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"Mimic (Wo)man" or "Abject Subject"? Crisscrossing Glances of Postcolonial and Psychoanalytic Theories in Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to examine the intersections of Postcolonilism and Psychoanalysis in Rhys's literary oeuvre, *Wide Sargasso Sea*. In the light of Kristeva's Abjection theory, the paper challenges Bhabha's notions of hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence as he accentuates them as a form of resistance against White hegemony. Notwithstanding Bhabha's arguments, the novel also indicates that the hybrid woman's mimicry of whiteness subjects her to an ambivalent space, which not only make her incapable of distorting the master's hegemony, it dooms her to get lost in a constant psychotic delirium and abjection.

"From boyhood I have dwelt on foreign soil and I know with what grief sometimes the mind takes leave of the narrow hearth of a peasant's hut, and I know too how frankly it afterwards disdains marble firesides and paneled halls". (St. Victor 101)

INTRODUCTION

Ella Gwendolyn Rees Williams (1890-1979), known to the literary world as Jean Rhys, was a West Indian mid-twentieth-century author and novelist. Her father, William Rees Williams, was a Welsh doctor and her mother, Minna Williams, was a Dominican- 1Creole of Scots ancestry. Indeed, she was neither Europe-an nor Black but White and West Indian, a bloodline which stamped her as a non-member in any of the social classes. Regarding this exotic heritage, the opposing forces of so-ciety made Jean have a different opininon of life. She lived a long life but it was her childhood in the Island of West Indies that formed her disposition as an author. Taunted by the savage nickname of "White cockroach", Jean reflects the West Indian heroine of her magnum opus, *Wide Sargasso Sea*. She once declared "I have only ever written about my-self" (Bloom 137). Like her heroine, Jean withered under the pressure of the colonial "Centre", England.

A prequel to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, *Wide Sargasso Sea* gave vent to the deliriums of Edward Rochester's "mad woman in the attic". Antoinette (alias Bertha) is that woman, and *Wide Sargasso Sea* is the reopening of her grim dead-end at Thornfield Hall. Deeply molded by her Creole ethnicity, Antoinette mirrors the typical portrait of a hybrid stuck between the fluxes of two different races. Unlike Bronte arraying a narrative of inclusion where the protagonists are implanted within the scope of Englishness, Jean Rhys plots a narrative of exclusion where the non-English struggles to obtain Englishness but it has disaster written all over it. Therefore, through its dual narrative, the latter regards scrupulous attention to the sentiments of the included and the excluded, the colonizer and the colonized.

The novel is divided into three parts. Part one is narrated by Antoinette cosway, a daughter in a white Creole plantation owning family who, due to the Emancipation Act and the father's death, have lost their status and prosperity in the society. It is a recollection of her childhood at the Coulibri estate in Jamaica, where, discarded by her mother, Annette, becomes isolated from the rest of people and takes solace in the nature surrounding her. Set in Dominica, part two of the novel is mostly recounted by Rochester, who has just espoused Antoinette. They decided to spend their honeymoon in Granbois, where, Rochester feels like an odd man out. Then he embarks on a long speech, loathing Antoinette on both her appearance and homeland. By the end of this part, Antoinette, beginning to lose grip of her sanity, slides towards alienation from her own self. In part three, Rochester has taken Antoinette to England and chained her in the attic of Thornfield Hall under the control of Grace Poole. In the end, losing grip on her sanity and identity, Antoinette

1 Oxford English Dictionary defines the 'Creole' as a person of mixed European and black descent, especially in the Caribbean.

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Cosway has been transformed to Bertha Mason, or Bronte's famous madwoman in the attic.

In his *Location of Culture*, Bhabha argues that "Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority)" (112). He further remarks that "the display of hybridity - its peculiar 'replication' – terrorizes authority with the ruse of recognition, its mimicry, its mockery" (115). Therefore, "mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal" (86). Indeed, he considers mimicry as the post-colonial process of distorting the norms of the colonizer. However, Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* along with kristeva's Abjection theory considers Bhabha's notion of mimicry as an oppressive strategy, especially when adopted by hybrids like Antoinette in their futile attempts to imbibe the imposed images of white culture.

HYBRIDITY, MIMICRY AND HOMI K. BHABHA'S CONSTANT AMBIVALENCE

"Hybridity" Bhabha maintains, tackles with "how newness enters the world" (7). Indeed, the present cross-cultural confrontations have provided the context for postmodern discussions of hybridity and have embraced Bhabha's oeuvre as an innovative version of understanding the world. However, Bhabha's formulation of hybridity is not perfectly new, He grounds his conception of hybridity in a heavy mixture of psychoanalysis and deconstruction, adopting mostly Lacan, Freud and Derrida to examine power relations and cultural collisions between the colonizer and colonized.

Bhabha's launch pad in Postcolonial criticism is Edward Said's Orientalism. In "Difference, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism", an article not included in his pioneering work, *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha pinpointed a problem to Said's theory, He deems Said to be "not post-structuralist enough" for conceptualizing a binary opposition between the discourse of the "West and/about the East" as a fixed system of representation that is left un-problematized.

Bhabha poses his critical ideas directly, contending that:

Where the originality of this account loses its inventiveness, and for me its usefulness, is with Said's refusal to engage with the alterity and ambivalence in the articulation of these two economies which threaten to split the very object of Orientalist discourse as a knowledge and the subject positioned therein. He contains his threat by introducing a binarism within the argument which, in initially setting up an opposition between these two discursive scenes, finally allows them to be correlated as a congruent system of representation that is unified through a political-ideological intention which, in his words, enables Europe to advance securely and unmetaphorically upon the Orient … There is always, in Said, the suggestion that colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the coloniser which is a historical and theoretical simplification. The terms in which Said's Orientalism are unified—which is, the intentionality and unidirectionality of colonial power—also unifies the subject of colonial enunciation. (199-200).

However, despite his criticism, Bhabha finds in Said's theory the key to embark upon his own oeuvre. Ambivalence, a principal concept in Bhabha's Postcolonial theories can be regarded as a development of Said's idea of "vacillation", which Bhabha deems a "forgotten" and "underdeveloped" point in Orientalism. (201) For Said, definitely neither of these Orients/Others was purely one thing. In his eyes, it is their vacillations and potentials for amusing and confusing the minds, that arouses interest:

What gives the immense number of encounters [between East and West] some unity however is the vacillation I was speaking about earlier. Something patently foreign and distant acquires, for one reason or another, a status more rather than less familiar. One tends to stop judging things either as completely novel or as completely well known; a new median category emerges, a category that allows one to see new things, things seen for the first time, as versions of a previously known thing. In essence such a category is not so much a way of receiving new information as it is a method of controlling what seems to be a threat to some established view of things. (58)

Along with the concept of "vacillation", reworded by Bhabha as ambivalence, Said's account certainly provides the cue for the rest of Bhabha's theories: his cognizance of the fact that colonial discourse is never pure, his idea of an in-between or liminal space that simultaneously controls and cold-shoulder the Other, and the introduction of the psychological elements in cross-cultural confrontations as depicted by a mélange of fear and fascination in the power's discourse. Indeed, Bhabha's concept of hybridity emanates from an intense ambivalence towards "otherness" as "object of desire and derision" (67). As Robert Young writes, Bhabha's probes into colonial discourse is "founded on an anxiety" and his preoccupation "is to demonstrate [the] ambivalence in colonial and colonizing subjects by articulating the inner dissention …structured according to the conflictual economy of the psyche" (145). It is, then, by combining deconstructive and psychoanalytic methods of analyzing discourse that he lights on the possibility of dethroning the colonial hierarchy, and hence exposing what he considered the major kink in Said's theory, "the suggestion that colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the colonizer" (200).

In this way, the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida, and his theory of language, différance, are the props Bhabha uses to secure his formulation of hybridity. Bhabha avails of Derrida's premise for being "an anti–epistemological position that … contests Western modes of representation" (195). To recall Derrida's theory, différance "is the sign that describes and performs the way in which a single meaning of a concept (text) arises as the repetition and effacement of other possible meanings" (125), which are themselves held in abeyance for their possible activation in other contexts. This conception of language is winning to Bhabha since it reveals that things can merely exist by virtue of differing. Indeed, at the heart of being there is différance, not essence. Therefore, if there is no essence or unity, nothing is its being, and no ultimate "truth" can exist. Derrida affirms about différance, "It governs nothing, reigns over nothing, and nowhere exercises any authority … there is no kingdom of

différance, but différance instigates the subversion of every kingdom" (132).

Deployed in this way, Derridean différance in poststructural discourse functions essentially as Bhabha's conception of the Other within Postcolonial context. That is, as differance can turn over the meaning, validity, certainty, and coherence of things, otherness have this potential to topple the hierarchy and truth of colonial kingdom and thus challenge its power and control. Therefore, otherness enters the Western discourse to shatter the idea of unity or "the historical identity of [Western] culture as a homogenizing force" (Bhabha 37). Hybridity then makes its appearance as a product of the colonizer-centre/colonized-other's discourse and a "sign" of the instability of the colonizer's authority with the potential of destabilizing it. Bhabha writes:

It [hybridity] reveals the ambivalence at the source of traditional discourses of authority and enables a form of subversion, founded on that uncertainty that turns the discursive conditions of dominance into the grounds of intervention. (154)

Here, ambivalence is made to operate at two discrete levels: as a feature of discourse in a Derridean sense, and also as a psychological disposition of the colonizer that will eventually get transferred to the colonized through mimicry. Indeed, the ambivalence manifested through hybridity and produced by différance/otherness, according to Bhabha, creates a "mental inclination, a frame of mind in the colonizer who strives to regulate otherness/différance to maintain power" (151). At this point, insecure in his ability to maintain power, the centre/colonizer stands in need of schemes that fix and check the other/colonized through means of representation. The psychological dimension of the colonial other as it becomes modulated by colonial power is described in Bhabha's theory by means of the Freudian stereotype and the Lacanian mirror stage. Bhabha uses these sampels to zoom on the manifestations of colonial identifications since they employ the internal logic of repetition and erasure and resemble différance in Derridean discourse. He notes:

My anatomy of colonial discourse remains incomplete until I locate the stereotype, as an arrested, fetishistic mode of representation within its field of identification, which I have identified in my descriptions of Fanon's primal scenes, as the Lacanian schema of the Imaginary. The Imaginary, as you probably know, is the transformation that takes place in the subject at the formative mirror phase, when it assumes a discrete image which allows it to postulate a series of equivalences, sameness, identities, between the surrounding world. However, this positioning is itself problematic, for the subject finds or recognises itself through an image which is simultaneously alienating and hence potentially confrontational. This is the basis of the close relation between the two forms of identification complicit with the imaginary narcissism and aggressivity. It is precisely these two forms of identification that constitute the dominant strategy of colonial power exercised in relation to the stereotype which, as a form of multiple and contradictory belief, gives knowledge of difference and simultaneously disavows or mask it. Like the 'mirror-phase' the 'fullness' of the stereotype—its image as identity—is always threatened by lack. (204)

In fact, although the stereotype is meant to dismiss or disavow différance, it constantly undoes itself by betraying the ambivalence within its own psychological disposition. In addition, Bhabha contends that the stereotype constitutes a form of knowledge that "vacillates between what is always 'in place' already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated (66). He continues:

The fetish or stereotype gives access to an 'identity' which is predicated as much on mastery and pleasure as it is on anxiety and defence, for it is a form of multiple and contradictory belief in its recognition of difference and disavowal of it … The stereotype then, as the primary point of subjectification in colonial discourse, for both colonizer and colonized, is the scene of similar fantasy and defence—the desire for an originality which is again threatened by the differences of race, colour, and culture. (74-75)

According to Bhabha, identification with this stereotype calls forth the Lacanian mirror stage. Since in Bhabha's theory, the stereotype becomes an image of identity that, like the image on the mirror, transforms the subject as he considers that image to be a coherent representation of self. Furthermore, in the colonial context, the process of identification with the stereotype necessitates the subject to identify him/herself in terms of what he is not, the other, and yet once again, shatters the notion of an original identity. As a result, the colonial pursuit of mimicry comes out of these recurring processes of subjectification and identification.

Mimicry, Bhabha states, "is one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" (85). Mimicry points out to "the narcissistic and aggressive tendencies of the colonizer by means of an imposition of iteration upon the colonized that should validate and recognize the authority of the colonizer in order to ease his anxiety about otherness" (Bhabha 98). At this point, Mimicry involves the colonized subject to adopt and to internalize the norms, values, and culture of the colonizer. Yet for mimicry to operate, the colonized firstly necessitates to be objectified by means of the stereotypical discourse. Later on, Bhabha reckons that for a repetition of the colonizer's culture as a source of civilizing reform, the colonized should firstly adopt the stereotype as an image of identification and then reject it. In this case, mimicry creates, Bhabha argues "authorized versions of otherness:" subjects that are "white, but not quite" (147). This, becomes the pillar on which colonial control is stablished. Since it does not allow, according to Bhabha, a clear oppositional line that separates "us vs. them." That is, Bhabha assumes, there is no clear colonial subject since "both colonizer and colonized are caught inside the Lacanian schema of the imaginary: they depend on each other for their constitution in the imaginary as fantasies, partial knowledges, and double images" (75).

However, under these conditions, one would think that, the colonized will not find a chance to form a counter-discourse, and hence will be crushed under the system of alienation established by the colonizer. Nevertheless, Bhabha contends that his theory designates a strategy of subversion that once again, is based on psychological ambivalence and insecurity. Quoting Lacan, he remarks that "mimicry is like camouflage, not a harmonization of repression of difference, but a form of resemblance, that differs from or defends presence by displaying it in part metonymically" (90). That is,

since colonial mimicry is meant to reform the colonized other, it simultaneously manifests a visible difference between the colonized and the colonizer while displaying a "psychological slippage" (86), that puts the power of the colonizer into jeopardy.

At this point, one concludes that hybridity only works within the parameters of mimicry; since, it is unable to solve or change the condition of the discriminated colonized independently. Therefore, it seems that Bhabha's perception of the hybrid promises more than it delivers. In other words, for the colonized other to exert some sort of resistance, he has to emulate, mimic, and be subject to a constant ambivalent feeling toward him/herself. To put it in Bhabha's words "Hybridization occurs as the master text is repeated creating a mutation that might challenge authority, but still depends on it for its formation" (153). Yet, this paradigm brings forth a trap, keeping the colonized and the colonizer tethered and hence dooms the latter to an endless in-between space.

Moreover, Bhabha's theory raises the question of whether the colonized can maintain his/her sanity, being in an ambivalent space, "always the split screen of the self and its doubling".(156) Indeed, both Jean Rhys and Julia Kristeva cold-shoulder this "borderline experience" to which the hybrid colonized is relegated by manifesting feats of mimicry, for the voice that comes out of such entrapment is psychotic.

BHABHA'S "MIMIC (WO)MAN" OR KRISTEVA'S "ABJECT SUBJECT"?

Just as Bhabha describes the "[I] of the mimic man" with no presence of individuality behind its mask, Kristeva remarks "the discourse of borderline subjects" is comprised entirely by "abjection". She defines this feature as "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules", and what is "above all ambiguity" (4). This ambiguity, or in Bhabha's terms, ambivalence, is what that epitomize the colonial mimic man. A man that according to Bhabha becomes "his alienated image; not self and Other but the Otherness of the self inscribed in the perverse palimpsest of colonial identity" (44). This ambiguity, Kristeva continues, results in the collapse of self-limits (5). The borderline mimic man, is neither subject nor object, neither inside nor outside, neither here nor there. As Bhabha puts it, he "speaks from where it is not" (47). Citing an example of Hamlet as a borderline subject, Kristeva contends:

Father or son, meaning or non-meaning, to be or not to be? Just when I prove the meaning—as, simultaneously, actor, author, stage director—I completely disappear(s). I—subject of the meaning, of the whole meaning—am (is) the mad—or dead—subject. (106-107)

In fact, suffering from an ambivalent status, the hybrid resembles a borderline patient who has trapped in a mimetic oscillation, being simultaneously the same and other. Consequently, Bhabha's mimics will ultimately lose their tracks in semblances and masks, fighting for a life without any place of their own to live. In that case, based on Kristeva's theory, next part is going to discuss how Bhabha's borderline subject is abjected to something wild and irreducible to language.

ABJECT REPRESENTATION OF MIMIC (WO) MAN IN *WIDE SARGASSO SEA*

In her "Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection," Kristeva writes that what causes abjection is "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (4). Antoinette has been treated this way throughout her life; she has been derided, taunted and observed as something between subject/object, White/Black, past/present: Partly, her present inability to successfully associate with Whites and thereby create an identity, has roots in her family's history with slavery. In the eyes of the black islanders of the West Indies, whiteness is correlated with the prosperous planter class: "Real white people, they got gold money. Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger" (Rhys 22). The reference to "old time white people" stands for Antoinette's pedigree. Before the Emancipation Act, they were wealthy slave owners whose sexual relationship with the slaves had besmirched their White race and honor. Antoinette's ambiguity of skin color also contributes to her abjection from the English class when she refers to "a song about a white cockroach. That's me. That's what they call all of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave traders" (93).

Antoinette has been rejected and disliked since her childhood even in her own family. Indeed, for her, the abjection of self emanates prominently from the relationship she had with her own mother, Anette. Kristeva explains how the abject is prominently related to our primal repression; how it exposes us to "our earliest attempts to release the hold of maternal entity – thanks to autonomy of language" (13). Indeed, one has to become "homologous to another in order to become himself" (13), and then abject the maternal entity to become a subject. Yet all Antoinette could identify with and attempt to abject was a distant mother who not only refused to have a close relationship with her, she has ignored her girl's presence. In a way, Antoinette cannot abject her mother since instead her mother have already abjected her: "she pushed me away, coldly, without a word, as if she had decided once and for all that I was useless to her" (20).

Having been unable to pass the primal repression for what Kristeva calls "maternal anguish", Antoinette is "unable to be satiated within the encompassing symbolic". (8). As the consequence, the child is not able to name or to symbolize what s/he has lost and the lost object remains unnamable. This can also be seen in the way Antoinette avails of language: Antoinette only dares to tell her secrets in the pitch dark of nights and during the daytime she stands mute as a way to stifle them. As Rochester says, "Shall I wake her up and listen to the things she says, whispers, in darkness. Not by day" (54), and Antoinette asserts, "Say nothing and it may not be true" (35).

Being incapable of passing through the symbolic realm and availing of language, the heroine does not achieve the capacity to become a unified subject and hence cannot ex-

press her individuality as 'I'. According to Kristeva, what characterizes the abject person is that when she fails to reach her subjectivity through the symbolic order, she struggles to derive her being from an all-powerful, "other". She writes, a person experiences abjection "only if an Other has settled in place and stead of what will be her. An Other who precedes and possesses her and through such possession cause her to be" (10). In fact, since the abject finds her/his existence within the Other, s/he looks for her/his sense of loss in the Other and pursues pseudo-objects represented by the Other which offer her a modicum of contentment. Kristeva further contends, "the abject is in short a stray. He is on a journey, during the night, the end of which keeps receding. He has a sense of the danger, of the loss that the pseudo-object! attracting him represents for him" (5). In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the pseudo-objects Antoinette pursues are definitely those images that connote pure Whiteness.

When Mr. Mason "so sure of himself, so without a doubt English" marries her mother, Antoinette mentions, "We ate English food now, beef and mutton, pies and puddings. I was glad to be like an English girl" (32). Reveling in the cheers of White culture, Antoinette struggles to escape from the third space of hybridity. In fact, there is no sign of mimicry which "marks those moments of civil disobedience within the discipline of civility: signs of spectacular resistance." (Bhabha 121), or no hint at the time when "the words of the master become the […] -the warlike, subaltern sign of the native." (121).

Throughout the story, Antoinette tries to identify with " The Miller's Daughter", "a lovely English girl with brown curls and blue eyes and a dress slipping off her shoulders" (Rhys 32). In her eyes, "The Miller's Daughter" is an epitome of the pure English woman and one of the few clues she has in order to look alluring to her English husband. Yet, there is neither sign of mimicry in her request which "marks those moments of civil disobedience within the discipline of civility: signs of spectacular resistance" (Bhabha 121), nor signs of mimicry which "represents an ironic compromise"(86). Indeed, mimicking an English woman, Antoinette aspires to capture her husband's heart and grant him the view of the woman he would admire, but she fails. Instead, Rochester regards his wife as an ugly colored patch jeopardizing the entirety of his pure culture: "She was wearing the white dress I had admired, but it had slipped untidily over one shoulder and seemed too large for her. I watched her holding her left wrist with her right hand, an annoying habit" (115). Therefore, Antoinette's passionate mimicry of the white pseudo-objects is the response to both society and family's abjection, negligent of the fact that mimicry itself comprises the threat of abjecting one from her own self.

Kristeva explains how the apogee of abjection occurs when "the subject, weary of fruitless attempts to identify with something on the outside, finds the impossible within; when it finds that the impossible constitutes its very being, that it is none other than abject" (5). In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette struggles to identify with Rochester himself and later his country England, as her desperate last attempt to achieve a sense of identity: "I never wished to live before I knew you […] Why did you make me want to live? Why did you do that to me?" (54), "I have been too unhappy, I thought, it cannot last, being so unhappy, it would kill you. I will be a different person when I live in England—" (66). She further fetishizes Rochester by telling him "You look like a king, an emperor" (62). Indeed, Antoinette is framing his identity so that he appears heroic, as she desires him to appear. Yet to Rochester, Antoinette is no more than an object to be possessed, to be ruled upon, as an inferior other. As he says "She's mad but mine, mine" (99). By compelling Antoinette to lose connection to herself, by pushing her to the borders of otherness, Rochester thinks he can rule over her. Thus by changing her name to Bertha and treating her as a doll only to suffocate her voice anytime he wishes, he buries her in the grave of abjects forever. As Antoinette says, "The doll had a doll's voice, a breathless but curiously indifferent voice […] and 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" (107). And this is where according to Kristeva Antoinette finds out that she becomes abject even to herself. Kristeva continues, "abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin; nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of memory" (5). When Antoinette ends up seeing herself outside the human contact, she feels inside the coercion of being as something tarnished, repugnant, abject:

> And if the razor grass cut my legs and arms I would think 'It's better than people.' Black ants or red ones, tall nests swarming with white ants, rain that soaked me to the skin – once I saw a snake. All better than people. Better. Better, better than people. Watching the red and yellow flowers in the sun thinking of nothing, it was as if a door opened and I was someone else, something else. Not myself any longer. (16)

Looking at her image in a mirror, Antoinette doesn't quite identify with the woman she sees there: "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 […] Now they have taken everything away. What am I doing in this place and who am I?" (107). Indeed, being pushed to the limits of the symbolic order, she cannot find herself as a whole identity. The further Antoinette's subjectivity is subjugated and suppressed, the more she becomes abjected by others and herself and the harder it is for her to identify with her own image. Thus, being dispossessed of all individuality and identity, she becomes unable to fully be a part of the symbolic order and hence manifests her existence through madness. Consequently, Antoinette get locked in the attic in England and from then on she no longer sees herself in the mirror other than an abject apparition of a mimic woman "who they say haunts this place" (111), "It was then that I saw her – the ghost. The woman with streaming hair. She was surrounded by a gilt frame but I knew her" (111-112).

CONCLUSION

Mimicry, repetition and slippage of meaning do not end in a prolific hybridity, as Homi. K. Bhabha asserts.

Julia Kristeva is among those Psychoanalytic critics remarking that mimicry can create the hazards of absorbing the norms of the dominant culture and hence results in different

forms of oppression, namely delirium and abjection. This study also challenges Bhabha's theory, citing instances from the masterpiece of Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*. While Bhabha accentuates the importance of mimicry for coloniz-ers as a form of resistance against White hegemony, Rhys is more critical of its threats. Her novel indicates that the hybrid woman's mimicry of whiteness subjects her to a liminal real-ity that not only make her incapable of distorting the master's text, it dooms her to get lost in a constant psychotic double-ness. In fact, suffering from an ambivalent status, the hybrid resembles a borderline patient stuck in a mimetic oscillation, being simultaneously the same and other, for he exists on either side of the mirror and hence will never be able to experience the real order. In that case, the condition of Bhabha's mimic (wo)man as an anomaly or abject never alters. Since with regard to Bhabha's theoretical framework, the colonized cannot deem himself anything more than a sign/object of lack and difference which leads him to abjec-tion. Moreover, being in the position of an object, traps him in the language of the master and he will never be able to return his gaze. In fact, when Bhabha gives the colonized no chance to speak on his own, mimicry becomes the way for him to get back at the master's text in order to topple down its sovereignty. Yet he is negligent of the fact that mimicry itself contains the threat of getting abjected by absorbing the norms of the colonizer; especially when one gets lost in the ambiva-lence of masks, and forever shatters his/her subjectivity.

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