

## Male Dominance in Jean Rhys Wide Sargasso Sea

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### Abstract

Jean Rhys in her novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* which was published in 1966 she says about the story of the character in the novel of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Bertha Mason, the first wife of Rochester and through this novel Rhys says about the story of his second wife Antoinette. Thus through this the author describes about the situation of the woman who was suffering under the male dominated society and also the woman who follows the strict rules of their culture and traditions as being silent in front of their husbands. In this dominated society women need their own rights and freedom even though they also want their equal rights but when they are in control of their husband they remain as dumb. Thus they have to look upon only the social issues which were happening in this male dominated society.

**KEYWORDS:** Feminism, male dominance, tradition, culture, freedom.

Jean Rhys says about the pathetic situations of women who were living in the male dominated community which was facing problems in societies such as post colonialism, racism, problems occurring in political and depression of mind as mental. The character mad woman represents the character Bertha in the novel of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. In the male dominated and colonized society, Rhys explains about the silent voice of the mad woman Antoinette and Bertha who is the mad wife of Mr Rochester. Bertha is an important character in the novel who is imprisoned in her husband's *Athens* as the character of Antoinette in the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The author really expresses that *Jane Eyre* was speaking against the society as view that where the father is the head of the family. Rhys develops Bertha's identity comparing Antoinette. The main character of this novel is Antoinette Cosway and she was considered as a Caribbean lady as she was living her life with Annette her mother, Pierre is her brother also with the servant in her house Christophine. Antoinette was facing a hard life in an infant stage itself, after few months Annette left her alone and she was spending most of the time with her only son because he was a boy. At Antoinette's small days she was facing lots of trouble in her companions in family as she has no one to give some advice and love in her family.

Rhys shows the family members of Antoinette then consider her as a dumb who never opens the mouth in the society. As she was a dumb girl she never finds the identity and she lost herself also her strength and power. When the sorrowful life in her adult and childhood over she got married with Mr. Rochester and he was the British man. Rochester married Antoinette and he needs her rich family he doesn't want the true love from his wife. Jean Rhys represents him as a male-dominated man in the society and he wants women to be silent because he has other modern countries

mind and their culture always her husband shows strength of men to make women pregnant.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Rochester considers Antoinette weak yet Rochester thought and he wants Antoinette must live a life with him and he wants her to be alone in a room yet Rochester only has the sexual strength. He considers Antoinette is unbalanced woman, without any clever with lower status woman. Antoinette's condition is said as incompleteness. He always ignores his wife thoughts, feelings and emotions, and he always uses his sexual power to women's.

Men always classified in a class which they belong, there is no freedom for woman's to create the classes and they never form a class in a society, these people never has any strength so that they must not accompany with others they all want freedom in their life to live in the societies. The critic Lacan says about the culture and words of man, and also he added the father's character and the way they speak as the head of the family and the culture they follow; he never tries to understand the values of women. He also says about the role of the father who was always strict to the girl children. At this concept, the critic Lacan shows that Rochester with the male dominance man. Antoinette always listens to the rules which were kept by her husband. Through the domination of Rochester, Antoinette wishes to come forward in social issues through the power of Rochester. It was clear that Rochester was the man who was the motive in the life of Antoinette.

Females never have the relation in society and economical powers instead of that they were living a life with lots of stresses in each and every minute. Not only stress, they are thinking only the issues happening in the societies. And their thought is apart from everything. And the society put a name mad for women and the women are considered as evil. In this novel, her mother always agrees the condition of this dominance which was put forward by men. She wants to be rich and husband to be rich then only she can live a family with high status in front of others. She remains as a slave in front of her husband because she needs the money of her husband so she depends upon male. Without her consciousness she always hears her husband's words and the rules put forward by him and she also believes in culture and traditions. They were living in the unconscious world they never look upon their life they look upon the world and the society where they live, when they came to know that they are blind they start to change their life and turn against the society and their traditional life wants to change and they wake up in their blindness. But when they had changed and became conscious the people in the society consider the women as a mad.

Due to the problems in money as financial Antoinette was suffering a lot in her life and also she can't solve her family problems and even though among these problems, they easily accepted their weaknesses because they had to accept their weakness. Antoinette also did the same she also did the same among other women's she was also ready to accept her weakness and she never got any freedom in her life she was only thinking that she has only one job that is to accept the husband's strength and power and she never got a chance to be in touch with her family and with her friends. If not she thinks that she will die and Rochester will kill her. The unwanted thought in her mind and her husband's power took her to a room as alone and yet she became as a mad. According to the thought of Helen Cixous she says that mother has no role in the girl children after they got married and the father will be acting the role of the mother, the mother will be always thinking only about her child but at the same

time as a father he never thinks about the necessary of women and look upon what is left and he never think and never thought lie a mother. And also as a girl she never thins about her life and her position s a mother, instead of that she always look upon her husband needs. And the girl children after one stage they never go close with their father and thus the relation start distance and that they does not make a relation with their father. As a negative thinker Antoinette always look upon the passive way instead of being active. As a girl she want be with her mother and she was longing for the love of her mother she left her and after her marriage she want to be with her husband and her mother left her alone. At that moment only, there Rochester acts the part of male power; and he takes place of activeness.

As a women and her situations Antoinette always ready to agree and accept whatever happens in her life and the strict rule even from her child life when Antoinette was under the control of her father; she hears everything whatever her husband says and obeys him. While listening to her husband she became as a mad who sit in a room alone and also as a psychiatric patient yet at that time she begins to react and rise against Rochester. The main aim of her is only to tear everything from her new house with her husband and she want to burn the house and in the purpose of burning she consider herself as a mad women and act as madness it was realized that it happens because her sufferings she was locked in the house, it is a revenge for burning the place where Rochester has lived. She became mad and mentally depressed only because of her husband and the lost of freedom for her.

Antoinette start with burning of their home from that her disorder started and then it continues the action in her brother's death with the fire which she has burnt the house of her husband. Her selfish and revenge behaviour make her failure in conflicts of society as social events among the people around her in the selfish society. Even though she always feels alone and she feels fear and frightened and finally she feels that she was losing her life without any power in the society. The author mentions about the confused situation of that, "Everything was brightness or dark". (48), her situation was confused and it was being represented through the motive like colourfulness of heaven also the darkness of hell and the women in evil. Thus Antoinette is trying to find light, brightness inner life, because always she was facing tragedy in her life. Darkness is considering for Rochester the husband of Antoinette. As a man Rochester always shows his power in the male dominance to Antoinette. When their marriage got over Rochester change his character and he shows his cruelty towards his wife Antoinette. If a woman starts to love her husband she will be facing the difficult situation that she want the love back from her husband, and also she thinks that her husband should learn the truth about the women that they must also have in freedom in the society but as a truth women never shows their reaction in the society, and when start to react or start to open her mouth in front of society she will be called and consider as a mad women. Rochester never respect his wife and he never think about how she was in her childhood and he always consider her as mad because she never ask anything to him about her feelings she never open her mouth he thin that her family is totally filled with madness.

He thinks Antoinette has come and brought up in a family of madness so that she was also surely become as a mad from her parents. As she was consider as a mad woman after the marriage he never slept with his wife and also he never shows her that she is mad and he didn't say a single word about her madness. Because of this situation she herself chooses a medicine, in case of that she needs her husband and

never want to lose him so that she consider help from Christophine and she went to Obeah for their support. While he hears about this matter he confirms that his wife is a mad woman and they all together is tries to revenge upon him. Thus he fell that she is going to destroy him and the power of the women shows through her medicine and now he started to be aware in case of medicine and he understand that the power is her medicine instead of madness and now Rochester tries to control her wife in this society with the male domination. Controlling her, he wants to exhibits Bertha, the first wife of Rochester when Antoinette was in the next room hearing all the conversation. Antoinette can't tolerate this mistake and she wake up with disloyalty yet finally in the conscious level she bite the arm of Rochester.

In the next event Antoinette want to shows that she is normal she has no mad and for the proof she know everything happening among her and she is aware of each and everything, with her consciousness she says that, "Bertha is not my name, You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name" (121). He named Antoinette as Bertha. At this movement Rochester wants to give a new name to his wife and he want to give her an identity so for that purpose he tries to control his sexuality against female. She started to react in front of her dominated husband that she is mad and through her behaviour Rochester decide to show her to psychiatrist in England and she must not come out from the room and she must sit alone inside the room. Now Antoinette life became in a prison, she is imprisoned by plenty of her husband's rules and the room is consider for her for the final chance to control her madness. As a male dominated person the decision in the life of Antoinette has been taken by her husband Rochester that, what she should do in her life. He fixed that she must stay in the room alone because she is a danger for him and she has to remain in silence she never opens her mouth because of her husband.

'There is no voice and no identity, 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, 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, Now they have taken everything away. What am I doing in this place and who am I? (147)

Rochester wants to delete and erase all the freedom which was given to her in the room of prison, and she is consider as a mad so he think that she has to remain in the prison only till the end. As a loneliness girl from her childhood she never went to any place or any other countries, but after her marriage the same had happens loneliness only remains with she never face any happiness in her life. Inside the prison started to lose her strength and power in her life even though she lost her own identity she lost her consciousness and finally loneliness only remains with her and she started to dream about the things which is not going to happen in her life. But in her dreams she want to burn the house of her husband as Bertha had done and then she started to walk down and thinks;

"I waited a long time after her snore, the I got up, took the keys and unlocked the door. I was outside holding my candle. Now at last I know why I was brought here and what I have to do. There must have been a draught for the flame flickered and I thought it was out. But I shielded it with my hand and it burned up again to light me along the dark passage "

The last attempt of her is to burn the house and thus it shows her madness in the point of the revenge taking through the society. It shows the pain and anger in Antoinette. Yet she wants to run away and escape from Rochester and it was the life which makes her to the world of madness inside a room of loneliness so that she wants to run away from that room and life of Rochester. In this male dominated society for example the main victim is considered as Antoinette because as a woman she faces lots of difficulties, as a wife of the male dominated man she became mentally illness and also the society call her as a mad women and she feels that she has lost her life in this colonized society.

Finally, she says that all must know the value of their life and they should understand their rights and freedom and in their mind they should also equal like others and they also need education as a women and they need a freedom to write about the condition of women, they can also write how they suffers and their identity and they must not be in under the influence of male writers. Through their writings, women can stand against the male, and they will be stand against with the wrong rules and laws and through this method, they can change their culture and life style and force the society to change them and they must change their thoughts of evil, and considering woman as mad. Through these rules the character has no ability to live with the strict rule of her husband and struggle which was given by the male powers. The rule which was put forward by her husband is very pathetic. These all pulled her to the room of loneliness as alone, at this situation the poor women need to left their controlling social issues in the world and when they are not accepting the rules of the male dominated society, they are called as prostitute women and separate them from the society. Because of such kind of reason, the women's those who are educated are existed from the society.

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