoric view of one's life, in contrast to the conventional euphoric mode of self-narration and Bildungsroman. The 'woman in the picture' represents the way women like Julia have already been inscribed in a certain way in narratives by male modernists. This cultural narrative tells Julia that all that matters is her body and that her speech hardly signifies at all. The 'beastly feeling' she gets is due to being denied the authority to signify, to decide about the uses to which she wants to put her body. It is Julia's flesh, both in sexual terms and as an artist's model, that matters, not her stories, not her subjectivity. It is the ultimate abject moment, where the self feels disconnected from the body; it takes on such importance as to overwrite the traits of the self, appearing all of a sudden as a rival that usurps the self. Julia challenges this precedence of the body over the self at the level of narrative transmission⁸⁶ by rhetorically asking 'how' her body got to be where it is, suggesting that there must have been some agency that shaped the trajectory of that body, that took her to that artist's studio.

The Costs of Rearranging the Self:

To be able to answer the question of 'who am I', Julia decides to go to London to recover a self untainted by Mackenzie's legacy: "She thought: 'I must go away. That was a good idea. That's the only thing to be done.'" (43). It is evident that one of the reasons why Julia has no place in 'organized society' is that she escapes the clutches of social mechanisms by being constantly on the move. The social contract

⁸⁶ Real confrontation is once more deferred: "I *wanted* to say to Ruth..." (my italics).

requires that the subject remain in a given position through which her/his relation to social modes of production and reproduction can be mapped in order to recruit him/her as subject. Space, when seen as 'speaking discourse', as Regard (2008) puts it, speaks certain mindsets, obligations and expected patterns of behaviour. As such, different cities can generate different modes of articulation and offer different perspectives stemming from the different discourses that reign in those cities. Thus, leaving one for the other is leaving one life-style, one perception of the world for the other.

Naturally, what one calls 'home' - where one's relatives and people who have witnessed one 's growing up still live - are places where that person is encouraged , if not forced, to account for his/her past and present deeds. Michael Basseler and Dorothee Birke (2004: 133), point to the trope of return to the childhood home and formulate some of the functions of a 'travel in the self' occasioned by this narrative tool including "the staging of the foundations of identity". Returning to London can then be regenerative for Julia's capacities for telling her life-story in the sense that through renewed contact with certain people and spaces that have born witness to her foundational experiences, it can allow her to reconstruct her identity-narrative . Most importantly, it can allow her to define herself independently of her relationship to Mackenzie. In that respect, it can be argued that Julia's decision to flee Paris and to go to London is to flee the state of being an amateur, to inscribe herself once more in organized society as daughter or sister and to change her conditions of relationality. In order to reinsert herself in London cosmology she first has to remember who she was in that order. The minute she decides to go, Londonian space is conjured up in her mind, with the corresponding discourse of restrictive family ties and capitalism.⁸⁷

She began to reckon up the money she still had and came to the conclusion that, on arriving in London, there would be about thirty shillings left. Suddenly she began to doubt the wisdom of going there with so little money. She had not illusions as to the way in which her sister would receive her. It was pretty awful being in London without any money. Drabness swallowed you up, very quickly. (44)

⁸⁷ The London-Paris discursive opposition is articulated by Julia in terms of how she feels in each space, and she codifies the difference also through memory acts: "Julia thought: 'This place tells you all the time, 'Get money, get money, get money or forever be damned.' Just as Paris tells you to forget, forget, let yourself go." (*ALMM*, 65) Whereas London speaks to its citizens through an economic jargon, Paris, according to Julia, lets them be and encourages them to forget. Thus, Rhys demarcates these two spaces through what they tell you, through the world-view that each of them presents.

Julia's move to London shows travel in geographic space corresponds not only to a change of social environment but also to a change of the discourse within which one has to define oneself. As preparation for the journey Julia locates herself according to her financial situation, tries to refamiliarize herself with the dominant discourse of London - that of 'reckoning up'. The vestiges of another 'organized society' makes themselves apparent when Julia boards the train to London. Her encounter with England through the pages of a magazine reveals that her plan to reinsert herself in another geography of social relationships will be one difficult to carry out, as she realizes she has lost her ability to make sense of Londonian discourse :

Julia left Paris the next day by the midday boat train for Calais. She had bought an English illustrated paper at the Gare du Nord. In the train she read steadily down the glossy pages, which chattered about a world as remote and inaccessible as if it existed in another dimension. The people sitting opposite to her - obviously a married couple - were also English and they were reading the English papers. To all intents and purposes she was already in England. She felt strange and subdued. (45-46)

While she finds the discourse of the papers inaccessible, she can still read the signs of respectability on the couple sitting across from her. The institution of marriage is one of these signs, which, as an amateur, she has to confront as a technology of the social order that determines the female subject's distance from the 'Ideal' (See Chapter 3.2.). The distance from the Ideal and what kind of female categories it generates becomes clear when she finally reunites with her sister. As women who are not members of the institution of marriage their subjectivities are juxtaposed to point to the similarities and differences in their situation. To the extent that we are introduced to Norah's subjectivity in Julia's third person self-narration, we can observe, in comparison, the role of society in determining the subjectivity of unmarried young women.

The Amateur and the Good Sister

As we have seen already, in *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie* other male and female subjectivities are represented apart from the protagonist Julia. The two subjectivities that are especially pitted against each other are that of Julia, as amateur, and her sister Norah, as the dutiful daughter. Society demarcates the two categories with

clear lines, as people's reaction to them shows; still, their subjectivities approximate one another in the way they view the world and in their reaction to society. With all due premonition, Julia goes to meet her sister Norah who has been looking after their sick mother, and the premonitions are fulfilled as Norah sits across from Julia "as though she were waiting for explanations" (51). When Julia is not forthcoming, Norah asks how long she will be staying, at once making it clear that Julia's presence in London can only be temporary. After being thus marginalized by her sister, Julia says she does not know and the conversation gets even more strained: "Then there was a silence, like that between travellers in a railway carriage who have started a conversation which dies from lack of subjects of mutual interest" (52). Norah believes that the only reason Julia has written to see her is to ask for money:

'Yes, but look here, this is perfectly absurd,' said Norah fretfully. 'You've had practically nothing to do with us for years - and you don't seem to have starved.' [...] 'And who's better dressed - you or I?' said Norah. A fierce expression came into her eyes. (54)

It is clear that Norah sees Julia as the prodigal daughter/sister who has gone to Paris while she had to look after their mother - even her clothes are used as incriminating evidence against her. Julia is about to disturb the expectancies of inheritance by appearing at the moment when her mother dies, presenting herself as another party that could benefit from the inheritance that Norah believes she alone has deserved by looking after her mother. It is clear that being placed in another social constellation brings its own kind of difficulties, as Julia is held accountable for her actions by people she has a fundamental bond with, a bond which no amount of leaving (as in the case of Mackenzie) can undo: "[Julia] had lost the feeling of indifference to her fate, which in Paris had sustained her for so long." (55) Being judged by her sister rather than receiving an unconditional welcome disallows this indifference and she has to take stock of her fate, consider and weigh her successes and failures.

As testimony to the bond and rapprochement between the two sisters at the level of narrative transmission, the way Rhys goes from the 'consciousness content' of one to the other is quite different from the way that the narrative switches to the focalization of Heidler or Mackenzie. After they have to endure the terrible experience of having to hear their mother scream in her sick bed in the other room, the sisters sit down and drink. Norah dares Julia to call the scene 'sordid and ugly', however Julia doesn't and reaches an understanding of what her sister has gone through: "[...] she

was unable to put her emotions into words. At that moment her sister seemed to her like a character in a tremendous tragedy moving, dark, tranquil, and beautiful, across a background of yellowish snow." (73) Norah verifies Julia's thoughts by saying that neither of them have done very well in life and then the focalization moves onto Norah, just as Julia is watching her as if Norah were a tragic actor. Julia's gaze becomes the lens through which we see Norah and Norah's subjectivity thus seems to be mediated through Julia's gaze:

She felt a tightness of the throat, and her eyes stung. She opened them widely, and leaned her head back, because she knew that if she did that the tears would not fall; they would go back to where ever they came from. She did not want to give herself away before Julia - Julia with her hateful, blackened eyelids. What was the use of telling Julia what she thought of her? It was ridiculous to make a scene. You ignored people like that. [...] It was as if meeting Julia had aroused some spirit of rebellion to tear her to bits. She thought over and over again, 'It isn't fair, it isn't fair.' (74)

Here, just before Julia's name appears, the passage could just as well be Julia's stream-of-consciousness; the way they try to hide their emotions and to shut out the world is similar especially when one considers how the pronoun switches to the general 'you' here. However, the communication between the two sisters whose mental processes are so much alike is halted, due to the mistrust they both feel towards the world in general and towards each other in particular. Norah's focalization, in its likeness to Julia's demonstrates what Woolf terms 'the psychological sentence of the feminine gender' as a form of narrative that is "able to depict the depths of female psyche" without being "distorted by any sense of a need to justify that psyche" (Parsons 2007: 94). Norah contemplates her lot and repeats the mantra 'It isn't fair' and then she picks up a random book to leaf through, and it happens to be *Almayer's Folly*⁸⁸, and the following passage is what she reads (introduced in the text in smaller font and without quotation marks):

The slave had no hope, and knew of no change. She knew of no other sky, no other water, no other forest, no other world, no other life. She had no wish, no hope, no love The absence of pain and hunger was her happiness, and when she felt unhappy she was tired, more than usual, after the day's labour. (75)

Rhys's thus reveals to the reader what Julia reads and the passage consolidates Julia's vision of Norah as a 'tragic character' whose trajectory is already written out for her, like the predicament of a slave who has no prospects of bettering her

⁸⁸ Joseph Conrad's first novel, published in 1895.

position. The juxtaposition of Norah's predicament with that of a slave calls to mind Virginia Woolf's category of young women who are bound to the house because their elderly parents are in need and who receive no real compensation for their services:⁸⁹ Norah charges at society in a similar way that Rhys's protagonists do; at the level of narrative transmission rather than in the fictional world. The following judgements are given in free indirect discourse and they are in no way undermined by irony as in the case of Mackenzie's focalization:

Everybody had said: 'You're wonderful, Norah.' But they did not help. They just stood around watching her youth die, and her beauty die, and her soft heart grow hard and bitter. They sat there and said: "You're wonderful Norah.' Beasts... ..Devils... (76)

Here, Norah dissects how society works to keep people in place and how it uses 'admiration' as a drug to stop making people rebel against their lot. However, the approval of society is not enough to keep Norah happy or to remedy the fact that life is passing her by. Norah remains a respectable woman; however this passage reveals that it comes at a high cost, Rhys reminding us that 'respectable' people don't always get a fair deal either. The discrepancy between the 'form' provided for Norah, i.e. that of the self-less daughter, and what she really feels discloses the painful process of 'being recruited' by society. Her response to the way society cements her in her role is similar to the way Julia responds to those who categorize her as *amateur* or prodigal daughter, without giving a thought as to whether she agrees with such definitions. In that sense, both these unmarried women's subjectivities are interpellated from the outside, and suggest that similar interpellations will elicit similar narrative responses; reminiscent of the similar ways in which subjectivities on the colonial continuum also respond to interventions.

Before Rhys switches back to Julia's focalization, Norah is described in the following way: "And then she had felt so tired that after all nothing mattered except sleep. And then she must have slept." (76) This 'she must have slept' reveals a strange ambivalence on the part of the narrator, making the preceding passages of Norah's free indirect discourse read like conjecture rather than the statements of an omniscient narrator. This quality of conjecture, when considered together with the

⁸⁹ In *Three Guineas* Virginia Woolf discusses the predicament of such women, pointing to the service value of wives and daughters in the middle classes and how these go unnoticed and unpaid, as opposed to the paid (though low) wages of lower class women who work in factories. Thus, Woolf argues, middle class women are positioned worse than lower class women when it comes to power and agency.

fact that we explicitly start seeing Nora at the start of the passage through Julia's eyes, facilitates further conflation between the narrator and Julia. The rest of the page switches back and forth between Norah and Julia with Norah admitting that though "she hated her", "she felt more alive when her sister was with her." (77). Norah's feelings emphasize the natural bond that the sisters have as subjectivities connected together through a shared history and their distance to the institution of marriage as unmarried young women. The fluid way Norah's subjectivity is introduced into a text in which Julia is the central focalizer points to Woolf's emphasis on 'permeability of consciousness' and as I have shown this permeability varies according to the relationship that the subjectivities represented have.

Right after the end of this fantasy-like report of Norah's behaviour, Julia goes into another reverie, this time about her mother and remembers how she used to make up stories about her mother's colonial childhood:

She had been thinking of the words 'Orange-trees', remembering the time when she had woven innumerable romances about her mother's childhood in South America, when she had asked innumerable questions, which her mother had answered inadequately or not at all, for she was an inarticulate woman. Natural, accepting transplantation as a plant might have done. But sometimes you could tell that she was sickening for the sun. Julia remembered her saying: This is a cold, grey country. This isn't a country to be really happy in.' [...] Had she been unhappy? No, Julia did not remember her as an unhappy woman. Austere, unconsciously thwarted perhaps, but not unhappy. (76)

By enlisting Julia's fantasies about her mother's past Rhys stages a once removed utopic 'remembering' of colonial space, pointing to the organic tie between mother and daughter, a tie that harbours permeability of consciousness to the utmost degree. Julia contemplates her mother's subjectivity as an 'inarticulate' yet 'natural' one. However, although the mother may not have been articulate, Julia draws attention to the fact that there are other forms of expression, as she believes her mother's demeanour *showed* that she was 'sickening for the sun', like a plant. Julia keeps on attributing 'natural' or pre-symbolic characteristics to her mother, positing her as from the land of Real, traces of which she carries in herself. As such Julia's mother's "This is a cold, grey country. This isn't a country to be really happy in" depicting England is the most 'feminine sentence' of all, revealing the depths of female psychology which Rhys, in Parson's (2007: 95) terminology 'stretches' through the subjectivities of female characters in this novel.

The mother's sick body positions both her daughters' bodies in society - Norah's by tying her to the house and Julia's by allotting her to the space of the prodigal daughter. It also acts as repository of memory. When Julia is sitting by her mother's deathbed, she remembers her childhood days with longing, this period of her life transforming into a utopia, functioning like the sunny colonial spaces of her mother's memories. The mother's body itself functions like the lost colonial 'territory' that postcolonial self-narratives usually refer to, "held in utopic-dystopic tension" (Whitlock 2000: 179):

Julia sat there remembering that when she was a very young child she had loved her mother. Her mother had been the warm centre of the world. You loved to watch her brushing her long hair; and when you missed the caresses and the warmth you groped for them [...] It was strange sitting there, remembering the time when she was the sweet, warm centre of the world, remembering it so vividly that mysteriously it was all there again. [...] And from being the warm centre of the world her mother had gradually become a dark, austere, rather plump woman, who, because she was worried, slapped you for no reason that you knew." (ALMM, 77-78)

Julia's memories of her mother also display this 'utopic-dystopic tension' attached to colonial spaces, eliciting feelings of comfort and terror at the same time. The passage also suggests that as the centre of the world, all 'travels' originate from the mother. Julia's realization of her mother's now faded centrality is an instant in which a subject defines herself in terms of the distance she has covered from the bodies that have witnessed her foundational experiences. The movement away from the mother, then, is offered as the possible chronotope of Julia's story, which almost sidelines the chronotope of the movement away from the body of the lover, which the title of the novel suggests.⁹⁰ This chronotope effects the way she remembers and narrates, revealing the power dynamics between female subjectivities, especially mother, sister, daughter, and not only those between men and female dependents.

After staging the connection between Julia's subjectivity and that of her sister and mother, Rhys returns once more to inter-gender relations as Julia visits her first lover Mr. James, her interaction with him underlining once again how social distance between subjectivities complicate both the protagonist's engagement in self-narration and the representation of permeability of consciousness at the level of narrative

⁹⁰ "She was crying now because she remembered that her life had been a long succession of humiliations and mistakes and pains and ridiculous efforts." (94)

transmission.⁹¹ Julia and James talk and when the text now moves onto his free indirect discourse, his subjectivity is ironized through exclamation marks like Mr. Mackenzie's as he realizes that Julia is asking him for money in a roundabout way "At last she had come to the point - relief of Mr James!" (81). For Julia the professional sphere again invades the space of the personal:

'Of course, my dear,' he said, 'I'll do something for you. Look here. I'll write you tomorrow and send you something. [...] I promise. You'll be able to have a rest... Now let's talk about something else for God's sake.'

She said, rather stubbornly: 'But I always meant, when I saw you, to explain...'

Mr. James said: 'My dear, don't harrow me. I don't want to hear. Let's talk about something else.' (82)

James reduces the story of the miserable life Julia has had in Paris to a plea for money and the passage shows how he obstructs Julia's speech, her engagement in this 'prime social activity'. As she leaves his house she has a lump in her throat, the unspoken words transforming into an impulse to cry: "She thought: 'That wasn't what I wanted.' She had hoped that he would say something or look something that would make her feel less lonely." (84) Not having been able to share her story she feels she has no chance to gain James's sympathy and the move from hysteria (in which Mackenzie and James believe Julia to be in) to *historia* is once more deferred.

In his move to silence her story and render it insignificant, James draws a parallel between Julia's need to speak in what he believes to be incoherent terms with soldiers suffering from shellshock, with men who have been 'broken' in the war. He explains to her how what he feels towards 'mad people' has transformed and that now he suffers them to be:

'I despised a man who didn't get on. I didn't believe much in bad luck. But after the war I felt differently. I've got a lot of mad friends now. I call them my mad friends. [...] some women too. Though mind you, women are a different thing altogether. Because it's all nonsense; the life of a man and the life of a woman can't be compared. They're up against entirely different things the whole time. What's the use of talking nonsense about it? Look at cocks and hens; it's the same sort of thing,' said Mr James. (83)

⁹¹ As a further aspect of the narrative technique that Rhys uses, in the scene in she is talking to Mr. James about her Parisian life and how she has lost her baby, there's a passage that starts with "She was thinking" (81), a passage that continues in quotation marks, revealing her desperation at the time. And then the narrative goes back to the present, to the circumstances of her conversation with Mr. James for a couple of sentences and then quotation marks come again, making it difficult to tell whether it resumes Julia's thoughts or whether she is actually recounting them to Mr James, blurring the narrative line between what Julia utters and what she thinks.

Thus James reminds Julia about the Law which in Paris was represented by Mackenzie and Maître Legros and which is hardly different in London in the way it positions her. As James emphasizes, the experience of the male and female body will differ; the way in which men and women will be broken differ. Mr. James sounds almost like Woolf here, emphasizing the difference between the experiences of men and women, the irreducible difference being their bodies. According to Woolf, the obvious route of self-articulation for women is "telling the truth about my own experiences as body" (as quoted in Parsons 1999: 95). Obeying 'the rule of cocks and hens', Julia disinterestedly accepts to dance with a stranger on a night out with Horsefield, who finds her behaviour very strange. When he asks her why she danced with him, this is what she has to say: "Sometimes one has to do things, haven't you ever felt that? You're very lucky, then. But if you haven't felt it, it's no use talking. Because you won't believe." (110). This also ties in with zombie subjectivity, of feeling impelled to do things quite unconnected to one's volition. Horsefield says that he knows a thing or two about following orders and cracking up, having been in the war. However, this doesn't serve to bring them together, as Rhys switches to Horsefield as focalizer we learn: "But the worst of it is,' he thought, 'that one can never know what the woman is really feeling.'" (111).

While Horsefield gives up trying to fathom Julia's thoughts, Julia keeps conjecturing what others feel and think, constructing a picture of herself through others' eyes. In particular 'the female body' connects the two sisters in more ways than one and this 'organic bond' is also made apparent in their self-articulation. Just as we have seen Norah call the complacent and respectable members of society as 'beasts' and 'devils' in her free indirect discourse, we see Julia do the same to Norah's face, who in turn takes it personally:

'People are such beasts, such mean beasts,' she said. 'They'll let you die for want of a decent word, and then they'll lick the feet of anybody they can get anything out of. And do you think I'm going to cringe to a lot of mean, stupid animals? If all good, respectable people had one face, I'd spit in it. I wish they all had one face so that I could spit in it.' (98)

Apart from positing Julia as the amateur who is pushed to the margins of society, the passage underlines the similarity between the subjectivities of the two sisters, although society may place them very differently by way of respectability. Julia accuses Norah of being jealous of her and the two sisters, conditioned as they are to find fault with each other, part ways after this argument. After Julia leaves, we again

move onto Norah's focalization, learning that she feels sorry for the way they have parted. It is because they hold a mirror to each other's lives that they can't bear each other.

Having failed to insert herself into a 'familial context', Julia tries other ways to construct a subjectivity that is not interpellated by others, lovers or family. She tries to think back to a time when her feelings and perceptions were self-generated, without dependence on others. Her contemplation tests the boundaries of subjectivity, to see whether a non-relational self is possible at all:

How far back do you remember? The last time you were really happy - happy about nothing? When you were happy about nothing you had to jump up and down. 'Can't you keep still child, for one moment?' No, of course you couldn't keep still. You were too happy, you were bursting with happiness. You ran as if you were flying, without feeling your feet. And all the time you ran you were thinking, with a tight feeling in your throat: 'I'm happy - happy - happy...' That was the last time you were really happy about nothing, and you remembered it perfectly well. How old were you? Ten? Eleven? Younger ... yes, probably younger. And you could remember the first time you were afraid. (115)

Despairing for her future, Julia seeks happiness in the past, and the passage serves to bolster the idea that memory is very selective and reveals the current desires of the self that is remembering.⁹² The way a narrator remembers an event depends on his/her purposes at the time she tries to recall it. Here, the goal is to find a moment of ontological happiness: restricted as she is now by society's rules, her quest is to find an inner core, a psychological depth that is untouched by anything. She wants to capture a moment free from interaction, a moment where she is happy 'about nothing', happy in a self-sufficient manner; she wants to construct an extended self that goes well beyond the immediate reactions and thoughts and the excitability of the moment.

This passage demonstrates the tension between the need for a unique core of the self and relationality of human experience. Throughout the novel, we see the central focalizer Julia enmeshed in all sort of relations and constellations and Rhys stages her interaction with disparate characters. Presenting the subjectivities of these characters, the novel investigates what endures as common experience beneath and across subjective experience of different characters. Rhys deals with Julia's burning

⁹² "The visit to London had lasted ten days, and already it was a little blurred in Julia's memory. It had become a disconnected episode to be placed with all the other disconnected episodes which made up her life." (*ALMM*, 129)

question of 'who am I?' through juxtaposing her subjectivity with others'- by staging an intersubjectivity in which both the female preoccupation with the other is addressed and which demonstrates how consciousnesses interpenetrate. Rhys explores the possibilities of representation of intersubjectivity with a view to present a view of the conditions under which Julia is recruited by the different societies in London and Paris. In both spaces the same Law puts her in the same place of speech. Rhys complements Julia's articulation with her sister's and mother's and 'stretches' the 'female psychological sentence'. Male subjectivities are also introduced to reveal the Law and its effects on the discontented in the society that Julia lives in. The initial chronotope of moving away from the lover turns into a meeting with Julia's sister as mirror, and then finishes with assessing the distance she has covered away from her mother. Thus, Rhys delimits the permeability of consciousness by denoting male subjectivity as extrinsic and conflating the consciousness of sister, daughter and mother.

4.5. Membership to the Holy English Family and Madwitch Narration in *Wide Sargasso Sea*

I argued in Chapter 3.2. that distance to the holy English family shapes the self-narrative projects of colonial subjects in a fundamental way and that these subjects develop their own ways of coming to terms with the inclusion or exclusion they have to contend with. *Wide Sargasso Sea* deals primarily with its characters' distance from the holy English family and the ways in which this marks their narratives when telling their own stories. The two self-narrators in the novel, Antoinette and her unnamed husband can both be considered 'transitional subjects' due to their shifting positions and displacements within the English family throughout the novel. The husband ends up being the victorious colonizer who returns to England with the goods, while Antoinette transforms into the mad Creole woman who will in time become the proverbial 'madwoman in the attic'.⁹³ The novel charts these transformations along

⁹³ In the character of Antoinette readers are also invited to recognize Bertha from the Charlotte Brontë novel *Jane Eyre*. In the Brontë novel Bertha is the mad wife in the attic who spoils Jane's chances to marry Rochester, the owner of the manor house she works at as a governess. At the end of *Jane Eyre* Antoinette Bertha Mason decides to set fire to the house in one of her frenzies, and thus makes Rochester a free man. The figures of Antoinette and Rochester, in their embodiments in *JE*, have come to stand for certain archetypes, and in their seminal work *The Madwoman in the Attic* Sandra M.

with the intimacies that happen between the two subjects that on the surface seem diametrically opposed. Both self-narrators get support from characters on the island who display characteristics of the madwitch persona; the servant Christophine and Antoinette's distant relation Daniel. This chapter will be tracing how different colonial subject categories appropriate the madwitch voice and in turn get transformed by it.

Kathleen Renk (1999: 93) says that contemporary Caribbean women's writing transforms madwoman figure we know from Victorian texts - a figure that is expounded on in Gilbert and Gubar (See 3.3.). These narratives dissociate stagnation from the madwoman and point to her mode of articulation as an unofficial, alternative resource for power and agency. If the subject is denied powers such as legitimate use of language, it will look for other, non-conventional ways, favouring modes of 'revelation' (ibid: 18) over linear narration, and violence over appeasement. To be able to function fully, the disenfranchised and mad connotated woman needs new hermeneutic powers to make sense of experience. These characteristics are an aspect of Rhys's style and concur with the narration of Antoinette who makes references to divination and witchcraft. She resorts to obeah⁹⁴ a couple of times during the novel to get her husband back, and one can see that she tries to mimic the effects of obeah through her mesmerizing narration.

Wide Sargasso Sea is divided into three parts of unequal length. The first part is Antoinette's fragmented narration of her childhood. The second part, of almost equal length, is the story of the short-lived shared life of Rochester⁹⁵ and Antoinette. This part starts with Rochester's narration, switches back and forth between him and Antoinette twice and then ends again with Rochester.⁹⁶ The third part, much shorter than the first two, starts with Leah the cook reporting the speech of Grace Poole, Antoinette's keeper - ending again with Antoinette's narration. These changes in

Gilbert and Susan Gubar (1979: 348) read Antoinette, or Bertha Mason, as representing the suppressed psyche and sexuality of *Jane Eyre*, and the 'madwoman in the attic' has come to symbolize the darker side of Victorian, and post-Victorian heroines in British novels caught as they are between the ideals of 'angel in the house' or mad, hysterical women.

⁹⁴ A kind of witchcraft practiced in the Caribbean which Rhys defines in *Wide Sargasso Sea* through an encyclopedia entry that Antoinette's husband reads.

⁹⁵ For simplicity I will refer to Antoinette's unnamed husband as Rochester.

⁹⁶ That Rochester's account of his time in the Caribbean in *Jane Eyre* sounded too negative was a concern of Rhys's, which, she admits in a letter to her editor, is one of the reasons she wanted to write the *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Angier 1985: 26). The secret history that she wants to reveal is to do as much with Rochester's position as with the perceived madness of Antoinette. Rhys has the following to say about the white Creole stereotype that *Jane Eyre* has generated: "I was vexed at Bronte's portrait of the "paper lunatic", the all wrong Creole scenes and above all the cruelty of Mr. Rochester" (ibid: 44).

narrative voice provide spaces in the novel where intimacies between subjectivities can be observed. The passage from one voice to the other, sometimes staged as a transformation of one subjectivity into the other, reveals the shifting borders of categories of subjects, especially in the colonial order. Thus *Wide Sargasso Sea* works towards a deessentialization not only of the Creole but also the category of the 'Englishman' through the character of Rochester, who is a very particular male subject in the colonial order of things.

Making of the Creole

Wide Sargasso Sea opens with Antoinette's narration of a number of moments from her childhood in which she paints a clear picture of her family's and her own relationship with the island. Her family's too close ties with the island provoke censure in the island's white community, and despite their intimate relationship with their coloured servants, they are met with distrust in that quarter too. It is mostly the landscape that the child Antoinette feels attached to, though that too is sinister at times. Of all these relationships, the one that is most heavily policed is their relationship to the white community, and it is through placing her family in this community that she starts her narration: "They say when trouble comes close ranks, and so the white people did. But we were not in their ranks. The Jamaican ladies had never approved of my mother, 'because she pretty like pretty self' Christophine said." (5) This opening reveals many things about Antoinette at once - first, we learn that her family is not considered within the 'white ranks' and so are left outside the close-knit community when the trouble, that is the emancipation act,⁹⁷ comes. The narrator reveals that Antoinette's mother is not a 'native' of Jamaica but is from Martinique, an island with much Latin influence and where people speak patois, suggesting more and condoned miscegenation between the races.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ In the 'General Notes' section, Penguin's 2000 edition of *Wide Sargasso Sea* says the following about the emancipation of slaves: "The Emancipation Act was passed in 1833; a transitional phase of seven years' apprenticeship for the slaves before they attained liberty was originally intended, but this was amended and August 1838 became the date for full emancipation. The British government awarded owners a compensation rate of £19 per slave; the market value of slaves was £35. In addition to the loss of free labour the price of sugar fell by half with the introduction of free trade; the planters were no longer in a privileged trading position and compensation for the loss of the slaves often went to planters' creditors, not to them." (134)

⁹⁸ See 3.2. for a discussion of how Latin colonists are seen to be much more degenerate than Anglo-Saxon ones.

Just as it is 'revelatory' in madwitch fashion pointing to the root of the problem, Christophine's articulation and her particular patois also reveals her origins. Here we have a coloured subjectivity interpreting the class system of the whites. From the very start Christophine is shown to be able to read all sort of signs; she seems to be conversant in various semiotics and seems to be 'real referent' of the madwitch persona:

She was much blacker- blue-black with a thin face and straight features. She wore a black dress, heavy gold earrings and a yellow handkerchief- carefully tied with two high points in front. No other negro woman wore black, or tied her handkerchief Martinique fashion. She had a quiet voice and a quiet laugh (when she did laugh), and though she could speak good English if she wanted to, and French as well as patois, she took care to talk as they talked. But they would have nothing to do with her and she never saw her son who worked in Spanish Town. She had only one friend- a woman called Maillote,⁹⁹ and Maillote was not a Jamaican. (7)

Antoinette introduces Christophine as not 'among the usual ranks' since she comes from Martinique like Antoinette's mother. Just as Antoinette's mother retains her Latinate beauty, Christophine retains the way she wears her handkerchief, setting herself apart from the other 'negro' women. Here and elsewhere in the novel Martinique is attributed with a sense of worldliness. Even as a 'negro', coming from that island Christophine speaks French and English, and yet, in order not to upset balances in Jamaica, she reverts to Pidgin. She is aware of the fact that she has to adjust her speech to the Jamaican norm for coloured people, revealing the necessity for speaking in an accepted idiom.

Antoinette's childhood coincides with the period after the Emancipation Act, with slave-owner families, like hers, waiting for the financial compensation that England has promised. During that period, many families lose their wealth and the power they hold over the coloured population. Mr. Luttrell, Antoinette's then neighbour, is introduced as one of the first casualties of the new order:

One evening he shot his dog, swam out to sea and was gone for always. No agent came from England to look after his property- Nelson's Rest it was called- and strangers from Spanish Town rode up to gossip and discuss the tragedy.
'Live at Nelson's Rest? Not for love or money. An unlucky place.'
Mr. Luttrell's house was left empty, shutters banging in the wind. Soon the black people said it was haunted, they wouldn't go near it. And no one came near us. (6)

⁹⁹ Same name as the mulatto girl that Anna remembers in *Voyage in the Dark*. The other resonance is that the ill-fated mulatto in *Good Morning, Midnight* is also from Martinique.

It is the black people in more direct physical contact with the island who christen it haunted. Luttrell's unfortunate story enters the island's folklore as an instant where the English and Caribbean epistemologies fuse to produce hybrid myths and haunted places. The physical proximity to such an unlucky place and the similar financial white Creole predicament they share suggest the Cosways may go the same way as Luttrell. This prospect provides the blacks with a tool with which to slight the Cosways and contributes to their alienation from the island.

The purpose of the stories about Luttrell's haunted house is revealed later when Antoinette mother's horse is poisoned, suggesting that these stories are part of a plan to help drive the Cosways away in post-emancipation Jamaica. It seems the black people are redressing their former subjugation both by violence and discursive tools of alienating and in their own way denigrating the whites:

I never looked at any strange negro. They hated us. They called us white cockroaches. Let sleeping dogs lie. One day a little girl followed me singing, 'Go away white cockroach, go away, go away.' I walked fast, but she walked faster. 'White cockroach, go away, go away. Nobody want you. Go away.' (9)

We are given to see that the negroes also exercise a policing of hierarchies, and it is the children who reveal the expectation of the community in their made-up song.¹⁰⁰ Aware of their predicament Antoinette's mother declares them as 'marooned', hovering on the peripheries of the island, not quite able to leave, a phrase that Schellhorn (1998: 180) suggests provides a very good metaphor for white creoles in general.

Such reactions from the people on the island taint Antoinette's memories of the place, transforming happy recollections to feelings of rejection, pointing to the utopic/dystopic tension of remembering the colonial past pointed to by Whitlock. Antoinette remembers swimming in clear water pool with Tia, however this happy memory is checked when she remembers the racial exchange she has with her when Tia cheats her of her pennies:

'Keep them then, you cheating nigger,' I said, or I was tired, and the water I had swallowed made me feel sick. 'I can get more if I want to.'
That's not what she hear, she said. She hear all we poor like beggar. We ate salt fish- no money for fresh fish. That old house so leaky, you run with calabash to catch water when it

¹⁰⁰ This foreshadows another song that the maid sings later concerning Antoinette's failed marriage 'The white cockroach she marry: "The white cockroach she marry/ The white cockroach she buy young man/ The white cockroach she marry"' (63)

rain. Plenty white people in Jamaica. Real white people, they got gold money. They didn't look at us, nobody see them come near us. Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger. (10)

As in *Good Morning, Midnight* it is children that are harbingers of society's judgement on Antoinette's family. It is the children who know, intuitively, who to be nasty to and thus meet society's punishment on those who 'deserve' it. The sadness of this memory for Antoinette can also be better understood when one looks at the language in which she recounts it. She does not use quotation marks for Tia's words but reports by leaving Tia's speech as it is and changing the pronouns, as in "She hear we all poor like beggar" using reported speech without correcting Tia's Pidgin. This points to the degree to which, as a child, Antoinette identified with Tia, making the rejection even more poignant. Tia lets Antoinette know that hierarchies are changing and that the 'black nigger' with their knowledge of the island are better off than white people who no longer have English or Caribbean 'currency'. Antoinette's movement towards Tia as a nigger goes further when Tia runs away with her dress and she has to wear Tia's and then has to face the English visitors her mother is entertaining in those clothes. Her mother is so dismayed that she feels the only way to clear this blot on their racial credentials is to burn that dress. The mother's distrust and disgust of Tia is reminiscent of the way Anna's stepmother Hester in *Voyage in the Dark* censures Anna for spending time with her coloured friend Francine and speaking like her.

While Antoinette's mother is concerned about the impression she leaves on these guests who have come to inherit the haunted Luttrell estate, Christophine, the madwitch who can read the 'signs', totally disapproves of the new owners. As the 'old generation' she doesn't like the new 'moneyed' English settlers who come to island: "Old Mr Luttrell spit in their face if he see how they look at you. Trouble walk into the house this day. Trouble walk in." (11) Christophine recognizes the patronizing gaze of the respectable, moneyed classes on the old slave owners with no money like the Cosways as acutely then the gaze they exercise on the coloured people. Seemingly untouched by the subjectivating gaze of either the whites or coloureds, Christophine functions as the madwitch consciousness in the novel, educating not just Antoinette, but also the reader, into the ways of the colonial world, able to tell between good and bad omens.

Antoinette's mother marries the new owner without heeding Christophine's words and the 'voices' that Antoinette hears during the wedding confirm Christophine's foresight, that these are people who will be 'looking down' on Antoinette and her mother as the old landed gentry whose way of conducting business is both dubious and passer

'A fantastic marriage and he will regret it. Why should a very wealthy man who could take his pick of all the girls in the West Indies, and many in England too probably?' 'Why *probably*?' the other voice said. '*Certainly*.' Then why should he marry a widow without a penny to her name and Coulibri a wreck of a place? Emancipation troubles killed old Cosway? Nonsense- the estate was going downhill for years before that. He drank himself to death. Many's the time when- well! And all those women! She never did anything to stop him- she encouraged him. Presents and smiles for the bastards every Christmas. Old customs? Some old customs are better dead and buried. Her new husband will have to spend a pretty penny before the house is fit to live in- leaks like a sieve[...] and the six-foot snake I saw with my own eyes curled up on the privy seat last time I was there. Alarmed? I screamed. Then that horrible old man she harbours came along, doubled up with laughter. As for those two children- the boy and idiot kept out of sight and mind and the girl going the same way in my opinion- a *lowering* expression.' (13)

The questions asked about Antoinette's mother again point to her beauty, the beauty that, as Christophine has underlined, is the reason why they are ostracised. With her beauty she has usurped the right of 'the girls' as a widow in marrying a very eligible man. Marriage, of course, needs to be regulated strictly to keep the borders of the holy English family intact. Antoinette's mother is not the ideal wife for an 'Englishman' with her too close connections to the island. That she has done nothing to mend her late husband's promiscuous ways also implicates her in the violation of the borders of the holy English family. The Cosways' 'illegitimate' connection to the island is underlined in the way that the Cosway house is described, letting the rain, or the nature of the Caribbean seep in. The sieve of course has connotations of sexual promiscuity, along with the huge snake that frightens the speaker. Old Creole customs suggest a more lax understanding of interaction between the races and clearly with the emancipation act the borders of categories have to be more strictly policed.

Mr. Mason, however, seems oblivious to the exigencies of the new order and ignores the gaze that the community directs at Antoinette and her family as he doesn't quite understand the hierarchies in the colonies. He says they imagine enmity where it doesn't exist and patronizes them about their lack of understanding of the island: "Live here most of your life and know nothing about the people. It's

astonishing . They are children- they wouldn't hurt a fly.' 'Unhappily children do hurt flies,' said Aunt Cora." (18) The difference between the creoles and the new arrival settler is spelled out in more detail in the following passage:

I looked away from her at my favourite picture, 'The Miller's Daughter', a lovely English girl with brown curls and blue eyes and a dress slipping off her shoulders. Then I looked across the white table-cloth and the vase of yellow roses at Mr Mason, so sure of himself, so without a doubt English. And at my mother, so without a doubt not English, but no white nigger either. Not my mother. Never had been. Never could be. (18)

Here the lovely, composed English girl of the picture is set in a pure Victorian world and work ethic, knowing her place as the 'miller's daughter'. Mr. Mason's self-assurance of his place on earth is also read in his demeanour, all contrasted to the transitionality of Antoinette's family. This moment teaches Antoinette the difference between the 'English' and the 'Creole'. Although Antoinette does not accept the epithet 'white nigger' for her mother because of her presence and beauty, when it comes to politics of the island this is how they are treated.

This is indeed how they are called when a group of ex-slaves burn their house down. They also nickname Mason as the 'black Englishman'^{1,01} pointing to how through marriage the respectable Englishman has also been miscegenated and degraded. The slaves engage in renaming in a carnivalesque manner⁰² and their orgy of arson adds to the ritualistic atmosphere of the way they alienate the whites from the island. The act that hurts and distances Antoinette most in this scene comes from closer quarters, not from black men with torches in their hands but Tia:

I saw Tia and her mother and I ran to her, for she was all that was left of my life as it had been. We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, bathed in the same river. As I ran, I thought, I will live with Tia and I will be like her. Not to leave Coulibri. Not to go. Not. When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it. I did not feel it either, only something wet, running down my face. I looked at her and I saw her face crumple up as she began to cry. We stared at each other, blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking-glass. (24)

¹⁰¹ "Somebody yelled, 'But look at the black Englishman! Look the white niggers!' and then they were all yelling. 'Look the white niggers! Look the damn white niggers!'" (22). However, his Englishness and ties with the superior Law remain for Antoinette because she observes that though Cora prays as well, it is when Mason calls to God the slaves stop: "The prayer ended, 'May Almighty God defend us.' And God who is indeed mysterious, who had made no sign when they burned Pierre as he slept- not a clap of thunder, not a flash of lightning- mysterious God heard Mr Mason at once and answered him. The riots stopped." (22).

⁰² See 3.3. for the uses of carnivalesque in Rhys's novel.

Even as the slaves try to alienate her Antoinette fantasizes about becoming one with the island, becoming one with Tia. She engages in this fantasy with the sole focus of not having to leave home, "Not to go". Antoinette identifies with Tia so much and is so focused on her that she hardly feels the impact of the stone Tia throws at her. She later has to contend with a similar rejection when, after this tragic incident, her mother is recovering in a house in the country. Her distressed mother hardly recognizes her and throws her away completing her rejection by all she holds dear. She is placed in a convent where the children, as always, act as society's technology of policing and keep reminding Antoinette of her lineage, in the language of the island, the coloureds not missing the chance of denigrating whites when they get a chance as means of retribution:

The girl said 'Look the crazy girl, you crazy like your mother. Your aunt frightened to have you in the house. She send you for the nuns to lock up. Your mother walk about with no shoes and stockings on her feet, she sans culottes. She try to kill her husband and she try to kill you too that day you go see her. She have eyes like zombi and you have eyes like zombi too.' (27)

This confrontation with other children from the Caribbean reveals the power of malicious gossip in colonial society. The girl identifies Antoinette as 'crazy' and interprets her mother's reaction in a way that would hurt Antoinette. The coloured child uses the hybrid language of the island with 'sans culottes' and relegates Antoinette to a place of hollowness and muteness like the zombie, urging her to become like Luttrell who fled the island. Zombies as hollowed out individuals open to exploitation is a naming that literary critics have also taken up when speaking about Creole subjectivity, perpetually displaced due to their double heritage (Aizenberg 1999: 461).

Self-Narration of the Creole

It is under these excruciating circumstances that the Creole must make herself heard in the Caribbean, and it is these circumstances that mark Rhys's method of staging Antoinette's self-narrative. Moments that make a direct reference to the narration are rare in the novel, however, just before she talks about her convent days Antoinette

says "Quickly, while I can, I must remember the hot classroom"¹⁰³, a few pages later the section concerning her childhood ends and the description of her life with Rochester starts. So before moving onto this new period, she feels there is an allocated time for her childhood memories and she must make best use of it. As we learn from these 'hurried memories', Antoinette's level of displacement and transitionality go deep as revealed from her epithet "Antoinette Mason, nee Cosway, Mount Calvary Convent, Spanish Town, Jamaica, 1839" (29). At such a young age, her name reads like a married woman, she is already distanced from her family name of Cosway.

At the convent her narration 'comes of age': having been disenfranchised from white colonial community she moves onto another epistemology. When her stepfather comes to visit her after her mother's death, Antoinette realizes that she will suffer yet another displacement due to the 'designs' Mr. Mason has for her future. Trying to make sense of her life she starts to make use of 'non-English' methods, connected more to how she has seen Christophine cope with the world, such as interpreting experiences through dreams. Her dream reveals to her what will become of her and how she must react as she develops into maturity, not only as woman but also as a reader of signs in the Caribbean sense:

This was the second time I had my dream. Again I have left the house at Coulibri. It is still night and I am walking towards the forest. I am wearing a long dress and thin slippers, so I walk with difficulty, following the man who is with me and holding up the skirt of my dress. It is white and beautiful and I don't wish to get it soiled. I follow him, sick with fear but I make no effort to save myself; if anyone were to save me I would refuse. This must happen. Now we have reached the forest. We are under the tall dark trees and there is no wind. 'Here?' He turns and looks at me, his face black with hatred, and when I see this I begin to cry. He smiles slyly. 'Not here, not yet,' he says, and I follow him, weeping. Now I do not try to hold up my dress, it trails in the dirt, my beautiful dress. We are no longer in the forest but in an enclosed garden surrounded by a stone wall and the trees are different trees. I do not know them. There are steps leading upwards. It is too dark to see the wall or the steps, but they are there and I think, 'It will be when I go up these steps. At the top.' (34)

It is thus 'revealed' to Antoinette as to a madwitch that she will be led into the unknown by a man and that she will do so willingly. As the story will reveal later, she will not take the escape routes that are open to her because she has been inculcated with the feeling/understanding that "This must happen": the creole must be exploited

¹⁰³ As space, the classroom is of course very important since that is where as Cooper puts it 'zombification' of the colonial takes place. See 3.3. for a brief discussion on colonial education.

by the Englishman.¹⁰⁴ After she wakes up from her nightmare one of the nuns takes care of her and she coaxes Antoinette to sleep. It is with the nun's words: 'Now go quietly back to bed. Think of calm, peaceful things and try to sleep. Soon I will give the signal. Soon it will be tomorrow morning.' (35) that Antoinette's narration ends.

The Settler and the Colonial Family

The "tomorrow morning" (35) after the dream in the narrative jumps, as if by magic, to the morning of the day she stands at the door of her honeymoon house, but it is now her husband Rochester narrating, describing a tableau of intimacy between colonials in a very comprehensive sense, the settler, the Creole and the mulatto:

So it was all over, the advance, the retreat, the doubts and hesitations. Everything finished, for better or for worse. There we were, sheltering from the heavy rain under a large mango tree, myself, my wife Antoinette and a little half-caste servant who was called Amelie. Under a neighbouring tree I could see our luggage covered with sacking, the two porters and a boy holding fresh horses, hired to carry us up 2,000 feet to the waiting honeymoon house. (39)

'For better or for worse' sounds like the consecration of a new marriage bond. In the picture are mulattoes and servants, and the colonial landscape, signalling a very particular, colonial English family. After locating himself thus in the colonial order of things, Rochester also starts to use the discourse that will shape his understanding of the Caribbean as he describes the servant girl: "A lovely little creature but sly, spiteful, malignant perhaps, like much else in this place." (39) For Rochester, the Caribbean offers beautiful sights that turn out to be degenerative and even evil inside. Though he tries to make a sweeping generalization, he is also aware of the differences between the various subjects to be found in the colonies and distinguishes Antoinette both from himself and Amelie. Rochester starts the inventory of the island, looking at the specimens 'critically' in keeping with the 'narrative of exploration' that Doring speaks about against which the postcolonial narrator situates his/her own self-narration:

I watched her critically. She wore a tricorne hat which became her. At least it shadowed her eyes which are too large and can be disconcerting. She never blinks at all it seems to me. Long, sad, dark alien eyes. Creole of pure English descent she may be, but they are not English or European either. And when did I start to notice all this about my wife Antoinette?

¹⁰⁴ Rhys uses intertextuality here point to the prophetic nature of this dream as Antoinette dreams of going 'upwards', to 'the top', to her attic in *Jane Eyre*.

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. (40)

Rochester exercises his gaze on Antoinette, perceiving her like an exotic creature that doesn't blink. He perceives her as he wants to see her, afraid and sad, waiting to be delivered by him. Although he has been told of her 'pure' lineage, he also realizes she is not English or European in the strict sense of the word. This important distinction, he tells the reader taking him/her into confidence, is something he did not want to 'admit' at first. For his laxness in judgement he blames the 'tropics' for having made him ill, suggesting to the reader that he didn't have all his faculties functioning properly when he married Antoinette. The reader, in a way, becomes the 'civilized' interlocutor with whom he can share his experience in this 'wild' place. Now that his senses are back to normal can he really assess the 'strangeness' of both Antoinette and the landscape, again, it seems, for the benefit of a respectable, civilized reader :

Not only wild but menacing. Those hills would close in on you[. . .] Everything is too much, I felt as I rode wearily after her. Too much blue, too much purple, too much green. The flowers too red, the mountains too high, the hills too near. And the woman is a stranger. Her pleading expression annoys me. I have not bought her, she had bought me, or so she thinks. I looked down at the coarse mane of the horse... (42)

After seeking the sympathy of the reader by emphasizing the 'too-muchness' of the place, Rochester turns to address his father concerning the situation he finds himself in in the Caribbean, a situation he feels himself pushed in by none other than the father himself:

Dear Father. The thirty thousand pounds have been paid to me without question or condition. No provision made for her (that must be seen to). I have a modest competence now. I will never be a disgrace to you or to my dear brother the son you love. No begging letters, no mean requests. None of the furtive shabby manoeuvres of a younger son. I have sold my soul or you have sold it, and after all is it such a bad bargain? The girl is thought to be beautiful, she is beautiful. And yet... (42)

Rochester reveals himself to be the unfavoured son who obviously gets no willing financial help from his family, who had had to make his fortune himself by 'selling his soul' or as he suggests, by having been sold. This trade strangely draws him close to the predicament of the people of the island he despises. In fact, we are given to understand that this is part of the reason why he despises them so: it is the mirror that the slaves hold onto his situation that makes him so apprehensive.

Just as the slaves' Rochester's predicament also echoes the situation of the amateur, with his personal and professional spheres enmeshed: he has had to trust his capacity of emotional capabilities to secure his financial sustenance.¹⁰⁵ Rochester continues to contemplate the terms of his 'bondage', looking at the space around him 'critically'. He is mesmerised by the scenery as he smells the air: "I could smell and cinnamon, roses and orange blossom. And an intoxicating freshness as if all this had never been breathed before" (44). This complies with the narrative of exploration, of being a victorious explorer who becomes the first civilized man to experience this bit of 'heaven' for the first time and who could appreciate it as it should be appreciated. He also symbolically fancies himself as the first lover that Antoinette has had. As he tries to forge a relationship with the landscape and the house, the honeymoon hut symbolizes for him the Creole predicament which he will be observing at very close quarters: "Perched up on wooden stilts the house seemed to shrink from the forest behind it and crane eagerly out to the distant sea. It was more awkward than ugly, a little sad as if it knew it could not last." (43) It is a house that doesn't seem to belong to the landscape and that shies away from the forest as Rochester does. It is still connected to the earth, however precariously, looking out towards the sea, towards England.

Rochester's detached look at the house gives clues as to meanings of the inclusion of his narration in a novel that is commonly known as the story of the white Creole woman. It almost reads like Antoinette needs him to describe the island and her own predicament for her, because she has become too solipsistic and wants an outsider's eye to assess her existence. It is Rochester who has experience of both worlds that mean so much to Antoinette and he who can bring them together in comparison in his own narration. This need on the part of Antoinette is made more apparent when she asks him to describe England for her:

'Is it true,' she said, 'that England is like a dream? Because one of my friends who married an Englishman wrote and told me so. She said this place London is like a cold dark dream sometimes. I want to wake up.'

¹⁰⁵ Rochester remembers the time when Antoinette almost threw off the engagement and how he had to sweet-talk her into going ahead with the wedding. We see here how Rochester has been disenfranchised by his family and how he now feels liberated from the position of having to beg. His reaction to people who beg, or plead, accordingly, is informed by his own situation which he detests and has put an end to by marrying Antoinette. Thus her 'pleading eyes' and the similar attitudes of the islanders remind him of his former situation which he means to leave behind.

Well,' I answered annoyed, 'that is exactly how your beautiful island seems to me, quite unreal and like a dream.'

'But how can rivers and mountains and the sea be unreal?'

'But how can millions of people, their houses and their streets be unreal?'

'More easily,' she said, 'much more easily. Yes, a big city must be like a dream.'

'No, this is unreal and like a dream,' I thought. (49)

Antoinette tries to get a genuine, first hand account of England from him to overwrite what she has already learned about the place through her education. Rochester is annoyed at the suggestion that England may be like a dream since he himself has been attributing dream-like characteristics to island; for him England has to retain the qualities of being real, and the Caribbean has to be the fleeting dream. Here we see the clash of the two epistemologies, one for which house and streets, and one for which mountains and the sea constitute reality. This is one of the few moments when Antoinette and Rochester engage in genuine discussion about how the other's reality seems to strange to them. Although their epistemologies differ, Antoinette's colonial education half-connects them through a song that Rochester also knows. They share a moment of understanding, transcending their epistemologies, indeed, a fusion is made possible between how Antoinette feels and the English cultural archive Rochester resorts to:

'Do you think that too,' she said, 'that I have slept too long in the moon light?' Her mouth was set in a fixed smile but her eyes were so withdrawn and lonely that I put my arms around her, rocked her like a child and sang to her. An old song I thought I had forgotten:

'Hail to the queen of silent night,

Shine bright, shine bright Robin as you die.'

She listened, then sang with me:

'Shine bright, shine bright Robin as you die.' (51)

Antoinette expresses herself in her own idiom, inviting Rochester to understand what she means by 'moonlight sleep'. Although here Rochester signals that he understands by joining her song, most of the time he is not quite so willing, for instance when he hears the way she refers to the coloured people who work for her:

'He's a very good overseer,' she'd say, and I'd agree, keeping my opinion of Baptiste, Christophine and all the others to myself. 'Baptiste says... Christophine wants...' She trusted them and I did not. But I could hardly say so. Not yet. (55)

Although he refrains from using a racially charged rhetoric, it is clear here that he doesn't think that Baptiste or Christophine are supposed to be talked of in this manner, as if they were people who were entitled to their opinions. That she trusts

them as people is also a revelation for Rochester, who cannot take that the leap of faith to believe in the humanity of the people of the island. He feels he doesn't hold the reins quite firmly as yet and so does not voice his views. He is also surprised that Antoinette hugs and kisses Christophine; this sort of intimacy is too much for his sensibilities as the new patriarch of this particular colonial family. He himself experiences 'intimacy' with Antoinette, and so Antoinette's closeness to Christophine makes him only once removed from intimacy with people of the island. For him, this physical intimacy does not signify love but a sort of dependence,¹⁰⁶ a dependence which he is loath to admit and which he feels he must shake off rather than indulge in. After deciding that Antoinette can only be a shackle that will tie him to the island, he starts conceiving of her more and more as an agencyless body that he lusts after:

If she was a child, she was not a stupid child but an obstinate one. She often questioned me about England and listened attentively to my answers but I was certain that nothing I said made much difference. Her mind was already made up. Some romantic novel, a stray remark never forgotten, a sketch, a picture, a song, a waltz, some note of music, and her ideas were fixed. About England and about Europe. I could not change them and nothing would. Reality might disconcert her, bewilder her, hurt her, but it would not be reality. It would be only a mistake, a misfortune, a wrong path taken, her fixed ideas would never change. (58)

Rochester realizes that people in the colonies have fixed ideas about England, without stopping to think that his own perceived ideas about the Caribbean are just as fixed, learned from books, pictures and songs. Through Rochester's narration we understand the conditions under which Antoinette has to engage in self-narration daily and how her story will be received by the English, the centre. In a way Rochester is already preparing his plans for her, saying reality would 'hurt' her. He believes her to be too naïve to bear the 'reality' of England, suggesting that he has no intentions of having her come in contact with England even if they should go there.

Madwitch Models: Christophine and Daniel

While Antoinette is not well-versed in the conventional English idiom, there are models of speech on the island that confront Rochester's narration and could serve as model for Antoinette too. This model, or mode, is what I have already referred to

¹⁰⁶ "I did not love her. I was thirsty for her, she was a stranger to me, a stranger who did not think or feel as I did" (58)

as madwitch narration. In madwitch narration, more often than not the restitution of speech for the 'mad' or 'beyond the pale' connotated figure involves retribution for the hitherto unacknowledged moments of silencing. Through his/her narration the 'mad' character offers another epistemology where different meanings are attached to various symbols and actions. Such revision of values and at times history comes through what can be termed rhetorical violence and sometimes violence that is physically inflicted.

As I have argued, just as Rochester sets Antoinette apart from the English as Creole, the coloured creoles other her by calling her white cockroach. The hatred that the slave owning classes have inculcated in the coloured population is personified in the novel by a distant cousin of Antoinette's, whose blood relation to her is somewhat discredited in the course of the novel. An embittered and religious man, Daniel writes to Rochester taking for granted that as a new arrival Rochester will have racial prejudices concerning creoles and with stories about Antoinette's family he confirms Rochester's fears of miscegenation:

You have been shamefully deceived by the Mason family. They tell you perhaps that your wife's name is Cosway, the English gentleman Mr Mason being her stepfather only, but they don't tell you what sort of people were these Cosways. Wicked and detestable slave-owners since generations- yes everybody hate them in Jamaica and also in this beautiful island where I hope your stay will be long and pleasant in spite of all, for some not worth sorrow. Wickedness is not the worst. There is madness in that family. Old Cosway die raving like his father before him. (59)

It is clear that Daniel knows the white discourse concerning miscegenation and plans to exploit Rochester's fears: he reinterprets history in a way to right the wrongs he thinks have been committed against him as a non-white member of the colonial family. In order to inflict the same sort of exclusion on the white creoles who have ostracised the coloured as slaves, he draws a distinction between the Cosway family and what he believes to be 'proper' Englishmen like Mason and Rochester. As a local informant he knows stuff about white creoles that Rochester can't and he tells him that the family he is marrying into has madness - that white creoles revert to madness as the only natural end they have in the island:

Then comes the glorious Emancipation Act and trouble for some of the high and mighties. [...] This young Mrs. Cosway is worthless and spoilt, she can't lift a hand for herself and soon the madness that is in her, and in all these white Creoles, come out. She shut herself away, laughing and talking to nobody as many can bear witness. [...] The madness gets worse and she has to be shut away for she try to kill her husband- madness not being all either[...]Then it

seems to me that it is my Christian duty to warn the gentleman that she is no girl to marry with the bad blood she have from both sides. But they are white, I am coloured. They are rich, I am poor (60-61)

In one brush he absolves Mason and Rochester from any implication in the slave-trade and thus exercises what can be called 'a selective remembering' of those who have been involved in the crimes of slavery. He makes to be representatives of the benevolence of the Emancipation Act and acts like he wants to do them a 'good turn' for delivering him from the oppression of the white creoles. His colour has kept him at a distance from the English family (membership to which he believes is his birthright) and it has also kept him stagnating in a particular economic class. It is this exclusion now that he wants to visit on Antoinette through implying that she has coloured relatives, that she is as much tainted as he is and mad into the bargain.

Having learned them well through his colonial education reminds Rochester of the rules of English family, particularly those pertaining to marriage: "She is in your blood and your bones. By night and by day. But you, an honourable man, know well that for marriage more is needed than all this." (61) He seems to suggest that he knows how attractive white Creole women can be, but that for the foundation of a proper English family what is important is not attraction but 'pure blood', and that sexual passions are spent rather quickly. He is repeating the stories that are already extant about white female creoles, about their beauty and uncontrollability, along with Victorian wisdom about whom one is supposed to marry. That Daniel has used the discourses he has learnt about the English class-race system through his colonial education successfully is made evident by Rochester who believes everything he says: "I felt no surprise. It was as if I'd expected it, been waiting for it." (62) Daniel's letter is very interesting in its double character: while it uses discourses concerning the English family successfully its grammar is faulty, making it a hybrid constituting what Bhabha (1994: 87) calls the 'perverse colonial palimpsest'.

Trying to counter the effects of this particular madwitch narration and Rochester's alienation from her as a result of it, Antoinette consults another madwitch figure, Christophine, to make sense of her predicament and help her win Rochester's love. Christophine lays bare both the caprices of men in matters of love and the injustice of the white system of allocating authority and ownership:

'When man don't love you, more you try, more he hate you, man like that. If you love them they treat you bad, if you don't love them they after you night and day bothering your soul case out. I hear about you and your husband,' she said.

'But I cannot go. He is my husband after all.'

She spat over her shoulder. 'All women, all colours, nothing but fools. Three children I have. One living in this world, each one a different father, but no husband, I thank my God. I keep my money. I don't give it to no worthless man.' [...]

[...] I have no money of my own at all, everything I had belongs to him.'

'What you tell me there?' she said sharply.

'That is English law.'

'Law! [...] Listen to me now and I advise you what to do. Tell your husband you feeling sick, you want to visit your cousin in Martinique. Ask him pretty for some of your own money, the man not bad-hearted he give it. When you get away, stay away. Ask more. He give again and well satisfy. In the end he come to find out what you do [...] and if he see you fat and happy he want you back. Men like that. Better not stay in that old house. Go from that house, I tell you.'

(69)

Here we see her interpreting for Antoinette, not just the ways of the island, but also the ways of the English as well. Christophine first identifies and condemns the dependence of women of all colours on men, making it clear that this emotional dependence is closely connected with matters of money, and that she, as an independent woman, 'keeps her own money'. Then, in an attempt to make Antoinette understand, she dismisses English law, implying that the law applies only to people who let the law be applied to them, and that especially women must follow their own law, their own rules of the game in order to make men act according to their needs. When Antoinette tells her that she has to stay in this marriage because she wants to see England, Christophine tries to make her see sense, by a radical questioning of Antoinette's worldview, starting with the existence of England - as opposed to the Caribbean reality that they are living and the real recourses they have at hand to remedy Antoinette's situation. Just like Christophine has no use for a husband or the 'Law', she doesn't have use for an ideal like England, which would help her achieve nothing in the here and now:

'England,' said Christophine, who was watching me. 'You think there is such a place?'

'How can you ask that? You know there is.'

'I never see the damn place, how I know?'

'You do not believe that there is a country called England?'

[...] 'I don't say I don't believe, I said I don't know, I know what I see with my eyes and I never see it. [...] I hear it cold to freeze your bones and they thief your money, clever like the devil. You have money in your pocket, you look again and barn! No money. Why you want to go to this cold thief place? If there is this place at all, I never see it, that is one thing sure.' (70)

Christophine tries to give Antoinette sound advice but what Antoinette really wants is for Christophine to intervene through 'supernatural' ways. Christophine warns her

that "that is not for *beke*. Bad, bad trouble come when *beke* meddle with that." (71) However, Antoinette gets her way and Christophine gives her a love potion to make Rochester attracted to her. After relating this incident, Antoinette returns to the moment of narration with "I can remember every second of that morning" (75). After having draw attention to the narration, Rhys switches in the next paragraph again to Rochester with "'The mistress pay a visit,' Baptiste told me when he brought my coffee that morning" (75). In this scene Rochester receives a second letter from Daniel. The help Antoinette is getting is juxtaposed with the help that Rochester is getting from the locals; while Antoinette seeks help from Christophine to put her marriage aright, Rochester also seeks help from someone from Daniel to, in a way, annul his marriage. Daniel's information also a criticism of the Law through the church:

My father old Cosway, with his white marble tablet in the English church at Spanish Town for all to see [...] I never know such lies. I hope that stone tie round his neck and drag him down to Hell in the end. "Pious," they write up. "Beloved by all". Not a word about the people he buy and sell like cattle. "Merciful to the weak", they write up. Mercy! The man have heart like stone. [...] I can still see the tablet before my eyes because I go look at it often. I know by heart all the lies they tell-no one to stand up and say, Why you write lies in the church?... I tell you this so you can know what sort of people you mix up with. [...] I remember it like yesterday the morning he put a curse on me. Sixteen years old and I was anxious. I start very early. I walk all the way to Coulibri- five hours it take. He don't refuse to see me; he receive me very cool and calm and first thing he tell me is I'm always pestering him for money. This because sometimes I ask help to buy a pair of shoes and such. Not to go barefoot like a nigger. Which I am not. He look at me like I was dirt and I get angry too. "I have my rights after all," I tell him and you know what he do? He laugh in my face. When he finished laughing, he call me what's-your-name. "I can't remember all their names- it's too much to expect of me," he says, talking to himself. (79)

Daniel's letter is a melange of discourses he has picked up and he formulates responses to them in an idiosyncratic idiom that reveals both his connection and distance to the English family. As a seemingly religious man he rails at having 'lies' written on church walls, lies that have served to disenfranchise people like him. While he seems to be speaking up for slaves' rights he also sets himself apart from them saying he's not a 'nigger' as he wants to assert that Cosway is his father for a possible inheritance. In that sense, the scene he depicts between himself and Cosway eerily recalls the kind of relationship that Rochester has with his own father. So issues of lineage and inheritance, and father-son confrontation scenes are duplicated in the Caribbean, with a difference. While Rochester has solved his

financial problems by marrying Antoinette, Daniel is trying to do so now by trying to win the favour of an Englishman.

Just as Daniel seeks retribution through claiming Antoinette to be miscegenated, servants in the house also call Antoinette's respectability and racial background into question and engage in this act of denigration of Antoinette by making up songs about her:

The white cockroach she marry
The white cockroach she marry
The white cockroach she buy young man
The white cockroach she marry' (63)

This again comes as a retribution for the strict racial categories drawn up by white creoles. Since the creoles have underlined their difference from the blacks, it is this distinction that the blacks now turn into a means of degradation - calling them white cock roaches, again setting Rochester as a category apart from her. While Rochester pretends not to hear Amelie's song - he hardly needs the 'native informants' to provide him with more proof against Antoinette - Antoinette interprets it for him:

'I don't always understand what they say or sing.' Or anything else.
'It was a song about white cockroach. That's me. That's what they call all of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave traders. 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. (64)

Thus we see that Antoinette is well aware of the position she occupies in the colonial constellation, caught between the two epithets of 'white cockroach' and the 'white nigger'. She locates the white creoles as predating the coming of slaves, so with even a longer history on the island. She also tries to devolve some of the implications of exploitation of indentured labour by laying the blame on the Africans who sold their 'own people' to the 'slave traders'. However, she recognizes that through their closer involvement with the island through labour, the black people have made the island their 'home' more than the white and they have developed their own culture that is mostly inaccessible to the whites.

The black people sing about the inhabitants of the island and the island itself, and within their method of making the island their own, they also attach stories and myths to different locations, like in the case of Antoinette's one-time neighbour Luttrell's place. In that sense they are very democratic; they include stories of white

settlers in their stories albeit as source of uncanny. Rochester himself discovers that white people have already been inscribed in the myths of the island. He discovers the ruins of a colonial house and as he turns to go home a girl passing him is afraid and runs away when he catches her eye. He realizes that she has taken him to be a ghost: he is thus subjectivated as a zombie. He learns that the derelict place was owned by a priest and that the place is considered to be haunted. He tries to find out about zombies and consults a colonial account called *The Glittering Coronet of Isles* to find out what the zombie signifies in the culture of the island:

'A zombie is a dead person who seems to be alive or a living person who is dead. A zombie can also be the spirit of a place, usually malignant but sometimes to be propitiated with sacrifices or offerings of flowers and fruit [...] The white people, sometimes credulous, pretend to dismiss the whole thing as nonsense. Cases of sudden or mysterious death are attributed to a poison known to the negroes which cannot be traced. It is further complicated by...' (67)

Thus having been found at the priest's place, he himself has become the spirit, or zombie of the place. The risks he runs, as such, is not being threatened by zombies, but becoming a zombie himself, a category that he thinks belongs to the Caribbean, a creature between the living and the dead, a predicament he has already ascribed to Antoinette. Zombie, then, also becomes a metaphor for transitional identity, floating between two realms. Transition is also enacted at the level of narrative transmission when Rochester's narrative leaves its place to Antoinette's. The text trails off in three dots, and after that the first-person narration resumes:

I did not look up though I saw him at the window but rode on without thinking till I came to the rocks. People here call them Mounes Mors (the Dead Ones). Preston shied at them, they say horses always do. Then he stumbled badly, so I dismounted and walked along with the bridle over my arm. It was getting hot and I was tired when I reached the path to Christophine's two-roomed house, the roof shingled, not thatched. She was sitting on a box under her mango tree, smoking a clay pipe and she called out, 'It's you Antoinette? Why you come up here so early?' (67)

The 'I' here is a bit difficult to locate at first as it speaks of how the horse reacts to the spirit of a place, following from the discourse of the definition of zombie from the book. The fact that the self-narrator is riding the horse and that he/she distances himself/herself from the landscape, transferring the knowledge of the stones to the locals by saying 'people here call them', accommodate a perception of this narration as still being Rochester's. Christophine also perceives Antoinette here almost like a changeling, and the reader is startled just as much. This effect of one voice

transforming into the other, this dexterous staging of intersubjectivity is what Rhys's orchestration of self-narratives achieves in the text of *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The intimacies between the narrators happen not only through Rhys's narrative strategy of allowing one character to cut the narration of the other, but also through letting each other's discourses "leak into each other" (Trin Minh-Ha 1989: 94)¹⁰⁷. The adoption of certain aspects of the discourse of the other, for instance the way they express their feelings for the island, also works towards deessentialization as is revealed when Rochester speaks of his alienation from the island:

"I feel very much a stranger here,' I said. 'I feel that this place is my enemy and on your side.' 'You are quite mistaken,' she said. 'It is not for you and not for me. It has nothing to do with either of us. That is why you are afraid of it, because it is something else. I found that out long ago, when I was child. I loved it because I had nothing else to love, but it is as indifferent as this God you call on so often.'" (82)

Rochester suggests that in any story told in the Caribbean, the island will favour the way Antoinette gives meaning to the 'facts' and not his own powers of interpretation. Antoinette tries to put Rochester's feelings for the island into perspective, accusing the island of the same indifference towards both of them. Her empathy with him underlines the similarity of their positions vis-a-vis the island. However, Rochester will have none of it and to prove their fundamental difference confronts Antoinette with Daniel's letter that puts her beyond the pale. When she tries to explain the past circumstances of her family he doesn't want to listen and then she rebels against his indifference towards her version of her story in this exchange we get from Rochester :

"'You have no right,' she said fiercely. 'You have no right to ask questions about my mother and them refuse to listen to my answer.'" (82) This is a clear moment of obstruction of self-narration for Antoinette. His strategy seems to be to empty Antoinette of her stories and turn her into mere flesh like a zombie. This is how he wants to see her, as a beautiful body or even a corpse. He denies having been affected by the potion when he 'possesses' Antoinette as her husband one last time, before Antoinette's zombification is complete :

The light changed her. I had never seen her look so gay or so beautiful. She poured wine into two glasses and handed me one but I swear it was before I drank that I longed to bury my face

¹⁰⁷ "Whether I accept it or not, the natures of I, you, s/he, We, they, wo/man constantly overlap. They all display a necessary ambivalence [...] Despite our desperate eternal to contain and mend, categories always leak." (Min-Ha 1989: 94)

in her hair as I used to do. I said, 'We are letting ghosts trouble us. Why shouldn't we be happy?' She said, 'Christophine knows about ghosts too, but that is not what she calls them.' She need not have done what she did to me. I will always swear by that, she need not have done it. [...] I remember saying in a voice that was not like my own that it was too light. I remember putting out the candles on the table near the bed and that is all I remember. (87)

In order for him to transform into a person who can enjoy this night he has to turn the lights out, and be his own shadow. Rochester is adamant in denying the powers of the potion that Antoinette has given him but after waking up he feels the whole force of the potion and spends his passion once more with the servant girl. Going so 'deep' into the Caribbean wilderness ("her skin was darker, her lips thicker than I thought" (89)) he achieves real hatred for the people and the island because they have brought him this low. When he next sets eyes on Antoinette she is totally transformed in his eyes, no longer the exquisite creature to whom he made love, but the evil, uncontrollable force of the island:

The door of Antoinette's room opened. When I saw her I was too shocked to speak. Her hair hung uncombed and dull into her eyes which were inflamed and staring, her face was very flushed and looked swollen. Her feet were bare. However, when she spoke her voice was low, almost inaudible. (93)

Here Rochester wants to make it clear that meaningful communication with Antoinette is no longer possible, he is too shocked to speak and her voice is inaudible. He sees her as emptied of speech, her eyes 'staring' denoting an empty mind, his description corresponding to a malevolent zombie. As a creature rendered pure flesh (attention drawn to her 'bare feet') she can now be re-inscribed into the social order as Rochester deems fit and he starts by renaming this creature he feels he owns:

'Bertha,' I said
'Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name. I know, that's obeah too.'
Tears streamed from her eyes. (94)

Antoinette recognizes that 'naming' things is the English obeah - it is through naming her that Rochester feels he has complete power over her. Rhys then juxtaposes the practitioner of 'English sorcery' with Christophine, the master of Caribbean obeah.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Her words are so potent that soon Christophine's idiom seeps into his, echoing in his consciousness in italics and parenthesis:
'So that you can leave her alone.'

Christophine can see through his methods and tries to reason with him to leave Antoinette. She tries to explain to him that Antoinette, too, has a pride ("Nobody is to have any pride but you" (96)) and is incensed when Rochester calls Antoinette *his* wife, especially after all he has done to her:

'Your wife!' she said. 'You make me laugh. I don't know all you did but I know some. Everybody know 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 is nothing for her. Oh I see that first 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 for looking at her.' (98)

Christophine says he's doing all this because he is jealous of Antoinette, her free spirit that doesn't care about money as opposed to his own department which is dictated by his aspiration to be financially secure and little else. This, Christophine tells him, is the fundamental difference between them. This is harsh judgement passed on Rochester which makes him all the more determined to take things under his own control. He starts by writing to his father to tell him that he will soon redress the wrongs done to him:

I spoke aloud as I walked. I spoke the letter I meant to write.
'I know now that you planned this because you wanted to be rid of me. You had no love at all for me. Nor had my brother. Your plan succeeded because I was young, conceited, foolish, trusting. Above all because I was young. You were able to do this to me...' But I am not young now, I thought, stopped pacing and drank. [...]
I wrote:
Dear Father,
We are leaving this island for Jamaica shortly. Unforeseen circumstances, at least unforeseen by me, have forced me to take this decision. I am certain that you know or can guess what has happened, and I am certain you will believe that the less you talk to anyone about my affairs, especially my marriage, the better. This is in your interest as well as mine. (105)

Rochester's reasons for coming to the island and marrying Antoinette are revealed once more as he writes his last letter to his father, responding at the same time to Christophine's accusations. He emphasizes that he has been coerced by his father, representing the Victorian patriarchal system, to go to the colonies and seek his own fortune. Although he doesn't sentimentalize too much, the reader is invited to sympathize with his powerlessness in the face of a society that decrees everyone's

(Leave her alone)
'Not telling her why.'
(Why?)
'No more love, eh?'
(No more love) (98-99)

positions; we see how he too becomes a tool of that society to propagate its 'Law's at the expense of other people's liberties. Just as he has been disenfranchised in England, he is seen to have had a bad bargain in the Caribbean too, the servants gossiping that he has been 'bought' by Mason for his stepdaughter. He wants to get away from the island and its judgements and starts his flight by drawing up an English house:

Wherever I went I would be talked about. I drank some more rum and, drinking, I drew a house surrounded by tree. A large house. I divided the third floor into rooms and in one room I drew a standing woman- a child's scribble, a dot for head, a larger one for the body, a triangle for a skirt, slanting lines for arms and feet. But it was an English house. (105-106)

Antoinette has become the stick figure he has drawn, through the way he practices 'obeah', as Antoinette puts it!¹⁰⁹ He thus makes her the 'spirit' of an English home, an English space, unwittingly miscegenating this space he holds most sacred. Antoinette thus creolizes English space and becomes part of the ghost stories generated there.

After a few pages we are indeed transported to England, the last part opening with Grace Poole's speech, who is now the keeper of Antoinette on the 'third floor' that Rochester has designed while in the Caribbean. The gossip that Rochester feels to be such a part of the servants in the Caribbean is duplicated by the gossiping servants in the English house, as Grace admires Antoinette's fierce spirit.

Antoinette's narration cuts this description of herself, reverts the gaze back to Grace and describes her. Antoinette doesn't believe that the room she is imprisoned in is England and believes she is in England only when she is taken outside to see the landscape that she recognizes from the books she has read:

(That afternoon we went to England. There was grass and olive-green water and tall trees looking into the water. This, I thought, is England. If I could be here I could be well again and the sound in my head would stop. Let me stay a little longer, I said, and she sat down under a tree and went to sleep. A little way off there was a cart and horse- a woman was driving it. It was she who sold me the knife, I gave her the locket round my neck for it.) (119)

¹⁰⁹ Rochester also suggests that Antoinette is not the only white Creole who's been relegated to such a role as he contemplates: "Very soon she'll join all the others who know the secret and will not tell it. Or cannot. Or try and fail because they do not know enough. They can be recognized. White faces, dazed eyes, aimless gestures, high-pitched laughter. The way they walk and talk and scream or try to kill (themselves or you) if you laugh back at them. Yes, they've got to be watched. For the time comes when they try to kill, then disappear. But others are waiting to take their places, it's a long, long line. She's one of them. I too can wait- for the day when she is only a memory to be avoided, locked away, and like all memories a legend. Or a lie..." (112)

This is the 'wistful reconnection' that Doring speaks about, the postcolonial experience of England, of meeting the real referents. Here Antoinette remembers how she bought the knife with which she later threatens her cousin Daniel who comes to visit her in England. Rather than bring her solace, her confrontation with Daniel only helps tighten the restrictions on her movements and she realizes that she is imprisoned in the attic for good. She thus abandons making plans on her own and decides to wait for a dream to tell her what to do, and the novel finishes with her description of the dream in which she goes down into house. She fears the 'ghost' she has heard the maids talk about, an entity she is familiar with from the Victorian novels she has read. It is only in the dream that she recognizes that it is herself who is the ghost that the servants are talking about, as she sees herself in the 'gilt frame' of the mirror:

I went into the hall again with the tall candle in my hand. It was then that I saw her- the ghost. The woman with streaming hair. She was surrounded by a gilt frame but I knew her. I dropped the candle I was carrying and it caught the end of a tablecloth and I saw flames shoot up. As I ran or perhaps floated or flew I called help me Christophine help me and looking behind me I saw that I had been helped. There was a wall of fire protecting me but it was too hot, it scorched me and I went away from it. (123)

As Antoinette calls Christophine for help she realizes that she has already been helped by her, through the way in which Christophine has educated Antoinette to 'read' her dreams. The dream is clear in its suggestion that 'protection' or freedom will come through fire. The novel finishes with Antoinette waking up from her dream, and now fully equipped with the knowledge of what she has to do, she takes the candle and heads for the dark corridor. Thus the interpretative bond between Christophine and Antoinette is emphasized once more at the end of the novel, with the suggestion of what family bonds are stronger, and through what epistemology these bonds are held. Through this prospective fire Antoinette brings Caribbean ways of resistance into English space and creolizes the space of the English home, leaving her mark.

As such, Antoinette's trajectory reveals the tension between forging legitimate family bonds and the fear of miscegenation. The novel opens and closes with particular semantization of family bonds and thus Rhys makes the colonial English family her central concern in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The relationships between the members of this family, settler, white creole, nigger and black and/or emancipated

slave are all explored and shown to be changing with the changing times and circumstances. These relationships are portrayed through the narrative voice of two white subjects of the Empire, and their portrayals sometimes contradict and sometimes concur with each other. Both their narrations are affected by the very content, or people they describe, not least that of emancipated slaves Christophine and Daniel who I described to be 'madwitch persona's in the novel. The madwitch voice then seeps into the narrative voice of both Antoinette and Rochester as they tell their memories in utopic/dystopic tension of remembering. Thus, as narrative styles intermingle so do the subjectivities of both self-narrators, blurring the lines between seemingly fixed categories.

5. Tackling Unfavourable Narrative Conditions: Self-Narratives for the Chorus Girl and the Horrid Colonial

Setting out to investigate how Rhys's heroines negotiate prescribed modes and discourses of self-representation, this study has sketched out how self-narrators tackle unfavourable narrative conditions in various social constellations. I have taken the immutable bond between narrative and identity as my premise and focused my investigation on certain elements of representation such as the narrative impulse, relationality of self-narration, established ways of telling and obstructions to narrative. All these elements are shaped to a great extent by the self-narrator's social environment; the obstructions posed in the way of narrative leads to necessary transgressions that define each self-narrator's particular mode of life-story telling. The importance and the meanings of the modes that are employed by Rhys's narrators can be properly understood in the context in which their narratives are obstructed, and the offence they give through their transgression. In Rhys's novels the protagonist suffers the punishment at the end, however not without upsetting the image that respectable society has of itself.

The true protagonist of Rhys's work has often been considered to be the author herself, however, probably Ford Maddox Ford was closest to the mark when he said that Rhys spoke for the 'underdog' (Angiers 1985: 40) in her novels. The protagonists of Rhys's stories are women who are on the margins, contemplating their own lives along with other peripheral characters' whose stories do not usually

get heard. The self-narrators in Rhys's novels bring these stories out of the woodwork and embed them in their own. These stories reveal the 'true adversaries' in her novels; that is the peripheral characters and the Centre that refutes their way of life and sometimes their very existence. This refutation is of course based on the deeply rooted rationale of the rules of the (imperial) English family. It is through this rationale and its conventions that the inhabitants of the peripheries are known to the central, respectable members of society. The English family is sustained by a powerful body of imagery and metaphor, and throughout the analytical chapters I have teased out the particular ones that Rhys points to, especially those concerning the borders and policing the borders of this holy family.

The idioms that Rhys's self-narrators are shown to develop and the medium through which Rhys transmits them shows the clear link between the two predicaments that these protagonists find themselves in: the *amateur* designated by social discourse as violating the boundaries of the English family, and the white creole, as a 'transitional' subject whose loyalties are very hard to fathom. Rhys's oeuvre traces the trials and tribulations of female and white creole protagonists as they fight for a legitimate position from where to speak in their particular historical and social moment. The agency of speech and the space that will facilitate it is a constant concern in her novels and both these elements are connected to the protagonist's relation or access to the cultural archive. It is through her relation to the cultural archive that the heroine can claim self-possession or the agency to articulate and interpret her own experiences. The need to articulate and interpret the experiences of the self is a central concern in modernist literature and Rhys proves a writer of her moment, making this a central issue in her work as well. Rhys's heroines are doubly strained to find a voice which will address both the modernist and postcolonial concerns for constructing an individual identity.

The way her heroines are recruited by society reveals the similar mechanisms through which the amateur and white creole are subjectified, through dislocation, dispossession and cultural denigration. Rhys's account of both these aspects of her heroines' lives reveal the close link between race and gender, and how the borders of both are held by similar metaphors, or how, indeed, they are used as metaphors for each other. The contention with their social recruitment occurs through self-narration in which they define themselves differently from what the society assigns them as. The amateur is defined from the outside in terms of how she performs her

gender and sexuality, along with where she stands in relation to the respectable English family. The metaphor of the English family is equally important for the white creole because of the intimacy that he/she has with the local population and the physical space of the colonies. Both the amateur and the white creole provoke fear of miscegenation in their 'uncontrollability' and tendency to cross boundaries that are firmly kept in order for both patriarchal and colonial orders to function. The social treatment that these categories get reveals the ways in which the said orders function through their prejudices and policing tools such as the 'gaze'.

The 'gaze', in its patriarchal and colonial incarnations, alienates the subject from her environment and body and prompts her to engage in self-narration at the same time. At its worst it leads to abjection, the subject conceiving of her own body as disturbing the order. The body that is 'engendered' from the outside will in most cases be reduced to silence or unconventional forms of expression, showing the intricate link between gender and genre. The amateur, described as not following any of the prescribed roles for women adopts an idiom particular to herself when she fails to find any narrative model that fits her own predicament in the cultural archive. This brings us back to the importance of access to established forms of telling a story and how unconventional subjecthoods can complicate this access. Rhys's subjects' tone when narrating disagrees with the usual euphoric mode of self-narration in which the accomplishment of the self is related: the narratives of Rhys heroines are more like chronicles of failure, written in a dysphoric mode.

It is the sense of failure that permeates the psyches of all Rhys's heroines, and part of this sense of failure is the failure of the subject to attain a respectable status in the holy English family, both in the metropolis and the colonies. Through her characters Rhys follows the 'making' of the female white creole category, juxtaposes it with other colonial subjectivities to see how through her sexual and narrative practices she moves to a differentiated identity. While depicting creole identity Rhys places strong emphasis on the semiotic transformations that creole subjectivities go through, as her white creole heroines make the 'reverse passage' from the Caribbean to England. The discovery tropes are turned over their head with white creoles connecting to England through images they have learnt in childhood. The connection with England provokes different modes of remembering the past and memories of the Caribbean are held in utopic/dystopic tension, describing the subject's uneasy relationship with her colonial 'past'. The trope of the white colonial trying to

accommodate herself in the new environment she finds herself in becomes part of the larger chronotope that is shared by all her novels, that is finding a legitimate place in the English family. The self-narration of the heroines is part of this quest and when their efforts are obstructed they adopt narrating styles that cannot so easily be policed by society.

As I have mentioned already, ways of telling a story is largely policed by the plot musters already found in the cultural archive. The extent to which the self-narrator veers away from conventions effects the reception of her story and the narrator has to adopt certain ways of speaking if she wants to share her stories at all. Clearly, the experiences of the amateur and the white creole complicate this sharing. These problems are reflected in the narrative as each character tries to come to terms with her own predicament, and these unconventionalities in narrative are interpreted by her interlocutors as *dysnarrativia*. These inflections get reflected at the level of narrative transmission in a different ways. The representation of consciousness may be so fraught with difficulties that the self-narrator may refer to herself in the third person, immediacy of experience is made evident through use of tense, and intensity of emotions through use of italics and quotation marks.

Two narrative voices that the heroines adopt to internalize or resist obstructions are relatively that of the zombie and the madwitch. The zombie figure is one that can be traced in modernist literature ; it is also connected to colonial space through its carnival resurrections , and the way that colonials are 'hollowed out' to become good subjects of the empire. This 'hollowing out' is carried out by colonial education and the colonial subject becomes 'zombified ', ready to take directions from the Centre (O'Callaghan 1993: 71). The madwitch is also a part of the colonial carnival but one that has more agency and works as the retributive instant for subjects that have been denied speech . The madwitch narrating mode provides for the articulation and execution of an epistemology other than propagated by the holy English family, an epistemology that is more eclectic and uses dreams and imagination as equally valid signifiers. The sometimes violent and coarse method of the madwitch also provides an antidote to 'the angel in the house', a very powerful symbol in Victorian literature and in setting up gender categories.

Rhys's Modern Female Colonial Sensibility

In the analysis I have especially looked at scenes in which the heroines go through a Kafkaesque experience, confronted with the machinery of society, their sense of hurt and pain compounded by the seeming impossibility of conveying their own views. The way Rhys's heroines speak in their fictional world also gets reflected in the way narrative transmission is constructed; the predicament of the protagonist is made evident in the text. Apart from the frequent use of stream of consciousness and ellipses in the self-narrators' story-telling, the texts are fragmented through italics, parenthesis, three dots and quotation marks.

Looking at Rhys's novels we see that in each one Rhys formulates a different aspect of her poetics of narration. The alienation and abjection that the amateur and the white creole feel coalesce perfectly in Rhys's oeuvre, especially in *Voyage in the Dark* whose heroine Anna is a white creole from the colonies who has just come to London. Her first 'cultural experience' is that of meeting the real referents of various things she has learnt about England through her colonial education. Rhys chronicles her wistful reconnection with the signified and we learn, with Anna, the way meaning is produced in England. The trope of discovery and travel is turned around, and Anna's discourse becomes a travesty of the discourse of discovery that Victorian settlers used for her own island. The novel traces the experience of a colonial who makes the 'reverse passage' and her narrative demonstrates how she has to use two different epistemologies to make meaning of her new experiences. Rhys draws our attention especially to how the female colonial body is interpellated by society, by the significant other and by commercial calls that place emphasis on the desirability of her body, circumscribing an amateur subjectivity.

A first person narrative, the text uses various markers to distinguish between Anna's present and past experiences as Rhys develops a method to signal stream of consciousness and memories with punctuation and type face. Developing a female colonial idiom in the novel needs the incorporation of English and Caribbean epistemologies in a meaningful manner. The resulting narrative voice demonstrates characteristics of the madwitch; not only through hysteria and violence, but also through embedding others' stories and creating a community of stories within which Anna's becomes more intelligible. The zombie narrative voice is also explored as to

its various corollaries in the story and Anna makes references to the Caribbean image of the soucriant, consolidating the relevance of the 'zombie voice' for Anna. The zombie voice is taken further to suggest exhausted narration, bodily reactions taking the place of speech, pointing to the failure of verbal articulation. Rhys points to the alteration of the zombie and madwitch voices as they meet the narrator's needs; after exhaustion, verbal articulation comes again, however, this time by means of parody and quotation.

Anna's mimicry of 'black speech' and resistance to a Bildungsroman structure of life-story telling reveals two layers of resistance, one at the level of the story and one at the level of narrative transmission. Parody and quotation thus fits the articulation for Anna's transitional identity whose self-narration is politically inflected. Anna parodies not just the English but also Caribbean discourses, distancing herself from both. This political strategy is best observed in the novel in moments of remembering which are held in utopic/dystopic tension, called to the fore when the narrator needs to make sense of her present situation, questioning to what extent the child in the colonies can be implicated in the oppression of slaves and the indigenous people. Anna's narration contains snippets from the lives of the colonized to the extent that she has been allowed to mix with them and learn about them. These, too, are strategically placed, and elsewhere in Rhys's work, these inclusions, or embeddings become more systematic, constituting an important part of Rhysian poetics of narration.

Community of Stories and Surrogate Narration

I have already suggested that Rhysian poetics of narration is composed of ways in which the female and colonial subjectivities tackle unfavourable conditions of narration. Obstructions to narrative lead the self-narrator to seek for alternative ways of speech and I have discussed embedding others' stories in one's own narrative as one of these methods. This method becomes the central dynamic in *Good Morning, Midnight*, in which the demimondaine Sasha creates a community of life stories through her simultaneous self-narration in which hers makes sense and does not seem too depressing in comparison. While Sasha does not have any immediate connections with the colonies, the stories that she embeds into her own have colonial connections, revealing once again the kinship between the predicament of

postcolonials and amateurs. The underdog as protagonist becomes evident in *Good Morning, Midnight* as Rhys uses the embedding method to depict not only the self-narrator's but also others' stories of dejection. Sasha's predicament as a demimondaine echoes the predicament of (post)colonial subjects like slaves and creoles, and the search for similar plot musters leads Sasha to even include animals' stories, which she finds she can identify with.

Sasha as a demimondaine who is losing her attractiveness can be seen as a future reincarnation of Anna. She is a character who lives at the margins of society and relates to the reader, in present tense, her experience of being subjectivated. She recounts how she was recruited to the job she works at, revealing the dynamics of respectable society and how respectable members are allowed to exploit the not so respectable. Although she has a firm understanding of her predicament and can read through the masks that people put on, her resistance to their discourse happens only at the level of her stream of consciousness. She lets the reader know her thoughts, but does not take that extra step to put it directly to people who have power over her, such as her boss. Rhys here uses a kind of surrogate narration, happening at the level of narrative transmission rather than the fictional world represented, to reflect the confines of the conditions that the subject has to engage in self-narration.

Sasha's search for similar stories also reveals that the dependence and exploitation that she suffers from is not limited to the female sex, but that there are similarly situated men as well - men the fallen empires no longer use for. The marginal male characters give Sasha the chance of reversal of her role, becoming the side who judges the underdog's performance and censuring or rewarding him accordingly. The male 'amateur' Serge - a displaced Russian after the break up of the empire - is a postcolonial subject, however the postcolonial subject par excellence in the novel who embodies all the harsh aspects of the postcolonial predicament is a mulatto Martinique woman whose story Serge shares with Sasha. The Martinique woman lives in Paris with her English lover and fears to go out by day because people can see her clearly and can tell that she is not white. She also fears speaking lest people judge her by her accent. In effect she becomes a zombie that haunts the city at night. Sasha also identifies with the Martinique woman's story, however Serge forbids her, for in his experience he has not seen any sight quite so morbid - a human afraid of contact with other people and hungry for fraternity and love. When describing her he uses the imagery of death - thus we have the zombie subjectivity in

the midst of Sasha's narration, an end that awaits all those who are systematically denied speech and human interaction.

Third Person Self-Narration

While obstructions or abstaining from speech demonstrates itself in speaking through others' stories in *Good Morning, Midnight*, Rhys takes the consequences of this obstruction to another level in *Quartet* by staging the heroine's self-narration in third person narrative voice. The narrative is engineered to have a very covert narrator and the rhetoric of the narrator and fixed focalizer Marya are indistinguishable, to the extent that we can read the novel as a third person self-narration. The content of the story reveals the abjection and alienation that the protagonist Marya is feeling, consolidating the self-narrator's perception of herself as a third person. Marya finds herself alone to fend for herself in the expat community of Paris when her husband is put in jail. *Quartet* shows that the 'recruitment' by society can go so far as to place people physically in certain places, as Marya is placed in the attic of the Heidler couple, representing the respectable English family. Her stay in the Heidler attic reveals how professional and emotional fields of experience get intertwined when the female subject does not have a private space she can call her own. Marya is assigned a certain place in such a way as to have her modes of production continuously policed by respectable members of society.

We see that the performance of sexuality and identity go hand in hand as she is recruited by society as a kept woman rather than be let loose as a free sexual agent. It is the ultimate rejection of her agency that this placement suggests that leads the heroine to lose her grip on the 'I', as she is hardly ever addressed as 'you' by others. The humiliation she suffers is shown to be the reason for the split in the self - to the degree that she finds it more comfortable to refer to herself in the third person. Anna's abjection is especially prominent in the scenes in which she feels helpless and in Heidler's presence, in total need of his appreciation. Her abandonment inspires nothing but 'horror' in Heidler, whose reaction embodies the reaction of society in the face of individuals whose lack self-possession and conviction enough to tell their own stories. The symptoms of Marya's apparent 'dysnarrativia' provides the reader with a cultural analysis of the English expat

society, as she resorts to another semiotics - such as dream vision - to make sense of gender relationships.

Intersubjectivity through Rotating Focalization

After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie introduces intersubjectivity to Rhys's exercise in third person self-narration, facilitating the narrator's reconstruction of the social discourses of the period in the text. The novel also places emphasis on the intricate relationship between space and narration as we see the protagonist's narration modifying according to the social and physical spaces of London and Paris. Rhys draws our attention to the way that places can harbour certain discourses and thus intervene on the subject's self-articulation. The lack of private space is also underlined as a reason why a self-narrator may feel alienated from her surroundings and her own body, to the extent to refer to herself as 'she'. The alienation and abjection that leads Anna in *Quartet* to refer to herself in the third person is also present in *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie*.

Julia, the protagonist in *After Leaving Mr. Mackenzie*, is not a fixed focalizer and when the narrative moves to other focalizations this happens through a membrane of irony, whereas Julia's focalization is maintained with total covertness of the narrator. As such, Julia's focalization remains central and the irony in the representation of others' subjectivities reveals the subjects' closeness or distance to Julia's predicament. The antithesis to Julia's predicament is Mr. Mackenzie, the respectable Englishman who has just left her and whose memory Julia is trying to flee from. While the text ironizes Mackenzie's observations about Julia, when the focalization moves onto Horsefield, Julia's new lover, the irony lessens and the worldview represented through Horsefield's eyes agrees to a certain extent with that of Julia's - pointing to the degrees to which subjectivities may resemble or differ from each other.

The most similar subjectivity that is embedded is that of her sister Norah: they are both unmarried women, outside the all-important institution of marriage. The two represent two opposites in this predicament; one going the way of promiscuity and the other of the dutiful daughter who looks after the mother. Norah's focalization reveals that being a respectable member of society takes its toll on the subject as well; she rages at society (in her thoughts) for confining her to her role, in a similar

way that Sasha does. The 'permeability of consciousness' that Rhys stages especially between the two sisters reasserts the importance of family and this displaces the chronotope of the novel from 'leaving Mr. Mackenzie' to 'reuniting with the family'.

Colonial Subjectivities Exiled from the English Family

Rhys's most famous exercise in testing the limits of permeability, however, remains the *Wide Sargasso Sea*, in which she juxtaposes the self-narratives of a 'white creole' and a 'colonizer'. Again, the distance to the holy English family is negotiated by seemingly very different characters, but the hardships they come against underline the common experience that they have. The term 'transitional identity' which is used for the white creole seems to define the colonizer as well as we trace the self-narratives of Antoinette and Rochester. The narrative of the white creole chronicles how the emancipation act has affected the fortunes of her family and how she experiences a series of displacements till she finds herself married off to an Englishman fresh from England. Along with the sad memories of displacement; how their house got burned by emancipated slaves and how her mother lost her mind, she also shares memories of happy times and communion with the people of the island and the island itself.

The character that is omnipresent in her memories of the past is Christophine, their black servant, and it is her who helps Antoinette understand her family's predicament when they are abandoned both by the whites and the blacks. It is through Christophine's parables and interpretation of dreams that Antoinette can make sense of what they are going through. Thus, Christophine is the madwitch at the centre of the story providing Antoinette with the tools of interpretation. Aided by Christophine's education, Antoinette's own narration reaches madwitch maturity when she interprets a dream she has in which she is giving herself up to a man. And indeed, as if by magic, the narrative shifts to the future and to the self-narrative of the man Antoinette has dreamed of, her husband coming from England.

In the character Rochester, we have an English subject who in turn is trying to make sense of the scene he sees in the Caribbean, especially the constellation that he finds his wife in, in close intimacy with the coloured people, heeding their words and confiding in them. Feeling alienated from their intimacy, Rochester, as self-

narrator seeks intimacy with the reader and shares his astonishment about the place, and later his confessions concerning his reasons for marrying Antoinette and his future plans for her. We see Antoinette try to speak to him, try to let the two different epistemologies come to an understanding. However, Rochester holds firmly unto his belief that an understanding is impossible between the two; because once the route of understanding is open, questions will arise as to the validity of certain Victorian practices, including the predicament he finds himself in as the second son.

Rochester's relationship with his father is mirrored in another character on the island, in Daniel, another madwitch persona. Daniel claims to be related to Antoinette and writes a letter to Rochester exploiting his fears concerning the purity of the white creoles to suggest that Antoinette's family is miscegenated and that she is a loose woman to boot. He also relates the scene in which he is disowned by the patriarch Cosway whom Daniel claims is his father. Daniel thus becomes the articulation of the outrage the dispossessed feel; his accusations and curses acting as retribution for disowned coloured sons, mirroring the way Rochester himself has been 'disowned' from inheritance as the second son. Indeed, Daniel's eclectic madwitch tactic of subverting discourse on the English family and syncretic usage of the English language signals the way of developing a new idiom for the dispossessed all the while pointing to the similarities between their subjectivities: himself, Rochester and Antoinette .

Rochester's rapprochement to Antoinette's subjectivity happens through other channels as well. Just as Antoinette has been nicknamed a zombie by the local children, Rochester is actually mistaken for one when he goes to visit a haunted house on the island. It is after this incident Rochester reads about zombies, and as he is reading the book, the text this time reverts back to Antoinette's narration in rather a tricky manner - startling both the reader and Christophine as to the identity of the person who we see going about on the horse. This is one of the moments in which Rhys shows the interaction between the fictional world and narrative transmission: the themes that crop up in the fictional world get translated into the way in which they are represented on the page. The story suggests an intimacy of identities, and so Rhys attempts a *trompe l'oeil* in narrative to confuse who is speaking when.

Thus through her treatment of her various heroines Rhys offers us a theoretical perspective that would meet the methodological interests of those who are

interested in discussions of subjectivity, identity and political agency. My reading is geared towards teasing out an empowerment that Rhys lends her heroines, even at their most helpless state, through giving them agency. The selves that we encounter in her work can be utilized as means of cultural critical analysis and give us a picture of Rhys's 'worlding'; that is how she conceives of the society of her own time. My analysis reveals that the self provides an important entry point for discussions concerning the connection between life-stories and culture, by way of the cultural archive. As such, subjectivity proves as the occasion that can lead to broader exercises of analysis. My analysis of life stories, especially informed by Eakin, shifts the focus away from pathology and normality to cultural interpretation. Thus, the emphasis is placed on understanding how norms are established and maintained. Normality is the tool that is used to curb the subject's agency - which brings us to the question of the ends to which this curbing, obstructing, controlling others' subjectivity is used. The feat of 'possessing' another's self in order to inscribe it unto a particular grand narrative will always be a political project and the most immediate way of resisting this project is 'self-possession', a concern that is played out in the self-narrations that Rhys constructs in her oeuvre.

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