Chapter 3

The Voice of the Racial Other

*Wide Sargasso Sea and Foe as Postcolonial Countertexts*

The web of interrelationship between texts in which a text holds a critical and creative relationship with another text, by subjecting to alteration the value systems and discursive practices it entails is a mode of symbolic resistance. The new text interrogates the assumptions and practices of the previous one and writes back to its significations by unearthing hitherto undetected aspects of the discourse. The practice of writing back to the preconceived notions of the canonical texts is part of the theoretical resistance offered to hegemonic centrist systems and this is enabled by the emergence of new discursive practices and the altered perspectives. The response to a previous text gives rise to intertexts and countertexts that serve either as critique or commentary of the previous texts. These intertexts change the way the subjectivities are perceived and those in the margins of canonicity reclaim their voice and presence through them.

Postcolonialism uses the web of textual interrelationships that intertextuality offers to challenge the textual positions of authority of the great canonic works. The Eurocentric discourse has been dominating the world of the word where those who speak a different tongue are held on the other side of civilization. As per the theories of colonialism, it was up to the European white male to don the garb of the agent of civilization and possessor of culture. Postcolonialism is a strategy of asserting the native spirit, a method of writing back to the colonialist assumptions and if need be,
use the same tools of the dominant discourses to spite them and to counter them. Hence the texts of literature become a potential site for rewriting in which ‘Calibans’ make use of the benefits of language and literary tools to thwart the dominant ideology’s plans to perpetrate the deviated and distorted images of the natives through their literary masterpieces. Part of this strategy of challenge and interrogation is done through subverting the master narratives that bear the mark of colonialism. The other way is to create exclusively native works which write the Europeans out of their discourses and simultaneously trace and establish an unbroken chain of the native tradition.

Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* and J.M. Coetzee’s *Foe* are valid countertexts offering symbolic resistance to the monologic texts that glorify canonicity such as Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* and Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* respectively. They offer the alternate readings from the point of view of the marginalized, both of the gendered Other and the racial Other. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin say that “the notion of double colonization- i.e. those women in formerly colonized countries were doubly colonized by both imperial and patriarchal ideologies- became a catch-phrase of postcolonial and feminist discourses…” (*The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* 250).

Apprehending *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* as postcolonial countertexts is based on the concept of the canonical counter-discourse which “is a strategy in which the post-colonial writer takes up a character, or characters or the basic assumptions of a British canonical text, subverting the text for post-colonial purposes” (Tiffin, “Post-Colonial Literatures and Counter-Discourse” 22).
Wide Sargasso Sea gives the postcolonial reading of the Creole experience set in Dominica of the West Indies. It is the story of the regeneration of Bertha Mason in Jane Eyre who is endowed with a past and a narrative persona in Wide Sargasso Sea. As it deals with a woman’s struggle to be heard and seen and her attempt to resist the dominance of patriarchy, Wide Sargasso Sea is considered a feminist intertext. As it rewrites the colonial equations from the point of view of the racial Other, it is a postcolonial countertext. Along with Antoinette, the protagonist of the text, characters created in native colours, like Christophine, also serve as a site for the engraving of the postcolonial experience. Though Antoinette herself is a figure of interrogation and challenge, the saga of resistance is given an added vigour in the character of Christophine.

If in Wide Sargasso Sea, Antoinette is the symbol of the postcolonial and feminist rewriting, in Foe the feminist resistance is conveyed by the figure of Susan Barton while the symbol of postcolonial resistance is in the tongueless figure of Friday whose voiceless self survives the ineffectual control of the dominant discourse. As Susan Barton narrates the story of Cruso from her perspective, the patriarchal dominance of Cruso is subjected to a feminist challenge rendering Foe as a feminist intertext that upholds the woman’s discourse. This text serves as a valid postcolonial countertext by putting forth an unmistakable voice of resistance of the native spirit by its transplantation of Friday from the position of ideological subservience that he holds in the colonialist text Robinson Crusoe to one of discursive significance in Foe. The strategic twist that happens at the supposed end of the text in which Friday remains as the lone live presence decisively conveys the counter-discursive voice of the
postcolonial. Hence both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* are deemed as feminist intertexts and postcolonial counter-discursive narratives. This chapter would attempt to throw light on these texts as postcolonial countertexts aiming to reclaim the voice of the marginalized, submerged in the colonial dominance. Though the terms intertext and countertext are deployed interchangeably generally, in the space of this study the term countertext is used to refer to the postcolonial challenge that the texts offer to the hegemonic narratives.

### 3.1 *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a Postcolonial Counter-discursive Text

*Wide Sargasso Sea* is the depiction of a doubly colonized woman, in whose inscription patriarchy and colonialism play their respective roles, necessitating a counter-discursive disposition. As a counter-discursive text *Wide Sargasso Sea* has been called “one of the canonical texts of postcolonial studies” (Su 158). This countertext offers the chance to tell Bertha Antoinette’s story “otherwise” (Su 158) by exposing the ambiguities of the previous narrative. *Jane Eyre* aims to look at the world from the pedestal of approval of colonialism, casting into silence the agonized cries of Bertha, and subjecting her to spaces kept for discarded property and things – the attic. A close analysis of the text will reveal that colonialist strategies and postcolonial manifestations of resistance are woven into the plot, the texture, structure, and narrative of the novel. The retelling of the patriarchal and the colonial narrative of *Jane Eyre* is not done exclusively through Bertha reborn as Antoinette, but through characters who retain the native ‘black’ colour like Christophine. Significantly Rochester is left unnamed in Rhys’ text. Spivak opines, “Rhys denies to Bronte’s
Rochester the one thing that is supposed to be secured … the Name of the Father… In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the character corresponding to Rochester has no name” (“Three Women’s Texts” 271). This strategy of erasure also corresponds to the postcolonial and feminist reaction to Rochester’s renaming of Antoinette as Bertha. Her renaming is challenged by Rochester’s namelessness.

There are three levels of intra-textual relationships that serve as sites for the deployment of postcolonial trauma and unrest inflicted through colonial intervention and the exposition of the various strategies of postcolonial resistance. The interpersonal relationship of mutual antipathy and distrust between the whites and the blacks, the ‘complex’ ridden relationship between the whites and the Creoles, and the uncertain relationship between the Creoles and the blacks form the intratextual realm of the postcolonial discourse of *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

The text exhibits very pertinent and conspicuous characteristics of postcolonial voices and themes. The text has characters who serve as the site of colonial mutilation and repression. These characters evolve gradually into figures of resistance and interrogation. Antoinette is a postcolonial symbol of the challenge to racial hegemony. The discourse of domination runs along the course of *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The physical and emotional subordination in which the Creoles are held form the subtext of the novel. The text also exemplifies the levels of slavery in which the blacks survive in a colonial society. In all these aspects, the text retains its postcolonial spirit. The themes of alienation and exile are conspicuously rendered in the textual space. Antoinette and Annette are exiles in their own land. The aftermath of colonialism and
the postcolonial emergence of the decolonized selves mark *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a text of postcolonialism. The theme of hegemony, the strategic use of language as a means of the colonialist inscription and the revisionary native reaction achieved through the medium of language also account for the postcolonial content of the text.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* opens up a society which is torn by the cultural conflicts between the colonized West Indian and the English or European colonizers, the friction of relations between the people who speak Patois and the masters of English. The cultural rift operates on dual dimensions. On one level it explores the strains of antipathy which an islander, black or coloured, houses against the cold English masters; on the subtler level it touches upon the mutual cultural distrust of the blacks and the whites.

Structurally the text maintains its postcolonial resistance through the narrative of Antoinette Cosway who is given the opportunity to present her story as opposed to the powerful projected ‘history’ of Rochester permeating the canon of literature through the much read master narrative *Jane Eyre*. “Failure to believe in the figure of ‘Charlotte’s lunatic’ is…a rejection of the *grands recits* of colonialism and empire by means of which …both Bertha and the problematic feminism of *Jane Eyre* as a whole are enabled and legitimated” (Carl Plasa 83). The postcolonial resistance is also maintained through the strategic way in which the blacks maintain their distinct discourse. The marginal characters like Antoinette have to resort to violence to state her denial of the imprisoning structures. But marginalized groups like the blacks, who are the Other not only to the dominant structures but also to the forces in complicity
with them like the Creoles, resist inscription of colonialism by refusing to be written. The native blacks question the imperialist power structures through their non-participation and non-alignment with the colonizer points of view and by steadily maintaining a dialectical relation with the way imperialists and colonialists appropriate things. As Antoinette’s end is in a premeditated manner as Bertha Mason of *Jane Eyre*, her revolt and interrogation of the debilitating structures of colonialism have to be done in the textual space of *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The motive of the devastating fire at the end of *Jane Eyre* is to be enquired in *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

“Part One of *Wide Sargasso Sea* is rocked by the disorienting textual motion between the colonial identification and disidentification with England. Rhys’ text repeatedly calls attention to this intense ambivalence, lingering over the confusion of the Creole woman who is caught between the increasingly separate moral and economic logics of England and the West Indian colonies” (Ciolkowski 341). Right from the beginning of the text, Antoinette’s colonization and subjugation by imperialist structures is evoked. As a white Creole, she is caught between the English imperialist and the black native. This position is one without an identity of its own. This sense of belonging nowhere makes Antoinette shunned both by the whites and the blacks alike. According to Spivak, “*Wide Sargasso Sea* is a novel which rewrites the canonical English text within the European novelistic tradition in the interest of the white Creole rather than the native” (“Three Women’s Texts” 253). As Carl Plasa writes, “…in *Wide Sargasso Sea* the concern with the recuperation of white Creole narrative reinjects the notion of the third story and third person, causing them to become associated with the space between the polarities of master and slave, white
and black, European source and African resource of colonial oppression” (85). Here the white Creole is identified with the marginalized native because of the position of voicelessness she inhabits, not only because of her gender, but also because of her race. The Creoles were looked down upon by the European masters and shunned by the black servants alike. This position of subordination in which Antoinette finds herself is very clearly evoked right from the beginning of the story. She symbolizes the postcolonial trauma of dislocation from the native culture, once caught in complicity with the patriarchal colonial culture. Susan L. Meyer writes:

Bertha is clearly imagined as the white- or passing as white-in the novel’s retrospective narrative…But when she actually emerges in the course of the action, the narrative associates her with the blacks…In the form in which she becomes visible in the novel, Bertha has become black (252).

The postcolonial narratives voice the agonies of the alienated beings caught off balance in the struggle for survival in the world of discourses. Antoinette’s narration of her alienated childhood is suffused in open and veiled references to the marginalization at the hands of colonialism. Antoinette says, “The Jamaican ladies never approved of my mother” (*Wide Sargasso Sea* 15) because she was, “worse still, a Martinique girl” (15). The subordination her mother suffers at the hand of the white Europeans is emblematic of their location in the margins. Antoinette and Annette are surrounded by places with names that evoke colonial hangover. “Live at Nelson’s
Rest? Not for love or money” (16). The name clearly evokes the memory of Admiral Nelson and his colonial exploits. Maurel States:

Named after one of Britain’s heroes who fought the Napoleonic wars and opposed the abolition of slave trade, Luttrell’s plantation is a clear inscription of the empire’s coercive power and of the colonizer’s self proclaimed legitimacy: after territorial conquest, he is entitled to a well-earned ‘rest’...the imposition of arbitrary labellings on the reality of the colony, which, Jean Rhys intimates, is yet another form of violence (111).

It emphasizes the colonizers’ appropriation not only of the physical property but of the psychological realm as well. Mason’s marriage to Annette is symbolic of the colonial equation behind personal relations. “He didn’t come to the West Indies to dance - he came to make money as they all do. Some of the big estates are going cheap, and one unfortunate’s loss is always a clever man’s gain” (Wide Sargasso Sea 33). The economic motive of colonization runs parallel to the motive for domination. Mason like Rochester is a representative of the colonial mastery and Antoinette sums up his attitude to them as “None of you understand about us” (34). The Creoles do not have an identity of their own. To the blacks they are the “white cockroaches” (130). The whites do not own them up. “I have heard English women call us white Niggers” (130-31). Caught between these two conflicting dichotomous worlds in
‘mean’ mode Antoinette wonders, “Who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all” (120).

The colonial penetration of the Coulibri household after the marriage of Annette with Mason shows the way in which the food habits and other daily practices get changed to suit the English taste, taking them away from the native way. “We ate English food now, beef and mutton, pies and puddings. I was glad to be like an English girl but I missed the taste of Christophine’s cooking” (40). The certainty of being a colonial power and the consequent sense of authority and the non-confidence and non-authority of the racially marginal is powerfully etched by the contrasting representations of Annette and Mr. Mason. Antoinette says, “Then I looked across the white table cloth and the vase of yellow roses at Mr. Mason, so sure of himself, so without a doubt English. And at my mother, so without a doubt not English” (41).

The interim period of Antoinette’s convent life can also be read as a process of educating the subjects of the colonial power in the mission of grooming them as the citizens of an empire where Christianity is the dominant religion. It is part of the colonialist strategy of claiming spaces for the empire and Christianity. Educating a woman in the Christian way in obedience is to bring her up as an obedient observer of the norms of colonialism and patriarchy. The first part of the novel highlights not only the negations on the gendered subject but also the colonial subject.

In part two which forms Rochester’s narrative, the colonial question and the postcolonial answers negating those notions emphasize the wide Sargasso sea of divergent discourses, the sea of unsurpassable gulf that exists between the colonizer
and the colonized, the insurmountable depth of the deceptive whirlwinds and the cross currents of dialectical discourses. The gulf that separates Antoinette and Rochester is not only that of the gender, but of the cultural divide that exists between the warm and sensuous Caribbean of Rhys’ childhood and the cold rational world of patriarchal England of Charlotte Bronte. The colonial question dominates the marriage between the colonizer and the colonized which is a mercenary liaison bringing respectability and a worthy competence to an incompetent heir as is evident from the way Rochester agrees to the marriage with Antoinette. Part two shows forth the dichotomy between the two perspectives - of the imperialist and the native. The young Rochester is bewitched and at the same time baffled by the strange country, the strange people and above all his strange wife. His first impression is that of hostility “… but sly, spiteful, malignant perhaps, like much else in this place” (81). The honeymoon of Rochester and Antoinette begins in a place called ‘Massacre’ symbolizing the annihilation of the native culture by the imperialist. The attitude of Rochester towards Antoinette is one of intolerant criticism, “I watched her critically” (83). Even her physical features speak aloud her silencing and alienation. It is her difference from his people that Rochester notices about Antoinette for the first time. “Long, sad, dark alien eyes. Creole of pure English descent she may be, but they are not English or European either” (83). Through Antoinette Cosway, Rhys portrays the tensions and ambivalences of Creole culture that go unexamined in the English texts of imperialism. The British imperialists’ inability to comprehend the West Indian native is worked out through the attitude of Mason and Rochester towards their Creole wives.
The Antoinette –Rochester relationship becomes a touch stone through which the problematic of man –woman dichotomy is expressed in the context of the imperialist inability and unwillingness to understand and to build a bridge to the heart of the white West Indian native. According to Elaine Showalter “Bertha comes to represent the native, the heart of darkness, the Other” (A Literature of Their Own 24). Bertha represents “the wholly Otherness” (Spivak, “Theory” 4) to Rochester in being a white West Indian native and also in being a woman.

Antoinette’s attachment with the black natives with whom she has grown up and therefore felt close is derided by Rochester. Everything about her seems strange and debased to him. The perception of the island culture as something uncivilized and wild is maintained throughout as part of the preconceived notions which colonialism harbours about the Other. “This is a very wild place - not civilized” (Wide Sargasso Sea 85). His bewilderment and the sad dark alien feeling that Rochester receives in the new surrounding is supplemented by the strange unfriendly locality. “Not only wild but menacing. Those hills would close in on you” (87). He feels suffocated by the intensity of the ‘nativeness’ around him where “everything is too much… too much blue, too much purple, too much green. The flowers too red, the mountains too high, hills too near. And the woman is a stranger” (87). Rochester and Antoinette inhabit mutually exclusive spaces with no hope of intersecting each other’s trajectories. The entire reference to the marriage is clothed in commercial and economic equations in terms of buying and selling. This economic terminology is also indicative of the underlying commercial nature of the colonial interests. Rochester says, “I have not bought her she has bought me. Or so she thinks” (87-8). The Creole women with their large dowry and landholdings
served the commercial and capitalistic interest of imperialism. To Creole girls their dowries were their curse. Englishmen and Europeans with their pompous Eurocentrism married these heiresses and took them away from their lands across ‘cold English seas’ to cold unfriendly houses in England and Europe. Being an islander, one who has grown up in Jamaica, Antoinette cannot trust anything English. As Rochester says, “... and her ideas were fixed. About England and about Europe. I could not change them and probably nothing would” (120).

The cultural dichotomy and its implications are set initially in a conversation between Antoinette and her husband. “Next time she spoke she said, ‘The earth is red here, do you notice’? ‘It is red in parts of England too.’ ‘Oh England, England’ she called back mockingly, and the sound went on and on like a warning I did not choose to hear” (89). Rochester could never comprehend his strange wife and her strange locality. “I felt very little tenderness for her, she was a stranger to me, a stranger who didn’t think or feel as I did” (119).

By placing Bronte’s Rochester into a culture and reality which initially bewilders him, then casts its spell over him and is finally rejected by him, Rhys interrogates the entire spectrum of colonialist notions. Rochester muses on coming to Antoinette’s house, “But the feeling of security had left me” (94). The colonialist assumptions of superiority is dismantled and destroyed in the leaping flames of Thornfield Hall. Rochester advances into and retreats from the world associated with Antoinette and by implication from the problem of the postcolonial and female reality. The white Creoles in their complicit marginalization imitate the colonizers by copying
their eating habits, living style, party practices and domestic habits. These external
imitations do not make them closer to the heart of the white masters. The discourse of
the Other is incomprehensible to the Eurocentric representatives. The sensuousness
and vibrancy of the West Indian landscape around Rochester are so different from the
ordered gray surrounding of his home land that they alarm his sense of rightness.
“There are blanks in my mind that cannot be filled up” (97). Rochester speaks the
language of the cold, calculating English man who is blind to the spontaneous feelings
of love and joy. The colonial appraisal is one of cold indifference as he says, “… but
it meant nothing to me. Nor did she, the girl I was to marry” (97).

The very structure of Rhys’ novel implies that different discourses intersect in
the making of subjects and lives. The materialist experience of living in one place
decides the formation of the subject position and shapes the perception of that
individual regarding other subject positions. As Antoinette and Rochester represent
diverse and distinct subject positions here, the locality/ the realm they inhabit
represent all their conflicting values. On their wedding day Antoinette and Rochester
discuss about their own lands of origin-England and the Caribbean-and cannot
comprehend each other’s world.

Is it true’ she said, ‘that England is like a dream? Because
one of my friends who married an Englishman wrote and
told me so. She said this place London is like a cold dark
dream sometimes. I want to wake up’. ‘Well’, I answered,
annoyed, ‘that is precisely how your beautiful island seems to me quite unreal and like a dream’.

‘But how can rivers and mountains and the sea be unreal?’

‘And how can millions of people, their houses and their streets be unreal’?

‘More easily’, she said, ‘much more easily’

‘yes a big city must be like a dream’. ‘No, this is unreal and like a dream.’ I thought (102).

As seen from this exchange of dichotomous values they cannot see the other side and hence can’t understand the Other’s world. They cannot reach out to each other because the power relations between them are so unequal. As the unwavering symbol of patriarchy and colonialism, Rochester possesses everything. His discourse dominates everything else. An unequal display of power from Antoinette prevents herself from being heard. The only recourse left for her is a display of devastating destruction through all consuming fire.

If the whites held the Creoles in subordination and contempt as “white niggers” (26) the interpersonal relationship between the Creoles and the blacks are sketched in the backdrop of the Emancipation Act as a result of which the blacks, the genuine Other begin to grow independent and consequently hostile with the slave owning community of the Creoles. The Jamaican society represented in Wide Sargasso Sea is in a volcanic state of transformation. The royal decree of 1833 had emancipated the blacks from slavery in the Caribbean islands partially which
would be completed by 1837. At the beginning of the narrative, the blacks seem to be contemptuous and derisive of the Creoles because of their marginal position in the median. There are a number of incidents to show the native hatred of the compromising position of the Creoles. Annette’s horse is poisoned to death and Antoinette remarks that Annette is jeered at by the blacks when she goes riding.

Caught between dialectical value systems without belonging to either, Antoinette and her family occupy a position of non acceptance which makes them figures of absence. “…Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger” (26). There is a duality in the blacks’ attitude to the Creoles. On one level the blacks make the Creoles the butt of their ridicule and attack as the Creoles represent the power equations of imperialism as former slave owners. This hatred of some of the black natives for the Creoles is balanced by the sincere and honest attachment of others who share their intimacy with the Creoles in the awareness that the Creole situation is no better than the blacks in their subservience. The characters like Christophine and Baptiste, loyal servants of Antoinette’s family are examples. The black animosity is directly proportionate to the economic and ideological location of the white Creoles. The richer the Creoles, the more hostile the blacks become. When Antoinette’s family was poor, they were simply ridiculed by the blacks. But once Annette becomes rich by marriage to Mason, they become the target of black animosity and anger as they are forced to maintain a position of complicity with the dominant power structures. “The black people did not hate us quite so much when we were poor …What was there to hate? Now it had started up again and worse than before… I wish I could tell him that out here is not at all like English people
think it is” (39). There is a fire at Coulibri supposed to be set by the black natives unleashing their rage against “the white cockroaches” (23).

The jeer and the sneer of the blacks give way to cold hatred and destructive anger as the Creoles come to be associated with the victimizing imperialism in the mind of the blacks though the Creoles themselves are victims of it. The animosity of the blacks against the whites reaches a feverish pitch when Coulibri is set fire to by them, killing Pierre. “So black and white, they burn the same, eh?” (52). The fire at Coulibri is the fire of the hatred of the colonized against the colonial powers, a kind of postcolonial gesture of resistance, presupposing the fire at Thornfield Hall. The fire also traces a parallel side of postcolonial resistance in which the blacks’ relations to the Creoles who were one time slave owners hold the same dialectical relationship, the Creoles hold with the whites. Thus Wide Sargasso Sea may be considered as theorizing on the strategies of postcolonial resistance in all its diverse textual interrelationships.

The progression of the text coincides with the increased hatred of the blacks for the Creoles when alliances with the rich Europeans make the Creoles rich as well as partakers of the European values. Tia is Antoinette’s only native friend. But in a childhood incident, Tia forcibly exchanges their stations in life by stealing Antoinette’s dress and money and Antoinette is made to wear Tia’s dress, subtly conveying the message that economically and racially Antoinette is equal to Tia. Later the inherent conflict comes out when the blacks rise in revolt against the Masons and Tia throws a stone at her, wounding her.
Then, not so far off, I saw Tia and her mother and I ran to her, for she was all that was left of my life as it had been.
We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, bathed in the same river… I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it….. We stared at each other, blood, on my face, tears on hers (54).

Antoinette’s identity gets mirrored in Tia. Antoinette and Tia are symbols of challenge. But Tia’s position is invariably better like Christophine’s as she stays out of the spatial allocations of the logocentric discourses and refuses to be inscribed. But the position of Antoinette at this point can be compared to the half colonized self of Susan Barton in *Foe* whose position of complicity with the hegemonic systems makes her vulnerable as a point of inscription at the hands of the dominant discourses whether of patriarchy or of colonialism. Tia and her marginalization mirror the subordination of Antoinette. But the distance and the uncompromising attitude to the machinations of colonialism is Tia’s passport to be a symbol of postcolonial resistance which Antoinette has to forego as she lives on the breadcrumbs of ‘safety and security’ which the centres of power seem to offer in return for subservient complicity.

The text portrays the way in which the blacks maintain a love-hate relationship with the Creoles, some turning hostile and dishonest towards their erstwhile masters as they are regarded as accomplices in relegating the blacks to the margins while some others remain honest and loyal. Antoinette and her mother are taken care of by Christophine and Baptiste till they are ousted from the household by
Rochester. The location of the blacks and the Creoles in the text fulfill various levels and strategies of resistance and interrogation of the colonial and imperialistic ideas.

The subtle formation of the colonial perspective which the colonized undergoes in complicity with the dominant discursive structures is so encompassing that there are moments in which the Creoles fulfill the role of the half colonized Other by occupying the middle, the median in which they remain voiceless and subjugated, but at the same time seem to possess a semblance of power by appropriating the notions of the colonial world. They seem to partake of the worldview of the colonizers which bring in subtle changes in their appraisal of the genuine Other, the native blacks. Antoinette in her moment of spontaneity has an easy, trusting relationship with the blacks around her. But her corruption at the hands of the symbols of colonialism colour her perceptions towards Christophine and Tia. She regains her lost perceptions and identifies with the black natives as fellow sufferers only at the moment of the final awakening. In the final section of the novel, her location as a marginalized and imprisoned self, dreaming a cold dark dream in a strange alien place achieves an intense moment of fusion with the colonized blacks. This is an autobiographical moment of awareness as this echoes what Jean Rhys wrote in *The Black Exercise Book*:

I was curious about black people. They stimulated me and I felt akin to them. It added to my sadness that I couldn’t help but realize they didn’t really like or trust white people—white cockroaches they called us. Sick with shame at some
of the stories of the slave days…Yet all the time knowing
that there was another side to it. Sometimes seeing myself
powerful ... sometimes being proud of my great
grandfather, the estate, and the good old days….But the end
of my thinking about them was always a sick revolt and I
wanted to be identified with the other side… (21).

To the white colonizers the Creoles and the blacks are the same- abhorrent and
aberrant -to be castigated and feared, to be hated and kept under siege and kept away
from their world. Wide Sargasso Sea fuses various discourses into the same textual
structure. The man–woman conflicts inherent in the discourse of Rochester-
Antoinette Cosway relationship can be a site for the deployment of the colonial
question holding the gender issue in a subtle competition.

If the relationship between the blacks and the Creoles is an ambivalent mixture
of love-hate, there is an open enmity between the white European and the black native
and it is the Creole who bears the brunt of this hatred, because of their liaison with
both parties, as the median. The English or the European and the black Negroes hold
each other in mutual unhidden hatred, disgust and distrust. They both inhabit mutually
exclusive points of view and maintain a gulf that can never be bridged. By this
exclusion the blacks refuse to be the site of colonial inscription. Mason and Rochester
represent the colonial attitude of the distrust and disregard of the native while the
natives like Christophine and Baptiste maintain a distance of unfriendliness with the
colonial masters. The English people kept themselves strictly away from the blacks as
the gap can never hope to be filled. Rivalries were open with both groups occupying diverse cultural realms which meet nowhere. Occupying the no man’s land of the black and the white animosity and antipathy is the Creoles of mixed origin detested equally by the blacks and the whites. It is the representation of the themes of alienation and exile of the Creoles that mark *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a significant postcolonial text.

The strains of antipathy between the blacks and the whites run throughout the text, keeping the postcolonial reference alive. To the blacks the whites are the destroyers of their paradise and traders of their priceless riches, and hence worthy to be treated with solid hatred. The repercussion of this nameless hatred is seen in the colonial treatment of the ‘Niggers’ as uncivilized, who speak a different language and whose songs are different. Christophine’s songs “were not like Jamaican songs, and she was not like the other women. She was much blacker” (*Wide Sargasso Sea* 20). Her language was also different, “Not adieu as we said it, but a `dieu” (20). Rochester is apprehensive and distrustful of the blacks with their intense black colour, strange customs, black magic and love potions. “Martinique, Obeah” (32) customs, incomprehensible to the whites, are regarded as witchcraft which results in Christophine’s exile. The colonial attitude to the native customs and culture and the way their Otherness is maintained is implied here. Annette tells Mason, “‘you don’t like or even recognize the good in them,’ she said, ‘and you won’t believe in the other side’ ” (37). In all the encounters and interface between the opposing, mutually exclusive discourses of the whites and the blacks, sparks of hatred and distrust are exchanged. The whites always fail to understand the blacks.
Annette expresses her concern regarding Mason’s attitude to the blacks. “‘They are too damn lazy to be dangerous’, said Mr. Mason. ‘I know that.’ ‘They are more alive than you are, lazy or not, and they can be dangerous and cruel for reasons you wouldn’t understand’” (37). The initial appraisal of Rochester by Christophine is drowned in disapproval. “She looked at me steadily, not with approval, I thought” (91). Christophine and Rochester nurse open animosity against each other. Their hatred and verbal exchanges are fine examples of the colonial conflicts between the colonizer and the colonized. After giving strong coffee to her master, Christophine says. “Not horse piss like the English madams drink,’ she said, ‘I know them. Drink, drink their yellow horse piss, talk, talk their lying talk” (108). The sea of aversion that separates the two sets of people is mirrored in this exchange. Young Rochester cannot approve of Christophine either. “…but her language is horrible” (109).

Antoinette’s trust of Christophine and Baptiste is matched by Rochester’s dislike for them which exemplifies the divergent attitudes of the whites and the Creoles towards the blacks. Rochester says of Antoinette’s attitude to the blacks, “‘She’d say, and I’d agree, keeping my opinions of Baptiste, Christophine and all the others to myself’. ‘Baptiste says…Christophe wants…,’She trusted them and I did not” (115). Antoinette loses the ‘safety and security’ of Christophine’s company because of the mutual dislike of her husband and her loyal servant. “…Besides the young master don’t like me, and perhaps I don’t like him so much. If I stay here I bring trouble and bone of contention in your house” (131). Christophine sums up the postcolonial spirit of challenge when she expresses distrust of the circulated accounts about England. It deconstructs England as the empire whose sun never sets. She tells
Antoinette, “I hear it cold to freeze your bones and they thief your money, clever like
the devil. You have money in your pocket, you look again and bam! No money. Why
you want to go to this cold thief place?”(145). The male servant Baptiste treats
Rochester with deference, but is never intimate with him. If Rochester is the
victimizer, he is as much the victim of this cultural rift.

The antipathy of the islander against the victimizing discourses of the British
reaches its culmination when Antoinette is brought into the patriarchal mansion in
England as Bertha, bereft of even her own name and individuality, to be imprisoned
up there in the attic. The safety of madness that runs in the family is her tool of
reciprocation. The revenge against the humiliation and the crippling of her self, both
racial and individual, she suffers, will be complete only if she cripples him in return.
Antoinette catches back whatever is lost to her by setting fire to the cold English
structure and lets Dominica coloured flames go up from it. But the fire at Thornfield
Hall is not an expression of the postcolonial resistance alone. It powerfully combines
the feminist resistance too. “When they had finished, there would be nothing left but
blackened walls and the mounting stone. That was always left. That could not be
stolen or burned” (54). After setting fire to the English structure Antoinette jumps into
her dream pool where Tia will meet her, rediscovering her native self, challenging the
English culture. It is the live memory of Christophine and her sure help in times of
need that ignites Bertha to shake off her mantle of colonial (in) security and be once
again Antoinette.
This postcolonial counter canonical novel is set in Dominica which was a British colony where the language of official communication was English. But the natives used the popular language the French dialect of Patois which was looked down upon by their English masters. Just as the West Indian colony is derided by the English, the local language is also looked down upon by the colonizers.

Wide Sargasso Sea is set in Dominica of the 1830s. “Rhys returns to that spiritual country as to a distant dream” (Wyndham, “Introduction” 12) and discovers its haunting beauty with uncanny insight and vivid intensity. The setting of Dominica of the 19th century as the locale for the novel throws open the colonial question quite conspicuously. Antipathies of diverse kinds unravel various discursive strategies and bring forth multiple narrative persona emphasizing diverse perspectives. In this diversity, Antoinette and her mother inhabit a zone outside both discursive realms, occupying a ‘grey’ zone, the greyness of being alien and lonely, being relegated to the margins while preferring the ‘red’ness of life.

Along with the Creoles the blacks are also introduced negatively. “Indeed, the novel is not only about the repression of a white Creole woman or of the white Creole in general, but also about the black enfranchised slaves and their ‘double colonization’” (Mardorossian, “Double [De] colonization” 82). Christophine whose language and songs are unlike the colonial mode of expression is introduced in negativity. But her blackness renders her very powerful. She is invested with power because of her identity as a black native who is not bewitched by the magical stories of England. Christophine’s discourse is as powerful as that of Friday in Foe. She does not have to keep herself in marginal complicity like Antoinette in Wide Sargasso Sea.
or Susan in *Foe*. Sylvie Maurel argues, “Thanks to her occult and awe inspiring activities as Obeah woman, she is a figure of power” (252). Christophine refuses to be cowed by the clutches either of patriarchy or of colonialism. She does not become a subject victim like Antoinette. Though the negations through which the blacks are introduced serve to locate them in the margins, their marginalized position only lead to their empowerment in their non-alignment with the imperialist interests and denial of the colonialisit values.

Representation of the blacks in the textual space is not only to reveal the postcolonial hatred but also to mirror the ideological subordination and the marginal position of the Creoles. The purpose is contrastive as the blacks as marginalized selves refuse to yield to the spatial allocations of colonialism and are, therefore, beyond the desires of inscription of imperialist discourses. The text mirrors “the emergence of a nationalist tradition”, the development of the black identity and “the resulting challenge to the white dominant cultural system” (Mardorossian, “Double [De] colonization” 87). They are the foils to Antoinette’s people in their open resistance to the semblance of power which the Creoles feel in complicity with the whites. But an appraisal of Antoinette’s self in a moment of awareness reveals her position as marginal and such a moment of revelation depicts the ‘voiceless absence’ of the Creoles replicating the blacks’ marginalization. The feeling of repression and the voiceless and unwritten disposition make Antoinette a double of Tia, the black servant girl, in whose space Antoinette’s self gets mirrored. “It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking- glass” (*Wide Sargasso Sea* 54).
The strategic use of Christophine is a powerful answer to the dominant, imperialist culture as much as Antoinette’s measure of resistance in setting fire to Thornfield Hall. Through the character of Christophine, Rhys gives the postcolonial answer to the colonial master, more subtle and, therefore, more emphatic than the marginal complicity of the half colonized Other—the white Creole. Christophine retains her marginalized status in order to secure the space she needs to live, a position outside and beyond the authoritarian logos. She acknowledges that she does not know to read or write. “Read and write, I don’t know. Other things I know” (161). Here she declares that the practices of reading and writing, the signifying processes of Rochester’s system are outside her awareness and her discourse. She is an alien and an Other to Rochester’s world. But at the same time she is sure of her grasp of other definitions and practices, more valuable and indigenous to her. Christophine remains strong and powerful in her marginality unwilling to submit to any debilitating authority either of patriarchy or of colonialism. The language that she speaks with a native touch in it is symbolic of her feeling of freedom from the language of the hegemonic structures. She does not observe the rules of the grammar of the English language and sticks to her Obeah and Voodoo practices shunning the belief system of the masters which they try to impose on the natives.

If English language is the site of internal colonization, Christophine’s denial of the structured use of the English language is her passport to ideological emancipation. At the same time Rhys’ mastery of the same language to address the Creole issue and the perfect use she makes of it render it as a powerful instrument of decolonization. The effective use of language and the narrative style make the text a poetic rendering
of the pathos of displacement. According to Benita Parry “Christophine is the text’s female source of a counter-discourse” (38) while the same character invites from Spivak the comment as “inaccessible blankness circumscribed by an interpretable text” (“Three Women’s Texts” 264).

The postcolonial effect of the text is carried out through the way it inscribes the discourse of colonial mutilations and oppressions. The effect is also analyzed through the way the text theorizes the process of decolonization. In all these ways *Wide Sargasso Sea* retains its postcolonial voice. The life of the Creoles and the black natives is steeped in the domination of the colonial powers and both these groups are kept in mute subordination. But in the course of the text, these marginalized groups achieve their powerful process of decolonization in their diverse ways. The text is noted for its discussion and deliberations on hegemony, another significant aspect of postcolonial ethos. Antoinette, her community and the black servants are all subjected to the hegemonic centrist systems and their manipulations. But the emancipation that they manage at the end of the text through the vehement fire unequivocally celebrates the postcolonial spirit of decolonization and challenge. The colonizer’s language is another confluent symbol of the colonialist assumptions and the postcolonial challenge and revision. Here through the character of Christophine and her denial of the rules of the grammar of the colonial masters, the postcolonial resistance is powerfully etched. *Wide Sargasso Sea* conspicuously lets the postcolonial themes of displacement and alienation prevail in its textual space. This motive is conveyed through the characters Antoinette and Annette who live on the fringes of normalcy as perennial exiles. All
these disbursement of postcolonial themes in its textual space render *Wide Sargasso Sea* a notable postcolonial countertext.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* celebrates the negations which are more powerful and structurally significant than the complicity of the Creoles and the centrality of the authoritative figures. The black native silence in response to colonialism is more as a strategy of power than a reflection of weakness. This is true of absences as well. Absences and silences represent the lack which is strategically more valid than speaking words and living persons. Christophine is made to leave Antoinette’s household and the narrative the moment she communicates that the discourses of imperialist power and patriarchal assumptions cannot thwart her confidence about “other things” (*Wide Sargasso Sea* 213). Her discourse also offers the postcolonial challenge to the white colonial Eurocentric universe which perceives the colonized as a location for the deployment of Eurocentric assumptions. “Although the black Creoles are …doubly silenced and doubly marginalized, their complex interplay with colonial strategies actualizes a resistance that effectively unsettles the colonizer’s world view and actions” (Mardorossian, “Shutting up the Subaltern” 1077).

The postcolonial challenge in a strong conspicuous and convincing manner is offered by Antoinette in sending the colonial mansion going up in ‘Dominica’ coloured flames as she wakes up from her cold English dream. The postcolonial resistance is not offered by the speaking voice and persona of Antoinette alone. The black community represented by Christophine, Baptiste, and Tia negate the Eurocentric assumptions by managing to retain their integrities and ‘blackness’ in the
face of European or the white man’s civilizing mission symbolizing in the fire at Coulibri which represents the suppressed rage of the native against the imperialist. Antoinette reclaims her self and voice only when she imitates that gesture of hatred in the destructive fire-blood retaliation to a life of submission and subjugation.

As a microcosmic presentation of the English experience of the Caribbean and the Caribbean experience of the English, bringing in the colonial and postcolonial binaries, *Wide Sargasso Sea* celebrates the saga of the West Indian struggle against the devastating tendencies of imperialism and colonialism. Mardorossian suggests:

*Wide Sargasso Sea*’s exploration of the different contexts in and through which colonial subjects are constructed actually resists assigning to the subaltern the function of a mere repository of Eurocentric assumptions. Although the black Creoles are indeed doubly silenced and doubly marginalized, their complex interplay with colonial strategies actualizes a resistance that effectively unsettles the colonizer’s world view and actions (“Shutting up the Subaltern” 1078).

The novel does not intend to celebrate an unproblematic articulation of the West Indian world from a bleak perspective. But at the same time it foregrounds the black resistance indicating the self determining individualist stand addressed by the blacks which Antoinette in complicit marginality achieves only when she opens her
eyes to deny her ambivalent, ambiguous position and rises to embrace the violent
strains of the blacks’ reaction.

The analysis of *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a postcolonial mode of resistance rests
mostly on claiming the narrative for the racially marginalized and castigated wife of
Rochester, Bertha Mason of *Jane Eyre*. Her self and identity get reclaimed as
Antoinette in her chance to tell her story from her point of view. “Antoinette’s
narrative is literally shaped by the uncertainties of a Creole vision that is fractured by
the contradictory claims of British colonial history and the cultural residues of a dying
West Indian Plantation society” (Ciolkowski 340). Nevertheless Antoinette’s
postcolonial emergence has served to “install *Wide Sargasso Sea* as an ‘authentic’ and
‘historical’ response to the ‘inauthentic’ and ‘fictional’ version of West Indian Creole
life offered by *Jane Eyre*” (Hulme 81). But at the same time this text problematizes
the issue of the black people and their subtle though powerful resistance to the
colonialist strategies. Race in its various manifestations is theorized here and both the
blacks and the white Creoles are potentially deployed towards that end. Mardorossian
argues that “the novel’s narrative structure, its complexities of ethnicities and race as
well as the historical context in and about which it was written attest to Rhys’
understanding” (“Shutting up the Subaltern” 1086) of the white Creoles and the
blacks alike. Though Spivak argues that this was written “in the interest of the white
Creole” (“Three Women’s Texts” 253) and hence puts the blacks in a tangential
relation to the discourse of the white Creole, it is pointed out here that the blacks in
*Wide Sargasso Sea* also serve as signifiers for the emergence of counter meanings
which are perhaps as strong and powerful as that of the white Creole.
3.2 An Analysis of *Foe* as a Postcolonial Counternarrative

If Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* writes back to the colonialist strategies from the postcolonial perspective generally and from the Caribbean experience of postcolonialism in particular, J.M Coetzee’s *Foe* offers a radical critique of the notions of imperialism and colonialism in general and of *Robinson Crusoe* in particular which is the archetypal colonialist island tale. *Robinson Crusoe* has inaugurated the English novel with this story of the “founding of a new world ruled and claimed for Christianity and England” (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 83). As Richard J. Lane states, “*Robinson Crusoe* has been repeatedly analyzed as a key text intertwining the rise of the English novel in the 18th century with the rise of the mercantile classes in England” (20). *Foe* is considered as the “Ur-text” (Head 115) of Defoe’s novel. Analysed as a postcolonial countertext and a feminist intertext to *Robinson Crusoe*, *Foe* tries to answer a number of questions raised by *Robinson Crusoe*. The gaps and silences in the source text are filled or alternate gaps and silences are rendered in the new text.

As *Robinson Crusoe*’s eponymous hero is undoubtedly regarded as an authoritative figure, a confluent figure of the ideology of both patriarchy and imperialism, *Foe* gives a kind of creative response to both these ideologies impersonated by Crusoe in Daniel Defoe’s master narrative. Coetzee’s Cruso does not have the authority or appeal of Defoe’s Crusoe. Along with de/restructuring the persona of the cult figure of the realist narrative, Coetzee offers a deconstruction of Defoe as a writer. This novel offers a refocus on gender, empire, the art of writing and
the author. If it’s the might of words that mark the hero, if the narrative domination is what characterizes a master narrative, then *Foe* is undoubtedly a revisionary counter-discursive text from the feminist and postcolonial points of view as it centres around Susan Barton, the woman narrator representing the discourse of the marginalized selves of women and the ‘indefinite infinity’ of the narrative of the ‘tongue less slave’ Friday.

Friday, the postcolonial figure, the slave of Crusoe supplies the prominent and primary element of postcolonial countertextuality as he is an extended echo of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. He is mute, representing the silenced and mutilated Other. “A man with a dazzling halo about him” (*Foe* 90) is what Susan comments about Friday. He is an enigmatic presence right from the early part of Susan’s story and claims the narrative for himself at the end of the novel. Friday refuses to speak a language which will eventually call him a cannibal. The Prospero figure of Foe in complicity with Susan, the white colonial woman, fails to make him a Caliban. But he does not deny himself the joy and free play of communication as he chooses to communicate in a tongue intelligible to himself. Friday defies all theories of language along with the structures that formulate them. By defying the civilizing agency of the minions of the dominant ideology Friday establishes himself as an effective figure of counter-discursive resistance and supplies the countertextual element of the novel. Friday, the slave of Defoe’s Crusoe is different from Friday, the slave of Coetzee’s Cruso. Defoe’s Friday is tawny while his Coetzean counterpart is pointedly black. Coetzee’s Friday occupies the position of the “genuine” (Head 115) Other to the half-
colonized state of Susan Barton for she holds herself responsible for and capable to record Friday’s story.

Probably the representation of the resistance to colonialism is never better voiced than by the tongueless Friday. “In explaining the removal of the tongue, there is double projection of the other, always already a cannibal (a threat to order and stability) yet always already denied a voice, a story of his own which would no doubt dispute the official imposed history of his life” (Lane 22). Friday is a powerful figure of postcolonial resistance in writing back to the discourse of Defoean Crusoe. He serves as the figure of interrogation of the ideological manipulations of the discourse of marginalization by the supposed champions of the subordinate whose promises to deliver him from the clutches of hegemonic practices will only perpetrate another mode of literary subjugation. Along with imperialism, Friday challenges its tools of subjugation, education and language, and refuses to partake in the process of inscription in the colonial strategies.

Friday serves as a signified for the postcolonial counter-discourse through a number of signifiers. The silence of Friday with which he writes back to the voluble and verbal discourses of the hegemonic systems is the primary marker of his native defiance. Friday’s silence has generated much discursive significance as a telling gesture of the interrogation of and non-complicity with the power structures. Another signifier is Friday’s resistance through a self generated method of communicating his self and his total denial of the verbal world of the colonialist structures. Friday asserts his native emancipated self through indigenous musical tunes and passionate
performance of rhythmic dance. Another marker which asserts Friday’s postcolonial spirit of challenge is his attitude to the colonizer’s language. He refuses to be inculcated in the ideology of the colonizer. At the same time Friday does not deny himself the advantages of the colonialist tool. But like a true postcolonial he uses it for depicting his indigenous spirit and defying the colonial designs. Thus Friday’s writing which is a deviation from the signs of the hegemonic structures undoubtedly records his denial of the colonial ways of inscription. As a true postcolonial symbol Friday bears the mark of mutilation on him. He is the site of the supposed colonial atrocities as exemplified in his loss of tongue and masculinity. There is also the mention of a mark on Friday’s neck as left by a chain or a rope reinforcing his stature as an object of colonial cruelty. But the ultimate signifier for the celebration of the postcolonial voice and counter-narrative is the indefinite final section of Foe which establishes the emergence of Friday amidst the multiple discourses and portrays his survival and his emancipation from the hold of the dominant discourses. In its deployment of the themes of hegemony, displacement, alienation and the colonizer-colonized dichotomy also Foe maintains its postcolonial stance. As an allegory of the experience of the blacks in the South African colonial climate also, Foe maintains its postcolonial ideology.

Right from the beginning of Susan’s narrative, Friday remains where he can be seen but where his significance is communicated in a subtle manner. The islander is denied not only a voice, but the instrument of voice as well. Whether it is cut off by the imperial master or by the natives quarrelling among themselves is a matter of dispute. There are probable causes and motives for the loss of Friday’s tongue as
suggested by Cruso. He says that the slavers had cut the tongue of Friday. “…that the
slavers have cut it out…Perhaps they wanted to prevent him from ever telling his
story: who he was, where his home lay, how it came about that he was taken. Perhaps,
they took out the tongue of every cannibal they took, as a punishment” (Foe 23).
Friday’s loss of tongue and the probable motive is suggested by Susan too. She thinks
that Cruso might have cut it off. It is the colonialist strategy of denying the voice to
the Other.

The tongue or tonguelessness of Friday serves as an essential point of
departure for the textual enquiries regarding the nature and tone of postcolonial voices
in the text. The dismembering is a symbolic silencing of the Other -the colonial Other.
Thomas Pavel in Fictional Worlds comments that “given the right conditions a
fictional signal can start to operate as a paradigm of truth (70). The story of Friday’s
tongue has become “ontologically self sufficient” (77). It can simply take the story
further forward by its absence. The loss of Friday’s tongue is a symbolic gesture
indicating the ‘Otherness’ of the enslaved people, who have already been assigned
roles as cannibals, a threat to order, structure, normalcy and the demands of liberal
humanism. The very fact that many theories surround the loss of Friday’s tongue
indicates the discursive significance it has achieved.

‘Silence’ of Friday is a much repeated motif and word in the novel. The ‘mute’
Friday whose silence is a “helpless” one and the forced “purposeful” (Foe 122)
silence of Susan Barton together render this text as a record of “internal colonization”
(Spivak, “Theory” 16). As silenced figures Susan and Friday inhabit and perpetrate
margins. But the supposed end of the novel conveys what Spivak terms a “walking out of the margin” (17). Friday is on his way out of the margin. In this final gesture of freedom from the authorial grasp and the manipulation of imperialism he is able to vocalize and communicate the native spirit of the island, rendering the postcolonial voice prevail over the structured, organized, concocted ‘story’ of the master manipulators of discourse, the authors of all discourses—the imperialists. It is the so-called “helpless silence” (*Foe* 122) of Friday which makes him a kind of “withheld limit” (Spivak, “Theory” 17) as he refuses to give into their demands. Macleod says that, “Friday is discursively better without a tongue” (10). Attridge speaks of Friday’s tonguelessness “as a sign of oppression” (183). But the argument is that, this sign of oppression, which is a symbol of internalized and repressed mutilations for generations together, is the sign of discursive power and narrative superiority as well. In a world where words alone matter, much power—both narrative and discursive—is achieved by this tongueless silence of Friday.

The text has four sections out of which the first one is essentially Susan’s narrative. In this section Friday remains where he remained in Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, just at the edge of Cruso’s words, as an executor of Cruso’s will and commands. But with the death of Cruso, the discourse of Friday evolves slowly and in the third section, though Susan still remains the narrator, Friday begins to move from the periphery to the centre, from a position of invisible subjugation to one of visibility and power where in the last section the nameless, omniscient narrator reaches the “home of Friday” (*Foe* 157) after elaborate enquiries and relentless quests, crossing currents of the dominant discourses of the author Foe and of the other
emerging discourses. It is a quest which finally, though infinitely, establishes the text’s closure in a realm of fluidity where multiple voices and pluralities emerge toppling definite significations and the discourses of the centre.

Friday is not just a person here. But he stands as a constant, a constructed theme or concept. He is a “topos” (Lane 24) as he is the site of merging and the emergence of a number of ideas. He stands as a symbol for a “a set of references, a congeries of characteristics that seem to have its origin in a quotation or a fragment of a text or a citation” (Said, *Orientalism* 177). Discourses of colonialism have shaped the persona and the physical and spiritual characteristics of Friday, with a lot of misinformation, endlessly cited and propagated through colonial agencies of hegemonic construction. Cruso the master thinks Friday the slave is better with a “lenient master” (*Foe* 23) like himself. Friday becomes a target of construction and inscription at the hands of Cruso, Susan and Foe. Cruso cultivates him as it suits his projects of survival in the island, giving him the advantage of words “only as much as he needs” (21). It is actually what Cruso thinks what Friday needs. The stance of Friday with Cruso makes him an object of appropriation at the hands of Susan in her liberal feminist garb offering liberation from hegemonic structures to the identically marginalized. The attitude of the apparent non-resistance in Friday to Cruso makes her think that Friday is “like a dog that heeds but one master” (21).

With the death of Cruso, the burden of Friday with everything that is left of Cruso, including the authority of his island story falls into the hands of Susan. “…as it is I who have the disposal of all that Cruso leaves behind, which is the story of his
island” (45). Along with Cruso’s story, the narrative of Friday also becomes hers by right or that is what she thinks. The desire to have her story told in a befitting manner as per the accepted conventions of storytelling brings Susan to Foe, the master craftsman with a lot of castaway narratives to his credit. Foe’s writing place is a like a workshop where narratives are forged one after another with the right amount of ingredients. Susan brings her narrative to this place and here Friday’s story becomes a puzzle or a “hole in the narrative” (121). It leaves a gap and raises a lot of questions, not easily answered. Trying to bridge this gap will transmit the narrative into further complications of signification as “…the true story is buried within Friday, who is mute” (118). It becomes a significant voice of the native spirit that is beyond the agency of the white man or woman to comprehend and represent. It shows the indigenous spirit of life that cannot be appropriated by the colonial agencies under the guise of historical and literary representation.

With the second section Friday’s figure rises in visibility. It is a highly notable fact that he steadfastly guards his island scents and culture in the foreign soil surrounded by forces bent on civilizing him. The third section mainly consists of Susan’s and Foe’s efforts to provide the benefits of language to Friday. As language is an essential feature of the strategies of colonialism which helps to create a native community which retains the colonialist values through internalization, the effort of Susan and Foe may be considered as the symbolic inscription of the colonized in the values of hegemonic discourses. Susan tries to teach him the alphabet of the colonizer’s tongue. All her efforts end in dismay, as Friday does not learn anything the
way his custodians would want him to. He puts forth a terrific sense of independence in refusing to be the “native informant” (Said, Orientalism 324).

The third and the fourth sections of the novel are very important from the point of view of Friday’s resistance. The author Foe and Susan fail in their mission to teach Friday to read and write. He refuses to participate in the white man’s mission and efforts to civilize him and then to make him an object to be colonized, civilized and thus Calibanized. It is a vehement resistance of the colonized to colonialism, its language and reinterpretation. He refuses to yield to a language which calls him a cannibal. If Foe celebrates the discourse of the Other, Friday is two times the ‘Other’ as he is made to be an object of the Othering process which Susan Barton, the marginalized white woman narrator fulfilling the role of the gendered Other undertakes. In her assertion and assumption of the role of the narrator and the author, Susan tries to manipulate Friday’s story as she tries to block the hole created by Friday’s tongueless presence in her narrative. This effort is thwarted and Friday’s story along with Barton’s narrative is taken over by Foe, rendering Susan Barton as manipulated and marginalized as the island native had been to Susan. Foe hopes to fill the gap in the narrative caused by Friday’s silent presence by looking for motives that will logically account for his location in the margins. Friday’s denial of the colonizer’s language is not a general disregard or dismissal of the tools of the colonialist sway as he makes use of the same tools to formulate a signification system intelligible to him which is very much based on his indigenous culture. It is the lines drawn by the manipulators that he disregards. The structures of patriarchy- of verbal and physical language and stone structures - are not able to communicate the island
voice and spirit as much as the silence of Friday. It is his tonguelessness which makes him more vocal than the tongue in cheek colonial white woman whose story is twisted in the authorial manipulation.

All the manipulative strategies prove insignificant in the fourth section where an omniscient narrator appears, taking the narrative to its lyrical close, unmistakably communicating the native spirit of the postcolonial voice. This emergence of the postcolonial voice amidst the multiple voices of the divergent discourses ultimately brings out the native spirit of the counter narrative. The omniscient narrator mediates amidst the various attempts of narrative control and facilitates the process of reaching the spirit of the native in the course of which the plaques of authorship are toppled and submerged letting the voice of Friday remain. The sparse, grunting voices and noises that come out from Friday’s mouth communicate the islander psyche so much so that more than the colonizer’s narrative with organized and coherent structure, it is from “the mute Friday, come the sounds of island” (Lane 25). Friday is surrounded by the island spirit. “Closer I press, listening for other sounds: the chirp of sparrows, the thud of a mattock, the call of a voice. From his mouth, without a breath, issue the sounds of the island” (Foe 154).

The counter-discursive intertextuality of Foe is achieved not only through the resistant figure of Friday and his silence. Foe disrupts and writes back to the organized structure and coherent narration of the canonical narrative through the incoherent language of Friday’s discourse and the disorganized structure of its narrative. Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe follows realist narrative pattern with its
beginning, middle and an end. Friday’s story does not begin or end in the coherent way as it lacks the structured narrative of the canonical texts. Even the gendered Other, Susan Barton suffering subjugation and hegemonic domination of patriarchy is unable to comprehend the specific positioning of Friday. The language and self of Friday lie beyond the comprehension of Susan Barton. Instead of the first person narrative of the protagonist whose delineation is aimed at the evolution of that character in a realist text, in *Foe*, the narrative proceeds through various points of view as expressed through the accounts of Susan, her letters to Foe, the muteness of Friday and the omniscient unknown narrator at the end of the novel leading the text into an open ended fluid state of multiple voices and mixed significations, to the postcolonial “home of Friday” (157).

Friday’s use of language, his limited vocabulary and the use of gestures and grunting noises reflect and reverse the language theories of the 18th century philosophers. Just as Friday’s physical language offers a criticism of colonialism and imperialism, his verbal expressions challenge the dominant language theories. 18th century language theories concentrated on exact use of exact words where every excess was removed from the textual realm. These philosophers also differentiated between the primitive and excessive in the linguistic realm. Friday, the native islander is positioned at the site of dual modes of interpreting the Other. The first notion of interpreting the other is as primitive and simple with only basic needs which Friday fulfills. The counter theory rests on the assumption of the Other as “excessive filled with uncontrollable desires and dangerously unstable. Both modes of interpreting the other, even though contradictory and based upon fundamentally flawed empirical
research, were brought together in justifying the enslavement of entire peoples” (Lane 22). Friday here represents both these ideas of representing the Other. He has in command an extremely small vocabulary, something which is purely functional for his role as a slave. “How many words of English does Friday know”? I asked. ‘As many as he needs’, replied Cruso” (Foe 21). On the one side, Friday has only the possession of a limited vocabulary while the various guesses about his loss of tongue is indicative of his stance as the excessive Other. The question of excess is supplied by Cruso when he talks of Friday’s loss of tongue as caused by the fellow islanders getting fed up of Friday’s talk.

The effort to teach language to Friday is undertaken in a dual mode. The first one is by trying to make him talk and as speech continues to elude him, Foe and Susan try the next method of teaching him to write which goes on in his drawing of the figures. He refuses to be taught the language of his master. If learning language is a step to getting manipulated then Friday remains outside the hegemonic realm of language and inscription. This is a new way of representing the Other, of writing back to the literary canon and canonical figures. Even after all the hegemonic manipulations of colonial and imperialist figure assisted by other forces in complicity as represented by Foe and Susan trying to teach language to Friday, ‘H’ is the only sound Friday is capable of making. ‘H’ is a silent sound. As Spivak comments, “It is a failed echolalia of the mute” (“Theory” 15). But though denied the power of volubility either by choice or by force, Friday is undoubtedly the figure of colonial resistance. He may be mute, he may be dull, “yet it is Friday rather than Susan who is the unemphatic agent of withholding in the text” (16). Susan Barton comments that “… The silence of
Friday is a helpless silence. He is the child of his silence, a child unborn, a child waiting to be born that cannot be born” (Foe 122). But the end of the narrative in the fourth section proves that Friday’s silence is more voluble and more purposeful than all the words of colonialism put together.

By his non-participation in the educational processes of the Prospero figures trying to train him in the discursive forces of colonialism Friday escapes the fate of being a source and raw material for their narrative. Susan and Foe can only have vague guesses about him. She tries to teach him the art of writing and Friday fills the pages with “rows of the letter ‘o’ tightly packed together” (152). The ‘o’ may well refer to ‘omega’ as Spivak suggests, probably signifying Friday’s all pervasive comprehension of the way the dominant discourses would appropriate his native self and all that it entails. Their decision to teach him ‘a’ the next day could discursively mean that the alpha of the world of hegemony may come only after the omegas of the colonized world. Though the visibility of the word of the white colonial constitutes narrative power, the moment of emergence of the unconventional writing of the postcolonial saga would eventually lead to their narrative gaining visibility and voice as seen in the lyrical end of Foe.

The attempts of writing which Friday manages to reproduce after the efforts of Susan Barton and the author Foe to teach him the art of writing are significant from the point of view of postcolonialism in its interface with feminism and the discourses of power. The male author is able to manipulate the course of the narrative by the gendered Other. But his efforts to teach the language to Friday, the native, and get
hold of his narrative fails. Teaching language has always been an imperialist tool. It is the language of domination and hegemony. Writing, the wielding of pen- the ultimate tool of authority- is taught to Friday by Susan. But Friday does not reproduce the alphabets and words as used by Susan or Foe. Friday’s resistance to the attempts of Foe and Susan to teach him written English could be symbolically explained as the native resistance to move according to the script of the colonial tongue. As Spivak says, “Friday is the proto type of the successful colonial subject” (“Theory” 14).

Once taught the method of writing, Friday develops his sign, his mark, and his individuality and dressed in Foe’s garments could even be mistaken for Foe. The cannibal, once he dons the garb can resemble and impersonate the wielder of words, the author. But the resemblance is only peripheral as Friday chooses to remain outside the discourse of the colonizer. Macleod suggests that “Friday’s characterization is rooted in his non characterization” (12). He is beyond inscription and almost entirely surrounded by shrewd guesses. The efforts to control the black native are undertaken by various elements of hegemonic structures like the colonial Cruso and the authorial Foe. They use the tools available with them either by keeping Friday away from the advantages of education as Cruso does or by introducing him to language as Foe does.

It is the marks of external representation that distinguishes the one who writes from the one who is written and who is inscribed. “It was Friday, with Foe’s robes on his back and Foe’s wig, filthy as a bird’s nest on his head. In his hand, poised over Foe’s papers, he held a quill with a drop of black ink glistening at its tip” (Foe 151). The holding of the quill is the holding of the writing authority. Friday has
managed to use the quill for representing his native self, unpolluted by the discourse of colonialism and thus has managed to render an instance of internal decolonization. But in spite of toying with the narrative with a hope to gain control, Susan fails to reach this level of ‘authorship’. She waits at the foot of the colonizer waiting to deliver her story. Friday has learned the art of writing, not the way imperialism wants it, but the way he would like to inscribe. Friday inhabits the insubstantial world outside the realm of dominance of the discourses of colonialism. Foe says to Susan, “We are all alive, we are all substantial, we are all in the same world” (152) to which Susan replies, “You have omitted Friday” (152).

Friday is the Other who cannot be represented by anything other than his own discourse. The questions of controlling the narrative remain vacant in relation to Friday as he occupies a realm beyond such questions. He represents the primacy of writing over speech and gets equated with God as “God’s writing stands as an instance of writing without speech” (143). As it is suggested in *The Empire Writes Back* by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin “…the invasion of the ordered, cyclic and ‘paradigmatic’ oral world by the unpredictable and ‘syntagmatic’ world of the written word stands as a useful model for the beginnings of postcolonial discourse” (81). In the countertextual realm of *Foe*, Friday’s writing exercise and the development of a self generated system of signification out of the tools provided by hegemonic discourses may be argued as the point of emergence of the postcolonial ethos.

It may be suggested that Friday’s silence and his location as the site of colonial mutilation are connotative of the repression and suppression of the black majority in
colonial South Africa where they lead a castrated existence of denial and displacement
and the reference to Friday as the Negro reinforces this connection. The insults and
revulsion to which Friday is subjected is also indicative of the oppressive colonial
experience. The mutilation and the silence of Friday communicate more than his
words. Whether the silence is inflicted, or a voluntary act of defiance, it is a
postcolonial gesture of ‘the empire writing back’. Usually the presence of tongues
takes the story further by telling, retelling and narrating the same old story. But here
the old story of Crusoe is reshaped, reformed and rewritten, its possibilities analysed
and truths altered due to the violence of Friday’s tongue.

The genuine Other receives mutilation and silencing not only from the colonial
master, but repulsion from the half-colonized Other as well. The castration of Friday is
a “lack” (86), an absence which makes him an object of double mutilation, double
denial, both of tongue and of masculinity. Susan says, “…whether the lost tongue
might stand not only for itself but for a more atrocious mutilation; whether by a dumb
slave I was to understand a slave unmanned” (119). It renders him vulnerable to the
ministrations and the manipulation of the colonial, imperial and other half colonized
forces in complicity. Ironically it is this very lack or absence which serves as the
ultimate instrument of defense of the postcolonial perspective as all the discourses of
colonialism fail to record Friday’s story. They have only weird and vague guesses
about the way his ‘discourse ‘is shaped and his physical and psychological structure is
constructed, as “the only tongue that can tell Friday’s secret is the tongue he has lost”
(67). The double mutilation puts Friday beyond the concerns of the ordinary level of
ontological positioning and he is placed outside the normal means and pre requisites of
communication such as the tools of language of the dominant culture. It makes it imperative for the use of an alternate or different mode of communication to record Friday’s narrative.

In order to voice the silences and to narrate the absences of the marginalized, who are outside the purview of normal discourse and ordinary means of communication, the narrative strategy should be beyond the margin of ordinariness. The author is a great jester, liar and seducer because of the free play that he manages with the abundance of words around him and with the wielding of the pen destinies are shaped, stories are woven, characters are made and remade, narratives are structured and restructured and discourses are centred and decentred. As “Friday is a character inscribed within the text but not quite assimilated by it” (Macaskill and Colleran 433), a whole new textual strategy becomes necessary for inscribing the uninscribed. Normal /structured/ordinary character representation is made impossible by the silence of Friday which is a textual gesture of writing resistance. This operates outside and against the normal level of representation. Friday is either written down or written up or he writes against the existing colonial discourse.

Barton’s desire for the narrative control regulates her use of the island details. Like the master story teller Foe, she also begins to be concerned about trimming and sifting her story with the right amount of truth and reality. As Friday’s story remains an intrinsically important elusive reality, she wishes to open the secret code that lie behind his closed lips. He is a figure representing the cause and effect of the wreck of colonialism. Barton asks, “Who will dive into the wreck? On the island I told Cruso it
should be Friday… But if Friday cannot tell us what he sees, is Friday in my story any more than a figuring (or prefiguring) of another diver?” (142). This query is answered in the fourth section where the certainties of discourses are toppled and Friday manages to remain beyond record as his voice is “a slow stream without breath, without interruption” (157). It is a realm where the entire authorial words and imperial worlds are toppled. It is a space of fluidity where “Friday was the dark pillar at its centre” (119). Susan’s feminist desires of controlling the island story and Foe’s art and artifice of literary mastery fail to support them in this plurality of many sided discourses. “But this is not a place for words. Each syllable, as it comes out, is caught and filled with water and diffused. This is a place where bodies are their own signs. It is the home of Friday” (157).

The character with the denied voice is Friday, the one whose story is conveyed mainly through inference as the subject of the story is unable to authorize it by verbal agreement. The assumption is that Friday is the genuine Other, waiting to be delivered. Silence or inarticulation is what makes him the symbol of resistance to colonial voice, authority and hegemony. At the same it is what denies him the power of language, the tool of the imperialists’ civilizing mission. In the strategy level of narration Friday’s articulatory failure leads to the inability and incapacity of Cruso, Foe and Susan to voice his discourse. As the narrative proceeds through Susan’s account of her island experiences as put forth in her journal and through her letters to and dialogues with Foe, Friday continues to remain as a topic of debate without ever securing a chance to present his story through speech. “It is his privilege to speak, through his own signs, to voice out his own discourse” (Head 110). But the silence
enables him to remain in the native spirit. All dominant ideologies of the author and
the colonial master fail to deny him his home. Through all the repressive hegemonies
and the problematics of domination which suppress the voice of the islander, Friday is
able to retain his voice, though denied inscription in and as per the dominant
ideological framework. Ironically “Friday’s silence presents an irreducible duality. It
is a silence which is a resistance, yet also the product of, the dominant discourse”
(121).

The key to opening the world out there in the island is supposed not to be in
the monotonous strong structures that Cruso built, nor in the story that Foe will write
or the narrative that Susan will manipulate, but in the silence of Friday, as he is the
genuine Other who partakes in the spirit of the island, opening up the heart of the
colonized which is as densely significant as the forest. “The heart of man is dark
forest” (Foe 11). A lot of secrets lie beyond his closed lips. The heart of Friday is like
the unmapped, uncharted and unmeasured forest as it is the heart of darkness. It is dark
because it holds a lot of secrets, because the normal world does not comprehend the
discourse of the colonized. His anguish and delight are matters of alternate reading
beyond the looking and reading glass of the so called white colonizer. Foe the master
craftsman is intrigued by the story of Friday. There are loopholes, gaps, breaks and
silences, unanswered questions and improbable situations in the island story that
Susan tells and it baffles the master narrator. Susan the accomplice in colonialist
strategy suggests, “It is for us to open Friday’s mouth and hear what it holds; silence,
perhaps or a roar like the roar of the seashell held to the ear” (142). Susan knows with
certainty that the key to the island story is in the heart of Friday as both are united in
their marginalized position as the victims of hegemony. But the colonialists like Cruso or Foe will never understand the crux of the island matter just as they find it impossible to comprehend Friday. The author Foe’s professed attempt is to “… make Friday’s silence speak as well as the silence surrounding Friday” (143). The civilized world’s effort to vocalize Friday ends in futility. This is a moment of victory for the postcolonial genuine Other who outlasts and outlives the authorial figure Foe and Susan.

This text becomes a context for the celebration and communication of Friday’s silence. Friday communicates his postcolonial self and challenge not only through his characteristic silence, but through “music and dancing” (143) which Susan considers “are to speech as cries and shouts are to words” (142). Music and dance are Friday’s revelation through which he catches back the island spirit in the midst of colonial colours. His native tune never changes and by playing the same tune again and again he challenges the institution of colonialism which tries to teach him civilization. He refuses to adapt to the tune played by Susan Barton. In the moment of dance he is in a trance, a world with the island smells all around him. Friday is able to respond to the rhythm of and life in nature through his music and dance and it signifies his symbolic existence and response to the harmony of nature. But the agent of colonialism is not able to appreciate this sense of music, as coherence of factual utterance is what the world requires. Friday expresses his inner rebellious spirit through music and dance which prove to be his discourse. The world of words does not comprehend the power of dancing and music. Dance and music for the colonial powers are ornaments of culture and just a part of etiquette while for Friday it is the revelation of the native
spirit through which the island memories are evoked. A being, born free but with marks of chaining and mutilation all over him, has moments of exhilaration of self discovery in dance and music and it is communication for Friday. It is his mark of liberation. Both Foe and Susan fail to respond to the inner spirit of rhythm in universe as they are more concerned about managing and manipulating discourses and emphasizing authority in the realm of culture. But unlike Foe, Susan is able to comprehend this innate rhythm and harmony of Friday when she frees herself from the hegemonic limiting closures of colonial and imperial sway. She says, “As long as I have music in common with Friday perhaps he and I will need no language” (97). This may be an important point of fusion of the feminist and postcolonial intertexts inherent in *Foe* where the two marginalized beings relate in some fluid zone with each other, which may be impossible in the case of the colonial author figure with his chest of castaway narratives and solid structured words which are neither flexible nor fluid.

The colonial world goes on fashioning and refashioning the story of the colonized native, trying to embellish it the way it will sell most. The tale of a colonized is valued from the point of view of marketing and commercial purpose. What sells is what counts. This could also refer to the various narratives and the island tales full of great adventures that prevailed in the world of literature. The story is often a concocted narrative, where substantiality to the story is provided by the authorial intervention and the presence of an omniscient narrator, who not only embellishes the externals of the native life but also supposedly sees into the colonized people’s psyche as well, leaving them no choice of privacy or secrecy. The author and the imperialist play god to the object and the colonized. In this context also Friday
emerges as a figure of postcolonial resistance as ‘his author and his accomplice’ fail to voice his story as well as their stories. Their repeated attempts to make sense of what goes on in Friday’s mind indicate constant failures in their efforts to “make Friday’s silence speak” (142). As his silence remains beyond their powers of telling and retelling, so does their ability to vocalize the silence surrounding Friday. In a way Friday refuses to let his story be told, sold and made part of history. His story and his discourse are safe within his mouth. Any silence at the face of efforts at making some one speak is a challenging gesture. Friday’s silence becomes a tool for the postcolonial world to question the narrator, the author and imperialism. The authorial voice is submerged and silenced by the silence of Friday and the narrative comes to a fluid finale in Friday’s survival. The narrative has managed to outlast and outlive the manipulative narrator Foe and continues till it reaches” the home of Friday” (157) celebrating Friday’s discourse. It ends by gesturing towards a postcolonial Utopia, through the symbolic release of Friday’s unending history filling first the island and then the earth itself.

His mouth opens. From inside him comes a slow stream, without breath, without interruption. It flows up through the body and out upon me; it passes through the cabin; through the wreck, washing the cliffs and shores of the island, it runs northward and southward to the ends of the earth (157).
It is indeed the revival of the postcolonial genuine Other, silencing everybody else in its wake, the half-colonized Other and the author signifying dominant discourses. Even the claims of the feminist narrative is sometimes put on hold and submerged in the wake of the emergence of the colonized Other. Friday is the “central silence” (Macleod 12) of the novel. Friday’s narrative serves as the occasion for situating and locating the discourse of postcolonialism into the story retold, of the great “essential colonial” (Roberts 89) Cruso. Friday is a non speaking subject and his position in the narrative is inextricably linked to this non-vocal position which denies him the power to tell his own story. This in turn problematizes his locality as his status of silence refuses to locate where the dominant discourse would want him. If Susan is a failed narrator, Friday is a “non narrator” (Macleod 6) whose supposed story of mutilation and castration dominate the entire colonial and authorial discourse. He has “a story unable to be told” (*Foe* 118). The author suggests a number of manipulative deviations in the story of Susan, for her position as a failed narrator can be located. Friday keeps his story beyond the suggestive locale of Foe and his manipulations. The western imperial world is baffled when it comes to representing the Other. Foe’s self doubt problematizes precisely this when he has to incorporate Friday’s story into the narrative of Susan Barton. The representation of the native psyche is beyond the comprehension of Foe’s critical and creative moorings.

Towards the end of text in the emergent narrator’s efforts to read the island experience, the narrator slips overboard into Barton’s text and into the water above the shipwreck. Only Friday’s mute, incoherent self remains, while the colonial counterpart and the wielder of words, the author have fallen out of the context. As the authority
and power in a text are determined by who gets to tell the story and who ends up listening to it, this text undoubtedly becomes the tale of the tongueless native whose discourse is conveyed at the cost of the discourses of the author and the imperialist, silenced by and in death. The death of the author is a highly significant and symbolic gesture in which authorial mastery gets lost in the island voice.

But the fourth section of the novel is steeped in surreal effects with chronological and spatial shifts that resist the liberal humanist notion of closure. The newly emerged narrator slips overboard in a surreal realm where the room is juxtaposed with water. Water signifies infinity and this is conspicuously marked by “petals cast by Friday” (155). In the telling gesture in which petals surround the omniscient narrator in a proclamation of the postcolonial spirit or voice, all other writings and inscriptions are erased. Only the sounds emanating from the mouth of Friday, the son of the island remains along with petals cast by him. This is reminiscent of the scent and spirit of the island as this is a ritual performed earlier on the island by Friday. Susan says in an earlier occasion:

Curious to find what he had been casting on the waves, I waited that evening till he had gone to fill the water bowls. Then I searched under his mat and discovered a little bag with a draw string, and turning it out found some few white petals and buds from the brambles that were at the time flowering on parts of the island (31).
The resisting closure lets the voice of the islander prevail over the toppled plaque of Daniel Defoe, the author, the blue plaque with white words indicating the topical and chronological positioning of the author. Such certainties are thwarted to give way to nameless beings from whose mouth emits the roar of the sea, the foam, the smell and spirit of the island. The highly suggestive, surreal ending of this indeterminate novel posits Friday on his way out of the ‘margin’ of colonialism. It may appear that the selves of the author Foe and Susan are no more valid to the island tale and the only discourse that matters is the island, native self of Friday. The mysterious narrator emerges out of the wrecked ship, evoking reference to a number of vessels. As Dominic Head says, “This composite vessel is a distillation of the mechanics of colonization, the ironic home of Friday, the home of the colonial Other” (126). The victim of colonialism, Friday moves from periphery and emerges as a figure of postcolonial counter discourse. Cruso and Foe are decentred not through violent movements and proclamations but through a ‘silent revolution’. Susan says” He is his own master, in law, and has been since Cruso’s death” (Foe 150). Cruso dies a symbolic death for the emergence of Friday’s story.

Friday is an Other who refuses to yield to the machinations of dominant ideology, who refuses to be the obedient learner of the language of colonization and who goes beyond the script of his educators by drawing “walking Eyes” (147) for all the alphabetic manipulations that he was taught. The walking eyes, “row upon row of eyes upon feet” (147) echoes a former comment made by Foe to Susan regarding the art of story making unearthing the motives that guide each character into a particular course of action.
…resumed Foe, but I should have said the eye of the story.

Friday rows his log of wood across the dark pupil- or the
dead socket- of an eye -staring up at him from the floor of
the sea. He rows across it and is safe. To us he leaves the
task of descending into that eye (145).

Walking eyes could signify a challenge to the signifying systems of the
dominant discourses to make sense of the uninscribed. Hena Maes-Jelinek speculates
that “the walking eyes signify the stare of Friday’s victimized people” (238). Dominic
Head suggests that row upon row of open walking eyes convey “not only the
displacement of the enslaved’ but also the sense of bearing witness” (123). Though the
lack of speaking tongue keeps Friday out of the discourse of colonialism and its
agency, his story gets revealed through his ‘brand’ of writing. Here also he defies the
structured coherent alphabets and its signifying systems by drawing incoherent
pictures. This, to Spivak, signifies the “repression that resonates” (“Theory” 17). In
Coetzean world of literary signification ‘eyes’ are associated with power and
authority. ‘Walking eyes’ then becomes a symbol of authority that sees and reflects on
reality. He too has become a “reflecting eye” (Bongie). The reflecting eye of Friday
helps him to take his place in the open scheme of things, escaping the limiting closures
of people caught in the discourses of power and authority. It is an epic gesture of
defiance, a gesture that dwarfs the unconventional writing. His writing is as powerful
as his silence. It defies the absolute certainties of interpretations. His scripts are as
much a challenge to the signifying world around him as his silence. The neat letter, he
manages is ‘o’ – the end of all learning- Omega. The world of inscription and
epistemological dominance decides to teach him ‘a’, the Alpha. Alphas of normal discourse are irrelevant in Friday’s world of omega, a world already written and already known.

The defiant refusal to comply with the machinations of the canon and centre makes Friday an unquestionably communicative figure of postcolonial awakening. It is a spirit that dominates subtly without overtly seeming to topple any established canon. It is a silent resistance. Coetzee adopts various strategies to reveal Friday’s story. Barton tries to teach him writing. He refuses to learn the authorized scripts with which histories are made, marginalizing the natives. But unattended he discovers his own mark. Friday engages himself in the process of writing, writing ‘walking eyes’ which seem like flowers and leaves while Susan and Foe are engaged in the deeper questions of supremacy and narrative dominance. In the frustrated attempt of Susan to teach Friday, Friday comes out with his mark of individuality not complying with the words Susan inscribed. He refuses to draw her ‘house’, her ‘Africa’, or her ‘mother’. In this moment Foe appears to be a captive, probably more captive than Friday to Susan, the narrator. The authorial powers of creating tale upon tale of great courtesans and grenadiers are perceived as “…but the same story over and over, in version after version, still born every time; the story of the island as lifeless from his hand as from mine?” (Foe 151).

The colonial and imperial author finds his literary and creative abilities inadequate for recreating the island story while Friday emerges as the creator of the story that smells of the island. Susan Barton’s authority and discursive power as the
storyteller of the island tale suffer a lack and an absence with the story of Friday untold. What she accepted on the island as the ‘truth’ of Friday’s lost tongue becomes less credible with the waning of colonial hegemony. “To tell my story and be silent of Friday’s tongue is no better than offering a book for sale with pages in it quietly left empty. Yet the only tongue that can tell Friday’s secret is the tongue he has lost” (Foe 67). The claims of Susan and Foe about shaping and reshaping remain unrealized. The author serves as the tongue of the tongueless, voice of the voiceless and he does it on the presumption that they shape the identity and the structure for they are the wielders of words. Susan says about Friday. “I say he is a cannibal and he becomes a cannibal; I say he is a laundryman, and he becomes a laundry man” (121). What is the truth of Friday? is the central question that goes on endlessly as it is a question without an answer. This query is met with silence. All authorial and imperialist claims of writing and ‘righting’ the narrative are thwarted in the silence of Friday.

The story of Friday’s tongue is a story unable to be told, or unable to be told by me. That is to say, many stories can be told of Friday’s tongue, but the true story is buried within Friday, who is mute. The true story will not be heard till by art we have found a means of giving voice to Friday (118).

The world goes on because there are infinite ways of communication. Words are the tools with which Foe creates masterpieces that perpetrate discourse of power and authority, discourses of love and hate. If Friday is mute by choice, by consciously not opting to talk, it becomes a sign of restraint. It is a restraint that leads to an excess
in communication as Friday’s silence begins to speak volumes. Friday’s silence communicates as much as the words of imperialism. The impenetrable silence of Friday is an answer to all the questions and an act of interrogating colonialism, a challenge posed to the systems which govern discourses. Friday challenges narrative designs, canons, imperialism and the dominant discursive realms by not complying with the Prospero like efforts of Foe. Susan is an accomplice in the “art” (Foe 118) of giving voice to Friday. Friday is the child of Susan’s discourse. But the child grows more significant and beyond the comprehension of the very discourse that fathered him. A two or three fold restructuring has taken place in the art of fiction or novel writing and Friday is the infinite end. Tonguelessness makes Friday the subject of discourse rather than being the object of authorial sway. Hence Friday’s tongue attains almost an ontological status. Friday with his tongue intact is what constituted his subjugation in Robinson Crusoe. Foe’s Friday has learned the lesson and has woven himself out of the web of stories that colonialist patterns had been creating in him. The edifices of slavery, conquest and mutilation remain as scars on his body. But these marks of mutilation fail to write colonialist supremacy in his soul. Friday becomes a product and a project of colonialism. He is not just a project, instead he is a pro-ject something that juts out of the ‘project’ of colonialism. Friday emerges out of drowned narratives, thwarted designs and structured characters, a figure of emergence proclaiming the voice of the postcolonial world. A figure suffused in the fluidity and immanence of sea, a symbol of infinity and perenniality, he stands as a textual ‘topos’, a stand and location that threatens claims of writing and reading. Friday is a figure
reading the colonial saga and rewriting colonial legacy with the smells and sounds of the island around him.

There are reasons to consider *Foe* more as a postcolonial countertext stifling the feminist narrative in its wake. As Susan says, “I am the Sinbad of Persia and Friday is the tyrant riding on my shoulders. I walk with him, I eat with him, he watches me while I sleep. If I cannot be free of him I will stifle” (148). John Thieme notes parallels between Susan Barton and Marlow in *Heart of Darkness* in their civilizing mission. Friday’s story can be read as “…an absence in the signifying systems with which she (Susan) is familiar, in much the same way as the anonymous African’s of *Heart of Darkness* belong to a discursive universe that lies beyond Marlow’s comprehension. She appreciates that he is a colonial Other who has been constructed from outside because of his lack of access to language” (Thieme 66). Both Defoe/Foe and Friday inhabit mutually exclusive realms and it becomes the task of the gendered Other, the white colonial, but marginalized woman to act as a connecting link between the two.

Friday’s discourse is the answer to the colonial question posed by *Robinson Crusoe*. Friday in *Robinson Crusoe* is redeemed by Friday in *Foe*. Friday in *Foe* has conquered Defoe, decentring his authority and destructuring his narrative design, toppling Defoe who is the foe of postcolonial psyche, whose narrative centres around Robinson Crusoe and his colonial empire building. A ‘text’ more than ‘a context’ for the strategy of postcolonial enquiry, Friday fulfils his task of being beyond colonial reading, beyond colonial inscription, of inhabiting a realm outside and above
imperialist signifying systems. Friday is undoubtedly a figure of resistance whose lack is the presence in this countertextual answer to the legend of colonialism. Friday answers the colonial questions of the verisimilitude of Robinson Crusoe and poses questions to the dominant discourses by his stony silence. Its edifices are collapsed, designs thwarted and restructured to include a world of castaway narratives. Friday emerges from his dog like stance to colonize the narrative when the sounds emanating from his mouth resonate through the void and fill the sea of infinite signification.

Both Wide Sargasso Sea and Foe are deemed as postcolonial countertexts as they concern themselves with issues particular to the discourse of postcolonialism. They both problematize hegemony and its variants and suggest the emergence of the figures of postcolonial awakening. They also remain postcolonial in their preoccupation with the language of the colonizer as a “medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated” (Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin 7). These two texts celebrate the figures and characters who transform themselves into signifiers of presence from a locale of ideological absence. Friday in Foe and Antoinette and Christophine in Wide Sargasso Sea are examples. The power of the colonizer’s language is rejected at the emergence of the postcolonial voice in Wide Sargasso Sea and Foe. Another characteristic of the postcolonial voice that these texts maintain is their preoccupation with the concepts of place and displacement. Both Antoinette and Friday are effective vehicles for the deployment of this concept of displacement. Antoinette is a perfect study of the alienation caused by displacement and demonstrates its resultant crisis in self image and complexities of identity. Friday’s identity and authenticity are at stake on his removal from his island and he retains
them through his total rejection of the discursive systems of the colonizer. The divergent discourses of the colonizer and the colonized which signify a parallel theorizing of the dominating and the dominated run through the length and breadth of these texts making them effective vantage points for the celebration of the spirit of the postcolonial decolonization, toppling hegemonic narratives in their course of emergence. Their interrogation of the divide of gender validate them as significant feminist intertexts too offering the view from all aspects of the ‘Othersides’, projecting the gendered Other and the racial Other from the same platform, holding identical mirrors.