ABSTRACT

The thesis entitled “Texts, Countertexts and Intertexts: An Analysis of Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* and J.M. Coetzee’s *Foe*” analyses the said texts as texts with unique characteristics, as countertexts offering postcolonial resistance to colonialisat and imperialist ideology and as feminist intertexts that question the assumptions of patriarchy from a woman’s point of view. Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* is an intertext of Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* and J.M. Coetzee’s *Foe* is an intertext of Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*. The narrative in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is centred on Antoinette Cosway, the Bertha Mason of *Jane Eyre* and this portrayal challenges the patriarchal and colonial assumptions that constructed Bertha as a marginalized and insane Creole woman in *Jane Eyre*. At the same time J.M Coetzee’s *Foe* challenges the imperialistic and patriarchal claims inherent in *Robinson Crusoe* and writes back to it from the postcolonial and feminist positions and thereby becomes an intertext of *Robinson Crusoe*.

The study has five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction that traces the concept of intertextuality from its origin in the Kristevan parlance in 1966 to its wide and fast changing significance and trajectory in its deployment in various theoretical enquiries. The use of intertextuality as a rewarding concept in the theoretical fields of postcolonial and feminist enquiries is touched upon as the intertexts allow the celebration of the discourse of the marginalized and the submerged voices in the dominant discourses.
The second chapter is titled “Implications and Explications: Wide Sargasso Sea and Foe as Texts” and it deals with the unique characteristics of these texts that constitute their textuality. The locale, characterization, the dreams and fantasies, symbols and images that provide the unique textual effect of Wide Sargasso Sea is analysed. The text is viewed as a modernist text in its projection of the aberrant heroine as a challenge to the central figure Jane in Jane Eyre. Wide Sargasso Sea is considered as a gothic text as well. Coetzee’s Foe is viewed in its textual affiliations to “A True Revelation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal”, a short story by Daniel Defoe. Foe is spoken of as a self reflexive metafiction in its preoccupation with the art and artifice of fiction writing. It is a postmodernist text in its multiplicity of voices and plurality of selves.

Chapter 3 is titled “The Voice of the Racial Other: Wide Sargasso Sea and Foe as Postcolonial Countertexts”. It concentrates on the voices of postcolonial interrogation that emerge from the texts in question. Wide Sargasso Sea celebrates the discourse of Antoinette Cosway who offers the point of view of the postcolonial resistance of the Creoles in the Caribbean. Along with the character of Antoinette, Christophine stands as a strong symbol of postcolonial resistance offering the voice of the native blacks against the domination of the whites. Foe celebrates the voice of Friday in its challenge to the colonial voice of domination. The voice of Friday topples the figures of authority of Cruso as well as the author Foe in his reclamation of the island narrative for himself.
The fourth chapter is titled “The Woman and the Web: *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Foe as Feminist Intertexts*”. It offers the redeeming voice of the woman who writes back to the patriarchal canon by questioning the ethos of the master narratives where the women remain as figures of absence and silence. *Wide Sargasso Sea*’s feminist voice of protest is that of Antoinette Cosway, who redeems Bertha Mason of the previous text. Another figure of feminist resistance is Christophine. In *Foe* Susan Barton serves as the figure of feminist resistance in being the woman narrator altering the perception of the Crusoan world. Susan’s character retains the intertextual relationship with *Roxana* also.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion of the study which summarizes the major arguments of the study. It also compares and contrasts the two writers in their textual positions.