

COLONIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MADNESS IN *WIDE SARGASSO SEA*: A FANONIAN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the madness represented in Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys as a result of colonial domination and racial othering. The research draws from the theory of colonial psychology put forward by Frantz Fanon, and argues that the fragmentation of Antoinette's mind is not a personal pathology, but the product of sustained colonial violence which has shaped the identity, consciousness and emotional stability of the colonized. The study adopts the qualitative interpretive method which is close reading and thematic analysis of the novel. It focuses on salient issues like racial rejection, narrative control, spatial confinement, and the construction of "madness" in colonial discourse. Results indicate that Antoinette's psychological breakdown is caused by her unstable identity as a Creole subject, her exclusion to both the black and white communities, and her eventual erasure through Rochester's colonial power. The study concludes that madness in the novel is not a clinical state but a way of controlling, and that the novel itself demonstrates that it is socially constructed and that the novel's subject matter, of alienation, inferiority and fragmentation of identity in colonial contexts, is a Fanonian concern.

Keywords: Colonial psychology; Frantz Fanon; *Wide Sargasso Sea*; madness; racial othering; identity fragmentation; postcolonial literature; internalized colonialism; psychological alienation; narrative control

INTRODUCTION

Postcolonial literature often explores the psychological and cultural consequences of colonialism, focusing on the lingering effects of colonialism on identity, memory, and subjectivity even after the end of the imperial era. Fragmented identity and psychological distress in colonized people are one of the major issues in this area. In *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Jean Rhys examines these

themes with literary depth in the character of Antoinette Cosway, whose gradual psychological breakdown has been the subject of numerous interpretations. This study claims, however, that Antoinette's condition is not a mental illness, but rather a socially and historically created effect of colonial domination. This research draws from Frantz Fanon's theory of colonial psychology that

describes colonial systems as operating not just politically and economically, but also psychologically, influencing the consciousness and identity of the colonized. In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Fanon shows that the internalization of inferiority, alienation, and identity fragmentation are a product of colonialism in the colonized subject. These ideas offer a seminal framework for comprehending the psychological breakdown of Antoinette as a Fanonian expression of racial rejection and cultural displacement. This study focuses on the racial othering, the control of narratives, and the spatial confinement and the construction of madness within colonial discourse. Antoinette is in a liminal space in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, neither fully part of the white colonial society nor of the black community. This in-betweenness exposes her to continuous forms of rejection, which ultimately contribute to her psychological fragmentation. This is further complicated by her relationship with Rochester, who symbolizes colonial authority, redefining, renaming and confining her identity. This study also places Antoinette's experience in the context of wider postcolonial and critical psychological studies that focus on the fact that colonialism is a psychological system. Theories like Zubizarreta's (2024) Colonial Psychological Complex and empirical and critical research on the internalized colonial mentality also help to reinforce this claim. This research also brings a new perspective to postcolonial literary criticism by a Fanonian psychological reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, challenging traditional interpretations of Antoinette's madness as an individual pathology. Rather, it frames her psychological collapse as a structural effect of colonial violence, racial rejection and epistemic domination. The paper also draws attention to the importance of postcolonial psychology in the analysis of literary depictions of identity, trauma and psychological anguish.

Research Question

1. How does the novel portray Antoinette's madness as a psychological outcome of racial othering and colonial domination?

2. How does Rochester's narrative authority contribute to the construction and reinforcement of Antoinette's madness in *Wide Sargasso Sea*?

Research Objective

1. To analyze the depiction of Antoinette's mental fragmentation as a result of colonial oppression using Frantz Fanon's ideas on the psychological effects of colonization.
2. To examine how Rochester's control over naming, narration, and interpretation functions as a colonial mechanism that suppresses Antoinette's identity and constructs her psychological instability through a Fanonian perspective.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The recent literature has shown that colonialism is not only a political and economic system, but a very psychological structure, one that continues to shape identity, subjectivity, and mental health in postcolonial societies. This article introduces the Colonial Psychological Complex (CPC) by Zubizarreta (2024), which conceptualizes colonialism as a system that creates long-lasting effects including Colonial Stockholm Syndrome, Colonial Narcissism Syndrome and Colonial Social Conditioning. These dynamics can be manifested in a fragmented or interconnected way and can contribute to identity instability and psychological distress, according to Zubizarreta (2024). This framework is especially relevant to the study of the ways in which colonial trauma is represented in literature, because of the way in which the colonial subject internalizes the power of the coloniser in his or her mind.

In the same way, Utsey et al (2015) empirically prove the psychological implications of internalised colonial mentality among Ghanaian young adults. They concluded that colonial ideology is negatively related to self-esteem and positively related to anxiety and depression. Importantly, the internalization of inferiority related to physical appearance and cultural identity were stronger among individuals. The results of this research indicate that the mechanism of colonialism is psychological conditioning, which is carried out continuously in society, so as to make people think they are unworthy and live in a culture different from their own. Themes such as this offer a psychological

underpinning for the understanding of Antoinette's identity crisis in *Wide Sargasso Sea* as an expression of internalized colonial rejection. Pulido-Martinez and Giraldo Tamayo (2024) further explore the connection between psychology and coloniality. They identify interpretative repertoires that show how psychological knowledge itself reflects colonial ideas of what is normal, rational and deviant. Their work highlights the fact that often psychology reinforces colonial power structures by pathologizing difference instead of situating it within historical and socio-political frameworks. This perspective is important when reading the literature of postcolonialism because it challenges the assumption that psychological suffering is distinct from the colonial history.

Likewise, Wright (2017) critiques the historical entanglement of educational psychology with colonialism and explains how psychological approaches often fail to account for structural inequalities in focusing on individual pathology. In this work, Wright showcases decolonised approaches to the study of psychological "disorders", which are often created by Eurocentric norms that ignore race, power and historical trauma. This critique helps to explain the meaning of Antoinette's madness as a socially constructed category, rather than as a psychological illness.

Frantz Fanon is still the most important theorist of the psychological impact of colonialism. Fanon's work offers a basic analysis of oppression, and he shows how colonialism produces psychological alienation, identity fragmentation and internalized inferiority (Hilton, 2011). The term "zone of non-being" refers to Fanon's idea that the colonized subject does not exist in the eyes of the colonizer and is not human. This theoretical perspective is crucial in understanding Antoinette's marginalization by both the black and white people, and her eventual erasure by the colonial power in *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

Elaref and Hassan (2021) emphasize Fanon's argument in *The Wretched of the Earth* that violence is a structural response to colonial oppression. They observe that colonialism is a system of dehumanization and that resistance, including psychological resistance, is a reaction to

the violence of this system. This theoretical stance is followed by an interpretation of Antoinette's psychological breakdown as a reaction to protracted epistemic and emotional violence.

In the context of colonial trauma, Hilton (2011) and Fanon's overall work indicate the presence of unprocessed grief, psychological fragmentation, and identity dislocation. These ideas directly shape the reading of Antoinette's mental breakdown as a result of racial rejection and colonial domination as a Fanonian outcome.

Postcolonial literary studies also confirm the concept of the divided identity in a colonial context. In this article, Khanna (2021) compares Chinua Achebe and Salman Rushdie and how colonialism affects the continuity of culture, and the creation of hybrid, unstable identities. Achebe emphasizes the destruction of culture by the Europeans; Rushdie is concerned with the breakdown of identity as shown through narrative hybridity and magical realism. The comparative perspective here shows that identity fragmentation is not an isolated psychological condition, but rather a central postcolonial condition. These literary depictions are very similar to those in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, in which Antoinette's identity is continuously destabilized from racial categorization, cultural rejection, and narrative control imposed by Rochester. Both Wright (2017) and Pulido-Martinez and Giraldo Tamayo (2024) point psychological knowledge systems are historically embedded in colonial power structures. They claim that Eurocentric models present a view of mental normality which excludes colonized subjects. This validates Antoinette's imprisonment and her classification as "mad," which implies that the concept of "madness" is a colonial construct that helps to control and silence identities that fall outside of the norm.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in literary analysis. The methodology is interpretive, focusing on textual meaning-making rather than numerical measurement. It seeks to explore the psychological fragmentation of the protagonist through forms of racial, cultural, and spatial domination.

Research Design

The research method used is qualitative descriptive analytical because it can interpret the narrative structures, character representation and the ideological formations in the novel in depth. The study is guided by Frantz Fanon's psycho-colonial theory specifically the ideas of "the zone of non-being", "the internalized inferiority", and "racial alienation" which form a lens for understanding Antoinette's psychological breakdown.

Theoretical Framework

The analysis is grounded in Fanon's theory of colonial psychology, used to interpret the way in which colonial power works not just externally, but internally also, as it affects identity, consciousness and mental stability. The conceptual backbone of the analysis is his concepts of identity fragmentation, inferiority complex and racial rejection. These are complemented by postcolonial notions of naming, identity, and narrative authority.

Data Collection

The primary source of data is Jean Rhys's novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Close reading of the novel is carried out to gather selected excerpts from it, and key passages are selected to represent:

Antoinette's break-down and psychological development

Instances of racial othering and rejection

Rochester's narrative control and naming practices

Confinement and spatial displacement

Expressions of madness, memory and fragmentation

Secondary empirical data is not being used because study is text based and interpretive.

DATA ANALYSIS

Psychological Impact of Racial Rejection

The theory of colonial psychology by Frantz Fanon helps explain how racial rejection produces psychological damage that can occur in the colonized subject, and which can be deep and often irreversible. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon claims that the exploitation of land and labour is not the only thing colonialism does. It

also devalues the black identity systemically, by making whiteness the norm of intelligence, beauty and humanity. This is what he calls a "zone of non-being," a space where the colonized "subject" feels invisible, inferior, and fundamentally displaced from both self and society

This Fanonian approach can be read through Antoinette's psychological breakdown in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. As a child, she has experienced racial rejection from white colonisers and from other black communities who label her as a "white cockroach", a term that marks her as racially ambiguous and socially untrustworthy. This double rejection places her in an unstable identity situation, in which she is fully accepted neither by the colonial order, nor by the Black community. The subject of this racial in-betweenness suffers from profound alienation, Fanon says, in which the subject comes to internalize rejection and thus experiences self-division.

This internal fragmentation is revealed in Antoinette's narrative consciousness. Her constant fears, disorientations, and desire for safety are due to a mind that tries to create stable meaning in a world that continually rejects her sense of belonging. Her memories of Coulibri, her mother's breakdown, and the burning of her childhood home intensify this instability. These are psychological imprints of racial and social rejection. Her lack of a secure sense of racial identity makes it difficult for her to maintain a coherent sense of self, and she becomes more dependent on others to validate her sense of self, often Rochester, a figure of colonial authority.

Fanon also points out that when the colonized subject is rejected, it is likely that a sense of inferiority will be internalized, and that the colonized subject begins to view themselves through the eye of the oppressor. This is reflected in Antoinette's developing distrust and confusion over her own identity. She begins to question her own memories, relationships and even her own sanity. The psychological erosion is caused by the fact that Fanon says that colonial alienation is not just an outside phenomenon, but an internal one as well, and it changes the consciousness itself.

In addition, Antoinette's ultimate psychological breakdown is open to the interpretation that it is the result of long-term racial rejection and

emotional rejection. She is isolated in England, culturally unfamiliar, and unrecognized by Rochester and is completely estranged from any stabilizing identity structure. For Fanon, this is not madness in itself, but a structural result of colonial violence that undermines coherent selfhood.

Racial rejection in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is not just social rejection, it is a very psychological process that creates fragmentation, alienation, and mental disintegration. From a Fanonian perspective, Antoinette's state of madness is an example of the way in which colonial systems produce their madness by not providing the colonized subject with a secure position in the symbolic order of race and identity.

Rochester as Agent of Colonial Domination

From a Fanonian perspective, Rochester becomes a symbolic presence of colonial oppression, reproducing the psychological and cultural frameworks of colonial power in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Although he is not a colonial administrator, his identity as an English gentleman and landowner places him in the ideological framework of colonialism. In addition to political control, Fanon also claims that colonial control is maintained through everyday processes of naming, classification, and psychological possession, as evident in Rochester's relationship with Antoinette and the Caribbean space.

Rochester's narration reflects "colonial gaze," that is, it attempts to interpret the Caribbean as exotic, excessive, and disorderly. The landscape is often characterized as "overwhelming" in terms of colour, heat and density, indicating both fascination and fear. This sensory excess is not neutral, however, it is a way of identifying the colony as irrational and in need of control. In Fanonian perspective this reflects the colonizer's need to impose order on a space that threatens his psychological stability.

The direct colonial domination is expressed in his relationship with Antoinette. Rather than engaging with her as a subject Rochester tries to redefine and rename her, to deny her her Creole identity. He refuses to call her by her given name and instead calls her "Bertha", as Fanon calls it the colonial act of erasure, or the phenomenon of

naming and identity being built in Europe's way. In this act Rochester takes over the self-definition of Antoinette, giving it a colonial identity for his cultural context.

Furthermore, Rochester's suspicion and emotional isolation reflect the colonial mindset that views difference as threat. He sees Antoinette's cultural background, family history, and expressions of emotion as indications of instability, not complexity. This misreading is not an error, but is structurally rooted in colonial ideology, that Fanon explains turns the colonized subject into a stereotype of excess and irrationality. As Rochester's control grows stronger, Antoinette is slowly isolated both physically at Granbois and mentally in her marriage.

Rochester's power in economic and legal terms further strengthen his role as an agent of domination. He tries to control Antoinette's inheritance and eventually locks her up and makes marriage a way of gaining property. Fanon's analysis of colonial possession is relevant here, the colonized subject is not only governed but owned. In effect, Antoinette is an object within a colonial system of exchange, her identity is made subservient to property relations.

But there is another way in which Rhys undermines Rochester's authority by revealing Rochester's psychological instability. His narrative expose anxiety, jealousy and a sense of alienation in the Caribbean environment. This indicates that colonial domination has not sufficient psychological security, it is characterised by fear of the Other and fear of losing control. Fanon also claims that the colonizer is haunted by the instability of the system he supports, and Rochester's paranoia is an example of this.

Finally, Rochester is the representation of colonial power through language in naming, perception and possessing. But his power is not natural and not permanent, it is artificial and is always in danger. This characterization exposes colonial power as oppressive and as weak, as it relies on psychological control as well as material control.

Construction of "Madness"

"Madness" is not a psychological state in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, but rather it is a socially and ideologically constructed label, influenced by

colonial and patriarchal power. It is suggested that based on Frantz Fanon's theory, madness is a product of oppressive structures that break the identity of the subject, especially when individual lacks recognition, belonging and coherent self-definition. Antoinette's "insanity" is therefore not a medical diagnosis, but rather a product of systemic violence.

From the start Antoinette is placed in unstable social groups, neither fully embraced by the white colonial elite nor the black community. This in-betweenness is the basis for her subsequent "diagnosis" of being mad. In colonial societies, Fanon highlights, there are pathological terms for the non-conformist. It is therefore not Antoinette's difference in terms of cultural hybridity but rather as abnormality that is being interpreted. She is made emotionally sensitive, isolated and traumatized and her feelings become symptoms of mental illness.

Rochester is a key player in the construction of this madness. His narrative voice is the one that interprets Antoinette's actions through the lens of a European rationalist who equates emotional expression/cultural difference with instability. By not listening to her point of view, his actions help to constantly deny her subjectivity. He changes her name to "Bertha", symbolically finishing the psychological redefinition and making her identity into something foreign and pathological in his perspective.

This construction is further illustrated by the convent episodes and by Antoinette's dislocated memories. In the convent, where she is placed, she must abide by a system of rules that emphasize silence, obedience, and emotional restraint. These structures can be used for protection but they also limit her expressive selfhood. Her dreams, hallucinatory images and changing perceptions are then read as signs of instability, not trauma and displacement.

The idea of internalized alienation is relevant here. Antoinette starts to feel herself as others see her. Her relationships are breaking down and her surroundings are becoming hostile, and she is losing the external references upon which she relies to maintain her identity. This breakdown is interpreted by others as madness but is actually a

reaction to long-term psychological and social rejection.

Importantly, Rhys challenges the notion of "madness" as an authority by placing it in a subjective narrative format. The final section doesn't sound incoherent when you listen to Antoinette's voice, it is just that this voice is split apart by the strain of being confined and isolated. The iconic fire scene, which is traditionally interpreted as a moment of madness, might also be regarded as an expression of agency in a system that has already labeled her as being mad. In this respect, madness can be defined as an outside imposition and as a restricted type of opposition in oppressive situations.

The construction of madness is therefore highly political in the novel. It comes out of the interaction of colonial domination, gender oppression and racial othering. Through a Fanonian lens, Antoinette's "insanity" is not a pathology of her own but a condition that is socially produced under colonial discourse and why suffering is translated as a disease to be controlled and contained.

Confinement in England

Antoinette's last confinement in England is the result of her psychological and existential breakdown, which aligns with Fanon's theory of colonial alienation. Fanon explains in *Black Skin, White Masks* that the colonized subject's identity is lost when they are taken away from familiar cultural and spatial references, because identity is maintained through social recognition and cultural continuity. Antoinette is completely separated from the Caribbean setting of her past that has formed her sense of self, though it has been fragmented. This spatial displacement further intensifies her psychological collapse, because memory, language, and place no longer provide her with a sense of self.

The English setting itself is a symbol of colonial containment. Thornfield Hall is cold, rigid and enclosed, while the Caribbean is vibrant and excessive. But, while in the Caribbean Antoinette is destabilized by racial and social rejection, England is an erasure. In this place she is physically concealed, socially isolated and linguistically silenced. Fanon's concept of the "zone of non-

being” becomes fully realized, for Antoinette is no longer seen as a subject in any social or symbolic system.

The patriarchy also reinforces her confinement. She is put under the control of Grace Poole and then taken out of the public life altogether. This domestic arrest is an illustration of the intersection of colonial and gender power where total dependency is created. Rochester's move to confine her to England is the final stage in her psychological colonization, which started in the Caribbean she is no longer named or misinterpreted, she is now completely removed from the potential of self-definition or resistance. Antoinette's narrative voice in this section reflects extreme fragmentation and temporal disorientation. She has trouble separating past and present, dream and reality, memory and perception. But this disintegration is not just irrationality, it is the breakdown of the coherent identity in the face of prolonged alienation, as Fanon explains. If there is no social validation or culture, there will be no stability of the self, and it will be split within itself. This existential rupture is expressed in the questions she poses repeatedly “What am I doing here and who am I?”

The conclusion of the novel is a fire sequence, marks the climax of her psychology. It was read classically as madness but also as a last moment of existential affirmation in total confinement as read by Fanon. Devoid of identity, language and the recognition of relationships, Antoinette Antoinette transforms destruction into symbolic release. The fire is no longer a means of destruction but also a means of expression, the only power that remains is that of self-destruction or escape through fantasy, this reflects the paradox of colonial psychology.

Importantly, Rhys's last breakdown is not just a psychological breakdown, but the endpoint of colonial and patriarchal violence. In England, Antoinette's life becomes completely isolated, both the interpretive and physical space close around her subjectivity. Dialogue, negotiation, resistance is no longer there, only silence and internal vision.

In Fanon's terms, Antoinette's ultimate mental collapse is not a personal one, but one that is generated from the structural effects of colonial

uprooting, racial rejection and gendered imprisonment. The final expression of colonial control is the confinement of the colonized subject in England I, for identity is not to be assimilated or dominated, it is contained, erased, and made invisible within the metropolitan centre of the empire.

Discussion

The results of this study show that Antoinette's psychological breakdown in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is not an individual or clinical expression of madness, but a structurally engendered condition that is caused by colonial, racial and patriarchal systems of power. As a result, her sense of fragmentation is not a psychological flaw, but the inevitable result of enduring racial rejection, cultural dislocation, and epistemic violence, as revealed by Frantz Fanon's theory of colonial psychology.

One of the key findings of the analysis is that colonialism is manifested both externally and internally. Externally, it regulates social hierarchy by means of racial classification, economic control and cultural domination. Internally, it brings about inferiority complexes and a splitting of the colonized subject as Fanon (1952) claims. Antoinette's growing sense of self-doubt, her difficulty sustaining self-narration, and her growing reliance on Rochester are all examples of this internalisation of colonial ideology. This is how Fanon has argued that colonial power ultimately wins over, when it is psychologically absorbed up by the colonised subject.

The study also emphasizes the importance of racial rejection as a psychological mechanism of fragmentation. Antoinette's status as a Creole subject place her in an unstable identity category in the middle of two world where she is rejected by both the black and white communities. Such “in-betweenness” results in what Fanon calls the “zone of non-being” or alienation, which is the lack of complete recognition by any social order. Through the analysis of the novel, it is found that this double exclusion is not only social, but psychological as well, leading to identity instability, fear and emotional disintegration.

One of the important findings is Rochester's role in epistemic domination and psychological

domination. He has not only a legal and economic power, but a discursive one too, since he owns the power to name, interpret, and tell the narratives. Renaming Antoinette as 'Bertha' is a symbolic erasure, a reinforcement of Fanon's point that "colonialism is a restructuring of identity through linguistic violence". Rochester's misunderstanding of Antoinette's cultural context and emotional reactions is another example of an ideology of colonization pathologizing difference. In this regard, the madness is not found but manufactured in the process of colonial interpretation. The discussion also demonstrates how the novel destabilizes the notion of madness by making it a constructed and political one. Antoinette's supposed "insanity" is the result of a cycle of silencing, confinement and misrecognition. The convent, domestic space, and the final space of confinement in England all serve as disciplinary spaces which limit agency and promote dependency. These spaces play an active part in her psychological fragmentation, making madness not a pre-existing condition but a socially produced product of oppressive structures. Moreover, the examination of Antoinette's last period of confinement in England shows the full realization of Fanon's "zone of non-being." Here she is physically segregated, socially effaced, and linguistically silenced. But her final fire sequence complicates this reading by adding a moment of ambiguous agency. While traditionally interpreted as madness, it can also be understood as symbolic resistance within total confinement. This aligns with Fanon's (1961) assertion that when other modes of expression are closed, colonial violence can result in extreme modes of response. The results overall validate the argument that *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a form of madness, not a mental disorder but a condition of identity fragmentation created by colonialism. Antoinette's mental collapse can thus be best understood as a result of the interplay of various systems of colonial domination, racial exclusion, gender oppression, and narrative control. It reflects the larger postcolonial critique that the terms of madness, terms of psychology, must be used with caution in their historical and ideological context, rather than as neutral clinical terms. Lastly, this study adds to the postcolonial literary and psychological

studies by reiterating that colonialism is a psychological system of power as well as a historical or political one. It shows how literary depictions of madness can expose the hidden dynamics of colonial ideology, particularly its capacity to create fragmented subjectivities and to discipline identity through discourse, space, and language.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore Antoinette's madness in *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a psychological manifestation of colonial domination, using Frantz Fanon's theory of colonial psychology as the central interpretive framework. The analysis shows that while Antoinette's mental breakdown is neither an individual nor purely clinical condition, but a historically and ideologically constructed state of being that has been a result of racial rejection, cultural displacement and patriarchal-colonial control. The literature review and textual analysis reveal that the colonialism is an external system of domination as well as an internal psychological force. The study is based on Fanon (1952, 1961) and validates the production of inferiority complex, identity fragmentation and alienation within the colonized subject by colonial power. This is evident in Antoinette's experiences as she is continually racialized, excluded from society, and abandoned by her emotions. One of the main findings of this study is that the madness in the novel is a social, not biological phenomenon. Antoinette's "madness" is only diagnosed when she refuses to live in accordance with the norms of colonial and patriarchal society. The process of Rochester's renaming, interpretation, and enclosure of her serves to further signal this, as does the way she is handled by colonial power, which not only has control over physical space but it also has control over the meaning of the narrative and the psychological reality. In this way, madness is a means of containment, not a diagnosis of mental illness. The study also finds that spatial and institutional confinement is a key factor in the psychological breakdown of Antoinette. Each space she goes through from Coulibri to the convent to England, contributes to the softening of her identity. Her last time in England is the realization of Fanon's "zone of non-

being,” a space of erasure from recognition, language, and sociality. This demonstrates that colonialism ultimately creates invisibility as the last form of psychological violence. This erasure is also punctuated by moments of ambiguity, such as the fire scene, which may be interpreted as a case of collapse or resistance. It implies that there are also aspects of agency in extreme oppression, though these are usually fragmented and not coherent. This is in keeping with Fanon's perspective that the violence of the coloniser produces psychological damage and counter-violence. In conclusion, this study suggests that Antoinette's madness can be interpreted as a Fanonian response to colonial trauma, rather than a personal psychopathology. Her divided identity is a reflection of the postcolonial situation in which subjectivity is constantly being formed and fractured by the system of racial and cultural domination. The study thus reinforces the view that colonialism is a very psychological dimension and that its influence in shaping identities is still felt long after its formal end. Lastly, this study helps enrich the field of postcolonial literary studies by showing how the novel of psychological breakdown can work as a critique on colonial discourse, as *Wide Sargasso Sea* does. It demonstrates that books can uncover the hidden workings of colonial power, especially the manufacturing of madness, the regulation of identity, and erase the other modes of selfhood.

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