Chapter 5

Conclusion

An attempt has been made to analyze Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* and J. M. Coetzee’s *Foe* in their positions as texts, countertexts and intertexts in the thesis titled “Texts, Countertexts and Intertexts: An Analysis of Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* and J. M. Coetzee’s *Foe*”. These two texts are analysed in their intrinsic aspects of textuality and also as texts that undermine the presupposed assumptions of the canons in their status as postcolonial countertexts and feminist intertexts. *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* problematize the “politics of imperialism and the politics of gender” (Ciolkowski 340). Both texts expose the politics of the empire and their textual spaces confront “the ever-shifting relations between complicity and resistance” (340) in the postcolonial and feminist thoughts. It is argued that *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* hold pertinent, valid relationships with the master narratives and expose the fissures and gaps in *Jane Eyre* and *Robinson Crusoe* respectively. So *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* can be considered as rewritings of the dominant texts of the past from the perspectives of postcolonialism and feminism.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* is the inter/countertext of Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* as it presents the narrative of Antoinette Cosway, turned Bertha Mason, the mad and imprisoned wife of Edward Rochester as against the discourse of Jane which celebrates the character and personality of Jane and Rochester in *Jane Eyre*. Bertha is brought into the first ‘stor (e) y’ of the narration as Antoinette from the third ‘stor(e)y’ which she occupies in *Jane Eyre* as Bertha. These levels are indicative of
their narrative significance and dominance as well. In *Jane Eyre* Bronte makes a strong case for woman’s discourse by presenting the eponymous heroine’s struggle in a male dominated society and her passionate challenge of patriarchal authority. *Wide Sargasso Sea* apprehends the gender and the racial issues inherent in the textual world of *Jane Eyre* and exposes the imperialist bias and the cultural divide concealed within its texture. It is the location of the story in the sad, pitiful plight of the Creole woman, Antoinette that accounts for the postcolonial content of the story. *Wide Sargasso Sea* presents the regeneration of Antoinette from her doubly colonized and marginalized location as Bertha. Antoinette, as the site of double colonization, is pitted against the person of Jane, who suffers the margin of gender alone. Jean Rhys’ righteous anger against the racial discrimination inherent in *Jane Eyre* culminated in rendering an alternate tale of Bertha Antoinette and provides the feminist and postcolonial voices of the Other in the shaping of the character and location of Antoinette and Christophine. The positioning of Antoinette as a Creole exposes the “‘non position’ (*Giving Offense* 85) of the Creoles in the West Indies as they occupy a noman’s land between the black natives and the white Europeans, not able to negotiate their own space, caught among native dreams which are ‘fair’ in colour. The victory of owning a narrative liberates Antoinette from the garb of Bertha, making her soar into the world of theories and discourses where she will negotiate her own identity and space in the vast continuum of reclaimed voices.

The textual implications and explications of *Wide Sargasso Sea* are multifold. It is significant not just as a rewriting of the Jane Eyre story but as a unique text of postcolonial and feminist spirit, giving a platform for the exposition of submerged
discourses. *Wide Sargasso Sea* rewrites not only the premises inherent and inculcated through the text of Bronte, but also the narrative strategies of *Jane Eyre* with its blend of realistic details. The celebration of an aberrant heroine who questions the edifices of patriarchy and colonialism, shakes, and demolishes it, becomes the theme for a modernist rewriting against realist narrative of *Jane Eyre*. It is not only through the character of Antoinette that the postcolonial and feminist voices are conveyed. Christophine, the black servant offers the resistance from another level where she places herself beyond the limiting discourses of colonialism and patriarchy which she critiques in no uncertain terms. The dreams, the fantasies, the plot and the treatment together make *Wide Sargasso Sea* an expression of the postcolonial and feminist revolt. It is a representation of the Creole life against the backdrop of the Emancipation Act of 1833 which had granted freedom to the black slaves, but which had not freed the former slave owners, the Creoles, from colonial complicity and consequent marginality.

Antoinette and Jane represent different levels in the scale of feminism as Jane’s position as a white woman renders her discourse more legitimate than the gendered postcolonial position of Antoinette. With Rhys’ revision Antoinette completes what Jane could not and fills up the gaps and omissions in Bronte’s text. As Antoinette moves through a predetermined end as the intertextual figure of Bertha, it is what she differently does in the course of *Wide Sargasso Sea* that renders her an agent of interrogation of the structures that differentiate ‘Jane Eyres and Bertha Masons’.

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In technique, *Wide Sargasso Sea* exhibits certain modernist elements in writing back to a text that was written during the heyday of realism. The elements of psychological realism and the use of the stream of consciousness method, the aberrant central character, the narrative pattern and the intense and integral use of the imagery together make this text a modernist one. If the protagonist of *Jane Eyre* is presented as a woman of enough sense and sensibility very much rooted to the reality around her, endowed with a terrific sense of independence and practicality, Antoinette Cosway in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is represented in contrast as a lyrical being gliding through the situations around her, more alive in her dreams as the reality is baffling and overpowering. But it is the transformation at the end of the text where this sensitive being is converted into an avenging angel of destruction that accounts for the vehement challenge in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The technique is also modernist in the sense that it presents diverse viewpoints of the various narrative personae and there is a fluid unreality in the narration. Impressions come crowding upon the mind’s eye in which individual reactions exist in a point of ambivalence, where no one retains the mantle of authenticity and authority. *Wide Sargasso Sea* presents an aberrant woman at the centre of the rewriting and her perception of the world is from an angle different from that of the norm. Antoinette’s consciousness is revealed through the vague fancies, nameless agonies and faceless dreams which torment her.

Antoinette undertakes her life’s journey, driven by the dreamy unreality around her. The racial and the gendered revenge inherent in the fire at Thornfield Hall is undertaken in a dream where she achieves a rare moment of identification with the black natives around her like Christophine and Tia and the subsequent empowerment
that she receives from it. Along with her character, Antoinette’s background too makes her aberrant. The wild, uncivilized place with its intensity of “blue-green” \cite{Wide Sargasso Sea 87} makes her a mistress of aberration and she becomes a ‘blank’ which the sequential impressions of a realist world can never fill up. It takes this modernist aberrant heroine to let loose the attack on the structural edifices of patriarchy and colonialism. Not only Antoinette, but the representations of other characters like Annette, Christophine and Rochester add to the dreamy unreality of existence in keeping with the modernist strategies. Both the leading female figures, Antoinette and Annette walk through the corridors of realistic, patriarchal structure in an unpractised way plotting insanely the destruction of these structures. Rochester occupies an unnamed existence as a site of inscription of the hegemonic structures and the postcolonial disempowerment and erasures of them. He moves through the conflicting, passionate West Indian wilds frightened of black witches and mad women alike.

In narrative techniques also, \textit{Wide Sargasso Sea} closely follows modernist leanings. The incoherent narration, the sharing of the textual space by various characters with considerable possibility for ambiguous impressions, the disorganized way in which the characters seem to respond to one another and the general air of disconnectedness are indicative of modernist elements in the text. Another important aspect of literary impressionism is the lively, constructive activity that it demands of the reader. Within the texture of this text three parts are juxtaposed where the narrative personae differ in each part possessing diverse identities and cultural climate. All these make \textit{Wide Sargasso Sea} a pertinent modernist text.
Textual enquiry of *Wide Sargasso Sea* reveals the strategic use of the gothic elements as a counter-discursive measure. The evocation of the landscape which assumes the role of a character, the sense of doom and danger that is steadily built up through the natural and inevitable unravelling of events, the general atmosphere of an eerie unreality, the characters Rochester and Antoinette who fulfill the gothic conventions of the villain and heroine respectively and the characters’ move towards their impending disaster in a daze surrounded by inevitable forces of destruction contribute to the gothic nature of this work. Christophine’s intense black complexion, the practice of black magic, possessed chants, dissipated laughter and disjointed songs add to the unreal atmosphere.

The textual effects are augmented by the elaborate use of imagery and symbols. The frangipani tree, the tree of life, the looking glass, the picture of ‘The Miller’s Daughter’, the sun and the sea, the red dress and the colour ‘red’ are all powerful signifiers which convey the depth of the underlying theme and the course of life that the destiny has in store for the characters. Each symbol is inextricably intertwined with the development of the narration and there is fluidity in the symbolic handling of the themes that convey more effectively the encoded message. These symbols and images possess a textual signification in the delineation of Antoinette’s world.

If *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a twentieth century rendering of the feminist and postcolonial perspective of the nineteenth century classic *Jane Eyre*, J.M. Coetzee’s *Foe* analyses the fissures of the eighteenth century text *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel
Defoe. Along with this classic of the spirit of colonialism, another text by Defoe, *Roxana* and a short story “A True Revelation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal” find intertextual references in *Foe*. Hence it is to be inferred that the entire Defoean literary universe is subjected to re-enquiries in *Foe* regarding the questions of authorship, the authenticity of representation, the displacement of the marginalized leading on to their replacement through alternate texts and the reclamation of the multiple voices that make a postmodern literary universe. In *Foe* the newly claimed woman’s discourse is that of Susan Barton, the one who claims to have shared the island experience along with Cruso and therefore wishes for the ownership and authorship of the island story. The postcolonial voice that permeates the text is that of Friday, the slave of Cruso, who manages to communicate his discourse without using the props of communication in which colonialism seems to take pride, the advantages of language. The end of *Foe* is steeped in the postmodern celebration of the multiple discourses and plural attempts at signification and in a subtle but in no uncertain terms it clarifies the discourse of the postcolonial while negating the centralities of authorship and authority. *Foe* is essentially concerned with the way texts are made, stories are narrated and facts are concocted to create semblance of reality by the manipulative and ‘artifici’al strategies of the author and establishes how all the claims of centralities are rejected and emergent discourses are celebrated.

The textual space of *Foe* manifests a number of theoretical concerns. As an intertext of the textual world of Defoe, it alludes to many of his works. Along with *Roxana* and *Robinson Crusoe*, *Foe* traces its relations to the short story “A True Revelation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal”. This allusion is invoked to refer to
the issues of substantiality and manipulative authority of the author figure. *Foe* is noted as a text that defies the limitations of the signifying structures by facilitating multiple voices and plural selves. The text addresses the issue of the art of writing fiction as the strategies that create a story and the techniques that make a writer are elaborately discussed here. *Foe* deals with the questions of authenticity, substantiality and authority in writing. It serves as an effective treatise about the way texts are made.

*Foe* is a postmodern text for a variety of reasons. It celebrates multiple voices and diverse discourses and ends in a fluid self conscious realm of indefinite infinity. *Foe* makes use of a variety of genres and narrative styles in its textual space. The self conscious ontological uncertainty and ambivalence expressed and experienced by the characters in *Foe* is a familiar postmodern dilemma as expressed by Susan and Foe while it is carried to its maximum in rendering Friday an essence of uncertainty. The supposed closure of the text with its possibilities of significance thrown open makes this text a postmodern metafiction. In its textual space, *Foe* also allegorizes the strategy of reading in which Friday is the text that waits to be read but which is situated beyond the power of the readers like Foe and Susan Barton. Friday proves himself above the signifying practices of the dominant discourses and its representatives.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* as a postcolonial counter-discursive narrative makes use of the central character, Antoinette Cosway as the agent of resistance and critique of the colonial discourse. She serves as the site and space for inscription of the hegemonic mutilations and simultaneously offers the emergent postcolonial voice in the text.
Antoinette is a postcolonial figure of resistance as she gets to narrate the story from her ‘own’ point of view. She is a postcolonial persona as she is the site of colonial oppressions and repressions that characterize her race, in a location in the Caribbean. It is noted for the typical colonial experience of the Caribbean islands and traces it in the background of the Emancipation Act of 1833. The continuing emotional slavery of the Creoles and the spiritual emancipation of the blacks are placed in the same terrain and their diverse ways of writing back are dealt with. The theme of domination, a major postcolonial characteristic, is theorized in the textual space. The sense of alienation and displacement resulting in problems of identity, a dominant characteristic of postcolonial narrative is to be seen in this text. Antoinette as a Creole woman does not belong anywhere. It is this ambivalent, ambiguous location that is transformed into a discourse of challenge and critique in *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a postcolonial counter-discursive text. *Wide Sargasso Sea* hints at the way language becomes a significant element of colonial inscription and a postcolonial tool of resistance.

Along with the character of Antoinette, Christophine is also regarded as a postcolonial agent of resistance of colonialism and its presuppositions in inhabiting a margin different from that of Antoinette and managing a fruitful resistance therein. If Antoinette achieves the realization of her location in the Otherness of things only after prolonged complicity with the expectations and hopes of the colonial figure of domination, Christophine realizes this from the start and reacts accordingly. She is never for a single moment deceived by the colonial agents and their concern for the Creole for she comprehends the ulterior motives of the whites’ liaisons with the
Creoles. It is this terrific sense of independence and non-alignment with the colonial designs that make her a distinct voice of the postcolonial.

*Foe* provides its counter-discursive strategy in the unmistakable presence of Friday, the mute slave of Cruso. It is the transformation from his stature of subservience to claiming the narrative that accounts for the postcolonial finale of the story. Friday writes back to the volubility of historical representation of the dominant discourses through his silence. His silence is a gesture of defiance and at the same time a symbol of colonial mutilation. Friday’s presence as a castrated self in the colonial psyche, undergoes tremendous transformation in the course of the text where in the final section, he unquestionably communicates his native spirit. The silence may be inflicted or voluntary as there are multiple reasons suggested for his tonguelessness. He refuses to speak the language of the colonizers who tries to educate him in their ways. But Friday nevertheless communicates through music and dance integral to his natural self. He does not change the rhythm or the tunes with the incursion of the representatives of the ‘dominant culture’ into his life. Friday plays the same tune over and again without fail and keeps the memory of the island alive in the course of the text. Friday is a postcolonial figure of resistance in his writing strategy also. He does not negate the art of writing but at the same time refuses to follow the scripts of the colonizers. He develops his own mark in writing symbolizing his own individual mark of resistance. Through his scripts Friday seems to prove that the native has a culture of his own, which may be distinct from the dominant one but not inferior to it. Thus Friday’s significance as a postcolonial figure of critique and challenge remains in his refusal to change with the mission of the agents of social change bearing the
colonialist agenda and also in retaining his own mark in the world of discourse. He is unparalleled as a figure of postcolonial voice in controlling the narrative without vying for it as does the colonial powers. His mutilated self is also a representative of the Apartheid South Africa while the final section is an emphatic communication of the emergent black voice in post-Apartheid Africa.

Another level of enquiry concentrates on the stature of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* as feminist intertexts. The texts discuss the reclamation of the woman’s voice from amidst the unidirectional, monologic discourses that celebrate the male point of view in the patriarchal society causing woman’s subjugation and consequent marginalization. Moreover, *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* show forth the woman’s emancipation from the margins and the women’s assertion of their selves. The women’s decision to tell their story in their own way constitutes the feminist element of these texts. The resistance to the patriarchal world view is achieved in different ways in these texts. *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* do not just question the male aspirations and assertions; they uphold the woman’s voice as well. That is how these texts become feminist intertexts of significance.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* maintains its stance as an intertext by subjecting the supposed assumptions of *Jane Eyre* to question. The narrative persona of the first person narrator, Antoinette Cosway decides the text as a feminist intertext. She redeems her Other in *Jane Eyre* as Bertha Mason. Bertha Mason is an object in *Jane Eyre* who gets transported as Antoinette into this text as a subject who acts for her gender and race. Antoinette dramatizes the questions of a troubled self and identity
in a male conceived world where she is a cog in the wheel, whose moves and movements are charted by the forces of ideological powers. She represents the alienated self of the gendered Other along with her representation as a racial Other. The feminist content of the text resides in its affirmation of the self of Antoinette Cosway, the realization of her marginality and her consequent devastating destruction of the notions of patriarchy. *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a woman’s text as a gynocritic attempt at representing the woman’s point of view not only in their destructive possibilities, but in the way the primacy of narrative is invested with the woman narrator.

Along with Antoinette Cosway, the text presents Christophine as a voice of the woman’s spirit. She is a symbol of the emancipated black woman whose physical slavery does not extend to her indomitable spirit of will. In her emphatic location against the white men and their commercial selves, she proves herself to be the agent of double decolonization. Spiritually, economically and materially, she is a strong signifier for the call for woman’s empowerment, as the concept of emancipation is more of a spiritual entity than a physical reality.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* is a feminist intertext in the way it disfigures and revises the male character of the previous text, Rochester. Rochester is subjected to severe critique, is presented without a proper name and becomes a site for the revision and reversion of colonialist strategies of naming and renaming.

*Foe* maintains its feminist intertextuality by means of the persona and narrative of Susan Barton who assumes the role of the female Cruso, a resistant figure to the
archetypal colonial Robinson Crusoe who is a notable signifier for all the colonial adventures that celebrate the masculine glory. Susan’s claim as the first female castaway triggers the text as a feminist intertext. Along with her claim to rewrite the world of Crusoan exploits, she highlights the presence of a woman with a voice, who has been conspicuously absent from the world of *Robinson Crusoe*. *Foe* is a feminist intertext in the way it rewrites the authority of Crusoe by transforming him from the position of the great colonial figure to a faded figure beside Susan. Susan is a ‘woman as presence’ who succeeds in establishing the intertextual relationship to Defoe’s *Roxana* as well. *Roxana* unfailingly brings to mind the female exploits undertaken in a predominantly male world and conveys a total rejection of the male morality that judges self-willed women as immoral. Susan’s resemblance to Roxana in her first name and her adventurous spirit strongly recommend her intertextual relationship to the world of Defoe and to the feminist struggle for independence. In her tussle for control over the narration of the story Susan exhibits the spirit of the emerging woman’s discourse. She not only represents the voice of challenge of the feminist but fulfills various textual positions as well.

Susan Barton seems to occupy the position of a theoretical tool for Coetzee in providing an ambivalent position of the ‘median’ from which to question the assumptions of the centre and the discourse of power. She fulfills the role of the feminine as a textual strategy for questioning positions of power from a non-position. Susan is also the representative of the “colonial postcolonialism” (Attwell 112), a specific, special textual position of Coetzee in his location as a white male in the post-Apartheid South Africa, with theoretical and ideological affiliations with the
native resistance movements of the blacks. Susan Barton also exemplifies the plight of feminism in its affiliation with postcolonialism and it suggests that the feminist discourse may sometimes get submerged in its liaison with such movements. She also represents the practice of liberal feminism which aims to champion the cause of the emancipation of the privileged white women who hold themselves responsible for civilizing the native. The significance of *Foe* as a woman’s text is multiple and probably the emergent discourse of Friday in a fluid zone is indicative of an argument favouring the woman’s discourse as it is intertextually linked to “Diving into the Wreck” by Adrienne Rich. It is to be noted that the world of *Foe* is suffused in symbols of fluidity which is associated with the women’s discourse.

In short, the thesis titled “Texts, Countertexts and Intertexts: An Analysis of Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* and J.M.Coetzee’s *Foe*” reaches its conclusion with the following arguments:

1. Both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* have their own specific elements of textuality.
   - *Wide Sargasso Sea* makes use of the strategies of modernism to render the point of view of the aberrant heroine as against the narrative of *Jane Eyre*. It also makes use of the technique of the gothic in writing back to the masterpiece of Charlotte Bronte.
   - As a textual space, *Foe* celebrates the postmodern possibility of the plurality of voices and discourses. It is also an allegory of the art and artifice of writing fiction. *Foe* also deconstructs the concept of the primacy of the author. *Foe* writes back to the fictional world of Defoe as well.
2. Both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* are effective postcolonial counter-discursive narratives.

- As a postcolonial countertext *Wide Sargasso Sea* subverts the canonical narrative *Jane Eyre* and exposes the racial bias inherent in Bronte’s text by emphasizing the marginalized discourse of Antoinette. As a major symbol of colonial mutilation, Antoinette, the restructured Bertha Mason, is the primary voice of postcolonial resistance. She symbolizes the displacement, the alienation, the crisis with regard to the identity of the self, the hegemony inherent in the forces of domination and the discourse of the marginalized selves which are all critiqued in a postcolonial voice of resistance. Along with Antoinette’s typical Creole counter-discourse, *Wide Sargasso Sea* problematizes the colonial experience of the native blacks through the character Christophine who symbolizes the postcolonial voice of the blacks in their resistance to colonial hegemony and represents the denial of the colonizer’s ‘language’ as a mode of postcolonial resistance.

- *Foe* as a postcolonial counter-discourse concentrates on the figure of the mute slave, Friday as the symbol of colonial mutilation and the voice of postcolonial awakening. He reacts to the verbosity of the world of discourse through his silence. Friday’s refusal to learn the language of the colonizers marks him as a potential symbol of resistance. His own mark in writing is the symbolic use of the tools of the colonizer for the expression of the native spirit. Friday’s communication through dance and music. The finale of the text in which the omniscient narrator locates the submerged voice of Friday
from among the ruins of dominant discourse undoubtedly celebrates the emergence of the postcolonial voice.

3. Both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* address the woman’s discourse as feminist intertexts that celebrate the resurgent voices of women in their interrogation and challenge of the hegemonic centrist systems and its key texts and also in its affirmation of the emancipated selves of women.

- *Wide Sargasso Sea* is a feminist intertext as it celebrates the discourse of Antoinette Cosway confined to the attic of Thornfield Hall in *Jane Eyre* as Bertha Mason, the mad, Creole wife of Rochester. It is a feminist rendering of *Jane Eyre* exposing the duality inherent in the feminist message of *Jane Eyre*. The reclamation of the woman’s self and voice lost in complicity with the patriarchal ethos in the master narrative forms the feminist content of this text. Antoinette’s position as the narrator of *Wide Sargasso Sea* accounts for its stance as the feminist intertext of *Jane Eyre*. The text also subverts the canon by strategically making use of the black slave Christophine as a figure of resistance against patriarchy. It is a feminist intertext by the way the text revises the masculinist assumptions through the rewriting of the character of Rochester.

- *Foe*’s position as a feminist intertext is conveyed through the narrative of Susan Barton, who claims and takes over the story of Cruso, the representative figure of the canon and subjects him to severe disfigurement. By claiming her presence and voice in this text, she challenges Defoe’s narrative which excluded the woman from the tale of colonialist adventure.
She undoubtedly evokes intertextual reference to another Defoean text, *Roxana* and here also she thwarts the conventions of master narratives. By Susan Barton’s claims for the authorship of the narrative and the challenges she poses to the author figure, she represents the woman’s desire for gynocritic authority. It is suggested here that Susan is a signifier for the entire spectrum of woman’s discourse as her resistance is not confined to the feminist challenge alone. She is a signifier for the arguments of liberal feminism which emphasizes the liberated white woman as an agent of civilization of the natives. Susan Barton seems to occupy the position of the ‘median’ representing the Coetzean ideological position with regard to the typical South African situation. The final section of the text also brings into mind the resurgence of woman’s discourse as it unmistakably connotes Adrienne Rich’s poem “Diving into the Wreck”. In spite of this connotation it is argued that in *Foe*, in the fourth section, the postcolonial voice submerges the feminist narrative.

The conclusions that emerge out of this study establish the significance of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* and the complex ways in which they become relevant in the context of current theoretical enquiries. The publication of Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* in 1966 when feminism was scaling new heights cast a new fillip in the entire feminist enquiries. *Wide Sargasso Sea* also exposes the duality in feminist movements where the white woman’s problems gain supremacy over the conditions of subjugations of the racially marginalized. This text brings the plight of the Creole women to the attention of the theoretical preoccupations in the field of feminism.
which was essentially concerned with the more ‘privileged’ group of women, the white women of Europe and America. This feat of uncanny perception which deconstructs a popular realist text preferred by men and women alike shows forth the wide and far reaching roots of the dominating effects of patriarchy and colonialism over the psyche of apparently liberated women writers who had to write in subtle complicity with the operations of the dominant discourses, through which they perpetrate the inherited notions of womanhood although with a difference here and there. *Wide Sargasso Sea* also opened up the academic possibilities that intertexts and countertexts offer in challenging and critiquing dominant discursive practices.

*Foe* challenges and changes a lot of equations of gender and race and raises theoretical questions regarding the primacy of the author. As an intertext of Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* and *Roxana*, it subjects the discursive realms of patriarchy and colonialism to critique. *Foe* addresses questions regarding the position of Coetzee in South Africa as a white male writer belonging to the privileged group theorizing on black resistance. Its publication in 1986 generated a lot of critical commentary on issues of gender, race, colonialism and the art of writing. *Foe* also fixed Coetzee’s narrative subject in a middle voice which “deftly negotiates the interstices of power, maintaining its ethical integrity, but avoiding not only appeals for inclusion but also any over statement of its own legitimacy and authority” (Attwell 25-6). *Foe* is an allegorical representation of the colonial mutilations where the mark of chains still remains in the physical and spiritual realm of the individuals and hence reflects the oppressive conditions of the post-Apartheid South Africa.
Both Rhys and Coetzee have created considerable impact on the postcolonial and feminist literatures through the vast body of their writing. Carine Mardorossian opines about *Wide Sargasso Sea* that “the novel itself played an important role in the evolution of feminist critical trends” (“Double Decolonization” 79). *Foe* is an explication of Coetzee’s opinion on ‘truth’ in writing which unfolds only in texts as “it is related to silence, to reflection and to the practice of writing” (*Doubling the Point* 65-6). The changed situation in the complex, postcolonial South Africa requires a narrative that helps maintain an ethical basis for writing. *Foe* unfailingly retains the element of self reflexivity required for apprehending truth in such a situation. “Coetzee’s art seeks for itself the task of bearing witness to ‘the abundance of real suffering’ engendered by Apartheid, and more broadly by the history of colonialism, the larger context within which Coetzee has insisted South African Apartheid must be understood” (Durrant 434).

Both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* have generated immense critical interest which has transmuted over times and these inter/countertexts have risen to the status of the cult, key texts of the postcolonial and feminist perspectives over a span of fortyfive and twentyfive years respectively. The texts remain the same, but readings vary from decade to decade. Mardorossian comments on the multiple reactions *Wide Sargasso Sea* has evoked and says that its reading has undergone considerable transformation over the years. The feminist textual enquiries conducted into the world of *Wide Sargasso Sea* in the 1970s concentrated on the Eurocentric bias in which Antoinette was presented as facing the same constraints of gender and sexist ideologies as that of Jane in Bronte’s text in the previous century. But the questions of
“race, ethnicity, class and nationality functioned as interlocking systems of oppression and formed a matrix of domination” (Mardorossian, “Double Decolonization” 80) in the appraisal of this text in the 1980s in a way disrupted and revised the apprehension of the monolithic category of woman. New paradigms of feminist enquiries emerged which analysed the gender issues along the minute categories of racial, national and class divisions. The postcolonial and feminist contents of Wide Sargasso Sea achieved its altered interpretations along the changed world view.

Foe’s genesis in 1986 in the post-Apartheid Africa also gave rise to a lot of theoretical speculations regarding the role Coetzee asserts in the specific conditions of postcolonial South Africa. Along with the ideological depiction of the South African condition, it is a fine representation of the postmodern chaos out of which the alternate discourses have to emerge. Foe’s relevance rests in the fact that the current world of theory and practice is lost in the debates about authority and authorship. It is still caught in the clutches of subtle strategies of marginalization and neocolonialism. Foe not only subjects these concepts to analysis but also proposes questions of authority that may arise in future.

Both Wide Sargasso Sea and Foe are considered strong instances of “a mode of literary resistance” (Ciolkowski 351). Wide Sargasso Sea and Foe represent and, thus, validate postcolonial and feminist positions. But an attempt to consider both these texts as homogenous entities may result in the negation of their essential discursive differences. Primarily, there is a span of twenty years separating them which may very well result in the transformation of the ideological climate of the
academic and literary universe. Along with their ‘age difference’ their locale is also considerably different. *Wide Sargasso Sea* theorizes the Creole saga in the background of the Caribbean and along with the Creoles, the blacks are also allowed their space in the narrative. The period described in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is the early nineteenth century where the blacks and the Creoles retained their separate identities, though the cultural situation was one of marginalization for both of them. *Foe* is different in a lot of ways where though the narrative places the text in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the theoretical climate is that of the later twentieth century space of ‘doing writing’ by any conscious writer. Like any postmodern text *Foe* theorizes the crisis of identity, authority and the dichotomy between fact and fiction, art and artifice. If *Wide Sargasso Sea* shows the view from the Other side through an aberrant heroine, *Foe* is a debate on a lot of Othersides which does away with heroes and heroines. *Wide Sargasso Sea* achieves a subversion of the ‘feminist’ text by Bronte through a necessary revision and subsequent inclusion of the criteria of race into what is primarily a gendered text. *Foe* achieves a deconstruction of the textual world not only of *Robinson Crusoe*, but of Defoe as well and as the title would suggest the master narrators of the world-literary and non literary- who are foes to the emergence of any multidirectional discourse.

Though the textual worlds of both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* are vastly different, the selection of these two texts for this study does not become an arbitrary affair. Instead they are deeply united by the celebration of the perspective of the marginalized of the gender and of the race. It is the identical way of resistance that unites them. The mode of resistance may differ, but the cause and the effect are the
same. These texts represent diverse nationalities and theorize the colonial repercussions of diverse peoples. Yet it is the identical theoretical clime that *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* inhabit and the significant rereading that they offer to master narratives that bind these texts in this academic enquiry.

The relevance of this enquiry in a twenty first century scenario of academic and literary world rests on the claim that intertexts and countertexts of the works of the past have always generated significant interest and that reading the Otherside can help keep the perspectives right. It is also generated from the typical postcolonial situation in India and the world in general. In India, the divide of class and caste still dominate resulting in a whole set of new marginalization. The analysis of the current Indian socio-cultural and political situation reveals that a unified colonial experience of oppression and suppression has not properly united the Indians as it should have. Instead they are caught in a postcolonial situation of unrest suffering the mutilations of caste and class. The situation in other countries is no different, with diverse ethnicities running at tangent with one another. Instead of a dominant centre and marginalized peripheries of the colonial discourse, the situation of a postcolonial world is such that multiplicities of peripheries vie with one another in terms of caste, class, community, religion, politics and power relations, constantly disrupting the cause of peaceful co-existence and harmonious understanding of plurality in society. It is a world which has not learned much from bygone oppressions and previous mutilations and which still moves towards ‘wider and deeper Sargasso seas’ of hatred and divisions.
In spite of its location in the realms of politics and culture as world’s greatest democracy with its potential for vibrant economic development, in India a good number of women suffer death and mutilation due to various gender related atrocities. A society with great scientific breakthroughs, it still keeps an alarming percentage of female infanticide. It is a society where aboriginal natives and a large percentage of Dalits still live in ‘double negations of postcolonialism’ as subalterns. It is a society which has seen communal riots as an aftermath of the deviant power politics. It is hoped that a Caribbean voice of postcolonial and feminist text and a text emerging from post Apartheid South Africa, with its postcolonial and feminist affiliations and undergoing identical postcolonial dilemma and unrest will inspire the Indian postcolonial voice of challenge and critique of the divisive ‘foes’ of unity and will enable people to bridge the expanse of ‘Wide Sargasso Seas’ of gender, caste, creed, community and power relations.

The future researchers may delve into the wide expanse of possibilities that intertexts and countertexts offer as every text is a context for the intertextual and countertextual enquiries and subjecting it to readings and rereading will be rewarding enough with reclamation of the submerged voices and the revelation of hidden presences. The concept of inter relatedness of texts provides multiple possibilities for the researcher as the word is forever reworded and the world is forever remoulded. As Wide Sargasso Sea and Foe have reached a cult status, they can also be reread and rewritten from other angles where hidden personalities may reveal and resurface letting out newer possibilities of challenge and critique of these texts. It may be enquired regarding Wide Sargasso Sea whether Rhys was giving her own sense of
racial prejudices in delineating the stereotypical ethnical notions prevalent in the text. It can also be enquired whether the emphasis of the racist assumptions of her main characters were part of the unconscious desire of the author or a conscious strategy. With regard to *Foe* it may further be enquired whether the subversion of the dominant voice at the end of the text would result in the domination of the subversive and whether Friday would become the hero of another cult text opening possibilities of rereading.

It is argued that both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* have generated considerable interest and appeal in the areas of postcolonial and feminist enquiries. The interface of postcolonialism with feminism augment the opportunities for theoretical enquiry to both the racial and the gender issues opening up hitherto untapped areas for interrogation. W.D. Ashcroft speaks of the postcolonial and feminist positions as “intersecting marginalities” (23) as both positions have emerged because of the powerful trope of the margins. The wide spectrum of the ideological enquiries these texts undertake in their textual space accounts for its academic popularity and theoretical significance. *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* lay bare the sexual and racial politics inherent in the hegemonic texts and serve as sites of the emergence of multiple and alternate discourses. These texts deny the monologic inscriptions of the dominant texts and celebrate the resistance of the peripheries in their effort to awake and emerge and hence both *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe* are significant landmarks in the history of postcolonial and feminist resistance.