



**MADNESS AS AN ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN  
AGENT IN WIDE SARGASSO SEA AND THE  
BELL JAR**

**Hüseyin İÇEN**

**2020  
MASTER DEGREE  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**Thesis Advisor  
Asst. Prof. Dr. Nazila HEİDARZADEGAN**

**MADNESS AS AN ANTI- AUTHORITARIAN AGENT IN WIDE SARGASSO  
SEA AND THE BELL JAR**

**Hüseyin İÇEN**

**T.C.  
Karabuk University  
Institute of Graduate Programs  
Department of English Language and Literature  
Prepared as  
Master Degree**

**Thesis Advisor  
Assist. Prof. Dr. Nazila HEİDARZADEGAN**

**KARABUK  
July 2020**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |    |
|--|----|
| TABLE OF CONTENTS .....  | 1  |
| THESIS APPROVAL PAGE.....  | 3  |
| DECLARATION .....  | 4  |
| MUCH OBLIGED .....   | 5  |
| ABSTRACT.....  | 6  |
| ÖZ.....  | 7  |
| ARŞIV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ.....   | 8  |
| ARCHIVE RECORD INFORMATION .....   | 9  |
| SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH .....  | 10 |
| PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH .....                                 | 10 |
| METHOD OF THE RESEARCH .....   | 10 |
| INTRODUCTION .....   | 11 |
| CHAPTER ONE .....  | 31 |
| MADNESS AS A WEAPON AGAINST COLONIAL POWER IN WIDE<br>SARGASSO SEA .....     | 31 |
| 1.1. Wide Sargasso Sea as a Prequel to Jane Eyre .....                       | 31 |
| 1.2. Antoinette as Other .....   | 39 |
| 1.3. Changing Antoinette’s Identity.....                                     | 42 |
| 1.4. The Metaphor of Mirror In the Novel.....                                | 44 |
| 1.5. Estrangement and Entrapment of Antoinette .....                         | 45 |
| 1.6. The Third Space in the Novel.....                                       | 48 |
| CHAPTER TWO .....  | 51 |
| MADNESS AS A SECLUSION FROM SOCIAL PRESSURE IN <i>THE<br/>BELL JAR</i> ..... | 51 |
| 2.1. Esther as Author’s Alterego.....  | 51 |
| 2.2. Madness in the Novel .....  | 54 |
| 2.3. Esther as a Marginal Person .....                                       | 55 |
| 2.4. Patriarchy and Esther.....  | 59 |
| 2.5. Function of Looking-Glass in the Novel.....                             | 64 |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>2.6. Esther and Her Suicidal Attempts.....</b>                    | <b>66</b> |
| <b>2.7. Longing for Freedom From Colonial/Patriarchal Power.....</b> | <b>67</b> |
| <b>2.8. Implication of the Title .....</b>                           | <b>69</b> |
| <b>2.9. Madness as Seclusion .....</b>                               | <b>71</b> |
| <b>CONCLUSION .....</b>  | <b>73</b> |
| <b>REFERENCES.....</b>   | <b>83</b> |
| <b>CURRICULUM VITAE.....</b>   | <b>87</b> |



## THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Hüseyin İÇEN titled “MADNESS AS ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN AGENT IN WIDE SARGASSO SEA AND THE BELL JAR” is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Nazila HEİDARZADEGAN .....  
Thesis Advisor, Department of English Language and Literature

This thesis is accepted by the examining committee with a unanimous vote in the Department of English Language and Literature as a Master of Science thesis. July 21, 2020

### Examining Committee Members (Institutions)

Signature

Chairman : Assist.Prof.Dr. Nazila HEİDARZADEGAN (KBU) .....

Member : Assoc.Prof.Dr. Muayad Enwiya Jajo AL-JAMANI (KBU) .....

Member : Assist.Prof.Dr. Yıldırım ÖZSEVGİÇ (RTEU) .....

The degree of Master of Science by the thesis submitted is approved by the Administrative Board of the Institute of Graduate Programs, Karabuk University.

Prof. Dr. Hasan SOLMAZ .....  
Director of the Institute of Graduate Programs

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and all information included has been obtained and expounded in accordance with the academic rules and ethical policy specified by the institute. Besides, I declare that all the statements, results, materials, not original to this thesis have been cited and referenced literally.

Without being bound by a particular time, I accept all moral and legal consequences of any detection contrary to the aforementioned statement.

**Name Surname** : Hüseyin İÇEN

**Signature** :

## **MUCH OBLIGED**

I swear Allah The All-Knowing, The Omniscient, The All-Wise and The Majestic who created us with the truth and made us aware of His existence.

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my affectionate thesis supervisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Nazila Heidarzagdegan. Without her concern and strict guidance, it would not have been possible for me to complete this thesis.

I would like to give special thanks to **my Beloved Fiancee**, for everything she did to help me out. And I want to thank my parents for supporting me whole my life and during writing thesis.



## **ABSTRACT**

Present thesis studied metaphor of mirror as Third Space of enunciation in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*. Women characters' madness as a result of authoritarianism embodied as patriarchy in Esther of *Bell Jar* and colonial approach in Antoinette of *Wide Sargasso Sea* is the result of their fractured sense of identity, response to their dispossession from selfhood, and frightening sense of dismissing culture and sanity. Both female characters are emotionally vulnerable; while Antoinette is economically powerless; internally displaced, who deals with dismissed sexual passion, Esther's suicidal depression is the result of her reaction against the pressures of social conventions and protest against patriarchal power which has contaminated the psychiatric treatment to make female patients obedient wives. Both Esther and Antoinette seek seclusion in mirrors following the loss of their mental health. The looking glass in both novels suggests double identity, madness, and deterioration of subjectivity as a result of colonizing and patriarchal power. Mental instability and loss of identity have been interpreted as Bhabhaian Third Space of enunciation in mentioned novels.

**Key words:** Wide Sargasso Sea, The Bell Jar, Mirror, Colonial Power, Third Space, Madness, Patriarchal Power

## ÖZ

Bu tez, ayna metaforunu Üçüncü Uzamın ilanı bağlamında Jean Rhys'in *Wide Sargasso Sea* ve Sylvia Plath'ın *The Bell Jar* eserleri üzerinde çalışmaktadır. Otoriter gücün bir sonucu olarak karakterlerin deliliği, Ataerkil baskıdan dolayı *Sırça Fanus* eserindeki Esther ve emperyal yaklaşımın sonucundan dolayı da *Wide Sargasso Sea* eserindeki Antoinette parçalanmış kimliklerinin birer sonucu, kendi benliklerinden yoksun olmalarına karşı birer yanıt ve akıl sağlığını ve kültürel duyguya karşı bir reddettir. Her iki karakter duygusal olarak değersizdir; Antoinette karakteri ekonomik olarak güçsüz, psikolojik olarak yerinden edilmiş ve cinsel tutkudan azledilmişken, Esther'in intihar depresyonu, toplumsal sözleşmelerin baskılarına karşı verdiği tepkiden ve kadın hastaları itaatkâr eşler yapmak için psikiyatrik tedaviyi kirleten ataerkil iktidarı protesto etmesinin bir sonucudur. Hem Esther hem de Antoinette zihinsel sağlıklarının kaybının ardından aynalarda inzivaya çekilmektedir. Her iki romanda da görünen ayna, kolonileşme ve ataerkil gücünün bir sonucu olarak çifte özdeşlik, delilik ve özneliliğin bozulmasına işaret ediyor. Zihinsel dengesizlik ve kimlik kaybı, söz konusu romanlarda Bhabha'nın Üçüncü Uzamının bir ilanıdır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Wide Sargasso Sea, Sırça Fanus, Ayna, Sömürge Gücü, , Üçüncü Uzam, Delilik, Ataerkil Güç

## ARŞIV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Tezin Adı</b>          | Madness as an Anti- Authoritarian Agent in <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> and <i>The Bell Jar</i> |
| <b>Tezin Yazarı</b>       | Hüseyin İÇEN  |
| <b>Tezin Danışmanı</b>    | Asst. Professor Dr. Nazila HEİDERZADEGAN  |
| <b>Tezin Derecesi</b>     | Yüksek Lisans   |
| <b>Tezin Tarihi</b>       | 21/07/2020  |
| <b>Tezin Alanı</b>        | İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı   |
| <b>Tezin Yeri</b>         | KBÜ/LEE   |
| <b>Tezin Sayfa Sayısı</b> | 88  |
| <b>Anahtar Kelimeler</b>  | Wide Sargasso Sea, Sırça Fanus, Ayna, Sömürge Gücü, Üçüncü Uzam, Delilik, Ataerkil Güç      |

## ARCHIVE RECORD INFORMATION

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Name of the Thesis</b>    | Madness as an Anti- Authoritarian Agent in <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> and <i>The Bell Jar</i>      |
| <b>Author of the Thesis</b>  | Hüseyin İÇEN   |
| <b>Advisor of the Thesis</b> | Asst. Professor Dr. Nazila HEİDERZADEGAN   |
| <b>Status of the Thesis</b>  | Master Degree  |
| <b>Date of the Thesis</b>    | 21/07/2020   |
| <b>Field of the Thesis</b>   | English Language and Literature  |
| <b>Place of the Thesis</b>   | KBU/LEE  |
| <b>Total Page Number</b>     | 88   |
| <b>Keywords</b>              | Wide Sargasso Sea, The Bell Jar, Mirror, Colonial Power, Third Space, Madness, Patriarchal Power |

## **SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH**

In the society we live in, women are subjected to oppression by both colonial power and the dominant male, and as a result, to use insanity as a retreat or a weapon.

## **PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

Examining the disorder of women's psychology as a result of social oppression and exploited societies and articulating it with a manifesto.

## **METHOD OF THE RESEARCH**

The books I buy, magazines and many articles; the texts I download over the Internet and the libraries I go to are the methods I choose to achieve my goal.

## INTRODUCTION

*“The women’s novel has always had to struggle against the cultural and historical forces that relegated women’s experience to the second rank”.*

*(Showalter, 1977)*

In literature, madness is not merely a mental disorder but more than that a social burden. Madness is a pathological response or a manifestation of mental repression. Madness does not have a description. The present thesis examines madness as a weapon against imperial power and seclusion to escape social oppression which results from male dominant society and patriarchal ideology. A woman who rejects to follow traditional roles of womanhood is apt to be labelled as abnormal or mad. It does not depend on whether she has experienced depression, is well-educated and from well-to-do class, or an illiterate member of the working class. A female figure can be sexually harassed or othered without reasons in a male dominant society if she does not fit into societal, patriarchal, or imperial rules.

Women are supposed to obey the breadwinner man who is the head of household from traditional viewpoint. In *Second Sex*, Beauvoir states that:

Since the husband is the productive worker, he is the one who goes beyond the family interest to that of society, opening up a future for himself through co-operation in the building of the collective future: he incarnates transcendence. Woman is doomed to the continuation of the species and the care of the home-that is to say, to immanence (Beauvoir, 1949).

The chosen authors use madness in their novels to establish a safe side for pain experienced by main characters. Pain is no longer a state of helplessness for women. Both authors use the notion of madness as a means of protest in the course of expressing it. Madness is mode of utterance and a response to the power which is colonial and patriarchal.

Feminist criticism of the male-dominated patriarchy has identified the image of the madwoman as the core symbol in philosophy and literature. In such a gynocritical paradigm, the actions of the madwoman are a revolutionary reaction towards the subjugation she is facing. This revolutionary reactions position of the madwoman was centripetal to the doctrine of women. The picture of a madwoman parodies the moral

incapacity of women in patriarchal culture and is known as the initiator of rebellion against the injustice they face in that culture.

The important point to note is that in both of these texts, the women are silenced, isolated, or treated by men. There has been a need throughout history for the patriarchal cultures that these women lived in silence and were isolated. If madwomen had a voice, a man's culture would be threatened by their intelligence. A patriarchal culture is based upon the idea that the man is in charge as the breadwinner, the head of the household. A woman who challenges this mentality is refusing to conform to a patriarchal society's standards of whom she must be and therefore, in many instances, she is considered mad. Once a woman is considered mad, her voice is menacing for man that upsets the normal life he has built and to challenges man's superiority.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar discuss the question of the representation of female characters in and by men in *The Madwoman in The Attic: The Woman Writer and The Fictional Imagination of The 19th Century*. They deliver an excellent viewpoint on the positions which a male-dominated society prescribes for women. In the end, each of these tasks is directed toward supporting the man. Since these positions, particularly that of the madwoman, were inherently negative, they placed limits on the actions of the woman.

The appearance of a madwoman in women writers' literature is considered by feminists to be a means to subvert man-dominated hegemonic culture. The writers explore several aspects that the patriarchal hierarchy is broken by hysteria and secrecy in female literature. In his psychological-political study of madness, Laing states in his famous book *The Politics of Experience and the Bird of Paradise* that madness is a social reality and the social truth is a political occurrence. He insists that madness is not a condition that has to be cured; rather "it is a special strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unlivable situation" (Laing, 1967). Antoinette and Esther are strong enough to live in that unlivable occasion. For them, madness becomes a way of being. They manage, through their madness, to create a personal self that redefines the image that society forces on them. Victory of the protagonists of both novels underpins Laing's opinion that "madness need not be a breakdown; it may also be a breakthrough" (Laing, 1967).

The women that are placed in isolation seem to have ignored the conventional role of domesticated wives, mothers, and pillars of society, and are therefore being punished for not conforming to what is considered normal behavior for women. The isolation and hospitalization of these women are forms of silencing the stronger, more opinionated and more stubborn women who refuse to accept the rules of a patriarchal society. Whereas isolation is shown to the women in these literary works as a tactic that will help to make them better and able to return to a more normal life by society's standards, they are being punished and locked in to hide their abnormalities from the same society that claims to help them.

Present thesis investigated two focal points. Firstly, it will show how madness is used as a weapon against colonial power by studying the heroine of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, and secondly, it investigated how madness can be used as seclusion to flee from imperial power by analysing the heroine of *The Bell Jar*. It is the madness, which created a free space for women. Madness is the weapon that enabled these women to present their newly created selves. As Roy Porter explains in his book *Porter A Social History of Madness: Stories of the Insane*, "The mad tried to explain their own behaviour to themselves and others in the language that was available to them" (Porter, 1987); therefore, the women writers articulated the language available to the madwomen, in translating the unheard.

For years, people were menaced by being marked mad once they attempted to challenge the status quo norms which were governed by male dominance or imperial power, and this is no more evident than through literature. Within the framework of patriarchal oppression, truth does not exceed the borders of male-centered viewpoint. If women do not submit to male dominance, they will be automatically branded abnormal or insane in a patriarchal society; and since the institutions of power are part of the hegemony, no one contested the power and therefore women who might have succeeded in gaining some ground were silenced.

Postcolonialism, and its social and literary effects are examined as core argument of the thesis. It highlights the connections between madness and revolution of women against the colonial and imperial power in *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys and *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath from women's perspective. Also, women strategies used against power in *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys and *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath were

investigated. The main characters in both novels are women and in their journeys of two different characters to the same destination in two different societies will be discussed.

Nazila Heidarzadegan in her book entitled *The Middle Eastern American Theatre: Negation or Negotiation of Identity* states, “Women all over the world have different histories regarding their postcolonial legacy, including colonial invasion, forced migration and exile, slavery, and even genocide” (Heidarzadegan, 2019). Imperialist power uses some means to strengthen its hegemony. These apparatus are the means created by the imperialist power who has legalized colonisation and exploitation in target societies. As Heidarzadegan points that, “Women in numerous societies have been consigned to the situation of Other, minimized, marginalized, and colonized” (ibid, 2019). The colonial imperialist power has othered people living in the colonized societies. This situation is not only for an immigrant, but also for whom was othered in his/her own country, as the protagonists of two mentioned novels.

Rochester knows that what marriage means to him with Antoinette as a European colonizer. This is the register not of mere marriage or sexual reproduction but of Europe and subhuman Other, of soul making. Gayatri Spivak criticizes in her article that:

The differentiation is essential for an exhaustive examination of colonial domination. The result of this treatment is ultimately the formation of the terminologically problematic postcolonial woman. Even constructions of the pre-colonial are strongly influenced by the phallogocentric prejudice that wrongly defines ‘native’ women as passive and subsidiary inferiors. In fact, many of the representations of the female ‘native’ figure in western literature and art perpetuate the myth of the erotically charged female (Spivak, 1985).

The present study investigated women strategies used against power in *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys and *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath. *Wide Sargasso Sea* was written by Jean Rhys, a Dominican-born British woman writer. Jean Rhys is of a hybrid/Creole origin. She could not adapt to western society because she was born in Dominica and later moved to England (Drake, 1980). In fact, *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a bildungsroman novel describing the time from the author’s own childhood to her youth. At the same time, it is a sequel of *Jane Eyre* which was written by Charlotte Brontë, an English-born British writer and its prequel in terms of linear story telling. *Jane Eyre* is about a mad woman who had to live in the attic of a big dark mansion. Jean Rhys narrated the story from her viewpoint and on how she became mad. In her work she explained whether madness is a result or a means to end power abuse.

Through the 1940's and the 1950's, Caribbean writers were beginning to write about their own lives and cultural experiences which preceded many of the independence movements throughout the islands. By the 1960's, each Caribbean setting had definable characteristics making them unique and recognizable. *Wide Sargasso Sea* emerges out of these periods, speaking about a historical legacy of slavery and colonialism in Jamaica and speaking for a particular nationalism in Dominica. Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* is of importance for postcolonial studies since "it reverberates the voice of the oppressed Other and subsequently sets up an attestation to the social peculiarity of the prior colonized Creole individuals" (Gramaglia, 2008). Depending on the colonial system the Creoles had similar legal and political rights as whites in the home countries. However, Creoles were never seen as fully white, since nationals across the Atlantic in Europe felt that the Caribbean whites were sullied or colored by the tropic environment, especially considering the close proximity to slaves is in question in *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Creole is the social and psychological situation of the family with such an identity. After the first chapter of the novel, Antoinette had the role as a narrator of the story to a man who came from England, embodying the imperialist power. In fact, the husband's name is never mentioned in the novel. This man depicts the evil character of Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. He came from Europe to Jamaica. As a colonizer, he considered himself superior, civilised and educated, and sees Antoinette and her family traditional, primitive, and lower in rank.

In the last chapter of the novel, Antoinette becomes insane and creates a space for herself, happy to remember her old nice days there. A maid named Grace Poole takes care of Antoinette. She is admonished not to tell others about Antoinette. Since Grace loves drinking and sleeping, Antoinette could easily take her keys and wander through the different rooms of the mansion. Antoinette dreams that she has set fire to the lodges and jumps through the burning flames and flee to Christophine and lives happily ever with her. One day after having this dream again, she acts as in the dream and sets fire to the mansion with candles. The end of the book is ambiguous. It is not clear whether the mansion was burnt away or not. However, Antoinette loses her mind and is locked in an attic.

The third chapter of the book is narrated by Antoinette, who has been repressed and locked up in the attic of a mansion. The change of narrator is a de/colonisation

movement. The first chapter is described vividly by the Creole Antoinette, but the narrator has changed in chapter two with the arrival of Rochester who represents the imperial power. Antoinette's husband narrates a major part of the novel, indicating his control and power to prescribe and define Antoinette. Rhys moves into or out of Antoinette's husband's narration in each chapter.

Antoinette's madness in *the Wide Sargasso Sea* is the consequence of the female role imposed by imperial power which has accused and excluded those who do not comply with the standards set by the authority. Although Antoinette was a happy and vigorous character, she became insane, mad, and imprisoned in an attic because she was persecuted and insulted by Rochester who represents imperial power in the novel.

Another novel to be examined in the thesis is *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath written in 1963. The protagonist of the novel is a woman who has lost her mind because she does not fit into the woman model imposed by power. The concept of madness was connected with women and defined by men throughout history. The result of the fragile constitution of womanhood was traditionally seen as the result of female madness. The relation of women and men was always like that of patient and doctor and when psychiatrists started to examine the situation of their patients they chose women as their cases. Moreover, the creative realm of women was perceived as somehow defective by creative or intellectual men. But, as a result of external circumstances, female writers started to illustrate female folly, they must use men's languages for this purpose.

Plath shows in her work that she is aware of patriarchal oppression and shows in *The Bell Jar* that insanity is a social structure. As a result of the inability to reconcile dominant conceptions about the woman and her creativity, *The Bell Jar* depicts Esther Greenwood's insanity and while Plath draws from contemporary metaphors to depict Esther's decline in mind, she creates new metaphors. Plath creates new vocabulary to describe female insanity in the wake of patriarchal oppression; such vocabulary is also an attempt to reject representations of insanity that were built and expressed in patriarchal language.

Esther is a collegue student who likes reading and writing poetry. Since she lives in a patriarchal society, Esther cannot live as she wishes therefore she is always under

pressure and cannot express her ideas and thoughts. Jacqueline Rose wrote in her book entitled *Femininity and its Discontents* states:

(...) psychoanalysis becomes one of the places in our culture where it is recognized as more than a fact of individual pathology that most women do not painlessly slip into their roles as women, if indeed they do at all (Rose, 1983).

The quote links feminine insanity to a woman's unwillingness to slip into the role. Refusal to accept the role of gender imposed by tradition is one of the reasons for women's madness in patriarchal societies. Besides the apparently common theme of female madness owing to reluctance of the heroines to acknowledge their traditional gender role in two novels, there is another problem, self-image and the degree to which the concept of identity influences female role in sex. Herbert Sussman explains in his famous book *A New Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture* and defines:

Removed from the social supervision of family and of a traditional society, working alongside men, subject to the sexual power of supervisors, and often independent of spirit, the mill girls acquired a reputation for sexual looseness or, depending on one's perspective, sexual freedom. But it was expected by factory girls and by working-class society that they would eventually marry and take responsibility for home and children, with the husband supporting the family with his wages (Sussman, 2014).

In *The Bell Jar*, Esther meets a man named Buddy and falls in love with him. But while she keeps her virginity for Buddy, he finds himself free to be in relationship with other girls. It is implied in the novel that a man as the authorial figure has more freedom to do what he wants.

Rochester and Buddy symbolize power in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Bell Jar*, respectively. Every society in which the strong oppresses the weak is under the control of the dominant power. In *The Bell Jar*, the dominant power is a male and the oppressed is a female character. Buddy puts pressure on Esther and asks her to think like him. Esther, who resists him, was ostracized and humiliated, and as a result she attempted to commit suicide several times but failed every time, finally she fainted by sleeping pills of her mother. When she opened her eyes, she found herself in the hospital and was sent to mental hospital for psychological treatment. Both Antoinette and Esther suffer from oppression resulted from colonial and patriarchal authority. Gayatri Spivak explains as follows:

For feminist individualism in the age of imperialism, is precisely the making of human beings, the constitution and "interpellation" of the subject not only as individual but as "individualist." This stake is represented on two registers: childbearing and soul making. The first is domestic-

society- through-sexual-reproduction cathected as “companionate love”; the second is the imperialist project cathected as civil-society-through-social-mission (Spivak, 1985).

Madness and factors leading to madness extensively appear in the novels and this thesis has focused on studying mental health of Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Esther Greenwood in *The Bell Jar* jeopardized by dominant power. The journey of two different characters to the same destination in two different societies will be discussed. A Creole woman on the Caribbean islands and a woman living in New York, the biggest and most glorious city in the West, share same fate.

### **COLONIAL POWER, PATRIARCHY, AND SUBALTERN WOMEN**

Women, if subordinated, are assigned different roles in a patriarchal society such as wives, mothers, sisters all of which make them dependent upon the male and reduce her identity to relation to a man. Gender role demands a woman since childhood, to believe that motherhood and the role of a woman are the objectives to be pursued. It has naturalized the relationship between the sexes.

Frantz Fanon believes that “she is a woman (...) that (...) she is not welcomed in this society” (Fanon, 1967). Both Antoinette and Esther are not embraced by the society in which they live.

Oppression by imperial powers from various perspectives and above all, through the patriarchal systems, places women in a low position in society and among other related classes. Bill Ashcroft argues that:

There have been robust debates in a variety of colonized societies over whether gender or colonial exploitation is the most significant political element in women’s lives and add that such colonial control has led to requests for greater consideration of gender creation and jobs in the study of imperialism and colonialism (Ashcroft, 2000).

The implications of gender and colonial inequality in the current situation of women are debated, in which patriarchal inequality is interpreted as a fundamental element in the exploitation of women in their societies. All these occurrences are the product of imperial power and colonialism. Ashcroft suggests that:

Both patriarchy and imperialism can be seen to practice similar forms of dominance over those they make subordinates. Thus, the perceptions of women in patriarchy and those of colonized subjects can be paralleled in a variety of ways (Ashcroft, 2000).

The study explains that colonialism and patriarchy view women as the subordinate category of people in society. The relation between men and women in the

novels is power relation and the power agent varies in each novel that are colonial power in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and patriarchal power or male dominance in *The Bell Jar*. Antoinette suffers from being Creole, that is to be neither white nor black, on the other hand Esther suffers from being a passive woman in a male dominant society. But main difference between two characters is the level of oppression. Antoinette suffers from double oppression since she is a Creole woman. Kate Millet in her famous book entitled *Sexual Politics* argues as:

Patriarchy's chief institution is the family. It is both a mirror of and a connection with the larger society; a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole. Mediating between the individual and the social structure, the family effects control and conformity where political and other authorities are insufficient. As the fundamental instrument and the foundation unit of patriarchal society the family and its roles are prototypical. Serving as an agent of the larger society, the family not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state which rules its citizens through its family heads (Millet, 1970).

Gayatri Spivak's complex essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* received an enormous amount of attention since its first publication in 1988. Spivak's subaltern refers to the least powerful subjects in society.

Subaltern is a term used for those of lower economic and cultural status; the masses who exist outside power structure of a given society. In *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak seeks to overthrow the binary opposition between subject and object, itself and the rest, the West, and the Orient, middle and the margin, and the majority and the minority. They cannot speak because they are divided by gender, class, caste, religion, etc.

The term Speak is not entirely literal for Spivak. She means can the lowest members of society express their concerns, enter into dialogue with those who have power? and also if they do speak right or otherwise communicate their concerns will they be hurt? Spivak argues as:

What we mean by attending to the subaltern classes is what they do 'speak' is resist they form collectives; but there is no infrastructure for again to go back to the metaphor for them to have this speech act completed. In other words, those around them with the power, the state's power or long states power do not have the infrastructure to be able to attend to these things (Spivak, 1988).

She does not like this answer since she sees it as a kind of ventriloquism. One should remember Said's theory and the importance of representation in maintaining colonial control. Spivak is also talking about representation but in her case, it is not the

colonizer who represents the colonized, but there are layers of representation. Spivak's essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* challenges the idea of the colonial subject and provides an example of the limits of the Western discourse's ability to interact with other cultures. This study is marked by a paradigm shift in postcolonial studies.

In *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak argues that, "My readings are, rather, an interested and inexperienced examination, by a postcolonial woman, of the fabrication of repression, a constructed counternarrative of woman's consciousness, thus woman's being" (Spivak, 1988). She considers a woman equal with the other members of society and notices her as an important part of it. In relation to the importance of the woman, there exists the word subaltern which Spivak uses it more than common terms such as woman or colonized. Subaltern refers to any group of people who are lower than the others from different points of views which Donna Landry and Gerald Maclean define it as, "The kinds of groups that are claimed to be subaltern are simply groups that feel subordinated in any way" (Landry and Maclean, 1993).

Woman and her position in the society, according to Spivak, "is maneuvered between indigenous patriarchy and colonial government" (Spivak, 1999). From both perspectives, women are excluded from the important social activities and are considered as desirous objects possessed by men who dominate them. Women's freedom and "Women's desire," as Spivak considers, are always restricted by the traditional patriarchal principles and the power of the rulers (Spivak, 1999). She declares "the subaltern cannot speak" and clarifies the state of the women especially in India and illuminates "the subaltern has not the right to talk" (Spivak, 1988).

Concerning the position of the native women, Bill Ashcroft explains the main reason of this silence as "gender bias, and constructions of the traditional or pre-colonial are often heavily inflected by a contemporary masculinist bias that represents native women as quietist and subordinate" (Ashcroft, 2000). Women do not have the right to take part in the economic or cultural activities. They are forced to be colonized doubly and excluded from social events, as Landry and Maclean consider the subaltern as "the most oppressed and invisible constituencies" (Landry and Maclean, 1993). In this concern, they are afflicted in the most awful condition in society.

Spivak states: “between patriarchy and imperialism (...) the figure of the woman disappears (...) into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the third-world woman caught between tradition and modernization” (Spivak, 1988). She sees the woman as a figure crushed between the male-dominated society and colonial power. She notices the woman disappeared completely between strategies applied by both sides and argues that she is lost as a third-world woman among the concepts of tradition and modernization. An analysis regarding postcolonialism reveals this idea that imperial power and patriarchy make the women double colonized. Postcolonial women are humiliated and oppressed, so that they do not have the power of determination by themselves.

Spivak would agree with Said that every representation is a misrepresentation. A picture, in other words, no matter how perfect, is not the thing it represents but Spivak thinks that as long as the subaltern is not able to develop a political consciousness and express it, this representation is the best option available. Gayatri Spivak asks can the subaltern, as the weakest members of society, speak? She argues that they cannot speak because of the way society structured them. As Heidarzadegan states:

Women, like colonized people, have needed to develop their own language, and their own accessible apparatuses as those of the colonizer. Both groups are colonized, powerless and have a subordinate situation. Postcolonial discourse and feminism look to reinstate the subordinate and marginalized against the dominant and early nationalist postcolonialism like early feminism tried to transform the structure of dominance (Heidarzadegan, 2019).

The concept of womanhood is important for a critical view of the topic of female insanity. It is important to search for the definition of femininity and gender aside from sex while focusing on the role of Sylvia Plath as a woman. Simone De Beauvoir has written in her seminal book, *The Second Sex*, , that “One does not born, but rather becomes a woman” (Beauvoir, 1949). But what does the word ‘woman’ imply to us? We identify a person’s bio-sex as the main characteristics of his/her identity in everyday life. On the other hand, female or more like ‘feminine’ referres to a variety of symbolic, conventional, standardized behaviours that entail identity in a wider society.

The word patriarchy means “the rule of the father” (Wolfreys, Robbins and Womack, 2006). In a wider context, it refers to male dominance and rule. In a general sense, colonialism as well as patriarchy is built on unequal control and oppression. Although, postcolonial theorists and authors concentrate on colonialism, the main focus

of the feminists is on hegemony. The emphasis of feminists is on the balance of power between women and men. According to Lundin, “while postcolonialism focuses on the marginalization and exploitation in colonial contexts” (Lundin, 2008). As McLeod pointed out, “feminism and postcolonialism share the mutual goal of challenging forms of oppression” (McLeod, 2000). Women who are colonized by foreign colonial agents are double oppressed, exploited, and colonized.

As McLeod writes, “Kirsten Holst Peterson and Anna Rutherford used the phrase ‘Double Colonization’ to refer to the ways in which women have simultaneously experienced the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy” (McLeod, 2000). Such women were named by Spivak as subaltern. She thought that “the inferior, like women in the sense of colonial production has no past and cannot speak” (Spivak, 1988).

Regarding this theme, *Wide Sargasso Sea* is an excellent postcolonial and feminist text that exposes the colonial and patriarchal systems of power previously glorified by the novel *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte. In the words of Lundin:

*Wide Sargasso Sea* is a prequel to *Jane Eyre*, where Antoinette/Bertha is known as the madwoman in the attic. *Wide Sargasso Sea* depicts an explanation for Antoinette/Bertha’s troublesome situation and it ends up tragically with the female protagonist’s total deprivation of her freedom (Lundin, 2008).

Lundin noted that the relationship between Antoinette and her husband, Mr Rochester, is traditionally patriarchal and colonial, not only a sexual mixture, it is also a synthesis of various cultures and traditions (Lundin, 2008).

Double colonization means a situation where women are colonized twice. Firstly, they are colonized by patriarchal ideas prevailing within their own homeland, and secondly, imperial colonizers mainly came from Europe to dominate and govern their countries based on their own laws. Therefore, women are apt to suffer from various types of oppression imposed on them by different forces of power.

Spivak's theory of double colonization needs two dominant powers such as man and colonial power to be applied to a text, and it is obviously seen in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Rochester is both a man and a colonial agent, and he dictates and exploits Antoinette to fulfill his role as a double colonizer. Antoinette is colonized twice. On the other hand, double colonization cannot be applied to *The Bell Jar* because there are no essential

instruments in the text such as colonizer. Because Esther lives in New York and is not exploited physically like Antoinette by Rochester.

Women are commonly viewed as colonized images rather than persons in patriarchal societies. Throughout this way, they are viewed as servants to men and are substantially excluded from the most important social events. If women's presence in the events of a society is not evident it can be a sign of their minor role. If there is patriarchal power, the condition of women is worsened. When women endure the burden of both colonial power and the patriarchal structure in society, they are told to be double colonized.

This study is carried out based on exposing the social structure of madness and socializing it to the point of dehumanizing women from the societal strata. The women in these postcolonial and feminist texts are seeking to justify their lives. All the woman characters display a purpose in their madness. They challenge psychological, postcolonial, and patriarchal repression and establish their own culture. They are abused and imprisoned even if they did not threaten the community that persecuted them. All the women characters in these novels are restricted to solitude and both novels have fractured narratives, complicated metaphors, distorted words, and various meanings and explanations.

## **OTHERNESS**

Otherness is a wide concept. The meaning of it changes from field to field such as in postcolonial and psychoanalytic literature. The colonizer uses the Other to make distinction between superior and inferior. On the other hand, the pschoanalists use the other to indicate the strong and the weak one. Ashcroft defines the Other in his well-known book *The Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* as:

In general terms, the other is anyone who is separate from one's self. The existence of others is crucial in defining what is 'normal' and in locating one's own place in the world. The colonized subject is characterized as 'Other' through discourses such as primitivism and cannibalism, as a

means of establishing the binary separation of the colonizer and colonized and asserting the naturalness and primacy of the colonizing culture and world view (Ashcroft, 2000).

It can be said that Rhys forces Otherness in the novel by creating narratives in which she utilizes various narrative points to show how individuals are altered by landscape, gender and cultural differentiations. Rhys passes this traditional border to show that the other side is always unknown.

Lacan's use of the term involves a distinction between the Other and the other, which may lead to some confusion, but it is a distinction that can be very useful in postcolonial theory. The Other with the initial capital letter has been called the *grand-autre* by Lacan. In Lacan's theory, the other with the small 'o' designates the other person who resembles the self that the child discovers when she looks in the mirror and becomes aware of herself as a separate being.

The other is critical in defining the subject's identity. In postcolonial theory, it may refer to the colonized others oppressed by imperial discourse, characterized by their distance from the center and, perhaps crucially, becoming the object of the imperial ego's anticipated dominance. This Other can be contrasted in two ways with the imperial centre and discourse, or the empire itself. First, it offers the terms on which the colonized subject receives a sense of its existence as somehow other-dependent; second, it is the absolute pole of speech, the theoretical context on which the colonized subject will come to understand the world. In colonial discourse the colonized's subjectivity is constantly placed in the eye of the dominant Other, the *grand-autre*.

The otherness in *The Bell Jar* is compulsory. Esther Greenwood is marginal and outfit person who rebels against the patriarchal rules. She does not want to be traditional woman figure whom men intend to be what they wish. But unfourtanetly she cannot achive freedom being sane. First, she is othered by people around her in college in New York, and by her parents including her mother, as well. She is not like an ordinary girl in the society therefore she is labelled as mad and neurotic. Once, Esther's boyfriend Buddy, as the symbol of patriarchal oppression, tells her "You should give up writing and studying so hard, when you marry you cannot find the time to do these stuffs" but Esther replys negatively that "I will not marry and give babies, I want to do what I want" and Buddy tells her that "You're neurotic!" (p. 49). Since Esther does not follow social rules, she is called mad and insane.

The otherness, according to David Barnhill, is “a word for how people tend viewing others (individuals or nature) who are dissimilar failing to see one’s resemblance to them and acknowledge their distinguishing features” (Barnhill, 1999). Jean Rhys reinforces Otherness in her novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, using various narrative points of perspective (first person narrators, monologues, and dialogues) exploring how othered personalities are leading to a feeling of displacement, alienation and ostracism. These thoughts emerge because of viewpoint, gender, and cultural diversity. Antoinette’s displacement leads her to the madness. She cannot put herself in a certain space because of being Creole and having hybrid identity. Bhabha states as follows:

The impress of foreignness as a displacement of the angle of vision in the practice of dialectical contrast as implications that are ethical and pedagogical, political and psychic. The splitting within intention between the intended object and its way of meaning, where foreignness in here’s what I’ve called the Third Space, enables a narrative to become the bearer of motivated meanings and deliberative intentions in situ, in a locality at the very point of translation and its enunciation (Bhabha, 1994).

Through her narrative technique, Rhys not only creates equity for both Antoinette, a young Creole woman, and her husband, an Englishman who stays nameless, to explain their narratives but, more importantly, to produce a more in-depth knowledge of the theme of Otherness through distinct identities. Each protagonist has a story to tell; thus, through two dominant narrators, Rhys helps her readers to understand the idea of the other part. Rhys compares both Antoinette and her husband in terms of their displacement. Antoinette feels like she is displaced to the Caribbean and the United Kingdom and her husband is expelled from the Caribbean. In each story one must realize that, there is always the other side, if the purpose is to attain a feeling of fairness in assessing distinct personalities and their behaviour.

Hybridity is Otherness which takes the colonized away from his or her own culture and identity shaping a people who are neither themselves nor their colonizers. In other words, they are people who were in-between without usable and effective identity. Antoinette is a Creole/ hybrid person. She is neither Jamaican nor English because of her heritage. The black community calls Antoinette and her family “white-cochraches” (p. 1) because they are not as rich as they were.

After Rochester enters the novel in the part two, Antoinette tries to behave like English ladies. She gets dressed like English, eats, and speaks like them. She imitates

English culture to be loved by Rochester, the English colonizer, and white man. Antoinette is a mimic man who imitates the imperial culture.

Bhabha sees ways in which mimicry challenges dominant cultures. For example, an Indian can learn English as well as an Englishman, act English, play cricket, drink tea, do all the other things that make up Englishness. The dominant culture sees it as a performance. It is not something one is born with but something one learns, does, performs, and acts out. As Bhabha writes “Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed recognizable Other” (Bhabha 1984).

It is a symbol of a double enunciation which, to normalize the Other, creates opposition to this very normalizing force and opens up a room for subversion by creating ambiguous subject positions. As Bhabha states as:

The ambivalence of mimicry – almost but not quite – suggests that the fetishized colonial culture is potentially and strategically an insurgent counterappeal. What I have called its ‘identity-effects’ are always crucially split. Under cover of camouflage, mimicry, like the fetish, is a part-object that radically revalues the normative knowledges of the priority of race, writing, history. For the fetish mimics the forms of authority at the point at which it deauthorizes them. Similarly, mimicry rearticulates presence in terms of its ‘otherness’, that which it disavows (Bhabha, 1987).

The discourse of Mimicry is constructed around Ambivalence. To be effective Mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. In other words, the Colonizer wants to colonize subject to mimic the dominant society. For example, Antoinette tries to be like an English lady to make Rochester love her again. She, once, gets dressed like an English lady and it makes Rochester happy because of dominant culture which he symbolises.

### **THIRD SPACE AND MIRROR**

Homi Bhabha’s the Third Space and mirror used as Third Space will be examined and explained in *Wide Sargasso Sea and The Bell Jar*. As Creole, Antoinette does not identify herself with white people however, Mason family are white in the eyes of the black who are recently emancipated Jamaicans. Because of this misalignment at best or ignorance at worst, Antoinette cannot fathom the chaos that ensues in part one.

When Antoinette and her family lived in prosperity, they were rich and superior compared to black community. They had slaves and enormous farmlands which made them superior. After Emancipation Act in Caribbean, first Mason family and then the rest of the white community lost their power which came from farmlands and slaves.

Antoinette was not able to adapt with the society which she lived in. She had neither friend nor family to support her. She spent her childhood in loneliness until she was adult. The black society did not welcome Antoinette and her family because of their situation. Neither black nor white community accepted them. Antoinette noticed it and wanted to escape this situation.

She was not accepted by her mother, too. She was alone and helpless. Annette treats her daughter as an outsider. Her life was influenced by relationship with her mother, and her mother formed her future. The life issues of Antoinette can be found that derive from her mother's relationship and mentoring. "You were making such a noise. I must go to Pierre, you've frightened him" (p. 27). After Blacks set fire to their house, Antoinette yearns for her mother's attention and affection, but her mother Annette says, "I will go and take Pierre with me...It is not safe. It is not safe for Pierre" (p. 34-5).

In chapter two of the novel, Rochester narrates the story from his perspective. Shift of the narrator from Antoinette to Rochester symbolizes her suppression and silence by colonial power since Rochester takes speaking ability from her. Rochester, the English and white, is not Creole like Antoinette. He never accepts Antoinette as white throughout the novel and says, "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" (p. 46).

Receiving a letter from Antoinette's stepbrother, Rochester starts believing that Antoinette is a mad woman and treats her as a woman incapable of reasoning and love. The letter convinces Rochester. He does not expect any explanation from Antoinette about her family, particularly about her mother's death. Rhys projects how madness as a label can be attributed to any individual and how everybody believes the label without questions. Daniel's letter is aimed at ruining Antoinette's marriage; madness is used as a label for that purpose. Rochester convinces himself that Antoinette is no sane woman and it is seen as:

She thirsts for anyone – not for me ... She'll loosen her black hair, and laugh and coax and flatter (a mad girl. She'll not care who she's loving). She'll moan and cry and give herself as no sane woman would – or could. (...) Till she's drunk so deep, played her games so often that the lowest shrug and jeer at her (p. 130-131).

Whatever she did she never reached what she wanted. Rochester dominated Antoinette and called her as he wanted. Antoinette could not tolerate it anymore and lost her mental stability. She wanted to create another space for herself. She could not live in a society which she born and lived in. Finally, she went mad. She could not recognize herself when she looked at the mirror. She had to create another space as Bhabha calls Third Space.

Third Space, as Bhabha states, “is a space between the colonizers and the colonized as the cutting edge of translation and negotiation. It is a position where we construct our identities regarding conflicting meaning structures” (Bhabha, 1994).

Present study has found out that Third Space was used for same aims but with different results in both novels. Antoinette uses madness to take revenge, but Esther employs it to hide from social oppression. She takes refuge in seclusion by going mad.

Third Space is related to colonialism because colonial/ imperial power dictates its reality to change the society which is exploited by colonial power. The exploitation can be metaphorical for example Antoinette was exploited by Rochester both mentally and physically. Colonial power dictates its norms and the colonized tries to resist it. If colonized succeeds in preserving its norms, resistance is accomplished. But If colonized fails, they have to follow the norms of imperial/ colonial power and soon lose their ancestor’s heritage and be a different person by first failing to resist then begin to change and as the last phase of changing identity.

Both Esther of *The Bell Jar* and Antoinette of *Wide Sargasso Sea* experience same process from the beginning of the novels to the end. Antoinette is colonized by her husband Rochester and lost her heritage by being another person. Esther Greenwood was leading a life in contrast with the society once she lived in. The people around her lived normal and humble lives to fit into social norms; on the contrary, Esther did not fit into society and was outcast.

Esther and Antoinette shared same fate. While Antoinette used madness as a weapon against colonizer and burnt down the whole mansion by realizing her Third Space in dreams Esther used madness as seclusion to be free from oppression of patriarchal dominance. Bhabha states that culture is formed by the new and foreign oppression of colonial/imperial power. He states as:

It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory . . . may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity (Bhabha, 1994).

Bhabha examines colonialism in a cultural context with a psychoanalytic and a poststructuralist/postmodern approach. Edward Said argues that West presents modernity as a universal reality and tries to give universal quality to its own culture and values. According to Bhabha, there is an important relationship between colonialism, modernity and postcolonialism. At the sight of Third Space, Bhabha suggests that:

Where cultures open up to each other, the Third Space is formed where boundaries cross each other. This threshold space between cultures is the intermediate space where cultural boundaries are constantly interpreted and where new cultural meanings and identities are derived, and cultural hybrid is created (Bhabha, 1994).

The metaphors of mirror has been used in both novels as a Third Space to take refuge in and to meet the true self represented in looking-glass. Mirror or looking-glass is used to show or reflect the hidden reality in the novels. In both novels mirror is used as a Third Space of enunciation for feminine identity. Mirror does not reflect what it stands against at the same time it shows what it is not seen on mirror. When Antoinette sees her reflection in the mirror in England, she does not identify herself with the image. She comments on what she has seen in the mirror. Mirror is a place to hide. Mirrors are ambivalent objects and a place to live in seclusion. Both Antoinette and Esther take refuge in the looking glasses. Their first impression of mirror is that they do not identify with their reflections.

Jean Rhys's ending is purposely ambivalent which has the connections to *Jane Eyre*. Additionally, her psychosis at the end stems from her struggle to understand who she is. Rhys uses the looking glass throughout the novel to symbolize this struggle. In part three, she narrates how she cannot see herself as, "There is no looking-glass here and I don't know what I am like now. I remember watching myself brush my hair and how my eyes looked back at me. The girl I saw was myself yet not quite myself" (p. 107).

This quote alludes to her internal conflict about her identity in the novel. The reader is left to determine who she is. She always searches where she comes from and who she is throughout the novel. As discussed earlier, Antoinette is Creole and she lives in an in-between space. She cannot fit into the society where she lives in. Sometimes

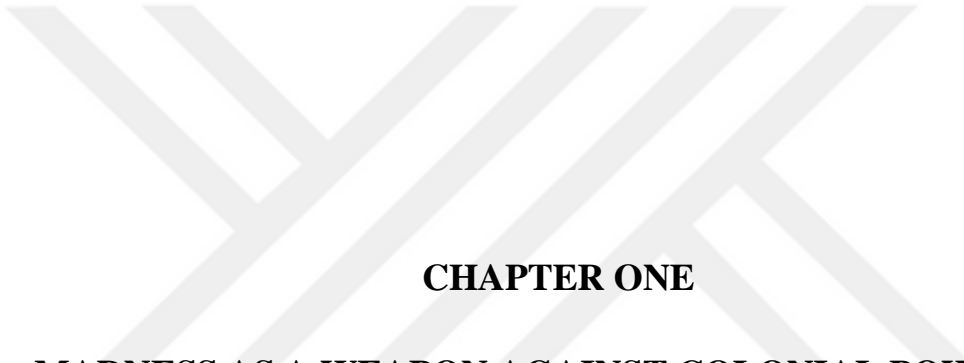
she asks Chirspohine to know about herself and her heritage, “So between you I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all” (p. 61). She experiences the identity crisis both in Jamaica and England.

When she is brought there, she ruptures all her relations to her mother womb, Caribbean region. She is rootless and seeks the place she feels better and safe in. She always looks at mirrors to recognize herself. Once looking in the mirror, she does not identify herself and does not know whom she looks at. She remembers her red dress which symbolises her childhood, the time when she was happy with her Third Space in the mirror.

Esther in *The Bell Jar* continually confronts reflections of herself which she often fails to recognize, for example after her evening party with Doreen and Leni, she cannot recognize her own image on the elevator doors. Also, during her first electronic shock treatment with Doctor Nolan she thinks her image is another woman's in the room. Most dramatically, after her suicidal attempt, Esther does not know her bruised and discoloured face in the mirror and cannot even tell if the creature she sees is a man or a woman.

After committing suicide for several times, Esther loses her mind and seeks the place she would feel better and safe and embraces mirror to feel better. The mirror is her Third Space when she looks at and sees her reflection in it. Esther suffers from patriarchal dominance imposed on her as a woman therefore she wants to free herself from oppression. She needs to find a way to preserve her mental health henceforth she soaks her mind in literature to save her mental health.

Once she enters elevator, she sees her reflection on the mirror, but she does not know whom she looks at and she feels well because it looks funny to her. Similarly, when she was sitting in her room in the hotel in New York, she saw her reflection in mirror and laughs at it. All Esther needs is happiness in her life, and mirror gives her happiness. It is Esther's Third Space where she finds salvation and happiness she was seeking for throughout the novel.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MADNESS AS A WEAPON AGAINST COLONIAL POWER IN WIDE SARGASSO SEA**

#### **1.1. Wide Sargasso Sea as a Prequel to Jane Eyre**

Jean Rhys' work represents struggles and risks that a writer witnesses. As a white Creole woman from Dominica's tiny Caribbean island, she moved to Britain at the age of sixteen in 1907 and stayed in England and Europe until her death in 1979. She began writing in Paris in the 1920s under Ford Madox Ford's patronage, and four of her five novels and one short story collection were written during the 1920s and 1930s high-modernist era. She, then, disappeared and her novels vanished. Her fictional revival happened in the 1960s, and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, her best-known book was written in 1966 when she was 76. "The trend of writing, missing, and reissuing her novels during her life provides an emblematic account of what happens to the career and prestige of a female author after she is dead" (Emery, 1990).

Rhys's feelings were oppressed or removed from British culture as a Creole female in England; women's exclusion from all political institutions, having power and authority is felt by her protagonists. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is like a memoir in the way that Rhys "voices her own sense of displacement as a white Creole, dispossessed at home and living as an exile in England" (Howells, 1991).

Rhys had intended the novel to be a prequel to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. She wanted to provide voice and historical context to Brontë's Bertha or mad woman in the attic. While Brontë's novel depicts the young Jane encountering a mysterious yet fascinating Rochester, Rhys enables the reader to delve into his role in driving his wife into madness. Haque states as follows:

*Wide Sargasso Sea* has become the Creole answer to Brontë's English text, which has generated the subtle understanding of postcolonialism through the double minded character Antoinette. In one sense she was utterly a rebellious soul fighting against the English, while on the other hand, she was trying to fix herself as perfect as an English girl (Haque, 2016).

*Wide Sargasso Sea* is divided into three parts. Part one describes Antoinette Mason's childhood. Her life is marked by rejection and ambiguity. She is experiencing discrimination as an insane woman's daughter. Her mother, Annette, is secluded and harshly punished by the society for her psychosis. The voice of Antoinette tells the story of Antoinette Cosway, the young girl, who lives on a ruined estate called Coulibri, near Spanish Town, Jamaica. Her mother, Annette, is described as a beautiful Creole woman from the island of Martinique. The novel is set around the year 1834 when the slaves were emancipated but Jamaica witnessed large-scale social turmoil owing to the new social dynamics emerging between former slaves and owners.

Part two is the longest section of the book. The voice in this part is mainly Rochester's, the character from *Jane Eyre*, although his name is never mentioned. Antoinette and Rochester are already married. They are on honeymoon in the Windward Islands, on an estate called Granbois, which once belonged to Antoinette's mother. Soon he receives a letter from Daniel Cosway, Antoinette's illegitimate brother, warning him of the madness that runs in the family. Rochester believes what he reads. Even though Daniel's accusations about Antoinette's incestuous relation with her cousin Sandi and his demands for money to keep all this secret disgusts Rochester who wants to believe all he has heard. He begins to view Antoinette with suspicion and his attitude towards her changes. The oppressive nature of his manhood is revealed when he is

simultaneously disgusted by Antoinette and at the same time does not want her to flourish on her own. Rochester decides to take Antoinette with him to England for medical treatment. Part two ends with the two of them leaving the island. Rochester vows Antoinette would never return to the Caribbean island.

In the part three, Antoinette is captured in an attic room in the mansion. She is not allowed to go to other rooms. One night, like several nights before, Antoinette dreams that she steals the keys from Grace Poole, lets her out into the passage to the rest of the house and moves along carrying candles. She dreams herself in a chapel that looks like Aunt Cora's house. Soon, in the dream, there is a wall of flame behind her. Moving away from the flames and the sounds of yelling, Antoinette goes back upstairs out to where she watches the red sky and sees fragments of her life pass before her. She sees Tia taunting her from the ground and coaxing her to jump.

In dream as Antoinette is about to jump, she wakes, screaming, and feeling that she must enact the dream, therefore she steals Grace's keys and heads down the passage with a candle in her hand. The ending is left open and the reader can offer an alternative to the well-known consequence of Antoinette's desire to burn the house down as it is immortalised in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*.

The theme of madness is mentioned throughout the novel. Recurrent references to madness in various characters make it an important theme in the novel. Cosway a drunken slave owner is said to have died a raving lunatic and was also believed to have madness in his genes. Annette's progression from aloofness and depression into complete madness, as her life takes various turns from bad to worse, brings the link between womanhood and madness into focus. When her son dies, she loses all semblance of balance and is yet again abandoned by Mr Mason who returns to England.

The uncanny repetition of events demonstrates the helplessness of women especially Antoinette in financial and legal aspects with respect to their husbands. Left with none to turn to or nowhere to escape, Antoinette loses her mind and is overcome with a desire to destroy everything that was destroying her. Madness thus becomes the representative condition of the Creole stuck in no-man's land between whites and blacks. Unable to move beyond this binary and severely disadvantaged in both white and black contexts, the Creole woman snaps under the pressures of patriarchy and race inequality.

In a patriarchal society, a woman's value is dependent on the meaning ascribed to her by men, and it is obviously seen in *Wide Sargasso Sea* that Rochester renames Antoinette as Bertha to give her a different identity. Spivak critiques this situation in her article *Three Women's Text and a Critique of Imperialism*: "Rochester violently renames Bertha, Rhys suggests that so intimate a thing as personal and human identity might be determined by the politics of imperialism" (Spivak, 1985).

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Jean Rhys's social critique is grounded not only in the history of women's oppression but also in the history of colonialism. In this sense the novel contests the idea of the woman of a mixed race, as inherently susceptible to madness by providing a depiction of madness that advanced by various forms of colonial and patriarchal violence. In the novel, Antoinette's story of madness is illustrated because of both her liminal position between two cultures and her marriage. As a Creole, Antoinette belongs to neither the native Jamaicans nor the white Europeans and is rejected by both. Furthermore, the novel represents Antoinette's madness as a result of her lack of autonomy in her marriage to her unnamed, English husband. The marriage thus acts as a microcosm of the broad socio-cultural context, wherein the husband represents white settler and Antoinette the native colonial subject. The husband is part of an economic exchange and because he is threatened by the natural environment, and by extension, he imposes insanity to exercise colonial power on her.

Rhys deconstructs the traditional image of female heroin embodying the other in *Jane Eyre* by constructing a weak, powerless, schizophrenic heroine portraying a Creole woman's in-betweenness. According to Bhabha, In-betweenness is, "a person or thing that is between two extremes, two contrasting conditions" (Bhabha, 1994). Antoinette and her family are Creolish because of being neither Jamaican nor English.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rhys constructs a nightmarish dream world in which Bertha dies in her husband Rochester's real life but is rescued by Antoinette in a semiotic realm of madness. Rhys argues that people should cross borders and exists on the fringe by being mad to thrive in the prevailing ideology's system, which is patriarchal here.

The link between madness and the crisis of identity is significant. Antoinette suffers from identity crisis in the novel and inevitably this leads her to paranoia and then insanity. Identity can be described as the attributes, features, social relationships,

positions, and membership in the social groups defining personalty. Those who concentrate on what they used to be true in the past, what is true for the present, or what will happen in the future, are obliged to try and become, or to be the one whom they are afraid to become.

Antoinette has problem with her sense of selfhood. She sometimes does not recognize herself and uses wrong pronouns. It is enunciation of madness relapsing on Antoinette. She says in the novel as follows:

I remember watching myself brush my hair and how my eyes looked back at me. The girl I saw was my self yet not quite myself. Long ago when I was a child and very lonely I tried to kiss her. But the glass was between us – hard, cold, and misted over with my breath (p. 147).

Homi Bhabha explains this situation in his book *The Location of Culture* as follows:

The pact of interpretation is never simply an act of communication between the I and the You designated in the statement. The production of meaning requires that these two places be mobilized in the passage through a Third Space, which represents both the general conditions of language and the specific implication of the utterance in a performative and institutional strategy of which it cannot “in itself” be conscious. [...] The meaning of the utterance is quite literally neither the one nor the other (Bhabha, 1994).

Madness has created another space for Antoinette and in it she does not have ability to recognize herself. She is frustrated to be discriminated in her country, explicated in the first few lines of the novel, “They say when trouble come 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” (p. 3).

Because of relationship with the white slave master, the Creole girl, Antoinette sees herself as black but is not considered black by the Native people. The following quotation states this condition properly:

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 wants you. Go away (p. 13).

*Wide Sargasso Sea* is an effort to assert a formerly unheard speech using traditional approaches and vocabulary to create a collective identity for the historically marginalized voice of the Creole communities. Jean Rhys utilizes the practices, forms,

and culture of the centre to tell the story of the other, marginal, and oppressed woman. The perspective that *Jane Eyre* misjudged, disregarded and ignored now turned out to be the fundamental primary interpretation in the *Wide Sargasso Sea*, where the tale of the other is predominantly portrayed. Throughout her postcolonial response, Rhys opposes the oppressive patriarchal styles and techniques of writing fiction throughout order to identify the repressed ones, since postcolonialism intends to undermine, disassemble, and deconstruct the Western framework.

Bertha or formerly Antoinette's madness is related to the double and even triple injustice she faces as an oppressed person and a Western-Indian-Creole girl, the pressure that puts her between white English and recently emancipated slaves cultures. During her early years of marriage, she was left to live under a hegemonic repression by her ostensibly beloved husband and excluded from White English culture for not being a pure white person, and experienced oppression from the newly freed slaves who previously worked in their plantations. These three reasons could be adduced as the main points that drove Antoinette into hysteria.

Reading *Wide Sargasso Sea* from a feminist point of view, one can see that Antoinette has been suffering from male dominance and exploitation from the very beginning of the book. In *Wide Sargasso Sea* Antoinette's husband is trying to leave her by hearing a sentence from an unknown person claiming Creole's illegitimate child. He does not judge her but turns a blind eye to her. The novel also reflects the Orientalist views of Westerners towards the Creole people. Rochester represents the Othering mentality towards Antoinette and the Caribbean Creoles. As a colonized woman, Antoinette is addressee of Spivak's question *Can the Subaltern Speak?* She tries to raise her voice against all the oppressive powers. The end of her relationship with her husband also conveys a message that the Europeans are welcoming the subordinates.

Antoinette, however, opposes his masculinist and colonial approach by refusing the threatening label and by disrupting temporal succession and contiguity. In this book, the widow's wretched situation in a postcolonial world is visible. Upon the death of Antoinette's father, her mother Annette is blamed and ostracized by the Jamaican bourgeois community for her relationship with a Spanish man. They did not fulfill the socio-economic and physical desires. It provides a strong impression of the discriminatory views towards women's rights.

The colonizer imposing a history upon a country forces his influence on the colonized people. As a superior white Englishman, Mr Rochester attempts to impose a new history on Antoinette, but it drives her into madness which is the only space to find peace apart from the oppressor hegemony.

A hybrid space which is neither a black community nor an English white society contributes to the trauma of in-betweenness that Antoinette experiences. Nevertheless, a modern estranged Creole culture has been created which strictly suits to neither white nor black society. Bhabha states in his book *The Location of Culture* as follows:

It is in the emergence of the interstices--the overlap and displacement of domains of difference--that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. How are subjects formed 'in-between', or in excess of, the sum of the 'parts' of difference? How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable? (Bhabha, 1994)

Double exploitation of Antoinette undergoes in the background of the novel through several partnerships she establishes, such as her tragic marriage to Mr. Rochester, her desperate search for Christophine's salvation, and her abusive engagement with Amelia, who would not follow Antoinette's imperatives. Even the public space in which Annette and her daughter must reside in search of rich white English husbands is adequate to understand their restricted status in society.

Antoinette's oppressive subjugation intensifies her oppression, forcing her to suffer both as a female and a postcolonial subject. The double injustice under which Antoinette seeks to accept her identity, brings her to the final resolution, which is nothing less than a pleasant madness.

As Spivak and Rody have pointed out among others, Rochester claims his right not only to Antoinette's body by rejecting her naturalness, but also to her own personality by changing her name from Antoinette to Bertha. Antoinette Cosway is Bertha Mason bearing the marks of the stepfather who sold her and the husband who purchased her. In fact, Rochester transforms Antoinette into a hollow object first when he begins calling her a puppet, then eventually when he creates a house for her:

I drank some more rum and, drinking, I drew a house surrounded by trees. 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 a head, a larger one for the body, a triangle for a skirt, slanting lines for arms and feet. But it was an English house (p. 134-35).

The fact that colonial oppression has influenced men and women in various ways should be noted. Women have also been exposed to what has been named double colonization by which they have been discriminated against not just for their status as colonized citizens, but also as for being woman. According to Gayatri Spivak, this difference is necessary for a detailed analysis of colonial dominance. As Spivak states:

The consequence of this procedure is essentially the creation of a terminologically troublesome postcolonial female. Even constructions of the pre-colonial are strongly influenced by the phallogocentric prejudice that wrongly defines 'native' women as passive and subsidiary inferiors (Spivak, 1988).

Because of being Creole, Antoinette's identity is not certain through her life. She always questions about herself and where she comes from. Hybridity is what comes out at the point of intersection of unique things: social, cultural, linguistic, and psychological differences. At this point of intersection, an in-between condition occurs, causing things to be neither/nor. In *The Location of Culture* Bhabha explains how the outcome of this contact creates what he calls a "Third Space of enunciation" (Bhabha, 1988). According to Susie Thomas, Bhabha sees any identity as already hybrid and "(...) that cultural differences are not synthesized into a new third term but continue to exist in a hybrid Third Space" (Thomas, 2005). And this is the starting point of the whole hybridity concept.

Antoinette's hybrid heritage can be offered as the basic reason Antoinette cannot cope with which is typically expressed as ambiguous. Yet, gender and identity blurs Antoinette in recognizing a specific uniqueness. Throughout the book, Antoinette's character is alluded by the audience as Annette's daughter, or Mr. Rochester's wife, or Bertha, a label and personality that the husband utterly imposes on her. Thanks to the roles placed by other authority owners, Antoinette cannot strike a balance with her individual self. This identity crisis is linked to Antoinette's ambiguity and displacement which according to Homi Bhabha is putting of two worlds in one and the same. He relates displacement and Third Space to each other:

So that by a displacement of the angle of vision, a positive element emerges anew, something different from that previously signified. What matters are never the great, but only the dialectical contrasts which often seem indistinguishable from nuances. It is nonetheless from them that life is born anew (Bhabha, 2016).

All the triple injustice she continues to suffer in life consigns Antoinette to a kind of madness whose truth is disputable. Because of the characteristics of hybridity, in-betweenness, un-homeliness, alienation, estrangement, loss of identification, identity crisis, feelings of insecurity, mistrust, all sorts of financial, cultural, hierarchical, gender, imperial and class injustice, Antoinette may take a step further towards madness.

## 1.2. Antoinette as Other

Antoinette is a hybrid character because of her heritage. She lives in a black community, but she is neither black nor white. Her father was white English but her mother was Creole.

In colonial societies, people who have suffered psychological problems are always left behind as a ruin. Bhabha claims that cultural origins cannot be ascribed to pre-given, irreducible, written, and ahistoric cultural characteristics that describe ethnicity conventions. Nor can 'colonizer' and 'colonized' be distinct entities that define themselves separately (Bhabha, 1994). Instead, Bhabha argues that the negotiation of cultural identity requires a continuous interface and transfer of cultural performances which, in effect, create a reciprocal and mutable acknowledgement (or portrayal) of cultural differences. As Bhabha claims in the passages below, this liminalspace is a hybrid place that observes the production instead of reflection of a cultural meaning:

Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation (Bhabha, 1994).

*Wide Sargasso Sea* summarizes the situation of people in colonized societies. Antoinette who experiences in-betweenness and is aware of it, asks Christophine questions, "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" (p. 61). As a result of un-homeliness she intends to learn where she belongs to, because she does not fit into anywhere. Bhabha defines un-homeliness as, "The colonized observes two distinct worldviews: that of the colonizer, the conqueror, and that of the colonized, the conquered. Seemingly, neither of the cultures feels like home" (Bhabha, 1994). And Heidarzadegan adds more as:

The feeling or perception of abandonment by both cultures forces colonial subject, to become a psychological refugee. The colonized writer must create a new discourse by rejecting all established transcendental significance created by the colonizers. Such a writer must also embrace pluralism, believing that no single truth or meta-theory of history exists (Heidarzadegan, 2019).

It would seem, though, that the madness she has driven into or ‘prefers’ to be is an emotional response expressed against all-oppressive forces throughout her life. In the subaltern in Spivak’s popular essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* she challenges the role of subordinate and marginalized post-colonial female participants. Antoinette seeks to find a new way to raise her voice against oppressive and postcolonial control.

For Antoinette there is a definite way out of political, ethnic, hierarchical, and colonial oppression of the subaltern, and that is madness and dreams. She revolts in her nightmares against all those subjugating forces in her personality, in which she shoots at the whole colonizing British empire. The subaltern, like Antoinette, has the vision of fighting against all the power structures that captivate, devalue, and undermine their own identities.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* focuses on madness and how it has been used as women’s exploitation process. Rhys introduces Mr. Rochester whose uncanny fear of unknown Jamaica is apparent, and exotic Antoinette causes him to try to regain power by menacing Antoinette deliberately and then portraying her as mad. In a conversation with Christophine and Mr. Rochester:

Everyone knows you’re marrying her for her money and you’re taking it all. And then, because you are jealous of her, you want to break her up. She’s smarter than you, she’s got better blood in her, and she doesn’t care about money—it’s nothing to her. That’s how it was. But do not say anything better (p. 92).

Rhys illustrates Rochester’s desire to gain control of Antoinette’s assets and then minimize her until she is mad, then he can lock her in the attic, as he did in *Jane Eyre*.

It is suggested that Rochester’s desire to possess Antoinette and prove her madness derives from his exclusion from the island’s secrets, its people, and the damage they have done to him and his self-perception as an all-mighty and all-knowing European. He determines what Antoinette does by manipulating her. Rochester could not tolerate the idea of being the outsider or the Other. That role was unfamiliar to him as a white European male, and he needed to reclaim his white Western identity by owning Antoinette even after he knew he did not love her or want her. “(...) I’ll take her

into my arms, my lunatic arms. She's mad, but mine" (p. 99). He neither wanted her, nor liked her to be with anyone else.

Ironically enough, discussing the love of madness is the source of Rochester's control system. Rochester first tempts Antoinette to fall back in love with him, starts attacking her character by naming her, taking another partner before her, and eventually calling her mad by rationalizing her biological structure. Therefore, Rochester in *Jane Eyre* forces Bertha into silence. Antoinette/Bertha becomes one of the uncounted psychoses that is never known, so she cannot confirm whether she was mad or a command function. A woman locked in a dumb house cannot be debated since her existence is denied. This refers to the earlier implication that since men- controlled the flow of information, there was no justification to tell the truth when it did not support them.

Antoinette had no one to help her, so she was thrown into the hands of a man who tried to subjugate her, and she could no longer fight and protect herself. Madness is the only solution for Antoinette. She was not insane and crazy until he managed to silence her by locking her up in an attic in England. His contemptuous manner towards her foreign experience contributed to her devastation. From Antoinette/Bertha's perspective, the only exit for her was to jump into her fantasy world and be safe with Christophine again, but the truth was her suicide which may be perceived as liberty, but she existed under another title abused by a person who was supposed to protect and support her (Burns, 2010).

During the honeymoon in Granbois, Rochester criticized the horrible language of Christophine when she asked him "taste my bull's blood, master" (p. 71), his trailing dress, and her lingering appearance. Rochester represents colonizer, "the black woman is unclean, sexualised and lazy" (p. 101), he inferred. Homi Bhabha states in his book *The Location of Culture*:

The intervention of the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process, destroys this mirror of representation in which cultural knowledge is customarily revealed as an integrated, open, expanding code. Such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force, authenticated by the originary Past kept alive in the national tradition of the People (Bhabha, 1994).

As every colonial stereotype, however, Antoinette replies in each case by telling Rochester that each feature is expression of richness and the slow movements are precise to make one's dress dirty. The difference between Christophine's two personal views is that for Rochester, colonial stereotypes are confirmed as inherent or biologic truths concerning black women, whereas Antoinette sees them as sociological points.

She still thinks of England and asks her husband "Is it right... England is like a dream?" (p. 57). Antoinette feels a sense of displacement in Jamaica. "Because one of my friends wrote and told me so that she had married an Englishman" (p. 57). She estimates that she will have to face the alienation and denial she faces in her hometown in England (p. 57).

### **1.3. Changing Antoinette's Identity**

There are two colonization forms performed in the novel: first is colonization of Antoinette by Rochester like English colonization of Jamaica, second is Rochester's patriarchal domination of Antoinette.

Her mother does not protect her, "Annette threw her daughter aside and wounded her psychologically and physically" (p. 44). Her husband tries to make her something she is not and that contributes to isolation. Her mother is not worried about her and she does not find it essential. Her name is Antoinette, but Rochester simply destroys her title when she calls her Bertha. Name is a crucial component of one's character and change of name means that somebody eliminates his identity (Caroline, 2008). He acts as a colonizer by taking her name to erase her original identity and impose the incorrect identity to completely alienate her from her own self and become the outcome of the patriarchal practices in Rochester. Antoinette's nostalgia plays an important role in her self-perception. She still assumes her life was far better than it really is. The present brought her misery. The worst thing was that her husband refused to call her by her given name. He began to call her Bertha partially because of the stories of her mother's hysteria and the similarity between two women. "He just calls me Bertha now when he past my window, Goodnight, Bertha. He said. He learned it was the name of my mother. You're going to sleep fine, I presume, Bertha. It couldn't be worse" (p. 87). Her half brother Danial's letters to her husband described the madness running in the family and demanded that the two gentlemen should meet. Antoinette's husband met him and was

confused whom Danial was. He told him stories about Annette, Antoinette and Christophine.

The racial conflict tells her that she does not belong to a certain class or land. Rochester could quickly pronounce her mad because of her loneliness and ostracism. He functions as a colonizer who colonizes and considers Antoinette to be his own wife. Briefly, factors such as identity crises, loneliness, Rochester's misogynist and nostalgia drive her mad.

Her existence as a marginalized person in West Indies enables people to accept her cultural, psychological, physical, and eventually mental traumas. Mr. Rochester is described as attempting to master and dominate Antoinette and fears that her mystical abilities may be possessed. His feelings for her, therefore, reflect not only the attitudes of masculinity towards women, but also the attitude of Europe towards this colonial country. Antoinette stands in a realistic framework, and reveals the oppression faced by women because of the dominant privilege and hegemony of a patriarchal society. Antoinette tries to articulate her sexuality in a confining social context but is unable to liberate herself until she reconnects to her identity and her birthplace.

Antoinette is wise and has learned the English Law which gives husbands full control over their wives' property, rather than bringing peace. She could not quit her marriage because if she had left her husband penniless, she would survive without her house as English rule would have given all the property of a person to her husband. Antoinette did not intend to share same destiny with her mom, but she did not want to lose anything like her mother did. For Antoinette being sad means death.

Rochester's lack of faith in his wife and his heartlessness pushed him into the arms of Amelie. Antoinette, full of mixed feelings, stops crying and smiles. Happiness is seen in her husband's eyes as crazy smiling, but she has nothing more to do than be happy with everything she has attained. He finds her a "Devil, a mad woman and insane" (p. 149).

Antoinette complains about Rochester's call, "You try to turn me into another person and call me with another name" (p. 133). By the choice of Antoinette's unidentified husband to title her Bertha, she only became a reflection of that woman she was once, "Names matter, like when he wouldn't call me Antoinette, and I saw

Antoinette drifting out of the window with her scents, her pretty clothes and her looking-glass” (p. 162).

Antoinette sinks into madness when her husband steadily deprives her life of all her personal strength, liberty, and identity. Her plunge into madness reveals the unequal power dynamic between men and women in the book. It sheds light on the cultural inequality of the colonized nations, questioning their hierarchical dictations.

#### **1.4. The Metaphor of Mirror In the Novel**

The comparison between Antoinette and her childhood friend Tia, on the night of the battle of Coulibri, “acts as a mirror image of the protagonist” (Erwin, 2001), “we stared at each other, blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking-glass” (p. 38). The end of the novel is recalled giving Antoinette a feeling for how things could have been very different. Tia, like Antoinette’s double, was a virtual aspect in part three of the novel when she appeared in her dreams, a sign for the person, she would have become, if not due to economic, racial, and social problems which led Antoinette’s to a different path, towards becoming-Bertha.

The same is true of another double image that Antoinette tries to show the Miller’s Daughter. She hopes to become more like an image of her wife’s English virtues. Once again, because of her relationship with a new set of intensities and developments, this new self does not allow Antoinette to become like a “lovely English girl” (p. 30). Antoinette is “surely not English, like her mother”(p. 30), and her Creole heritage invokes another set of declines, insanity, and illicit sexuality for Rochester.

Tia is a mirror image for Antoinette “it was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking-glass” (p. 38) but also a sign that it is irreducible. The Daughter of Miller is a picture of the future self of Antoinette and a marker of her disturbing Creolish difference that Rochester will never accommodate. It can only become a double image of the self or a mirror:

I remember watching myself brush my hair and how my eyes looked back at me. The girl I saw was my self yet not quite myself. Long ago when I was a child and very lonely I tried to kiss her. But the glass was between us –hard, cold, and misted over with my breath (p. 147).

It is the relentless division that evokes the echo of Antoinette instead of the same aspect that *Wide Sargasso Sea* evokes.

Her effort to justify her identity as Antoinette Mason by broding her into fire attempt to assume the role of the Daughter of Miller, and “her childhood mirror image in Tia are all masks that never have authentication” (Gregg, 2006).

Finally, Antoinette’s claim that “there are always two deaths, the real one and the one people know about” (p. 106) not only prepares the reader for another death besides her suicide at Thornfield Hall, but also shows sensitivity to being a series of developments and deaths.

### **1.5. Estrangement and Entrapment of Antoinette**

Antoinette is trapped in the attic and seeks the freedom from Rochester. “I will not trouble you again if you will let me go. But he never came” (p. 142). Antoinette begs Rochester to free her, but it is in vain. Rochester behaves as a traditional colonizer, berefts a country of its liberty and uses all its power to suppress opposition of any kind. Her question “who am I?” (p. 144) is important question for Antoinette because she does not identify herself anymore with what she was. She said as follows:

I’m in England, they tell me, but I don’t think I’m in England. We must lose our way to England”. Antoinette sometimes dreams of England, another nation; she asks her boyfriend, “Is it true... that England is like a dream? Because one of my friends who married an Englishman wrote and told me so (p. 47).

This curiosity stems from her deeply rooted refusal and alienation from her homeland. “I will be a different person when I live in England and different things will happen to me” (p. 66). The curiosity then transforms into hate when she expresses her frightening perception of England in the third portion of a novel when she is at Thornfield Hall in England. As an insane girl, she is limited to Thornfield Hall’s attic, where her dreams are colored by the beauty of the Caribbean. The cold, bleak and cruel location is England to Antoinette. Thornfield Hall is set on fire as the Blacks are doing for Coulibri and she jumps through the window wanting to kill herself. Now she is free to call it home: this place is not either the Caribbean or England. It is another place as called Third Space.

In the last section, it is Antoinette who narrates the story again but in a different way; she sacrifices herself and becomes an outsider to herself as well as to the land (England). “The windows were in my room, but they were taken away. In this place is not much more... no glass looks inside, and now I don’t understand how I am” (p. 149). Rochester took her name, body, spirit, and even her pride and left nothing to be recognized in her, “I remember watching my head brushing up and my eyes looking back at me” (p. 180). Once she wakes up, and remembers what happened, the vision comes to light, and truth turns out to be the illusion. As she wakes up, she does the same things. In the novel, the pictures of water, eyes, and mirror to tell her about secrets, unspeakable hopes and expectations. “I got used to a solitary life, but my mother still planned and hoped – perhaps she had to hope every time she passed a looking glass” (p. 3-4). Antoinette is lonely and, like her mother, she did not learn how to hide it. She realises this fact when she cannot recognize herself in the mirror. It signifies that she has lost herself, totally.

After Antoinette’s house was set to fire by black community who hated Mason Family and white people in Coulibri Estate, Antoinette experienced her first sense of estrangement. When she woke up the following day, she said “I got up because I wanted to know where I was” (p. 28). She wanted to know what happened and where she was. Like this incident, when she was brought to England by Rochester, she felt the same sense of estrangement in a dark and dull attic room.

But the first incident was real for Antoinette, she was useless and passive. After she went to England and became mad, she was strong enough to take revenge therefore she set fire to the mansion and recalled the happy memories which are Third Space for Antoinette.

When she was captured, Antoinette could not become part of the British picture. Her last act of shooting could be interpreted as reminding her first devastated island countryside. Antoinette acquires her identity by an obscured past, name, and location. She discovers her relationship with the island of Coulibri, her aunt Cora, her sister Tia, Christophine, her surrogate mother, and all those who once supported and deceived her. The portrayal of Rhys suggests that Antoinette jumps from the attic wall, in remembrance of her heritage, not in insanity.

Compared to her mother's imprisonment several years for being mad, Antoinette also has been secluded in the attic of Rochester mansion. On the contrary, Antoinette fights back and resists against oppression and gains her freedom again from her prisoner in an attic in England. Thus, she fires her jail. For the most part, Antoinette survives and continues to live in the past. The past is more reliable than her present. She wants to live in her youth days when she found happiness. The happy days Antoinette felt good in her home under the tree of life in her backyard. She plays with her mirror character Tia. She is cared by Christophine. These days were Antoinette's past which she was happy. Antoinette's past life is her Third Space without being oppressed and colonized.

I turned round and saw the sky. It was red and all my life was in it. I saw the grandfather clock and Aunt Cora's patchwork, all colours, I saw the orchids and the stephanotis and the jasmine and the tree of life in flames. I saw the chandelier and the red-carpet downstairs and the bamboos and the tree ferns, the gold ferns and the silver, and the soft green velvet of the moss on the garden wall. I saw my doll's house and the books and the picture of the Miller's Daughter (p. 153-154).

In this conflicting and ambivalent environment, Bhabha's claim to a hierarchical purity of cultures becomes impractical where cultural identity emerges. For him, understanding this ambivalent space of cultural identity will help transcend the exoticism of cultural diversity by acknowledging an inspiring hybridity within which cultural difference can operate. As Bhabha states:

It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity (Bhabha, 1994).

It is the in-between space which carries the burden and significance of culture, which makes the concept of hybridity so important. Hybridity was often used for cross-cultural exchanges in postcolonial discourses.

Finally, the mirrors reflect the wounded and colonized Antoinette because of patriarchal oppression. Their bond has broken irreversibly as shown in part three they flee from the attic and discover Thornfeld with great sorrow. She begins to talk about things she saw:

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. The frame of the dormitory was surrounded, but I knew her. I dropped the candle I was carrying and it caught the end of the 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 (p. 188-189).

Rhys shows how the identity of Antoinette is fragmented by its oppression and entanglement, that it does not fully recognize her reflection when she looks in the mirror in this pivotal, traumatic, and poetic scene. An impeccable work of separation, the use of the mirror itself, constitutes patriarchal judgment and Antoinette thinks that she saw a ghost-like woman with her hair streaming, but she is strange and does not recognize that she is Bertha Mason. Her selfhood is irreversibly divided, from which she does not recover. As Tia had previously been her mirror image and dark double, Antoinette was seeking to destroy Bertha, her other self, and Thornfield which is a manifestation of her patriarchal imprisonment.

### **1.6. The Third Space in the Novel**

Rhys uses mirrors throughout *Wide Sargasso Sea* to embody, under systematic patriarchal imprisonment, Antoinette's dual identity, psychological breakdown, and deteriorated identity. In the second part of a conversation with Rochester, Antoinette urges her husband to listen to her story and consider her side when she says, "It's always the other side" (p. 100). As the mirror serves as a The Third Space for the mental deterioration of Antoinette, *Wide Sargasso Sea* also offers a Third Space for exposing Rhys to the other's ethnic and feminist struggle. Apparently, through the mirror and an intimate view of Antoinette's mentality, Rhys entangled the reader and compassionated a female whose impotence is often remarkably well-known through patriarchal oppression.

Antoinette's past is her Third Space which she seeks happiness and prosperity. Through the novel she cannot fit into anywhere or anyone therefore she is not happy. Antoinette wants to be free from oppression she feels from beginning to the end, therefore, she chooses being mad and in the mirror, she finds seclusion and takes refuge there to feel safe. Finally, she wins her battle against colonial/imperial power and sets fire to the house and gains her freedom in the Third Space.

Because of moving to a different country which she does not know, she perceives England as a dream; she creates another dimension to make her past and happiness live.

She was colonized and now she lives in the colonizer's territory. Homi Bhabha explains this situation in his book as follows:

It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory - where I have led you - may reveal that the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity (Bhabha, 1994).

The Third Space is salvation for Antoinette, as a colonized; and it is damnation for Rochester, the colonizer. It is not clear that Antoinette sets fire to mansion or not, but she has that idea in her mind. Antoinette is not passive anymore and she has reasons to be free from all of colonial power agents.

Rhys tries to portray Antoinette fighting as a warrior in the novel. Antoinette is not passive and tries to be free from colonial power and male oppression. As it is stated before, Antoinette suffers double oppression from colonial power and male dominant society. The more she stands strong against them, the more she is perceived as mad. Rochester convinces himself that Antoinette is a mad woman.

She thirsts for anyone – not for me ... She'll loosen her black hair and laugh and coax and flatter (a mad girl. She'll not care who she's loving). She'll moan and cry and give herself as no sane woman would – or could. [...] Till she's drunk so deep, played her games so often that the lowest shrug and jeer at her (p. 130-131).

Whatever she did she never achieved what she wanted. Rochester dominated Antoinette and called her as he intended. Antoinette could not tolerate it anymore and lost her mental stability. She wanted to create another space for herself. She could not live in the society which she born and lived in. Finally, she went mad. She could not recognize herself when she looked at the mirror. She had to create another space as Bhabha calls Third Space.

In the two chapters of novel, Antoinette wants to live safe and feel free, in spite of every effort she cannot reach it. In the last chapter, she creates her own space as Bhabha calls it Third Space where she becomes free and herself. Third Space, as Bhabha states, "is a space between the colonizers and the colonized as the cutting edge of translation and negotiation. It is a position where one constructs identities regarding conflicting meaning structures" (Bhabha, 1994).

The Third Space was used in *Wide Sargasso Sea* for taking revenge and reach the happiness once Antoinette lived. She takes refuge in seclusion by going mad. Bhabha writes in his book *The Location of Culture* as follows:

It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory . . . may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity (Bhabha, 1994).

Third Space is sometimes a memory of past, or madness for Antoinette. Antoinette sets fire to the mansion, which is symbol of colonial power, to set free herself from attic/prison of the colonial power. Not only her body needs to be free but also does her mind. She experiences double freedom, one of which is going mad. This makes her mind free, and happens when she was captured in an attic in England. The other one is setting fire to the mansion. This makes her body free from the prison of colonial power.

## CHAPTER TWO

### MADNESS AS A SECLUSION FROM SOCIAL PRESSURE IN *THE BELL JAR*

#### 2.1. Esther as Author's Alterego

Sylvia Plath's growing usage of transitional spaces and artifacts (mirror, thresholds, windows), as well as her preferred scenographies (hospital quarters, cemeteries), heterotopic or alienating in her book *The Bell Jar* considers her spatial imagery as a radical guide for transitional conditions and locations of otherness and ambivalence. *The Bell Jar* is described as a *Kunstler Roman* (*Bildungsroman*) in terms of structure. Esther Greenwood is the main character and Plath's alter ego. *The Bell Jar* is also viewed as Plath's dramatic effort to free herself from patriarchal experience.

The way Plath committed suicide and put her head in the oven and gassed herself is seen as a symbolic rebellion against women's traditional roles, making her the ultimate feminist artist with the patriarchy causing death. Plath and a generation of women were not afflicted by the issue alone, but even today's populous society may see the stereotype of the neurotic yet apparently happy housewife in several cultural contexts. Without the stereotype of the neurotic housewife, the debate between the mad woman and the mentally damaged female artist is not complete. Such women are usually made bold enough to express the systemic issue of oppression.

Due to the patriarchal nature of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in western society, the physicians and psychiatrists who dealt with madwomen were male, and women were not given voices. This meant, of course, that psychiatrists consulted with the husbands or male figures that had control over the lives of those designated mad. The result of this was that many of the women confined to insane asylums were not necessarily in need of medical treatment, and that some were locked up simply for their husbands to be conveniently rid of them.

The asylum plays a vital role in confining the individuals to a particular way of life, which anti-psychiatrists severely oppose. A. Jamie Saris examines the asylum as a

model of discriminatory confinement with one of the consultants Tomas O'Connor he encountered, in the provocative essay *Institutional Persons and Personal Institutions: In The Asylum and Marginality in Rural Ireland* he talks of several issues concerning the asylum, its relation to the consultant Tomas O'Connor who was institutionalized several times for his mental illness. Pointing at the marginalization in relation to the asylum life and Irish historical colonization, he concludes as follows:

The asylum, from one point of view a historically transformative institution, firmly rooted in a colonial "civilizing" mandate, has, in its internationally influenced decline, played a small part in stabilizing a "traditional" form of locally recognized, even occasionally celebrated, marginal subjectivity—the town character, a category, whose roots in a narrative, mythopoetic logic, at clear odds with the rationality of the mental hospital, are easy to trace (O'Connor, 2008).

Often fundamental to Plath's book *The Bell Jar*, which depicts the destruction and gradual degeneration of an American teenager in the 1950s, named Esther Greenwood, is the struggle between societal repression and personal expectations. Frustrated by the need to define herself ambitious to become a writer, she is torn between the social imposition of marriage and family. The typical social repression of the Cold War and the domestic constraints of women were keys among the multiple causes of Esther's isolation. Her boyfriend for example told her, "what a man wants is a mate and what a woman wants is infinite security" and "what a man is an arrow into the future and what a woman is the place the arrow shoots off from" (p. 67). But Esther states, "[t]he last thing I wanted was infinite security and to be the place an arrow shoots off from. I wanted change and excitement and to shoot off in all directions myself, like the coloured arrows from a Fourth of July rocket" (p. 79).

The appearance of a madwoman in women's writer literature is considered by feminists to be a means to subvert man-dominated hegemonic culture. The writers explore several aspects that the hierarchical patriarchal structure is broken by hysteria and secrecy in female literature.

According to Laing, Esther is "still insecure." Laing describes ontological insecurity as a lack of "the clear sense of self-identity" in *The Divided Self* (Laing, 1967). Esther lacks a feeling of self-identification and has a feeling of dichotomy between her inner self and the outer world. The split between being-for-oneself and being-for-another should be overcome and a more positive personality is to be fostered. As Laing suggests, there is "being-for-oneself" and "being-for-another" a deep link in the human psyche,

and, if misunderstanding exists both them, disruption will result (Laing, 1967). Esther suffers from this disturbance, which is a disturbance of the schizophrenic interactions and of a separation within herself. This shows that how a woman can escape traditional pressures and the patriarchal rules. Esther finds madness as a seclusion to flee from societal pressure and be safe.

While Plath may have wished to write a new novel about rebirth of the female identity in a healthy society, she was defining her protagonist as a social rite, as a progression towards greater sickness and displacement. Esther is stuck in a trap that wants to meet her own expectations for professional and personal success and her social criteria are based primarily on her sex. *The Bell Jar*'s history is portrayed in the mental mind of a female protagonist whose trauma is the inability of her female self to become a human self, in a society that regards it as subordinate and insufficient. "It wasn't the silence of silence". Esther loses the ability to transmit through language, and she falls into an interference which only some type of lobotomy can heal "It has been my own silence" (p. 15).

While there is a huge demand for books about mental health of women Sylvia Plath has been right to choose Esther as her heroine. Paradoxically, women who published and reinterpreted their encounters later by writing a book added to the glamor and popularization of feminine madness. Throughout recent decades, on the other side, illnesses and pathologies between young women and girls have evolved significantly parallel to the mad woman's romantic and sexy look.

*The Bell Jar* represents Plath's journals and her novel is about her ideas and experiences as a female in the mid-twentieth century in domestic life. Nevertheless, revolt against masculinity is indication of Sylvia Plath's role as an artist. The multiple relationships and controversies make it a great case study and point of reference in women's images and their madness. Plath herself became her readers' first stereotype often referred to as the dangerous girl or the neurotic kid. Esther's psychological instability was caused precisely by her inclusion in a society in which patriarchal power has promoted its values as the norm for such a long time that a different choice of a sustainable lifestyle would not seem possible. A unique speech, which would express her past experiences and sense of selfishness, is not given to Esther. Rather, the pain she must hide in the documents of a scholarly entity that does not cure, but only surface

correction has been stripped from her unique characteristics, which the prevailing patriarchal system marked ill or unacceptable. The autobiographical experience as fiction reveals the lapses that are now readily exploited by the patriarchal system. In *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millett argues:

Patriarchy's chief institution is the family. It is both a mirror of and a connection with the larger society; a patriarchal unit within a patriarchal whole. Mediating between the individual and the social structure, the family effects control and conformity where political and other authorities are insufficient. As the fundamental instrument and the foundation unit of patriarchal society the family and its roles are prototypical. Serving as an agent of the larger society, the family not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state which rules its citizens through its family heads (Millett, 1970).

Sylvia Plath had always tried to escape patriarchal domestication by writing and publishing. In her adult life, she was an ordinary American female housewife. In January 1963, under the pseudonym of Victoria Lucas, Sylvia Plath's first novel was published. Her semi-autobiography, *The Bell Jar* is one of the most important books portraying women's hysteria young women's determination to marry, and their traditional role was republished under her own name after her death.

## **2.2. Madness in the Novel**

In *The Bell Jar*, madness is not an illness to be treated or healed by medicine but it is resisting pressures including patriarchal, imperial, or colonial. It is a way to express feelings. Madness is a manifestation of emotional uncomfortable situations and is a common label for the women who seem weak and inferior.

*The Bell Jar* is about a young woman who has mental problem. As such, the schizophrenic syndrome in the young female has a complex story. Esther sometimes repeats that she wants to be a psychiatrist or wants to study psychology. In the novel she says in the middle of text, "The notion of studying German or abnormal psychology flitted through my head" (p. 61), but at that time in Europe or America, only men could be psychologist in asylums and hospitals.

*The Bell Jar* tells the story of transformation of a young woman, but it does not follow the usual course of teenage growth into adulthood. Instead of receiving a liberal training in the ways of the world resulting in maturity, Esther, the main heroine, resorts to the perception of insanity in a positive sense. Her willingness to die rather than lead a fake existence can be viewed as admirable, and her slow strides back to health seem

respectable. As an undergraduate at Smith University, she has earned a job in a fashion magazine in New York, because of her academic excellence. She welcomes this chance at first because her dream is to become a writer, but soon after her mother comes back to take her to their home, she finds home as a prison which makes her to feel severe depression. She has a nervous collapse. In *The Bell Jar*, Esther is looking forward to gaining a fashion magazine internship in New York. When in New York, she is enthusiastic about the situation and loves shopping; she gradually becomes depressed by the reality she faces in the magazine.

Esther wants to become herself rather than what society dictates on her. This is her main struggle through the novel: between what she wants and what patriarchal society expects her to be. In the magazine, all pictures taken in fake places and texts written under pseudonyms mean meaningless to Esther. She knows everything happened in society stems from male dominance and she cannot tolerate it. Finally all things in her head lead her to the madness.

### **2.3. Esther as a Marginal Person**

Esther does not have control over her life. She feels lack of authority on her life. She cannot decide, and says:

A girl lives in some out-of-the-way town for nineteen years, so poor she can't afford a magazine, and then she gets a scholarship to college and wins a prize here and a prize there and ends up steering New York like her own private car. Only I wasn't steering anything, not even myself. I just bumped from my hotel to work and to parties and from parties to my hotel and back to work like a numb trolley-bus (p. 5).

Esther feels lost between what she wants to do and what the society expects her. She wants to write and think about her desires but she is under pressure of society to follow her womanly dreams. Sussman explains this situation as follows:

Removed from the social supervision of family and of a traditional society, working alongside men, subject to the sexual power of supervisors, and often independent of spirit, the mill girls acquired a reputation for sexual looseness or, depending on one's perspective, sexual freedom. But it was expected by factory girls and by working-class society that they would eventually marry and take responsibility for home and children, with the husband supporting the family with his wages (Sussman, 2014).

While Esther's academic success helps her to win prizes and scholarship to study in a college and be intern in different places, the society expects her to marry, bear and rear children.

According to Laing, Esther is “still insecure.” Laing describes ontological insecurity as a lack of “the clear sense of self-identity” in the *Divided Self* (Laing, 1967). Esther lacks a feeling of self-identification and has a feeling of dichotomy between her inner self and the outer world. The split between being-for-oneself and being-for-another should be overcome and a more positive personality is to be fostered. As Laing suggests, there is “being-for-oneself” and “being-for-another” (Laing, 1967) a deep link in the human psyche, and, if misunderstanding exists both there, disruption will result. Esther suffers from this disturbance, which is a disturbance of the schizophrenic interactions and of a separation within herself.

Buddy Willard tells her that if she marries, she will not have the time to write and read because of her children, home and husband she has to take care of. In the novel, some college girls mock her because of her hobby of writing and studying a lot. The girls also know society expects them to do domestic chores not like Esther does in the dormitory and afterwards. Esther thinks that she cannot be both a mother and an author, simultaneously.

Esther is sad and complains everytime. She feels dissatisfied and unhappy in the society she lives in. The emotional journey of Esther Greenwood is more reflective of what many people were going through than being an extreme case of disappointment with her living circumstances. Finally, her unnamed problem of dissatisfaction becomes serious that social change is necessary. Esther recognizes a disparity between what society demands her and what she encounters. The difference intensifies her madness which is employed to suppress persons whom unfit the social norms and do not obey its rules. Society expects girls Esther’s age to be optimistic, versatile, and positive, and Esther thinks she should repress innate depression, scepticism, and dark humour (Brain, 2001).

She thinks living in New York will make her feel beautiful and comfortable, but she finds it full of toxic, drunkenness and aggression. Her relationship with people should be intimate and positive, but they are characterized by confusion, suspicion, and cruelty. Esther always thinks her perceptions are right. Obsession with unreality develops to inevitable suicidal attempts which results in madness. Esther’s sense of alienation from her world stems from her aspirations as a young woman living in America in the 1950s.

Esther cannot place herself anywhere. She feels isolated from the world around her. She cannot match with her mother, girls at the college, the other girls in New York, and with her fellow patients. She cannot identify with the society she lives in, and compares this isolation and alienation to someone who lives under the bell jar. She can hear and see what is going around her but cannot include herself in it. She just sees it through a glass wall and cannot participate in it. She is an outsider observer of what happens around her. But at the same time, she is the subject to be observed by others. She is stuck under the bell jar and, cannot escape the judgments and glances of others.

The external forces lead Esther to commit suicide several times. She is obsessed with reading suicidal news on newspapers. After she saw a title of newspaper about suicide she comments, “The trouble about jumping was that if you didn’t pick the right number of stories, you might still be alive when you hit bottom. I thought seven stories must be a safe distance” (p. 71). She cannot continue living; therefore, she wants to end her life. Esther feels sad, unsatisfied and depressed always; in some occasions she thinks that living is meaningless. As she says as below:

Only I wasn’t steering anything, not even myself. I just bumped from my hotel to work and to parties and from parties to my hotel and back to work like a numb trolleybus. I guess I should have been excited the way most of the other girls were, but I couldn’t get myself to react. I felt very still and very empty, the way the eye of a tornado must feel, moving dully along in the middle of the surrounding hullabaloo (p. 2).

She cannot tolerate the events happening around her such as being normal, mother, or traditional woman. She is pessimist. It is shown as follow:

I remember the ceiling over every bathtub I’ve stretched out in. I remember the texture of the ceilings and the cracks and the colors and the damp spots and the light fixtures. I remember the tubs, too: the antique griffin-legged tubs, and the modern coffin shaped tubs, and the fancy pink marble tubs overlooking indoor lily ponds, and I remember the shapes and sizes of the water taps and the different sorts of soap holders (p. 11).

Her personality is different from other girls: she does not feel fear or disgusted on cadavers, cutting bodies or still-born babies (p. 32). Nothing seems rational to her:

I was so struck by the sight of the table where they were lifting the woman I didn’t say a word. It looked like some awful torture table, with these metal stirrups sticking up in mid-air at one end and all sorts of instruments and wires and tubes I couldn’t make out properly at the other (p. 33).

Esther thinks of herself useless, inadequate and loser. She is not satisfied with her appearance and always complains about it. She says, “I thought if only I had a keen, shapely bone structure to my face or could discuss politics shrewdly or was a famous writer Constantin might find me interesting enough to sleep with” (p. 43). Esther cannot

tolerate anything anymore and she goes mad, “The piggish noise irritated me, and for a while it seemed to me that the only way to stop it would be to take the column of skin and sinew from which it rose and twist it to silence between my hands” (p. 64).

Neither marriage nor motherhood seems desirable to Esther: “(...) I knew that in spite of all the roses and the kisses (. . .) what a man secretly wanted when the wedding service ended was for [the wife] to flatten out underneath his feet like Mrs. Willard’s kitchen mat”(p. 80), she claims at one point. Everybody forces her to marry Buddy, but she does not listen to them. Esther is an outfit person who does not follow social rules. She is revolutionary. It is quoted that “Although everybody still thought I would marry him when he came out of the TB place; I knew I would never marry him if he were the last man on earth” (p. 27). She knows that Buddy is hypocrite and she will never trust him again:

I didn’t know what to say. My mother and my grandmother had started hinting around to me a lot lately about what a fine, clean boy Buddy Willard was, coming from such a fine, clean family, and how everybody at church thought he was a model person, so kind to his parents and to older people, as well as so athletic and so handsome and so intelligent. All I’d heard about, really, was how fine and clean Buddy was and how he was the kind of a person a girl should stay fine and clean for (p. 35).

She knows Buddy, as an oppressor and enunciation of imperial power, is unreliable. Esther learns from her friends and family that Buddy was seduced by someone. He never makes mistakes: “Of course, somebody had seduced Buddy, Buddy hadn’t started it and it wasn’t really his fault. It was this waitress at the hotel he worked at as a busboy the last summer at Cape Cod” (p. 36).

Esther expresses alienation of other girls who have earned scholarships during her internship at the women’s magazine. She describes it as follows:

Mostly girls [are] my age with wealthy parents [...]. They were all going to posh secretarial schools like Katy Gibbs, where they had to wear hats and stockings and gloves to class, or they had just graduated from places like Katy Gibbs and were secretaries to executives and junior executives and simply hanging around in New York waiting to get married to some career man or other (p. 4).

This excerpt reveals that Ester considers herself different from other girls as an outside observer. It also suggests that what she yearns is very different from what life offers. She does not dream of finding a husband and of having a family. Therefore, she is banished metaphorically and goes mad.

Esther always feels under pressure. It sometimes is from her family, mother, or society, “My own mother wasn’t much help (...) She was always on to me to learn shorthand after college, so I’d have a practical skill as well as a college degree” (p. 20-21). Another pressure Esther feels on her is to be required to follow social ethics such as tips. It is obviously mentioned in the novel as below:

The first time I took a taxi in New York I tipped the driver ten cents. The fare was a dollar, so I thought ten cents was exactly right and gave the driver my dime with a little flourish and a smile. But he only held it in the palm of his hand and stared and stared at it, and when I stepped out of the cab, hoping I had not handed him a Canadian dime by mistake, he started yelling, “Lady, I gotta live like you and everybody else,” in a loud voice which scared me so much I broke into a run. Luckily he was stopped at a traffic light or I think he would have driven along beside me yelling in that embarrassing way (p. 28).

Esther’s treatment with an electroshock has already been forecasted on the first page of the novel when the protagonist talks about the electric chair executing the Rosenbergs. Esther states on the first line of *The Bell Jar* that “the idea of being electrocuted makes me sick, and that’s all there was to read about in the papers. [...] It had nothing to do with me, but I couldn’t help wondering what it would be like, being burnt alive all along your nerves” (p. 1).

According to Elaine Showalter, “the shock therapy is an enunciation of societal pressure” for Esther (Showalter, 1977). Esther feels pain and becomes defenseless. In first electroshock treatment, she was tied on chair and given electricity. The second shock is her first sex experience with Irwing after her recovery from illness.

#### **2.4. Patriarchy and Esther**

Plath critically implies in the novel that the word of man must be accepted as the truth and women must obey words of authority. Especially, girls in the novel never debate over the truth told by their boy friends, because being a perfect woman needs to obey one’s man. As Esther said, “My trouble was I took everything Buddy Willard told me as the honest-to-God truth” (p. 29). But here Esther recognizes her mistake to believe in Buddy. She knows the reality about Buddy and then she does not take Buddy’s speech serious:

I didn’t know what to say. My mother and my grandmother had started hinting around to me a lot lately about what a fine, clean boy Buddy Willard was, coming from such a fine, clean family, and how everybody at church thought he was a model person, so kind to his parents and to older people, as well as so athletic and so handsome and so intelligent. All I’d heard about, really, was

how fine and clean Buddy was and how he was the kind of a person a girl should stay fine and clean for. So I didn't really see the harm in anything Buddy would think up to do (p. 36).

She is a marginal character and is a non-compliant girl. She is not an ordinary woman like those who live around her, therefore she always doubts and seeks for the reality. She says, "Although everybody still thought I would marry him when he came out of the TB place, I knew I would never marry him if he were the last man on earth. Buddy Willard was a hypocrite" (p. 28). Seeking for truth is a burden on Esther because she begins thinking so hard and it hurts her. She states this situation like, "If I had to strain my brain with any more of that stuff I would go mad" (p. 20).

Esther likes being marginal and is aware of being untraditional which leads her into madness. Even if she is aware of it, she never wants to obey and be the normal woman of her society. Madness can help Esther to be free from her societal burden. She needs to hide herself and protect her values which make her Esther and a marginal woman; therefore, she takes refuge in mirrors as a secluded place. Mirrors are Esther's Third Space. Bhabha explains Third Space as follows:

The impress of foreignness as a displacement of the angle of vision in the practice of dialectical contrast as implications that are ethical and pedagogical, political and psychic. The splitting within intention between the intended object and its way of meaning, where foreignness in here's what I've called the Third Space, enables a narrative to become the bearer of motivated meanings and deliberative intentions in situ, in a locality at the very point of translation and its enunciation (Bhabha, 1994).

After several suicidal attempts, Esther loses her mind and seeks the place she would feel better and safe and embraces mirror to feel better. The mirror is her Third Space when she looks at and sees her reflection in it. Esther suffers from patriarchal dominance imposed on her as a woman therefore she wants to free herself from oppression. She needs to find a way to preserve her mental health henceforth she soaks her mind in literature to save her mental health.

Esther has certain problems with her self-image because major part of her concern is about how others see her. She is worried if she should stay a virgin, she always mentions what she's wearing, or how sleeplessness affects her appearance. Then, she breaks it after seeing what she looks like when she wakes up after her suicidal attempt and looks at the mirror and she says as below:

At first I didn't see what the trouble was. It wasn't a mirror at all, but a picture. You couldn't tell whether the person in the picture was a man or a woman, because their hair was shaved off and sprouted in bristly chicken-feather tufts all over their head. One side of the person's face

was purple, and bulged out in a shapeless way, shading to green along the edges, and then to a sallow yellow. The person's mouth was pale brown, with a rose-colored sore at either corner. The most startling thing about the face was supernatural conglomeration of bright colors. I smiled. The mouth in the mirror cracked into a grin. A minute after the crash another nurse ran in ... Anybody could drop a mirror. I didn't see why they should get so stirred up (p. 174-175).

The important thing in this passage is that Esther does not drop out the mirror, but breaks the mirror in a form of hysteric fury that can be attributed to the state of mind she has experienced after her suicidal attempt and does not know enough to remember it. Esther wants to proliferate her loneliness in thousands pieces of a broken mirror to have hundreds of her own image, and a society of her own, and uses the virtual image to proliferate herself to make her own world, therefore she reproduces herself and does not want to bear children. Her Third Space is her own image, because all else are other who threaten her tranquility. She cannot live in a male dominant society; therefore she creates her own world. This is her Third Space where she feels safe and free.

Esther's bell jar has a deviant theme; although in the beginning she is struggling to comply with her elegant urban world, she develops a pathosis that is alienated from her own aspirations, and finally detaches herself from the mainstream lifestyle. This contributes to a departure from normal functioning of the personality and eventually to mental collapse and suicide. Therefore, the physical environment of the hospital is profoundly ambivalent as it could be viewed either as a heterosis prison or as a liminal phase of the transformation rite for safety. It means that it is restricted to a mental institution and exposed to electro-convulsive therapy. Esther faces social pressure to adapt to the rules of society. Not only her mother and society in general, but also her boyfriend put pressure on her. Experiences which usually change their lives in a positive way become upsetting and disorienting, such as moving in New York City, or getting a marriage proposal first, and achieving a college success. Esther experiences depression and wants to die instead of establishing realistic expectations for herself while ignoring those determined by society. She recovers progressively from her suicidal attempts as the conclusion of her novel: her goal is just to live.

The term feminine mystique invented by Friedan was a reference as she points out, "to a philosophy that seeks to preserve women's role as wives and mothers at home" (Friedan, 1997). Little girls were raised to think that a husband should be the focal point of their lives for having children. Esther is against it, which is the reason of her insanity.

Friedan argues that “this theory was developed and maintained to accomplish those goals in a patriarchal culture that believed women would only find their fulfillment in sexual passivity, femininity, and motherly love.” (Friedan, 1997). Esther is a marginal person who does not fit into anything or anyone. She is against male dominant tradition and patriarchal rules accepted by society. Elaine Showalter as a critic claims that “there is a strong connection between female madness and the inability or refusal to submit to the cultural wishes concerning woman’s gender. It does not adhere or cater to the traditional roles and expectations of gender but is equally empty of substitute” (Showalter, 1977). As Esther’s non-compliance with granted nature of the categories of traditional sex assumed by *The Bell Jar* now, her rejection is perceived as unnatural or even sick.

The avoidance of embracing and behaving within the boundaries of a certain gender position is perceived to be a cause for personality disorder and mental disease. Most feminist critics clearly believe that the degree of adaptation of traditional gender roles and women’s mental health are causally linked.

Esther never obeys the patriarchal rules and therefore she is labelled mad and locked in an asylum. She is a marginal and disobedient person. She does not want to serve to man rule which is accepted by whole society:

The trouble was, I hated the idea of serving men in any way. I wanted to dictate my own thrilling letters. Besides, those little shorthand symbols in the book my mother showed me seemed just as bad as let t equal time and let s equal the total distance (p. 39).

She is a self-efficient woman and lives in a patriarchal society and does not obey its rules which drives her mad and insane. She does not follow the rules and is crazy or insane, “I’m never going to get married”. “You’re crazy.” Buddy brightened. “You’ll change your mind” (p. 48). Later she states that, “I was supposed to be having the time of my life” (p. 87), Esther thinks as below:

I was supposed to be the envy of thousands of other college girls just like me all over America who wanted nothing more than to be tripping about in those same size seven patent leather shoes I’d bought at Bloomingdale’s one lunch hour with a black leather belt and black patent leather pocket-book to match (p. 88).

Esther feels she is dissatisfied with her life, but she cannot understand the real source of her dissatisfaction. She should feel glad, because society gives her what the girls dream about such as make-up and beautiful shoes. Then, Esther begins to be

obsessed with a question that she has no name. She knows it should be a glamor and happiness for her in the world of fashion in New York. Rather, she merely sees the dark side of life in this socially glamorous cynical, intoxicated, and violence-filled community. She seems more terrified of the possibility of marrying and having babies to such a degree that she feels suffocated. Esther knows that there are wrong responses for her, but she gets alienated because she believes that she is the only one who encounters these fears, aversions, and a sense of unhappiness. She ends up feeling loss of reality. That feeling grows until it is insupportable to her and contributes to her suicidal attempt.

As Esther looks for her identity, she is confronted with a terrible descent into madness. She becomes more and more isolated from society's desires of the 1950s. She does not want to identify with the image of women who are perpetuated around her every day. The novel addresses topics like social pressures, women's sexuality, and limitations. Esther has academic aspirations, though, and cannot align with other women in gender roles. Ladies' Magazines have pictures used for advertising openly to promote the ideal of the perfect housewife and mother who would be happy to look after husband and children. Popular magazines offer advice on every aspect of women's lives that is considered important. This dictates women how to pick a man, how to dress, act, and talk. Esther does not want to be an ordinary and traditional woman therefore she seems outfit and marginal. She states it as follows:

The trouble was, I hated the idea of serving men in any way. I wanted to dictate my own thrilling letters. Besides, those little shorthand symbols in the magazine my mother showed me seemed just as bad as let t equal time and let s equal the total distance (p. 40).

Esther thinks of herself as a self-sufficient woman and never obeys any power such as patriarchal. Esther cannot fit into the doctrines which are the milestones of how to be a perfect woman. Girls around her consulted on subjects such as childbirth and the education of children; they were told how to keep their homes dry and safe. Esther is aware of being mad, "If I had to strain my brain with any more of that stuff I would go mad" (p. 19). She does not want to do what she does not like, otherwise she will be mad. There are clues to identify Esther as mad:

I hadn't washed my hair for three weeks, either.

I hadn't slept for seven nights.

My mother told me I must have slept, it was impossible not to sleep in all that time, but if I slept, it was with my eyes wide open, for I had followed the green, luminous course of the second hand and the minute hand and the hour hand of the bedside clock through their circles and semi-circles, every night for seven nights, without missing a second, or a minute, or an hour (p. 66).

She also likes writing, and it makes her happy and feels comfortable. But Esther cannot write correctly, she has some writing disorder because of her hand shaking. “But when I took up my pen, my hand made big, jerky letters like those of a child, and the lines sloped down the page from left to right almost diagonally (...)”(p. 68). From the beginning of the novel to the end, Esther’s evolution to the madness is described by the author. The most evident clue of her madness is talking to herself. Esther of *The Bell Jar* is mad and has the traces of madness. She begins talking as below:

I summoned my little chorus of voices. Doesn’t your work interest you, Esther? You know, Esther, you’ve got the perfect setup of a true neurotic. You’ll never get anywhere like that, you’ll never get anywhere like that, you’ll never get anywhere like that (p. 76).

## **2.5. Function of Looking-Glass in the Novel**

Esther continually confronts reflections of herself which she often fails to recognize. After her evening with Doreen and Leni, Esther fails to recognize her own image on the elevator doors. After her first electronic shock treatment by Doctor Nolan she thinks her reflection is another woman in the room. Most dramatically after her suicidal attempt, Esther fails to place her bruised and discoloured face in the mirror and cannot even tell if the creature she sees is a man or a woman. The mirrors are objects which reflect ambivalent situations. They give a virtual space that reflects and reproduces the scene and the theme underground.

Foucault uses the expression “heterotopia” for the description of spaces with greater layers of meaning or relationships than those that immediately reach the eye (Foucault, 1971). A heterotopia is usually a physical representation or imitation of a utopia or a parallel space (such as a mirror) comprising undesirable bodies that prevents a true utopian space (Foucault, 1971).

The relation between utopias and heterotopias is clarified by Foucault using a mirror metaphor. A mirror is a utopia, because the reflection in the mirror is a “placeless place” (Foucault, 1971), an unreal virtual place that allows one to see one’s own visibility. The mirror, though, is also a heterotopia, because it is a real item. The heterotopia of the mirror is real at the same time, connected to the actual room around it

and utterly unreal which produces a virtual image. The interaction of the subject with unusual heterotopic spaces (for example, the mirror) is always ambivalent, reflecting its internal division and struggle to create a unitary identity. In contrast, mirror symbol in Plath's spatial analysis was deemed as a turning point.

The self-fragmentation expressed by mirrors directly relates to transition themes and leads to this study's final theoretical area: seclusion. Throughout Plath's novel, intersections and in-between locations become the areas where it is necessary to reconfigure female identity; thereby blurring the prior borders in the sphere of otherness had surrounded women. The fracturing and loss of identity arising from being stuck in heterotopic and restricted environments are overcome via secluded spaces and transitions with transcendence.

When she first sees herself in the mirror weirdly, it was attractive for her because she was unfamiliar with what she would see in the mirror in the following pages of the novel. As it is stated in novel as follows:

I slid into the self-service elevator and pushed the button for my floor. The doors folded shut like a noiseless accordion. Then my ears went funny, and I noticed a big, smudgy-eyed Chinese woman staring idiotically into my face. It was only me, of course. I was appalled to see how wrinkled and used up I looked (p. 10).

She sometimes cannot identify herself with her image, "The mirror over my bureau seemed slightly warped and much too silver. The face in it looked like the reflection in a ball of dentist's mercury (p. 11). She sees the reflection, but she does not understand whose reflection is this. It is enunciation for madness.

Like *Wide Sargasso Sea*, when Antoinette sees herself in the mirror in the mansion in England, she does not identify herself. Esther in *The Bell Jar* sees herself in mirror, and cannot recognize who is in the mirror as stated:

The face that peered back at me seemed to be peering from the grating of a prison cell after a prolonged beating. It looked bruised and puffy and all the wrong colors. It was a face that needed soap and water and Christian tolerance (p. 54).

She does not have an idea of whom she sees in the mirror. The more days pass the more awareness of being mad she has. Especially, in this quote it is clear, "The face in the mirror looked like a sick Indian" (p. 58).

Esther cannot stop thinking about her future which is expected to be planned by her family and society which leads her to suffer from sleeping disorder and then madness. When she looks at mirror, she talks to herself, “Words, dimly familiar but twisted all awry, like faces in a funhouse mirror, fled past, leaving no impression on the glassy surface of my brain” (p. 65). She has sleeping disorder, therefore she asks for pills, “You say you want more sleeping pills?” (p. 65).

Toward the ending of the novel, Esther accepts to be an ordinary woman like Dodo Conway who has several children and a big house and a husband. Esther thinks if she were an ordinary woman, she would be happy and not be mad or insane:

I would be simple Elly Higgenbottom, the orphan. People would love me for my sweet, quiet nature. They wouldn't be after me to read books and write long papers on the twins in James Joyce. And one day I might just marry a virile, but tender, garage mechanic and have a big cowy family, like Dodo Conway (p. 69).

Esther wants to be happy which means to be a traditional and ordinary woman like the girls around her at the college or the girls in New York to show off their body and beauty. Esther deviates from the norm of tradition, reads and writes but she cannot live on as an intellectual woman and loses her mad.

## **2.6. Esther and Her Suicidal Attempts**

Esther thinks a lot and wants to be free from whatever represses her. At first suicidal attempt, she goes to the medicine cabinet and sees her reflection in the mirror and says, “I moved in front of the medicine cabinet. If I looked in the mirror while I did it, it would be like watching somebody else, in a book or a play” (p. 77). She does not know whom she sees. After several suicidal attempts, she accepts that she is mad. She is aware of being mad because she thinks of it when she and her friends go swimming by the sea, “I thought Jody would notice the change in me and that anybody with half an eye would see I didn't have a brain in my head” (p. 81). Esther confesses this situation in different parts of the novel, when she wants to be a nun, she thinks that they will not accept her because of her mental illness, “I was pretty sure the Catholics would not take in any crazy nuns” (p. 86).

Finally, Esther finds a lot of pills in her mother's medicine cabinet and takes all of them. First, she feels weak and then falls asleep. Opening her eyes in the hospital she finds herself surrounded by nurses and doctors. The first thing she wants is a mirror. She

wants to see herself. But nurses do not give her a mirror; she insists on and finally she takes one but does not recognize herself:

At first I didn't see what the trouble was. It wasn't a mirror at all, but a picture. You couldn't tell whether the person in the picture was a man or a woman, because their hair was shaved off and sprouted in bristly chicken-feather tufts all over their head. One side of the person's face was purple, and bulged out in a shapeless way, shading to green along the edges, and then to a sallow yellow. The person's mouth was pale brown, with a rose-colored sore at either corner. The most startling thing about the face was its supernatural conglomeration of bright colors. I smiled. The mouth in the mirror cracked into a grin (p. 91).

After recovery, she sees her picture on the newspaper but she does not identify it, "The first clipping showed a big, blown-up picture of a girl with black-shadowed eyes and black lips spread in a grin" (p. 103). Before Esther commits suicide, she has already known that she would lose her mental ability because of the societal oppression sourced by patriarchal dominant. After Esther goes mad and seeks seclusion in mirrors, she notices that she is not the person she was once. At the end of the novel, Esther is different from the one at the beginning of the novel, as did Antoinette of *Wide Sargasso Sea* changed. Before she is brought to England by her husband Rochester who represents the colonizer, she has undergone same oppression which Esther has but in her case, the oppression's source is Imperial/colonial power not patriarchy.

## **2.7. Longing for Freedom From Colonial/Patriarchal Power**

Common characteristic between Esther and Antoinette is desire for freedom from all agents of imperial/colonial and patriarchal dominance. Because Esther does not believe any truth set by society, she wants to be free from its confinements such as preserving virginity which is important in a patriarchal society. It symbolises purity, cleanness, and to be intact, it is like a territory which is waited for the moment that it is colonized and exploited by the dominant, colonizer, imperial, or patriarchy. Esther is virgin and she reserves it for Buddy, her lover. The people around her including her family and friends tell her that she must keep her virginity for her husband whom she marries soon. Esther is a territory to be exploited by her husband as a colonial power in patriarchal society or the oppressor.

Many of Esther's problems appear to stem from her conflicting views on gender. With reference to Buddy Willard, the inconsistencies are particularly evident. He wants her to be a virgin, though he acknowledges having premarital sex with another woman. At the same moment, Esther's mother and grandmother had advised her not to have

premarital sex. “All I really heard of was how fine and clean Buddy was and how he was the kind of person a girl was supposed to stay fine and clean for. So in whatever Buddy would think up to do, I didn’t really see the damage” (p. 104). Following his admission, Esther declares immediately that she does not want to marry Buddy and she declared as, “What I couldn’t bear was Buddy thinking that I was so beautiful and that he was so innocent when he had an affair with that tardy waitress all the time and he must have felt like laughing in my eyes” (p. 105). Although Esther claims that the opinions of Buddy were deceptive, his contradictory actions lead her to be concerned about her virginity. It is a huge responsibility for her. It sounds like she is holding something that makes her life more difficult and confusing.

After recovery, she wants to take revenge from Buddy Willard. Buddy is hypocrite person and deserves nothing in Esther’s opinion. After Esther learns that Buddy had an affair with other girls, she also wants to have an affair, “Ever since I’d learned about the corruption of Buddy Willard my virginity weighed like a millstone around my neck” (p. 119). She hates her virginity therefore she wants to lose it as the symbolic freedom from oppressor. Decolonization movement is bloody like Esther has when she loses it to Irwin: “But as Irwin drove me through the barren, snow-banked streets I felt the warm seepage let itself through the dam of the towel and my skirt and onto the car seat” (p. 120). She hopes for relief simply by removing herself from the burden of her virginity. Now, she is free from the pressure, so she looks like as if she has earned a little more independence. At the end of the novel, Buddy comes to visit Esther. She sees him as inferior because she is a free woman from all agents of imperial power. She describes him as follows:

Buddy met my eyes and I saw, for the first time, how he had changed. Instead of the old, sure smile that flashed on easily and frequently as a photographer’s bulb, his face was grave, even tentative -- the face of a man who often does not get what he wants (p. 125).

At the beginning of the novel, Buddy was hilarious and brilliant for Esther but now he is weak and inferior to Esther. She shows the way to escape from imperial power and its rules by finding seclusion in madness to have the strength to resist the imperial power.

## 2.8. Implication of the Title

The bell jar is an inverted glass which is generally used to display an object of scientific curiosity which contains a certain kind of gas or maintains a vacuum. The bell jar icon carries analogies to the window, it is a bell-shaped glass, and research instrument designed to preserve specimens or steam. This illustration in the novel symbolizes the entanglement of Esther in her mental condition and in the asylum's physical space: she finds herself trapped and held against her will, "stewing" in her own "sour air" (p. 178). The glass bell jar is also a window from which the hallucinating person looks at the world, since "[t]o the person in the bell jar, blank and stopped as a dead baby, the world itself is the bad dream" (p. 227). For Esther, insanity was a bubble above her head in an airless bell jar.

Sylvia Plath often utilizes metaphorical restraint and seclusion in *The Bell Jar* to explain the protagonist's feelings. The narrator explains her emotional state by creating the image that she has trapped in a bell jar. A cup-shaped bell jar is "a flipped chamber in a demountable vacuum system" (p. 192). Therefore, in a limited space, she is entrapped. She cannot engage in her daily life like other people through this confinement. This reflects the way that Esther feels isolated and separate from others. Once her condition improves, the confining bell jar is eventually lifted from over her ear, enabling sour air to blend with the outside. The bell jar icon is not a concrete thing but abstract. She describes bell jar metaphorically; it is just in her mind and seen by herself not anyone else.

If Mrs. Guinea had given me a ticket to Europe, or a round-the-world cruise, it wouldn't have made one scrap of difference to me, because wherever I sat -- on the deck of a ship or at a street café in Paris or Bangkok -- I would be sitting under the same glass bell jar, stewing in my own sour air (p. 97).

Esther Greenwood perceives that she is trapped in her depression, "wherever I sat...I would be sitting under the same glass bell jar, stewing in my sour air" (p. 178) and continues, "to the person in the bell jar, blank and stopped as a dead baby, the world itself is the bad dream" (p. 178). For Esther, the bell jar symbolizes madness. When gripped by insanity, she feels as if she is inside an airless jar that distorts her perspective on the world and prevents her from connecting with the people around her (Bonasera, 2019). Since she thinks the bell jar has raised and let in some air, "a bell jar, suspended, hanging a few feet over my skirt" (p. 98) as Esther overcomes her anxiety of her first

painful electroshock experience. She describes this feeling in the novel, "While I was not there any more, the bell jar still rests over my head while it is not near me" (p. 98). But she has not completely recovered yet.

At the end of the novel the bell jar is lifted but she can feel that it still hovers over her waiting to drop at any moment. *The Bell Jar* concludes with Esther's obvious suicidal recovery as the bell jar starts to rise suspended several foot above her head in symbolic terms, and to set her free. The room she resides in becomes more harmonious as she restores the exposure to "circulation air" (p. 206). The atmosphere is expressed through photos of open air, blue sky, the sun, and birds. Finally she recovers and is free now. She describes it as, "All the heat and fear purged itself. I felt surprisingly at peace. The bell jar hung, suspended, a few feet above my head. I was open to the circulating air" (p. 112). She feels free from madness and patriarchal rules. She will not commit suicide again, and does not even remember what she has done, "I tried to think what I had loved knives for, but my mind slipped from the noose of the thought and swung, like a bird, in the center of empty air" (p. 112). The only thing to remember is not to obey imperial power and patriarchal rules. She says, "What I hate is the thought of being under a man's thumb" (p. 115). She is strong again. She can choose her path. She can do what she wants, "I was my own woman. The next step was to find the proper sort of man" (p. 116). She can act what she wishes.

She is free but fears of being captured by bell jar again. She always carries it in her mind, "But I wasn't sure. I wasn't sure at all. How did I know that someday -- at college, in Europe, somewhere, anywhere -- the bell jar, with its stifling distortions, wouldn't descend again?" (p. 125). She recovers from her rehabilitations in asylums and feels better. She has completed her ritual death and rebirth throughout the story. She has escaped from pressures to a symbolic place which Homi K. Bhabha calls 'Third Space'. In this conflicting and ambivalent environment, this makes Bhabha's claim of a hierarchical pure culture, impractical when cultural identity emerges. For him, understanding this ambivalent space of cultural identity will help us transcend the exoticism of cultural diversity by acknowledging an inspiring hybridity within which cultural difference can operate:

It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory may open the way to

conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity (Bhabha, 1994).

It is the in-between space which carries the burden and significance of culture, and makes the concept of hybridity important. Hybridity is often used for cross-cultural exchanges in postcolonial discourses.

The bell jar symbolises Third Space of seclusion in which Esther seeks to be free. She goes back to her cave to defend and protect herself from pressures and external forces which dictate her to change her attitude and become stereotyped traditional woman.

## **2.9. Madness as Seclusion**

Seeing madness as a form of rebellion often poses many questions related to the over-simplification of living conditions, recognizing extreme suffering, and hindrance as a revolutionary act of daily activities. But the thesis discusses the positive dimensions of the characters' sufferings with an attempt to highlight how insanity is a social construct. The intended focus of expression is the postcolonial condition in which insanity and the world contrast with their colonial and postcolonial systems. The chosen women writers describe both the portrayal of insanity and the colonial power dominated by man in a patriarchal society.

Madness is not a mental disorder or disability of proper thinking but a revolutionary act against imperial/colonial and patriarchal power in the novels studied in the thesis. Both characters in two novels suffer from oppression which stems from dominant power therefore they must protect themselves by going mad. Madness creates another space for the characters and they take refuge in madness. Madness is an ambivalent space; it reflects subconscious of characters in order to have good memories and lead a life which they want to live.

For Antoinette and Esther, Madness creates a space which is between reality and dream by means of mirror and looking glass in both novels. Antoinette sees her reflection wearing red clothes which symbolises the happy moment for her in the mirror. She says; "Time has no meaning. But something you can touch and hold like my red dress, that has a meaning" (Rhys, 1967). She is happy when she sees her reflection in the mirror and moves to Third Space by looking at glass/mirror; "The colour of

flamboyant flowers. If you are buried under a flamboyant tree, I said, your soul is lifted up when it flowers” (Rhys, 1967).

Esther sees her reflection by smiling at herself thinking how happy she is in the mirror at the hospital. She laughs at herself as below:

I slid into the self-service elevator and pushed the button for my floor. The doors folded shut like a noiseless accordion. Then my ears went funny, and I noticed a big, smudgy-eyed Chinese woman staring idiotically into my face. It was only me, of course. I was appalled to see how wrinkled and used up I looked (p. 10).

It is obviously seen that Esther goes mad and lives in her Third Space, when she cannot stand the oppression coming from patriarchal power. She also suffers from not being normal and traditional women therefore she seeks a new space to take refuge and be free from all agents of patriarchal power.

## CONCLUSION

The stereotypes of female nature and mentality which are mentioned in previous chapters of the thesis, were not viewed and recognized as such, but rather perceived as a result of individual females' refusal to accept traditional gender role. In *Second Sex*, Beauvoir defends as follows:

Since the husband is the productive worker, he is the one who goes beyond the family interest to that of society, opening up a future for himself through co-operation in the building of the collective future: he incarnates transcendence. Woman is doomed to the continuation of the species and the care of the home-that is to say, to immanence (Beauvoir, 1956).

A woman who rejects to follow the traditional roles is apt to be labelled as a mad person in a patriarchal society and literature whether she is a well-fed, well-bred, well-educated or a underprivileged member of the working class. A female figure can be othered if she does not fit into societal, patriarchal, or imperial rules which are related to male dominance. Phyllis Chesler explains this situation in her book entitled as *Women and Madness*, "(...) Therefore, female madness can be considered a gender specific reaction towards oppressive and inadequate environments" (Chesler, 2005).

Each of the protagonists of the two novels, Antoinette of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Esther of *The Bell Jar* studied in the thesis has suffered from a strong combination of extrinsic and intrinsic factors which have gravely threatened their physical and mental health. Notably, "the two novels include widespread critique of the patriarchal society at the heart of West culture at the time and explicitly mix the oppression of women with different forms of female insanity" (Felman, 2003).

Both Esther of *The Bell Jar* and Antoinette of *Wide Sargasso Sea* are oppressed by the imperial power which is sometimes patriarchy or colonial power, therefore they try to be free from oppression and live in peace without anxiety which comes from society. Homi Bhabha states in *The Location of Culture*:

It is an anxiety which will not abate because the empty Third Space, the other space of symbolic representation, at once bar and bearer of difference, is closed to the paranoid position of power. In the colonial discourse, that space of the other is always occupied by an idie fixe: despot, heathen, barbarian, chaos, violence. If these symbols are always the same, their ambivalent repetition makes them the signs of a much deeper crisis of authority that emerges in the lawless writing of the colonial sense (Bhabha, 1994).

As Antoinette is considered barbarian and uncivilized by Rochester, Esther is perceived by her friends in New York and college. Between truth and dreams, hallucinations and isolation, rationality and theory, the pain and joy of forming one's own world, and being questioning and questioned, Antoinette and Esther build their own selves unburdened in a postcolonial and patriarchal scape. Madness is described in these two novels as an abstract concept dealing with colonialism and patriarchy. It is also strength and perversity. Sylvia Plath and Jean Rhys have constructed madness as a solution through the redefinition of postcolonialism and feminism in both novels.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* written by Jean Rhys as a Creole and British-Dominican author expressed what she thought and loaded her feelings on her heroine Antoinette. Like Jean Rhys, Esther of *The Bell Jar* also wants to write a novel and express her feelings and ideas in that book. She says, "My heroine would be myself, only in disguise. She would be called Elaine. Elaine. I counted the letters on my fingers. There were six letters in Esther, too. It seemed a lucky thing" (Plath, 1963). The identity is prominent item for both authors and it is comprehensive theme in both texts. Both characters try to escape the identity imposed by the imperial power which can be colonizer or patriarchal society.

Antoinette predicts the change when she is moved to another country and imagines that she would be comfortable and different. But in the land, she is strong, and striving to fulfill her violent dream of setting fire to the attic. England as a Third Space is a fantasy for Antoinette and her island is a vision to Rochester.

'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.'

'Well,' I answered annoyed, 'that is precisely how your beautiful island seems to me, quite unreal and like a dream' (p. 58).

Antoinette further questions as follows:

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

'And 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 (p. 58).

Antoinette considers England as a fantasy that indicates how she feels unconnected to the fact when she moves there. Through her constant misconceptions, Antoinette's enthusiasm for visiting England becomes stronger and stronger. It comes to Rochester weird and he complains as follows:

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 (p. 69-70).

When she is captured, Antoinette could not become part of the British scenery. Her last act of shooting could be interpreted as reminding her of the first devastated island countryside. Antoinette acquires her identity by an obscured past, a different name, and location. She discovers her relationship with the island of Coulibri, her aunt Cora, her friend Tia and Christophine her surrogate mother—all those who once supported and deceived her. Rhys' portrayal suggests that Antoinette jumps from the attic wall in remembrance of her heritage leading to insanity.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* ends on a picture of resolution of sequential isolation, a visual depiction of male and female oppositions, past and present, absence and appearance, and silence and expression in a frozen moment that involves the aspects of the narrative form of the text realism and fantasy to preserve it. The philosophical conflict or double sight implicit in imperial history and language is recapitulated transmuted in the text's oppositional narrative vocabulary and reflected in its thematic level. This style of storytelling allows the audience to read the novel in a dialectical way, avoiding the breakdown of either of the two narrative types into the other, while acknowledging the deterioration of the dialectical results in each large and totalizing process. The texts therefore require a kind of reading cycle in which the mind is encouraged to become fresh and revolutionary codes of recognition, typical of postcolonial practical texts.

In both novels, the names are not important as thought. Antoinette is not called by her name but is named differently which is given by Rochester as a symbol of imperial power in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Likely, Esther's name has not been mentioned until page seventeen in *The Bell Jar*. The authors want to give the clue of naming is not as important as the characters and experiences, "Doesn't your work interest you, Esther?" (p. 17).

Unlike Antoinette Mason, Esther Greenwood uses pseudonym to hide her real identity and truth about herself. Antoinette is given the nickname Bertha by Rochester, on the contrary Esther chooses to be named a different name. As it is stated in the novel as, “My name’s Elly Higginbottom,” I said. “I come from Chicago.” After that I felt safer. I didn’t want anything I said or did that night to be associated with me and my real name and coming from Boston” (Plath, 1963).

When she meets a sailor in the street and he asks her name, she says it is “Elly Higginbottom” (p. 95). She uses nicknames to conceal her identity. She sometimes cannot remember which nickname she has used. She accepts her split identity crisis, “Elly, Elly, Elly” the first voice mumbled, while the other voice went on hissing, “Miss Greenwood, Miss Greenwood, Miss Greenwood,” as if I had a split personality or something” (p. 12). Esther does not want to be known by anyone and she uses pseudonyms in some incidents to be safe. “(...) send in a couple of the stories I wrote in this class under a pseudonym” (p. 54).

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette is called Bertha because she does not follow the societal rules and is labelled mad by Rochester, the authority. In *The Bell Jar* the same thing happens. Esther is called neurotic by Buddy, the authority as below:

Well, you were right. I am neurotic. I could never settle down in either the country or the city.”  
“Well?” [...] I rapped out, thinking, You can’t coddle these sick people, it’s the worst thing for them, it’ll spoil them to bits.

Nothing for them, it’ll spoil them to bits.  
“Nothing”, Buddy said in a pale, still voice.”  
“Neurotic, ha!” I let out a scornful laugh. If neurotic is wanting two mutually exclusive things at one and the same time, then I’m neurotic as hell. I’ll be flying back and forth between one mutually exclusive thing and another for the rest of my days (Plath, 1963).

The madness here is a product of Antoinette’s confrontation with the imperial and patriarchal power and is not necessarily a mental illness. *Wide Sargasso Sea* has three parts, and the personel components are narrated by characters. Madness cannot be easily defined because it has different connotations and meanings in the novels. It can be considered a mental disorder and a product of social and cultural forces.

Madness is shown like a feminine condition or a patriarchal machination designed to keep two heroines of novels as subordinates. Within the framework of patriarchal oppression, no innocent truth is expected at power side. Authority has the

power to narrate the story according to its own will. For years, women have been accused of madness if they challenged the status quo ethic standards. Throughout literary works women who have not followed the line, were automatically considered noncompliant and insane. Since the institutions of power, that exist, are part of the hegemony by the virtue of being all males, there is no one to contest the diagnosis, therefore women who might have succeeded in gaining some ground in the name of women are silenced again. Rhys understood this well and considered her inspiration to dissatisfy Antoinette/Bertha with structural male dominance of culture. Rochester starts calling Antoinette by different names than her own real name. Antoinette feels lost without her established identity. Rhys depicts her insistence on Rochester calling Antoinette as Bertha. In a cool night in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rochester calls Antoinette by a different name, “Don’t laugh like, Bertha.” “My name is not Bertha; why do you call me Bertha?” “He said because it’s a name that I love most. As Bertha, I dream about you” (Rhys, 1967).

Rochester starts his systematic plan in this example to slowly erode the security and identity of Antoinette. Through continuing to call her by another name, he destroys the last traces of her Creole heritage and turns her into another person so that he can take Antoinette away and lock her up in attic.

The thesis examined how a woman is left completely helpless by lack of control over her subjectivity. This is the most terrifying power relationships the transplanted, and disinherited Antoinette is trapped in a house where her own money was used by the man who married her on the grounds of political motives.

The mixing of truth and imagination is one of the main topics in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Reality or vision switches or connects subtly, “Is it possible that England was like a dream Antoinette said? Actually, it’s surreal and dream-like” (p. 81). On the opposite, Rochester appears as if in a trance in this weird place but takes control of himself before he has a nightmare, “Yeah, it looks like your beautiful island is surreal and dreamlike” (p. 80).

Jean Rhys’s political critique in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is focused not only on the background of female oppression but also on the history of colonialism. The novel therefore challenges a mixed race as being necessarily vulnerable to madness by

providing a portrayal of madness that is supported by complex types of imperial and patriarchal abuse. Antoinette's insanity is illustrated by its two smaller positions between two cultures and marriage in the history of madness in the novel. As a Creole, Antoinette does not belong to the indigenous Jamaicans or White Europeans since both reject her. However, because of lack of self-governance in marriage to their nameless English husband, the novel reflects Antoinette's madness. Marriage then serves as a microcosm in the wider socio-cultural sense, in which the husband is the imperial object of the whites and Antoinette is an economic exchange, therefore the husband forces insanity on her because she feels frightened and by default, endangered by the natural environment.

The fake self would have to set off for the true self to be regenerated from metaphorical death. Each of the two novels relies, to a certain degree, on the theme of fragmented self, the notion that is formed and disconnected from the immediate experiences by the characters suffering lack of feeling. Only basic things such as urgent conditions are not inspired in *The Bell Jar*'s Esther. During auto-protection, *Wide Sargasso Sea*'s Antoinette is the heroine who struggles from depression losing the desire to do even basic things such as feeding and sleeping. The heroine in *The Bell Jar* cannot feel anything towards her boyfriend, Buddy, and Antoinette feels empty and dull when she sees her mother.

In these two novels of madness narratives, the writers utilize madness not only to portray the disorder itself, but also to represent the fragility of the mental states of the characters. It is in alignment with more compassionate treatment given to mad fictional characters. In *The Bell Jar*, Esther contrasts her mental failure to be in a "tornado's mouth", "very still and empty" (p. 2). Exploring the psychological fragility symbols in *Wide Sargasso Sea* use images used to indicate impending collapse. Antoinette's childhood story packed with destruction and disintegration images, like depiction of the garden overtaking Coulibri's estate.

Portraying the nature of psychosis as a separation or self-fragmentation, the books utilize mirror and images to demonstrate this fragmentation. In *The Bell Jar*, her reflection in the mirror becomes unrecognizable, and her image details sound like descriptions from outsiders. The implication is that in a system of fragmented selfhood,

Esther's false self is unrecognizable simply because it does not represent her true self. The disconnection between protagonist and reflection is also prevalent in *Wide Sargasso Sea* looking-glasses. Wherever Antoinette sees her reflection, there is a stereotypical madwoman with a pale face and hair; in this sense, she recognizes the madwoman's image that was thrust on her.

While *Wide Sargasso Sea* does not rely directly on the concept of fragmented selfhood like *The Bell Jar*, the disconnection between Antoinette and her reflection suggests that there is separation between her and her created image, one she cannot choose to define herself. *Wide Sargasso Sea*'s looking-glass is built on a variant of madness (Azmat, 2018). Therefore, the mirror further ties the peculiar creation of madness to the issues of women's sexual objectification, which is why the author should eventually condemn the mirror and turn it against the wall. In relation to the split between an authentic self and a false one, in *The Bell Jar*, the photograph's trope is used to highlight this psyche division. In *The Bell Jar*, all Esther thinks is her own false image. That point is further reinforced by Esther's apprehension of a camera and her paranoia about the camera taking something from her. The implication is that her authentic identity is stolen in photography, leaving her with a false self. Esther's depression often contributes to how the two books stress the subjective experience of insanity. In other terms, the novels not only portray insanity as a consequence of external circumstances, but also describe aspects of madness the mad person feels.

The notion of madness as loss of identity is depicted through naming trope. In *The Bell Jar*, Esther assumes a disguise to shield her secret from an odd person, naming herself Elly Higginbottom. There is a feeling that Esther becomes disconnected from her role and that she might surrender her connection with her persona. This is made clear when she tells her friend, Doreen, "seemed to think that Elly was who [she] was by now" (p. 14). Particularly in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the value of names is highlighted in the husband's act of renaming Antoinette to Bertha. Renaming Antoinette portrays her husband as colonial settler, who typically renames places and symbols such as rivers and mountains to exercise power over the colonized territories. In fact, the husband's renaming of Antoinette as Bertha leads to an attempt to change her name into *Jane Eyre*'s Bertha. Nevertheless, as this crafted version, the traditional madwoman with unruly hair and wild eyes, is forced on Antoinette and she begins to lose her identity to

Bertha. Links to colour illustrate this loss of identity; Antoinette connects red with her real identity, feeling like herself while wearing her red dress, while Bertha and her imprisonment were associated with blunt, gloomy shades. The consequences of his wife's renaming is that she finds herself inflicted between two identities that of the madwoman forced on her and that of her true and authentic identity.

In *The Bell Jar*, Esther ends her metaphorical journey by literally going underground, trying to commit suicide in the crawl space beneath her mother's house. The same goes with Plath's madness diagnosis in *The Bell Jar*. After being released, Esther is admitted to an asylum where she is diagnosed and treated with drugs and electroshock therapy, continues her rehabilitation through a path of self-knowledge, and can balance the expectations of idealized femininity and creativity. Esther wants to be free from oppression coming from patriarchal society and she commits suicide several times, she cannot achieve what she wants and finally "she finds madness as a Third Space which makes Esther relieved and safe" (Höhn, 2007). Her Third Space is her seclusion and isolation where she feels happy.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea* the metaphorical journey of the heroine ends as she loses Tia, all clothes and has no friend left. Her experience involves creation, loneliness, and isolation to the nature. Her path does not include insane asylums and hospital wards, but as a mad journey into her own mind as a seclusion. The protagonist, on a journey of self-discovery, tries to abandon humanity entirely and fuse with nature. Through this, she comes to realize that if she does not return to urban civilization, she would become the stereotypical madwoman and need to be sent to an attic or asylum. While *The Bell Jar* ends with the possibility of a return to order, sanity, and civilisation, *Wide Sargasso Sea* is left to reader with an ambiguous end. Therefore, both books reflect madness in terms of eventually overcoming the problematic nature of being a woman in a patriarchal society. While madness means seclusion for Esther, it is a weapon against colonizer for Antoinette. She goes mad to create her Third Space to be free from colonial power, and sets fire to mansion which symbolises the home for colonizer at the end of the novel.

*The Bell Jar* is Esther's salvation, and by comparison, *Wide Sargasso Sea*'s story of madness is settled in Antoinette's suicidal judgment. In this novel, Antoinette's decision is described as an option to choose between being locked in an attic in a foreign country and death. In this way, her death, an act of defiance, guarantees her liberation

from both dominant social concepts of madness and patriarchal oppression, but also removes the prospect of recovery. Antoinette chooses the path which leads her to madness and then death because of double oppression from patriarchy and colonization. Being free from all agents of colonial power; she finds her seclusion in the Third Space of madness and death.

As a result, women have always thought as oppressed, Other, inferior, and inadequate in the sight of imperial/colonial power including colonizers and male dominant societies. Women are oppressed both by double colonization which are imperialist powers and patriarchy. These two points were discussed in two separate books throughout the thesis. The first book describes how Antoinette, a female protagonist, set out in the Caribbean and how and why she was forced into madness. In colonial societies, people who have suffered from psychological problems are always left behind as a ruin. *Wide Sargasso Sea*, summarizes the situation of people in colonized societies. The unhomed displaced person suffers from Colonial/Imperial powers as Bhabha points as follows:

The colonised observes two distinct worldviews; that of the coloniser, the conqueror, and that of the colonised, the conquered. Seemingly, neither of the cultures feels like home (Heidarzadegan by Bhabha, 2019).

In Antoinette's case:

This feeling or perception of abandonment by both cultures causes the colonial subject, to become a psychological refugee. The colonized writer must create a new discourse by rejecting all the established transcendental significance created by the colonizers. Such a writer must also embrace pluralism, believing that no single truth or meta-theory of history exists (Heidarzadegan, 2019).

The main subject of the story is that Antoinette escapes from the means of colonization imposed on her and finds herself mad. Madness and the reasons of madness were the subjects discussed in detail throughout the thesis.

Madness was the main theme in both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Bell Jar*. A Creole woman on the Caribbean islands and a woman living in New York, share the same fate, and have common causes for their madness. Stories in two different books have examined on the same conclusions in two different societies.

The woman, who is always seen as the other in society, will find herself entrapped in psychological problems and she will be driven to madness. Madness is not

only psychological attitude to oppressive forces but also is a seclusion to preserve all characteristics of female figures. Seeing madness as a form of rebellion often poses many questions related to the over-simplification of living conditions, recognizing extreme suffering and hindrance as revolutionary daily activities. But the thesis discussed the positive dimensions of the characters' sufferings with an attempt to highlight how insanity is a social construct. The intended focus of expression is the postcolonial condition in which insanity and the world contrast with their colonial and postcolonial systems. The chosen women writers described both the portrayal of insanity and the imperial power including colonial and patriarchal oppressions.

Madness was a resisting and revolting tool adopted by two heroines against colonial and imperial powers. And madness is also a Third Space embodied on mirrors to take refuge in from imperial and colonial powers. Two heroines live in two different societies but share the common faith which is madness as Third Space. Homi Bhabha states this in his book as follows:

The non-synchronous temporality of global and national cultures opens up a cultural space - a Third Space - where the negotiation of incommensurable differences creates a tension peculiar to borderline existences (Bhabha, 1994).

Like *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *The Bell Jar* ends with ambiguity; the reader is not certain whether the heroine is in a good condition or has the same mental disorders. But it is certain that both characters have rescued themselves from being crushed by colonial and patriarchal power.

Colonized societies have been always depicted as weak and inferior to imperialists and colonizers. Colonized society experiences not only physical destruction but also spiritual depression, therefore, they become passive and ineffective. Colonizer makes colonized feel inferior and ineffective and dictates the new identity and calls colonized with another name. For example, Antoinette of *Wide Sargasso Sea* is called Bertha by her colonizer husband Rochester. Antoinette is dictated a new name and a new identity. Like Antoinette, Esther Greenwood of *The Bell Jar* experiences identity crisis which is dictated by patriarchal dominance imposed from society, her family, and Buddy.

Colonialism is not merely about skin colour, disadvantaged and underdeveloped regions, or southern hemisphere, but it is experienced under imperial power, oppression,

and persecution. Intention to be free from colonialism and imperialism may sometimes be impossible, therefore colonized creates his/her Third Space and it is called madness by imperial/colonial power or patriarchal dominance. Madness is rebellion against and escapes from exploiting powers of imperialism, colonialism, or patriarchal.

The societies which experience persecution and oppression find solution either as rioting against imperial, colonial, or patriarchal powers or living in seclusion to protect themselves. In colonized and patriarchal societies women are seen as weak and ineffective compared to men, who may choose to live in seclusion rather than be actively involved in freedom movements. Because Antoinette wants to be free from oppression of her husband and society, she takes refuge in madness as a Third Space. She lives happily and in peace when she is in her Third Space. Similarly, Esther wants to be free from oppression of patriarchal society and commits suicide several times, but she cannot achieve what she wants and finally finds madness as a Third Space which makes Esther relieved and safe. Her Third Space is her seclusion and the place she feels happy. Their madness has become a source of independence and emancipation from women's historically established image. It is a resistance against the oppressive values of male-dominated culture and a means of building an independent identity that is separate from the demands of that culture.

## REFERENCES

Ashcroft, Bill., Griffiths, Gareth and Tiffin, Helen. (2000). *The Post-colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. USA: Routledge.

- Azmat, Muhammad. (2018). *Madness as a Cross-Racial Predicament in Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea*. April. Vol. VI, Issue 1.
- Beauvoir, Simon De. (1956). *The Second Sex*. Trans. and Ed. H. M. Parshley. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Bonasera, Carmen. (2019) *Of Mirrors and Bell Jars. Heterotopia and Liminal Spaces as Reconfigurations of Female Identity in Sylvia Plath*. Italy: University of Pisa.
- Brain, Tracy. (2001). *The Other Sylvia Plath*. Detroit: Longman Press.
- Burns, Lorna. (2010). *Becoming-Bertha: Virtual Difference and Repetition in Postcolonial 'Writing Back', a Deleuzian Reading of Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea*. Scotland: University of Glasgow.
- Caroline Paul, Nalini. (2008). *Identities Displaced and Misplaced: Aspects of Postcolonial Subjectivity in the Novels of Jean Rhys*. Scotland: University of Glasgow.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1993). *Culture's in Between*. USA: Art Forum 32.1: 167-211.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1994). *The Location of Culture*. USA: Routledge.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (2000). *Introduction: Narrating The Nation*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Chesler, Phyllis. (2005). *Women and Madness*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Coral, Howells Ann. (1991). *Jean Rhys*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Drake, Sandra. (1980). *Race and Caribbean Culture as Thematics of Liberation in Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea*. USA: Ann Arbor, Mich.: University Microfilms International 193-206.
- Emery, Mary Lou. (1990). *Modernist Crosscurrents*. USA: Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Erwin, Lee. (2001). *Like in a Looking-Glass: History and Narrative in Wide Sargasso Sea*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, Michel. (1971). *Of Other Spaces*. Trans. Jay Miskowiec. USA: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Fanon, Frantz. (1965). *A Dying Colonialism*. Trans. Haakon Chevalier. New York: Grove press.
- Felman, Shoshana. (2003). *Writing and Madness Literature/ Philosophy/ Psychoanalysis*. Trans. Martha Noel Evans. California: Stanford University Press.

- Gilbert, Sandra M., Susan Gubar. (2000). *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Gramaglia, Letizia. (2008). *Representations of Madness in Indo-Caribbean Literature*. United Kingdom: Warwick University Press.
- Gregg, Veronica. (2006). *Symbolic Imagery and Mirroring Techniques in Wide Sargasso Sea*. Washington, DC: Three Continents.
- Haque, Farhana. (2016). *Jean Rhys's Controversial Postcolonial Text Wide Sargasso Sea Implicitly Agrees with and Elucidates the Colonial Project*. India. September, 16: 1930-2940.
- Heidarzadegan, Nazila. (2019). *The Middle Eastern American Theatre: Negation or Negotiation of Identity*. Ankara: Akademisyen Kitapevi.
- Höhn, Elizabeth, Marilena. (2007). *Out of Her Mind Female Insanity from the 1890s to the 1970s on the Basis of Women's Social History in "The Yellow Wallpaper", The Bell Jar, and Surfacing*. Norway: The University of Oslo Press.
- Lundin, Ingela. (2008). *Double Oppression In The Color Purple And Wide Sargasso Sea. A Comparison Between The Main Characters Celie And Antoinette/Bertha (C-Essay)*.
- McLeod, J. (2000). *Beginning Postcolonialism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Millett, Kate. (2000). *Sexual Politics*. Urbana and Chicago: Illinois UP.
- Plath, Sylvia. (1963). *The Bell Jar*. United States: Heinemann Print.
- Porter, Roy. (1987). *A Social History of Madness: Stories of the Insane*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson Print.
- Raiskin, Judith. (2013). *England: Dream and Nightmare*. 250-8. Print.
- Rhys, Jean. (1966). *Wide Sargasso Sea*. 1966. Norton Critical Ed. 1 ed. Ed. Judith Raiskin. New York: Norton, 1999. Print.
- Rody, Caroline. *Burning Down the House: The Revisionary Paradigm of Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea*. Raiskin 217-25. Print.
- Rose, Jacqueline. (1983). *Femininity and its Discontents*. USA: Feminist Review.
- Saris, A. Jamie. (2008). *Institutional Persons and Personal Institutions: The Asylum and Marginality in Rural Ireland*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Showalter, E. (1977). *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing*. New Jersey: Princeton UP.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. (1985). *Wide Sargasso Sea and a Critique of Imperialism*. USA: The University of Chicago Press.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. (1988). *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Sussman, Herbert. (2014). "Industrial". *A New Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*. Ed. Herbert F. Tucker. West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014. 249-263. Print.

Wolfreys, J., Robbins, R. and Womack, K. (2006). *Key Concepts In Literary Theory*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

[www.paperpublications.org](http://www.paperpublications.org)

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/44030290?seq=1>



## CURRICULUM VITAE

Özgeçmiş; 1994 tarihinde Şanlıurfa’da doğdu. Şanlıurfa’da liseden mezun olduktan sonra 2017 yılında Gaziantep Üniversitesinde Lisans eğitimini bitirdi. 2018 yılında Karabük Üniversitesinde İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı bölümünde Yüksek Lisansa başladı. 2019 yılında öğretmenlik görevine başladı. 2020 yılında “7. Uluslararası Kültür ve Medeniyet Kongresi’ne katılıp “*Mirroring Madness: Seclusion of Subaltern in Third Space*” isimli eseri sözlü olarak sundu. Euroasia Journal dergisinin 2020 1. sayısında “*Mirroring Madness: Seclusion of Subaltern in Third Space*” başlıklı ilk makalesini yayımladı. 2020 Temmuz ayında “*Madness as an Anti-Authoritarian Agent in Wide Sargasso Sea and The Bell Jar*” tezini savunup yayımladı.