

## CHAPTER II

### THEORETICAL APPROACHES AND RELATED STUDIES

#### A. The Theories

##### A.1. The Postcolonial Theory

'The postcolonial novel' is generally reserved to describe works of fiction written by citizens of lands, which have recently thrown off colonial rule. It is normally the case that the description, which implies the work(s), will take the immediate history of the land in question as a major part of its subject matter (Hawthorn 65). So it is not surprising that from postcolonial perspective, Western value and tradition of thoughts and literature, and versions of postmodernism are guilty of a repressive ethnocentrism (Selden 188). Models of Western thought or of literature have dominated world culture, marginalizing or excluding non-Western traditions and forms of cultural life and expression.

The importance of ideology in forming the ideas of the colonial subject has had a strong impact on postcolonial cultural and literary interpretation. Jean Rhys' reading of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* produces a counter attack based on Rhys' conviction that Brontë must have had something against the West Indies and Rhys was angry about it (Newman 14). Rhys has rewritten the work from the English 'canon' with a view to restructuring European 'realities' in postcolonial terms. Not simply by reversing, but the hierarchical order was based (Ashcroft 33) as the other postcolonial writer have done.

### **A.1.1. Margin and Minority**

Marginality is the condition constructed by the posited relation to a privileged centre, an 'Othering' directed by the imperial authority (Ashcroft 104). Discourses of marginality such as race, gender, psychological 'normalcy,' geographical and social distance intersect in a view of reality which supersedes the geometric distinction of centre and margin and replaces it with a sense of complex, interweaving, and synergetic accretion of experience (Ashcroft 104). The experience provides both a theoretical position and a narrative authority of marginal voices or minority discourses. The theoretical position, according to Fanon via Ashcroft is colonial dichotomy (coloniser-colonised) (124).

Colonial dichotomy, in which the primary sign is axiomatically privileged in the discourse of the colonial relationship, is the product of a 'manichaeism delirium' (Ashcroft 125), which produces a radical division into paired opposition / binary structuralism such as good-evil, true-false, white-black, self-other, centre-margin, oppressor-oppressed. But in postcolonial societies, the participants are frozen into a hierarchical relationship in which the oppressed is locked into position by the assumed moral superiority of the dominant group, a superiority that is reinforced when necessary by the use of physical force (Ashcroft 172). And that, the strategies of hierarchization and marginalization are employed in the management of colonial societies.

### **A.1.2. Place, Displacement, and Identity**

A major feature of postcolonial literature is the concern with place and displacement. The dialectic of place and displacement is always a feature of postcolonial societies whether these have been created by a process of settlement, intervention, or a mixture of the two (Ashcroft 9). And the issues above are always concerned with the myths of identity and authenticity.

A valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by *dislocation*, result from migration, the experience of enslavement, transportation or 'voluntary' removal for indentured labour. Or it may have been destroyed by *cultural denigration*, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model (Ashcroft 9).

According to Homi Bhabha in the postcolonial text, the problem of identity returns as a persistent questioning of the frame. The space of representation, where the image-missing person, invisible eye, oriental stereotype is confronted with its difference, its Other (46). These repeated negations of identity dramatize the impossibility of claiming on origin for the self (or Other) within a tradition of representation that conceives of identity as the satisfaction of a totalising, platitudinous object of vision.

Almost all colonial schemes begin with an assumption of native backwardness and general inadequacy to be independent, 'equal,' and fit (Said 80). This assumption can be explained by Edward Said's ideas about Eurocentrism.

Eurocentrism subordinates the non-European or peripheral world by banishing their identities, except as a lower order of being, from the culture and indeed the very idea of White Christian European (222). So, the discourse of identity covers the area of the philosophical tradition of identity as the process of self-reflection in the mirror of (human) nature; and the anthropological view of the difference of human identity as located in the division of Nature / Culture (Bhabha 46)

There can be no denying that marginality is a symptom of alienation and culture is a source of identity. Isolating and labelling the Non-European centre increase the level of alienation and establish a vicious circle, which encourages discrimination. It is to convince that the centre's parasitic relationship to the margin proposes a share of the centre in a seemingly new way (not a rupture but a displacement): disciplinary support for the conviction of authentic marginality by the conviction of authentic marginality by the (aspiring) elite (Gandhi 59).

### **A.1.3. Colonial Masculinities**

There is a significant parallel between feminist discourse and the postcolonial in rejecting the binary structures of patriarchal discourse. This subversion of patriarchal (literary forms for example) may not be a conscious aim of the authors where women write as a biologically oppressed group (Ashcroft 177), and a writer such as Jean Rhys plays an important role,

Postcolonialism and feminism collaborate together to present the possibility against the aggressive myth of both imperialism and masculinity. We have

already seen how colonial and colonized women are postulated as the symbolic mediators of this (male) contestation (Gandhi 98). If anti colonial nationalism authenticated itself through female custodians of spiritual domesticity, the male imperial ethic similarly distilled its 'mission' through the figure of the angle in the colonial home.

Colonial homology between sexual and political dominance formulates the colonial relationship of men over women as seen in Nandy's statement via Gandhi about the unquestioned dominance of European men at home and abroad:

Colonialism, too, was congruent with the existing western sexual stereotypes and the philosophy of life, which they represented. It produces a cultural consensus in which political and socio-economic dominance symbolized the dominance of men and masculinity over women and femininity (100)

This unmistakable patriarchal cast with distortions in women's and minority's rights are still perceptible today (Gandhi 224).

#### **A.1.4. Pure of Origin and Otherness**

According to Nietzsche the myth of pure origin is one of the foundational humanist myths. The Western humanists think of the 'origin' as the place of platitude, presence, and truth (Gandhi 38). The very idea perpetuates the unadulterated origin and promotes negation of alterity / otherness in its narcissistic desire to always see the world in its own self-image. Foucault substantially extends

the notion of Otherness to cover criminality, madness, disease, foreigners, homosexuals, strangers, and women (Gandhi 39). Foucault extension meets Spivak's statement that women in many societies have been relegated to a position of 'Other' marginalized and, in a metaphorical sense, 'colonized,' forced to pursue guerrilla warfare against imperial domination from positions deeply embedded, yet fundamentally alienated from, that imperium (175).

The myth of origin contributes a dangerous Otherness to the figure(s) of deviant; it is also endeavoured violently to repress all symptoms of cultural alterity / difference (Ghandi 39). And this cultural alterity / difference is so much-indispensable to postcolonial theory as what Ashcroft firmly believe:

In order to maintain authority over the 'Other' in a colonial situation, imperial discourses strive to delineate the 'Other' as radically different from the 'Self', yet the self and also articulate the 'Other' as inescapably different. 'Otherness' can thus only be produced by continual process of repetition and displacement...(103).

#### **A.2. Michel Foucault's History of Sexuality: Power and Sexuality**

In Victorian Era, sex was seen as something secret and restricted only in the bedroom of husband and wife and only between them. Sex was under the control of strict moral codes. For those who break the rules would be punished. All the idea of sex taboo and forms of its prohibitions shows the relation of repressive power.

This repressive power provokes the resistant against sex taboo and then 21<sup>st</sup> century thinkers, such as Foucault, were born with all of their breakthrough thinking and many sexual discourses.

On his article "The Return of Moral Through Sex," Konrad Kebung writes his introduction of Foucault's History of Sexuality. He writes that Foucault sees sex as some natural truth, experienced and understood by everyone (41). Sex is also something natural, virtue, and the source of pleasure. And all of these are needed in self-actualisation. So, it is obvious that sexuality is full of moral ethic nuances. If there is such immortality in sex, it does not come from the sex itself, but in the positivities and access on the practices. In doing sexual action, a human is aware that he is the sexual being himself. And he is also aware the relationship with other people in a perspective of power, because as long as there is will there is a relation of power.

In every sexual practice, a human being forms some sexual attitudes; those are awareness of freedom, responsibility of moral choices, both to himself and to other people. Sex is something private and yet is able to waken every individual of himself is, what he makes, and how far he owns his will and desire. By this awareness, we never can deceit ourselves in every sexual practice.

Sexuality seems more to be a very compact way for power relationship between men and women (also possible in homosexuality and lesbianism). In the power relationship, sexuality is not the deepest element, but may be more to be one of the most practical elements. As it is the most advantageous manoeuvre, it can be used as a foundation, the central point of various strategies (129). Sexual relationship

causes a permanent expansion of kinship system at any society: marital system is also responsible for the permanent fields and types of controlling of: (1) ties between two partners with a firm status, (2) the most important is the body sensation, the quality of the pleasure, natural character of impressions that is so soft almost invisible by senses, (3) the kinship system is closely related with the economical reasons because it plays an important role in the controlling and the circulating of wealth, meanwhile sexuality system is so complicated related to the economic matter through the uncountable mediation, but the emphasized relation is the body—the body that produces and consumes.

Lust becomes the bridge between power and sexuality. The problems of lust are the body sensation, the fixity of sexual pleasure, and the most significant secret in the sexual desire, the forms of ecstasies, and a complicated agreement (135). A great amount of lust has made a man as the son of sex who is so demanding and piercing. Sex is the reason for everything (95). A double evolution tend to place lust as the root of every sin, and have a tendency to move the most important of lustful action into confusion that is so difficult to be revealed and talked about; as sexual desire is a disease which possesses human being without any exception (20).



## **B. The Approaches**

### **B.1. Sociocultural**

Culture is defined as the whole 'way of life' of a society (Easthope, 1991, 72). Men are living under similar constitute social groups, which elaborate a complex of habits and mental structures to resolve their problem (Goldmann 1) and thus a society build, construct and adapt their values, norms, and standards.

So, it is obvious that literature is the reflection of a certain society's dominant ideas, which become the spirit of the era and setting. Lionel Trilling explains it but so well about the position of literature in the social and cultural spheres:

Literature is an integral element of culture, both reflecting its changes and helping to produce them ...the writer perceives and sets down in his work as truth becomes true, either anticipating a significant change in the ways men respond to life, expressing a change desired although still unrealised. Literature become a social institution, like politic, in that it is combined with human wants and is compelled to take them into account (166).

### **B.2. Literature and Biography**

Rene Wellek and Austin Warren proposed that a work of art is an explanation in terms of the personality and the life of the writer (75). Biography is an 'affording material' for psychology of the writer and the work itself which is

employed in the process of the writing. Biography explains and illuminates the actual product of work.

Like most of Romantic poets, who write about themselves and their inner most of feeling (77), Jean Rhys writing on Wide Sargasso Sea does the same. Nevertheless, a work of art is not a clear looking glass of its creator, if it does so; then it becomes autobiography. Wellek explains it in these brave lines:

A work of art forms a unity on a quite different plane, with a quite different relation to reality, than a book of memoirs, a diary, or a letter. Only by a perversion of the biographical method could the most intimate and frequently the most casual documents of an author's life become the central study while the actual (works) were interpreted in the light or even contradictory to that provided by any critical judgment of the (works) (78).

## **C. Related Studies**

### **C.1. Tendency to Debasement**

Sigmund Freud's writing about "The Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love' in Easthope's A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader creates a new understanding about the constrains a couple have in their marriage lives, one of which can be found in Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea.

Man always feels his respect for the woman acting as restriction on his sexual activity and only develops full potency when he is with a debased sexual

object; and this in its turn is partly caused by the entrance of perverse components into his sexual aims. This is the source of his need, which attributes no aesthetic scruples to a woman who does not know him in his other social relations and cannot judge him in them. It is to such woman that he prefers to devote his sexual potency, even when the whole of his affection belongs to a woman of a higher kind. The tendency so often observed in men of the highest classes of society to choose a woman of a lower class as a permanent mistress or even as a wife is nothing but a consequence of their need of a debased sexual object, to whom, psychologically, the possibility of complete satisfaction is linked (141). The phenomenon can be caused by the aims of civilization at making out of the instinct of love seems unattainable except at the price of a sensible loss of pleasure; the persistence of the impulses that could not be made use of can be detected in sexual activity in the form of non satisfaction (144).

### **C.2. I Walk With A Zombie: Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea**

One of chapter in her book The Ballistic Bard : Postcolonial Fiction, Judie Newman write about the comparison of Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea and Bronte's Jane Eyre to a movie made in 1943. This chapter "Walk With A Zombie : Jean Rhys' Wide Sargasso Sea 'is emphasizing Rhys' adopting a classic folklore zombie. A zombie is created by the giving of a drug of some kind, which creates the appearance of death. A common method is to sprinkle 'zombie poison' across the threshold where it is absorbed through the feet of the victim. The drug supposedly lower the

metabolic rate so that the victim seems dead, is cold, but can be restored to some sort of life by an antidote. The sorcerer digs up the body, administers a second potion and gives the zombie a new name. From this point on, the zombie is the slave of the sorcerer, lacking all memory, willpower or thought, but capable of working night and day in the field.

“Walk With A Zombie” is a title of a movie in 1943 produced by Val Lewton. Internal evidence strongly suggests that Rhys had seen “Walk With A Zombie” Quite minor incident in the movie are echoed in Wide Sargasso Sea. Holland, the Rochester figure, feels partly responsible for his wife’s apparent madness, because, when her adultery was discovered, he refused to allow her to leave him, insisting that he would keep her by force. Rochester seemingly refuses to countenance separation from Antoinette. And the practice of zombification in Wide Sargasso Sea is the use of poisonous potion by Antoinette to entice Rochester into her bed. When Rochester enters Antoinette’s room he notices “the white powder strewn on the floor’ (136) ostensibly against cockroaches. As he drink from the glass she offers him, he tells her to forget the past and his voice alters, and he succumbs to her charms. When he awakens it is as an almost-dead man. ‘I woke in the dark after dreaming that I was buried alive, and when I was awake the feeling of suffocation persisted. Something was lying across my mouth; hair ... I was cold too, deathly cold’ (Rhys137). He is also almost incapable of thought or action. Rochester appears to have narrowly escaped zombification. The scene apparently incriminates Antoinette and makes Rochester, however imperfect, a victim of female witchcraft.

But it is discovered then; there is a form of double zombification when Rochester has already scripted Antoinette into the role of sex-mad Caribbean lunatic – his puppet, a character under his control.

**CHAPTER III**  
**BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE**  
**AUTHOR**