THE BUCKRA'S STORY: WHITE WRITERS

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The earliest writers of the Caribbean were white or 'buckra.' Before one examines their novels, it would be worthwhile to delve into the history of the white community prior to the emancipation of slaves, with regard to their literary aspirations. Kenneth Ramchand's *The West Indian Novel and Its Background*, a pioneering work in the criticism of Caribbean fiction, quotes a petition written by a white Jamaican journalist for representation in the British House of Commons in 1831: "The haughty aristocrats who have property in that island, and who may obtain seats in the House of Commons have no community of interest, no identity of feeling with the resident inhabitants of Jamaica; to these aristocrats what may become of the people of that country is and ever must be a matter of perfect inconsequence, so long as they can retain in England what they call their station in society" (1970, 32). Most of the Europeans who had made their fortunes preferred to migrate back to Britain or to the Continent and those who inherited fortunes in the way of West Indian plantations preferred to remain 'at home'
allowing caretakers to look after them. This deprived the Islands of the best people, and also created the idea of Britain as home and the Islands as hunting grounds for wealth. Those who did remain behind evolved a way of life that was not English or even European, living in large homesteads, waited on hand and foot by the large servile population, they ate well, drank well and entertained well. The sunny climate moved them to indolence and the presence of Negro slave girls to licentiousness. Ironically however, they did not use their wealth for building schools or libraries, as the wealthy creoles preferred to send their children to England to be educated. England was the proud centre of art and culture and they looked to it in these matters. As a result of this, the literary output of the white creole community prior to the emancipation of slaves, was minimal. With the emancipation came a drastic change. The slaves turned hostile and the plantations became derelict. Many of the white creoles migrated back to the home country. Those who remained behind had a hard time till they started using indentured labour to work the canefields. By this time, the scene was
dominated by the 'coloured people,' for the generations of white creoles cohabiting with the slaves had produced a new class, who now started making their presence felt. When one examines the writing of the early white creole writers one finds that most of it is amateurish and trifling. Later on however the descendants of the plantation owners migrated abroad and started writing about the Caribbean experience. The cultural ethos of the West Indies was resurrected in their works, not as it was written by outsiders, but as experienced by white people who were part of it.

When one talks about the 'white' community, it is to be noted that the demarcation is based more on identification than on actual complexion. Of the two writers chosen for indepth analysis, Jean Rhys was long thought of as a British writer rather than as a Caribbean. But the sensibility of the author manifested in her writings is essentially Caribbean. The Caribbean experience has contributed more to her artistic genius than any other factor or experience. Born at Roseau, Dominica, Jean Rhys spent her childhood in the West Indies. Her father was a Welsh doctor and her mother a
white creole. At sixteen she went to England and a little later she met and married a Dutch poet. Her first novel, The Left Bank was published in 1927. The two novels that have been selected for analysis are those where the West Indian component is dominant, namely Voyage in the Dark and Wide Sargasso Sea. Both the novels depict female protagonists caught up in the tidal waves of emotional upheaval struggling to attain selfhood. Of these Voyage in the Dark published in 1934 was reprinted in 1967 after the success of Wide Sargasso Sea (1966). The Penguin edition of Wide Sargasso Sea was brought out in 1968. Anna Morgan, the protagonist of Voyage in the Dark, goes through life suspended between two dreams; the warm bright dream of her childhood in the Caribbean and the nightmare of cold and hostile England where she becomes a victim of exploitation. Through Anna Morgan, Rhys presents the vibrant picture of a sensitive woman whose romantic illusions are ripped apart by a hostile world. Antoinette Cosway, the protagonist of Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea has many points of similarity with Anna Morgan. She too is a victim, a creole heiress whose marriage to an Englishman ends up in her being
locked up in the attic of his ancestral homestead as a mad woman. Here, Jean Rhys tells us the story of the first Mrs Rochester of *Jane Eyre* but the tale is hardly a pastiche of Charlotte Bronte's novel. Antoinette Cosway suffers traumatic experiences both at the hands of the Negroes, who set fire to her house, and at the hands of her husband who married her for her money. Like a captive slave, she is wrenched from the shores of the sunlit Caribbean and taken to England. In England, her identity undergoes a complete change: Antoinette Cosway with her pretty clothes and perfumes, vanishes, Bertha Mason, mad and violent takes her place. The novel ends with the protagonist setting fire to Thornfield Hall to escape the death-in-life that she is forced to endure. Jean Rhys's other novels like *Good Morning, Midnight* and *The Left Bank* also treat women protagonists caught up in a world that does not understand them. These two novels have been chosen especially because the Caribbean experience portrayed in them are crucial to the attainment of selfhood.

H.G. De Lisser is a Jamaican writer born of a family of very old Jamaican ancestry, Portuguese-Jewish on the paternal side with a modicum of Negro blood.
Technically speaking, he should be considered coloured rather than white. However, his sense of identification with the white planter class makes him a spokesman for wealth and political conservatism. Moreover his scorn for the 'coloured' people, the rising browns and light browns of his day, is scathing. His novels reveal this attitude, especially Revenge that deals with the Morant Bay uprising of 1865. The criticism of the middle class as the real exploiters of the West Indian peasant is apparent in the novel, Jane's Career where the protagonist is a black girl who comes from the village to the city of Kingston to work as a domestic servant. It is in fact, De Lisser's first novel that he dedicates to Sir Sidney Oliver, the Governor of Jamaica from 1908 - 1913. Through Jane's experiences in Kingston, De Lisser unravels the West Indian milieu and delineates her attainment of selfhood. Ironically enough, Jane ends up as a member of the respectable middle class, the exploited turns exploiter. The White Witch of Rosehall presents a totally different picture with its series of sensational happenings and an exotic setting. Though the protagonist is an Englishman, Robert Rutherford, who comes to the West Indies as a book-keeper, the focus of
attention is a white woman, the beautiful, strange and ruthless Annie Palmer. She is the white witch of Rosehall who uses witchcraft to attain what she wants. The story of love and intrigue, jealousy and rivalry unravel the complex identity of the woman who has murdered three husbands without a qualm. Jane's Career and The White Witch of Rosehall have been selected from among De Lisser's novels in order to contrast the attainment of selfhood in the two women characters, Jane and Annie, with the protagonists of Rhys's two novels. The particular use of the six situations described in the Introduction would contribute to such an analysis.

Childhood: The experiences of childhood, recollected or otherwise, are crucial in the attainment of selfhood. In Voyage in the Dark the scene of action is England, where the heroine tries to earn her living as a chorus girl. Having left the warm sunny atmosphere of the Caribbean, Anna thinks nostalgically of her childhood, whenever the English experience is cold, hostile and debilitating. The experiences of childhood occur as reminiscences to contrast the present with the past; England with the Caribbean; security with insecurity.
Though Anna is nineteen, everyone calls her "kid" ironically implying her lack of maturity. Anna is incapable of looking after herself. She is sensitive and vulnerable like a child seeking the maximum of protection but never getting it. The novel begins with the focus of attention falling on her feeling of being uprooted when she lands in England, having been taken there by her stepmother Hester:

It was as if a curtain had fallen, hiding everything I had ever known. It was almost like being born again. The colours were different the smells different, the feelings things gave you right down inside yourself was different. Not just the difference between heat, cold; light, darkness; purple, grey. But a difference in the way I was frightened and the way I was happy. (1967, 7)

On one occasion, Anna falls ill and remembers the black girl Francine who had looked after her in childhood. She used to fan her with a palm-leaf fan. Anna had always wanted to be black. "Being black is warm and gay, being white is cold and sad" (31). Yet the relationship with Francine was hardly smooth. Hester, Anna's stepmother, disapproved of it and Francine herself disliked Anna because she was white. A similar ambiguous situation is seen in Rhys's other
novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea* where the little Antoinette makes friends with a black girl Tia. Though Antoinette enjoyed playing with her, she turned malevolent on more than one occasion.

The reminiscences of childhood are made use of in *Voyage in the Dark* to show Anna's sense of alienation in the cold atmosphere of England. Anna liked to talk about her island home to her lover, Walter Jeffries. She talked about the moonlight rides they used to have in a boat with their boatman Black Pappy. Walter, however, was unable to appreciate it. He told her that he did not like hot places much. "I prefer cold places. The tropics would be altogether too lush for me, I think" (54). The preference for cold places underlines the cold reserve of Walter Jeffries to whom the liaison with Anna is only temporary. When Walter broke up with her, he made his friend Vincent write a letter to Anna. The letter made her remember a childhood experience. She had suddenly come up on her uncle sleeping with his two false feeth protruding out of his mouth like a pair of fangs. The sudden memory makes her think thus: "But what's the matter with me? That was years and years
ago, ages and ages ago. Twelve years ago or something like that. What's this letter got to do with false teeth?" (92). The very falseness of the relationship is thus symbolically portrayed.

After being rejected by Walter, Anna fell a prey to a life of easy virtue. She became pregnant and had to undergo an abortion. In moments of delirium and sickness images of her childhood come to her of people with masks dancing in the Masquerade sticking their tongues out at her, making her feel squeamish. She also had the feeling of falling off a horse. Ironically enough, her friend Laurie told her to explain her excessive bleeding as the result of a fall. The sudden fall from the horse of sensuality into the sordidness of prostitution is symbolically portrayed.

Another aspect of childhood that is highlighted is the loss of parental love and security. Anna Morgan's father was a fine man but he had left nothing substantial for his daughter. The emotional bond between the two had always been strong. In London she remembers his handsome carriage and resents Hester's reference to him as poor Gerald. Once in childhood, she
had been crying for no reason at all but instead of being vexed with her, he had hugged her commenting that her nature was like his own. When her father died, her stepmother took over her affairs. Hester was a very poor mother-surrogate. Having come from England the habits of the Caribbean were shocking to her. She failed to understand the Caribbean identity of the little Anna, making her wear clothes and gloves imported from England. These were too warm for the sunny climate and made her sweat. She did her best to make Anna a little lady by scolding her whenever she mingled with the Negroes. However, she failed to establish an emotional rapport with the little girl. The lack of a mother's love was accentuated later on when Hester absolved herself of all responsibility for the nineteen-year old Anna. The insecurity and absence of parental affection made her an easy prey to a man like Walter Jeffries who was many years older than her.

In Wide Sargasso Sea, Antoinette Cosway's childhood in the Caribbean is described in detail in the first part of the novel. The childhood experiences perform a keyrole in shaping the events to come.
Antoinette's sense of isolation started in childhood itself. With her father's death, her family was cut off both from the white community and the Negroes. The white people had never approved of her mother who was from Martinique and who had married a man many years older than her. The blacks were malevolent towards them since the emancipation. The estate was derelict, the fortunes ebbing and the blacks laughed and jeered at them. Antoinette's mother who had been beautiful and gay became a recluse when her only neighbour Mr Lutterell committed suicide. Antoinette's younger brother Pierre had something wrong with him; he staggered when he walked and could not speak distinctly. Her mother preferred to spend all her time nursing him. Though Antoinette loved her mother, she was usually pushed away:

My mother usually walked up and down the glacis, a paved roofed in terrace which ran the length of the house and sloped upwards to a clump of bamboos. Standing by the bamboos, she had a clear view to the sea, but anyone passing could stare at her. They stared, sometimes they laughed. Long after the sound was far away and faint she kept her eyes shut and her hands clenched. A frown came between her black eyebrows, deep -- it might have been cut with a knife. I hated this frown and once I touched her forehead trying to smooth it. But she
pushed me away, not roughly, but calmly, coldly, without a word, as if she had decided once and for all that I was useless to her. (1968,17)

The child then turned to Christophine, the Negro woman from Martinique for a surrogate mother. Christophine was unlike the other blacks who were all terrified of her. It was she who managed the house in their days of want. Apart from her there were only two other servants, a deaf old man called Godfrey and a boy Sass. The girls in the village used to help Christophine without expecting payment because of her powers of obeah or witchcraft. As a child Antoinette was extremely lonely and insecure. After her mother's horse was poisoned, she used to keep a stick with her, with the pretentious idea of defending herself with it. Things changed for the better when her mother married again. Mr Mason was a rich man and for a little while Antoinette felt safe. The hostility of the Negroes, however, increased. Annette, Antoinette's mother sensed it intuitively and begged Mr Mason to take them away. Mr Mason refused to do so, feeling confident of his position, talking of importing labourers from the East to run the plantation. Unfortunately the Negroes heard
of it. One night they surrounded the house and set fire to it. Though Antoinette's mother managed to take Pierre from his crib half burnt, he did not survive the tragedy. The incident made her lose her sanity. She blamed her husband for the loss of her son and started becoming violent. Antoinette herself was sick for many days. Mr Mason left the country leaving his wife in the hands of coloured serants and enrolling Antoinette in a convent. Her mother's madness became a trauma for her. The coloured couple who were supposed to care for her treated her badly and each visit to see her mother became a nightmare for Antoinette. She herself was often insulted by others with insinuations of madness. Anna Morgan in Voyage in the Dark is likewise labelled "Potty" by an irate woman with whom she stays for some time working as a manicurist. In each case the absence of love and security warp the development of the child leaving a permanent stamp of insecurity and lack of confidence on the adult.

Jane's Career delineates the gradual evolution of the protagonist from the innocence of childhood to the cunning of adulthood. The novel is thus a
**bildungsroman** of a black girl who moves from the rustic to the urban milieu in her search for identity. Though Jane goes as a domestic servant in the household of Mrs Mason, she is referred to as a "school girl." Though the appellation pertains only to her age, the idea of apprenticeship is underlined; the household of Mrs Mason is the school where she learns how to make her way in the world. The novel starts with Jane being given a lecture by one of the village elders prior to her departure to Kingston. In contrast to Anna Morgan and Antoinette Cosway, Jane's relationship with her mother was a very strong one. It was poverty and the lack of opportunities for betterment that prompted Mrs Burrell to send her daughter away. Jane herself was not unhappy about it. Though her mother's eyes filled with tears, Jane did not break down feeling as she did of being on the threshold of new experience:

She had reached as it were, the boundary line between her old life and the life that was to begin that day. She thought in concrete images and Stony Hill represented to her the change that had taken place in her career. She was acquainted with one or two persons there; beyond that town, south, east and west was an unknown world; and though Celestina had told her about the delights and wonders of Kingston,
her friend the guitar player had also depicted to her some of its perils, and had warned her of the trials she might have to endure. (1972, 24)

This experience of leaving familiar surroundings may be contrasted with Anna Morgan's experience of leaving the Caribbean for England. In Voyage in the Dark, Anna like Jane, leaves home to earn her living but her mind is full of sadness:

It was when I looked back from the boat and saw the lights of the town bobbing up and down that was the first time I really knew I was going. Uncle Bob said "well, you're off now" and I turned my head so that nobody would see me crying - it ran down my face and splashed into the sea like the rain was splashing -- Adieu sweetheart adieu -- And I watched the light heaving up and down. (32)

Jane's confidence too was shortlived. She was thoroughly confused and awkward and her inexperience made her commit many blunders. Her first grave mistake was to leave a packet of moist sugar on her mistress's mahogany table. A stain appeared and Jane was thoroughly reprimanded for spoiling Mrs Mason's expensive furniture. Mrs Mason's other servant Sarah also announced that were it not for Mrs Mason's kindness, she would have been given corporal punishment.
This alarmed Jane. Her bewilderment grew when Sarah later confided that Mrs Mason was a wretch. She also warned Jane against the other inhabitants of the house. Mrs Mason's nephew, Cecil, for example had the habit of flirting with the domestic servants.

As the days passed, Jane got over her timidity and awkwardness. She also acquired new skills like telling lies and helping Sarah to cheat her mistress. In the beginning, she was terror-stricken when she lied to her mistress but she soon got used to it. Sarah reassured her saying that she need not feel guilty, for, her mistress's meanness was excuse enough. In fact, Jane was made to work very hard indeed and was paid just one shilling per week. She also had to pay out of this for any damages she caused to her mistress's crockery. The long hours of rest she was accustomed to were also denied to her.

On one occasion, Jane was beaten by Mrs Mason for talking to a friend of Sarah's in the yard after dark. Sarah had asked Jane to be with her while talking to her boyfriend to prevent Jane from carrying tales to Mrs Mason. Mrs Mason had strict ideas about the
morality of her servants and had forbidden such goings-on after dark. On hearing noises in the yard in the middle of the night, she questioned both the servants the next day. Though Sarah lied easily enough, Jane's inexperience gave the game away. This resulted in Jane's being beaten up and Sarah being dismissed. Sarah, however gave vent to her opinion about "brown" people and wrested her wages from a reluctant Mrs Mason before leaving the scene. The speech of Sarah criticising the 'coloured' people as the real exploiters echoes De Lisser's own opinion regarding the situation in his country: "De trute is dat people like you shouldn't have servant at all! I know I am black, an' I know that God meck two colour, black an' white, but it must be de devil meck brown people, for dem neider black nor white. In fact y'u better pay me at once an' let me go. I not stayin' here any longer. Pay me wages, an' meck me leave you yard" (56).

After this incident Jane felt more lonely than ever. As she was alone in her room, Cecil started pestering her even more. The threat of dismissal made her feel afraid. She felt that she had not "kept
herself up" as instructed by her parents. At the same time, she felt more self-reliant. As the days passed by she got to know more about Kingston. As she realized that there were thousands of people like Mrs Mason in Kingston, her earlier awe changed into contempt. She was after all a "mulatto" woman in a city with thousands of pure white folks.

When one compares Jane with Anna Ploryan, one finds that while Anna never learns to take care of herself, Jane learns the tricks of survival very fast indeed. The promises made to her parents were forgotten as Jane developed new friendships. Unlike Anna, Jane never allowed these friends to exploit her.

A very interesting scene is introduced by the author to mark the end of Jane's period of innocence. Jane's mother came to visit her at Mrs Mason's bringing a girl from the village. What Jane wanted to do was to seize this opportunity to acquaint her mother of Mrs Mason's meanness. Unfortunately however, Mrs Mason very cleverly refused to leave the two alone together even for a moment. Jane was bewildered to see her mother being taken in by Mrs Mason's sanctimonious utterances.
She even granted her mistress absolute freedom to deal with Jane as she thought fit. Jane felt sad to think that her mother had deserted her for the enemy side. The only thing she could do was to confide her troubles to her friend who had accompanied Jane's mother. As her mother and her friend left, Jane watched them with a heavy heart. She felt strangely alone:

She and her mother had in a way, become strangers. This she felt more than thought; for such a proposition, she never would have been able to formulate clearly in her mind. Her mother's way of looking at things seemed more or less that of Mrs Mason, and between Mrs Mason and herself there was a great gulf fixed. Mrs Mason looked upon her as a little servant girl merely, but Jane felt she was an individual with feelings, desires and rights of her own. Her mother had left her entirely in Mrs Mason's hands, and there she was perfectly determined not to remain. If she went away, her mother and father would probably blame her, but that she could not help. Kingston was big, she had become accustomed to it, she would probably be able to make her way in it as other people were doing. One by one the ties that bound her to the past were being loosened, unknown to her conscious self. What she did feel was that now she was free to do as she pleased. (77)

The childhood experiences of Annie Palmer in The White Witch of Rosehall bear little resemblance to the experiences of the other three. These experiences
are described in two chapters of the novel, one entitled, "Who is Annie Palmer?" and the next one, "Putting on Death." Here the attention of the reader is focussed on Annie's attainment of supernatural powers. The strange and ruthless owner of Rosehall had no serious trauma in childhood. Unlike Rhys's heroines, Anna Morgan and Antoinette Cosway, Annie Palmer's childhood was reasonably happy with no cause for insecurity. Unlike Jane in *Jane's Career*, Annie did not have to seek employment on account of her poverty. The only point of similarity that she shares with Antoinette Cosway is her association with a black woman in childhood who is gifted with supernatural powers.

In the chapter entitled, "Who is Annie Palmer?" Robert Rutherford and the other two book-keepers discuss the complicated personality of Annie Palmer, who though white, makes use of voodoo to achieve her object. Rider, one of the book-keepers had been a priest before alcoholism forced him to seek another job. He had heard that Annie had originally come from Haiti, which was the centre of devil craft. Though her parents were Irish, Rider surmised that she might have had a voodoo
priestess as a nurse. In the next chapter, "Putting on Death," the omniscient author corroborates Rider's story by making Annie remember her childhood as she proceeds to harm her rival in Rutherford's affections, Millicent, through voodoo. Annie's father had been an Irish merchant who had gone to Haiti attracted by the chance of making money under the rule of King Henry Christophe. Unlike his predecessor Christophe encouraged white people to come to Haiti. Though he was strict, he was unable to suppress the priests and priestesses of voodoo who worshipped their deity, the green serpent in secret. A high priestess of this cult had taken a fancy to Annie. She was a woman of property, a well respected baroness and she used to give presents to the beautiful little girl. She herself had no children of her own and once she presented a valuable diamond necklace to Annie. Her parents encouraged her, for, her friendship and patronage was advantageous to their business. It was she who taught Annie witchcraft. Though she hated the white race as a whole, she loved Annie. Annie was as intelligent as she was beautiful. So under her tutelage she learnt how to control the spirits and call up visions. The baroness hinted to her, that there was no
height she couldn't aspire to were she to remain in Haiti. Her whiteness, instead of being a disability would have aided her with the voodoo priests and priestesses. Unfortunately, both Annie's parents and the baroness died within months of each other. As their white friends thought Haiti an unsuitable place for a young unmarried white girl, Annie migrated to Jamaica where she met and married John Palmer.

Of the four novels, three depict unhappy experiences of childhood. *The White Witch of Rosehall* presents the happy childhood of Annie who becomes jealous and sadistic as an adult. Jane in *Jane's Career* develops the courage to face the challenges of the world despite the poverty of her environment. Both the heroines of Jean Rhys carry the vulnerability of childhood into adult life.

Struggle for Survival: The struggle to survive in society is another factor that is crucial to the emergence of selfhood. This struggle is determined by the difference in circumstances rather than the difference in colour. The question is of power or lack of it. In a male dominated society women often become
victims of chauvinism. The weaker women are exploited by men and women alike. The question of power is determined by economic considerations in the case of both Jane Burrell and Anna Morgan. In the case of Antoinette Cosway, power continues to elude her in poverty and prosperity alike. Annie Palmer starts by being powerful but loses it at the end through her own rashness and cruelty.

In Voyage in the Dark Anna Morgan's ancestral estate, "Morgan's Rest" had been sold by her stepmother after her father's death. She had then brought Anna to England to earn her own living. Hester did not feel that she had robbed Anna of anything; in fact she thought that she had done her best for her. When Anna could not make a success of her career as a chorus girl, she tried to send her back to the Caribbean to her mother's relatives, as she did not want Anna to come to her whenever she was in need of money. Her mother's people too, did not want to take on the responsibility of a penniless girl. In a long harangue Hester declared to Anna that she had absolutely no responsibility to look after her as all the money had already been spent
on Anna's education and clothes. Anna retorted that she could get all the money she wanted, making Hester stare at her with curiosity and disgust.

As a chorus girl, Anna had a tough time finding money for good food, decent accommodation and pretty clothes. Being unused to the cold climate, she had a tendency to fall sick. She was often miserable yearning for things she didn't have.

The ones without any money, the ones with beastly lives. Perhaps I'm going to be one of the ones with beastly lives. They swarm like woodlice when you push a stick into a woodlice nest at home. And their faces are the colour of woodlice. (26)

The drab, grey atmosphere of England had the quality of a dream. She was often very lonely. The girls she mingled with were friendly but they had their own problems. They were also impatient with her due to her inability in coping with problems. She often had a sad, anxious expression on her face. It was this that attracted Walter Jeffries to her as he watched her choose a pair of stockings. He was more a father-surrogate than a lover to Anna, for, he gave her pretty clothes and a furcoat and made her feel warm and
secure. But to him, it was only a temporary fling and Anna too knew it to be so. In a telling incident, Anna Morgan watches Walter Jeffries putting money in her handbag through a mirror. Though she knew what it meant, she did not stop him. After Walter left her, she started training as a masseuse under a girl called Ethel Mathews. Anna was not very good at that. Surrounded by people who did not understand her, Anna felt alone, vulnerable and lost: "The damned way they look at you and their damned voices, like high, smooth, unclimbable walls all round you, closing in on you. And nothing to be done about it either. The answer is a lemon, as Laurie says" (147).

Anna's descent into a life of easy virtue was gradual. The whole process seemed unreal and nightmarish. The admirers were faceless as she proceeded on her course of self destruction. On one occasion Anna started to vomit and the man disappeared like a streak of lightning. Anna realized that she was pregnant, and she tried every trick she knew to get rid of it. In the end she had to apply to Walter for financial assistance. Though Walter sent her money
through Vincent it was a purely business transaction. Vincent took away all the letters Walter had written to her. The end of the novel sees her being told by a doctor that she would soon recover to start all over again. The struggles of Anna's friends likewise were similar. They were all victims of an unfeeling society bent on exploiting their beauty and youth.

When one compares Jane in *Jane's Career* with Anna, one sees that Jane too is faced with problems of survival in the wilderness of Kingston. In the beginning she was naive enough to believe that there was plenty of money in Kingston. Her mother, however, pointed out that all the money belonged to white people. In the household of Mrs Mason she learnt that her wages were too meagre to buy all she wanted. After leaving Mrs Mason, she took up the job of pasting labels on bottles in an establishment. She shared a room with a girlfriend Sathyra by paying half the rent. The new found feeling of independence made her feel elated but soon the novelty wore off. She discovered that Sathyra had a jealous disposition. When Sathyra asked Jane to clear out of her room as her boyfriend wanted to move in
with her, Jane retorted that Sathyra would have to wait until Jane made alternative arrangements. This prompted Sathyra to play a foul trick on her. She accused Jane of theft in front of the entire neighbourhood. This frightened Jane, for as far as she was concerned, being accused of theft was equivalent to being prosecuted. Though most of the neighbours sympathized with her, a few twisted their lips in condemnation. Jane soon found another room to stay but the additional expenses were a great strain on her pocket. She had to cut down on her food and clothes to manage:

For the first time in her life, she was thrown absolutely on her own resources. She had lived under Mrs Mason's care, such as it was: she had shared a room with Sathyra. She had come to Kingston under Mrs Mason's protection, and had left Mrs Mason to go under the protection of Sathyra. But now she had to depend on herself entirely; she was her own mistress in every sense of the word. She was lonelier than she had ever been before; yet, on the other hand, she felt far more independent than she had ever done. (133)

Here we find Jane coming to depend upon herself whereas Anna Morgan continues to look for outside support even at the end of the novel. Jane also learns to tackle problems of male exploitation. She starts by
escaping Cecil's clutches. At work, her overseer, Mr Curden starts pestering her to come and live with him. In the beginning, she tells lies to escape him but later on she is faced with the dilemma of either giving in or losing her job. Jane with natural cunning managed to escape the situation. Perhaps, fortune was kind to her in the form of Vincent Broglie who could be persuaded to help her. Jane survived the crisis by resigning her job before Curden could dismiss her.

Unlike Anna, Jane had dreams about her future in which marriage, a good house and clean children figure prominently. Though it was a typical middleclass dream, Jane managed to achieve it through her common sense and resilience. It was she who convinced Vincent Broglie of the foolishness of going on strike. Jane's logic was reactionary but it brought her material success in the form of Vincent Broglie as her husband. The irony however lies in the fact that Jane too joins the rank of the exploiters by employing a servant girl.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the first part of the novel portrays the miserable conditions of the white creole family following the emancipation. The estate
turned into a wilderness and the house became shabby. Antoinette's mother was forced to give up her luxuries. The only pleasure that was left was to ride around on a horse: "She still rode about every morning, not caring that the black people stood about in groups to jeer at her especially after her riding clothes grew shabby (they notice clothes, they know about money)" (16).

The Negroes poisoned her horse, taking away even this enjoyment. If it were not for Christophine the family would have starved. One day, Antoinette's playmate Tia, the black girl, dared her to turn a somersault under water. Though Antoinette did as wagered, Tia took away the few pennies she had. In her anger Antoinette called Tia a cheating nigger but Tia's answer was venomous and taunting: "Plenty white people in Jamaica. Real white people, they got gold money. They didn't look at us, nobody see them come near us. Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger" (21). The girl then robbed Antoinette's only clean dress and left the place. Antoinette was forced to return home wearing the dress of the Negro girl. This incident made her mother realize that something must be done.
After Antoinette's mother married Mr Mason who was rich, things were all right for a while. After the catastrophe of the Negroes' violence, her stepfather left the West Indies. In the case of Anna Morgan, in *Voyage in the Dark* Hester the stepmother, robbed her of her meagre inheritance. Antoinette's stepfather in contrast, satisfied his conscience by putting her in a convent and leaving her an inheritance. What she wanted most, namely love and security, were denied her. Neither her insane mother nor her stepfather could provide her with the strength of family ties. Even the inheritance became a source of trouble rather than comfort. Antoinette was married by Mr Rochester, the younger son of an English family, purely for monetary advantage. The second part of the novel depicts the newly married Mr Rochester writing an imaginary letter to his father. It goes as follows:

Dear father, the thirty thousand pounds have been paid to me without question or condition. No provision made for her (that must be seen to). I have a modest competence now. I will never be a disgrace to you or to my dear brother the son you love. No begging letters, no mean requests. None of the furtive shabby manoeuvres of a younger son. I have sold my soul or you have sold it, and is it such a bad bargain? The girl is thought to be beautiful, she is beautiful. And yet... (59)
The word "yet" suggests regret. Antoinette's Aunt Cora had not liked the arrangement at all and had objected to the marriage. Antoinette herself had shown signs of hesitation but Rochester persuaded her to accept him not because he loved her but because he did not want to play the role of the rejected lover of a creole girl. The marriage was thus doomed from the beginning as it was the result of a conspiracy between Mason's son and Rochester's father.

In spite of all this, Rochester was attracted by Antoinette's beauty and sensuality but she remained alien to him. This made it easy for him to believe the insinuations made by a man who claimed to be her half-brother. Though Antoinette related to him the whole sad tale of her mother's insanity and her own loneliness, Rochester's mind was made up. Only Christophine, the black servant of Antoinette, had the guts to confront Mr Rochester. She guessed the intention of Rochester to label his wife mad and requested him to settle some money on her. Mr Rochester refused to listen to her and threatened her with prosecution for practising obeah or African witchcraft.
He hated Antoinette for buying him with her money. So he took her away from the island which she loved. She was shut up in the attic of Thornfield Hall as a mad woman. Her husband thus became her judge, jury and jailor.

Antoinette had thus turned into the archetype of the slave woman with no will of her own. She was even denied a looking glass. In her childhood the blacks had burnt down her house, the symbol of white ownership. Antoinette in turn set fire to Thornfield Hall, her house of captivity. She thus re-enacted the act of protest. Though she died in the flames, it was her only way of hitting back.

Annie Palmer in the *The White Witch of Rosehall* presents a totally different picture from Antoinette Cosway. The novel being set in the pre-emancipation period, presents the white woman at the height of her power. In Annie's case, the power became indomitable coupled with her mastery over the spirits. Annie loses her power and becomes a victim at the end of the novel but one feels that the tragedy is justly deserved. When a comparison is made with *Wide Sargasso Sea* we see
points of similarity between Rochester and Rutherford and Millicent and Amelie, the Negro girl with whom Rochester had 'laughing sex.' Like Rochester Rutherford too was a stranger to the Caribbean. He was equally fascinated by its beauty and magic. Unlike Rochester, Rutherford was not in search of a wealthy wife. He had hopes of inheriting a plantation and had come to learn the planting business by working as a book-keeper on Rosehall estate. He soon found out that life was very strenuous for a book-keeper. After spending the whole day working in the fields, he was expected to keep watch over the fermented spirit every alternate night. The book-keeper was only a slave driver, in very many ways a slave himself. As for the Negro slaves, they were forced to work from dawn to dusk and flogged even for petty offences. Soon after arrival, he witnessed an incident of flogging. What surprised him was the fact that a white woman, the owner of Rosehall, could watch the flogging without any squeamishness. The other book-keepers never interfered, for jobs were hard to get in the Caribbean and any protest warranted instant dismissal.
Just like Rochester, Rutherford was fascinated by the sheer sensuality of the Caribbean woman Annie Palmer. At the same time he was perplexed by her contradictions. Unlike Antoinette Cosway who could not keep her hold on Rochester, Annie Palmer was unwilling to let go of the man she loved. When Rochester indulged himself with the Negro slave girl Amelie, Antoinette was hurt but she could do nothing. Annie Palmer, however, used her powers of witchcraft on Millicent who was trying to take Rutherford away from her. She was indomitable and strong-willed with a streak of cruelty in her nature.

In the beginning of the novel, we see Annie Palmer, using witchcraft to keep the Negro slaves cowed and frightened. Her supernatural gifts symbolize her powers; with them she gets rid of people whom she does not like. She killed three husbands but no one dared protest. The slaves hated her but did as she told. If they murmured, she sent apparitions to frighten them. She also had an efficient foreman, Mr Ashman, who was also her lover. With his help her estates were being managed well. In spite of all this, she was basically
lonely. She was unpopular among the white folk also. On his first visit to her house, Annie told Rutherford about her sheer loneliness. Of the people in Spanish Town and Kingston she had this to say: "You don't know them. And the people horrible! They are narrow, fussy, inquisitive, full of envy and bitterness, always talking about one another and nothing good to say. Wait till you know them!" (1929, 47). She also gave her own version of her three marriages; her first husband died of apoplexy, the second went mad, stabbed her and then killed himself, the third drunk himself to death. The people of Montago Bay blamed her for the deaths, little did they know of the beatings she received at the hands of the drunkard. This experience made her shun all company. As for the flogging, she described it as absolutely essential for discipline. Though she hated it, it was not possible to control the slaves without resorting to corporal punishment: "I hated to be there, though I could not show it, for weakness would be fatal in dealing with slaves. But I had to be present, for they would have been treated far more harshly than they were had I not been. That was why I was there" (49).
Besotted by her beauty, Rutherford believed her then but later on he questioned her veracity. In contrast, Rochester in Wide Sargasso Sea had no ears for Antoinette's version of her past. Robert Rutherford was attracted to Annie but he could not seriously consider marrying her as that would bring about a total estrangement with his father. In Rochester's case, it was his father who forced him to marry the rich creole girl. Annie Palmer in contrast to Rutherford, really loved him and was willing to go to any length to get him. Though she harmed her rival, she was unable to win him. When he turned against her, she was faced with the agony of loneliness: "She did not think that she could go through the future without Robert. She was no longer very young, and she wanted no man save him. She had known the awful agony of a boredom almost without relief in the months before Robert's coming; it would be much worse in the years to come, a nightmare black and hideous as hell. Think as hard as she could, she saw no way of escape. She had built a prison about her. Its impalpable wall would hold her faster than could walls of iron and stone" (224). Thus Annie Palmer, despite
her wealth and supernatural powers, was unable to achieve happiness in love just like Anna Morgan and Antoinette Cosway.

When one examines Annie Palmer's dependence on her overseer Ashman, one sees points of similarity with Jane Burrell in *Jane's Career*. Mr Curden, the foreman threatened Jane with dismissal if she did not give in to him. In Annie's case, Ashman had been her lover before the arrival of Rutherford. Being of inferior status he could not hope to be her husband but felt resentful when he saw Annie taking an interest in Rutherford. He threatened Annie with resignation. Annie knew that she was in no position to dismiss an efficient overseer. The ideas that float through her mind as she thinks of Ashman reveal her helplessness:

Annie's gaze narrowed, and for one long minute, she sat silent, her fingers beating a tattoo upon the table at which both of them were sitting. She would have ordered this man peremptorily out of her sight and off the premises at once. But that the crop must be taken off day by day now, and that there were disquieting rumours about the disposition and plottings of the slaves. But, if not now, a little later, certainly Ashman must go. But if he knew too much -- and he could have found out too much in these last three years -- was it safe that he should be allowed to go, with a thirst for revenge in his heart? That was a question to be answered later on. (92)
Ironically however, things turned out differently. Rutherford threatened Annie with exposure when Annie harmed Millicent. Faced with such a turn of events she was forced to seek Ashman's help to get Rutherford out of the way. Though she loved him, she had to do so to save herself. This was a very traumatic decision for her to make. Ultimately when she was surrounded by the Negroes led by Millicent's grandfather Takoo, it was Rutherford who gallantly came to her aid, though he was unable to save her.

Search for Roots: The search for identity involves a delving into the past, the racial and cultural past, to understand oneself. Of the four female characters considered here, three are white and one black. Strangely enough, all the three white women are accused of being 'coloured' at one moment or the other. The Caribbean experience has made them alien to the white European culture. In the case of both Anna Morgan and Antionette Cosway, they themselves desire to be black. They envy the happy existence of the primitive, that they do not have. In the case of Annie Palmer, though she is white, she makes use of voodoo which is alien to her Christian faith as well as her white culture.
When Anna Morgan arrived in England she hated the climate and the drab atmosphere contrasting it with the warmth and lushness of the West Indies. In the beginning she used to shut her eyes pretending that the heat from the bed clothes was sunheat. The misery was not just physical, it was psychological too; the absence of warmth in human relationship made her feel alien. On one occasion she muses thus: "I was thinking it was funny I could giggle like that because in my heart I was always sad, with the sort of hurt that the cold gave me in my chest" (15).

Anna had always wanted to be black like Francine for she felt that it was happy and gay to be black. Here we find her wishing to resort to the identity of the happy primitive. In spite of this, she was full of protest when Hester insinuated that she was coloured. After receiving a letter from her maternal uncle refusing to accept Anna's responsibility, Hester flared up and told Anna that she had done her best for Anna "Considering everything." Anna took offence at this and retorted that Hester was trying to insinuate that her mother was coloured and that she wasn't.
Though Hester protested that it was only the way in which she spoke, like a nigger, that made her say so, the point was made. Hester being English could not understand the Caribbean situation at all. She disliked Anna's friendship with Francine, the Negro servant girl. She was also shocked by the open way in which the white plantation owners cohabited with the Negro slaves. Once as a child Anna had seen an old slave list in their estate house giving the names of the mulatto slaves on their estate. It was a revelation to her that she could be related to so many black slaves. In London, after Walter's desertion, she remembered the history of the Caribbean with its tilting scales of power. Here she too was just like a Negro slave, to be enjoyed and cherished for a little while and then to be cast away.

Anna Morgan had to put up with the dislike of the blacks who disliked her for no reason at all, other than her whiteness. In the case of Antoinette Cosway and Annie Palmer, the dislike deepened into hatred and ended in violence. Wide Sargasso Sea set in the early 1830s, depicts a very violent scene where Antoinette's house is burnt down by a crowd of hostile Negroes. The
incident robbed her of everything she had - her brother (who died), her mother (who became mad), her stepfather (who left the country) and her only friend Tia. The relationship with Tia is full of ambiguity with its tilting scales of love and hate. Antoinette sees Tia as the mirror image of herself, a 'black' self, poor but free. After the blacks burnt her house, Antoinette and the others were forced to flee. Just before she got into the carriage, she saw Tia and ran towards her but Tia threw a stone at her. "When I was close I saw the jagged stone in her hand but I did not see her throw it. I did not feel it either, only something wet, running down my face. I looked at her and I saw her face crumple up as she began to cry. We stared at each other blood on my face, tears on hers. It was as if I saw myself. Like in a looking glass" (39). At the end of the novel, the mad Antoinette saw Tia again as she jumped off the roof of the burning building. She had the feeling that she was jumping into Tia's arms. It was a re-enactment of the childhood incident.

The black/white conflict also makes its presence felt in a dream that recurs. Antoinette saw it first when she was staying in the convent. Later on,
she saw it again as a captive in Thornfield Hall. She saw a Negro leading her frightened and helpless, through the woods. Though she tried to resist by clinging to a tree, it was in vain. Here the colonial situation is reversed with a Negro male dominating a white woman. The white plantation owners had exploited the Negro girls over the generations. Her own father had fathered many coloured children. It was one of them, who created a rift between Antoinette and Rochester. Daniel Cosway wrote many letters to Rochester insinuating that Antoinette was bad and mad. Ironically enough, Rochester was not surprised. It was as though he was expecting it. When he met Daniel Cosway, he was shocked by the latter's hatred of Antoinette's family.

Rochester did not believe Antoinette's version of her own past. To him she was alien; on at least two occasions Rochester doubts her claim of being creole of pure English descent. Once, immediately after arrival at Coulibri estate, he noticed that Antoinette's eyes were large and disconcerting: "Long, sad, dark, alien eyes. Creole of pure English descent she may be, but they are not English or European either" (56). The
second occasion was when he confronted her with questions about her past: "She raised her eyebrows and the corners of her mouth turned down in a questioning, mocking way. For a moment she looked very much like Amelie. Perhaps they are related, I thought. It's possible, it's even probable in this damned place" (105). Rochester failed to understand the feeling of affection that Antoinette had for Christophine whom she hugged and kissed. When Christophine announced her decision to leave the house, Antoinette was very much upset but Amelie the Negro girl was happy. This moved her to violence, greatly shocking Rochester who did not consider it lady-like. Similarly, The White Witch of Rosehall depicts a scene where Annie Palmer is moved to violence by the insolence of the coloured girl Millicent. Rutherford, likewise was shocked by the obvious exhibition of jealousy and passion. In Wide Sargasso Sea Amelie sang a song about "a white cockroach" to insult Antoinette. It was Antoinette who explained it to Rochester: "That's me. That's what they call all of us who were here before their own people sold them to the slave traders. And I've heard English women call us white niggers. So between you, I often
wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all. Will you go now please. I must dress like Christophine said" (85). The passage highlights Antoinette's bewilderment in understanding her place in white society.

The third part of the novel depicts Antoinette as having lost all sense of time, place and identity. Even her name was changed to Bertha Mason: "There is no looking glass here and I don't know what I am like now. I remember watching myself brush my hair and how my eyes looked back at me. The girl I saw was myself yet not quite myself. Long ago when I was a child and very lonely I tried to kiss her. But the glass was between us hard, cold and misted over with my breath. Now they have taken everything away. What am I doing in this place and who am I?" (147). She felt that the house was made of cardboard. She did not believe that it was England. When her stepbrother Richard Mason came to see her, she attacked him with a knife. Her madness was a re-enactment of her mother's insanity. In her dreams she saw her mother with her streaming hair.
Annie Palmer, in *The White Witch of Rosehall* was also suspected of having Negro blood in her veins. When the three book-keepers were discussing her antecedents, Rider supplied them with the information that she had originally come from Haiti. Immediately Rutherford wondered if she was French as Haiti had been a French colony. Burbridge went one step further to wonder if she had Negro blood in her veins. He was prompted to make such a suggestion because of certain historical facts connected with Haiti. After the revolution in Haiti Dessalines, the Negro leader, had driven out all the whites and had massacred quite a few. Those who seemed white were allowed to stay only if they could prove that they had Negro blood in their veins. With typical white superiority Burbridge wanted to impute the practice of witchcraft to the 'black' blood in her veins. Annie Palmer, however, had no Negro strain at all. Dessalines was succeeded by Christophe who did not hate the white people and Annie's family had no difficulty whatsoever in Haiti. On another occasion Rider suggests that Annie might have insanity as her heritage which shows some similarity with Antoinette Cosway.
The novelist also unravels the situation prevailing in Jamaica in the nineteenth century by placing the action of the novel in the month of December, 1831. The period was one of great antagonism between the blacks and the whites. Though Annie Palmer died as a result of Negro violence, her death was more a case of personal vendetta than a racial one. Takoo, her murderer, allowed both Rutherford and Rider to escape though he strangled Mrs Palmer to death.

The protagonist of *Jane's Career* is black in contrast to the other three. But even there, the author does not seem to be too sure:

All of them were to superficial appearances, black. But in a country where racial intermixture has been going on for some two hundred years, large numbers of persons who appear black have a strain of white blood in their veins, a strain which sometimes shows itself in the smoothness and shading of the skin, sometimes, in the features. A practised eye would have pronounced Celestina to be 'a sambo' or one fourth white. Jane was a trifle darker, strongly built and robust but her features, the nose especially, hinted at some white ancestor. And anyone accustomed to the Jamaican peasants' appearance would have pronounced her good-looking, an opinion with which she would have entirely agreed. (12)
De Lisser does not allow Jane to indulge in much soul searching. The questions that formulate in her mind are mainly economic questions as to why the black people are poor. Her mother replies philosophically that God has decreed so. In Kingston, in the household of Mrs Mason, Jane got used to the middle class values and ways of life, though she herself was outside of it. She felt that the white ladies were fortunate in having husbands to look after them. When her friend Sathyra pointed out that the white ladies could not get rid of husbands who beat them, Jane replied that it was better to have a husband to beat you than no husband at all. She thus becomes the spokeswoman for the civilized values of life upheld by the white society. Jane remained virtuous unlike many other black girls, not out of any religious sentiment but out of pride. Even though the temptations were great, she wouldn't give in: "She too had come to find out that for one's respectability one often pays a price. But still she revolted against the idea of throwing herself away" (41). Ultimately she achieved what she wanted: the white wedding at the end of the novel marks the highest point in her career.
The four novels raise the question of race with regard to identity. But it is interesting to note that only the black protagonist Jane, achieves respectability in terms of the values of the white race. Annie Palmer's final defeat comes about through a coloured rival. She has no contenders to beauty among the white ladies of Jamaica. Anna Morgan succumbs to a life of easy virtue. Antoinette Cosway is insulted by Rochester who seeks a Negro girl in front of her eyes. At the same time, she herself is denied marriage to Sandi, the coloured boy who understands her. The pure Englishman who marries her, locks her up as a mad woman. The traditional white society discards all three but the Caribbean milieu adopts Jane as one of them.

Man-Woman Relationships: Man-woman relationships also help to highlight facets of identity. *Voyage in the Dark* is a brilliant account of self destruction brought on by failure in love. Anna Morgan met Walter Jeffries at the most vulnerable and lonely point of her life. He was kind to her and this made her cling on to him eventhough she knew that it would be short-lived. When she fell ill, she sent for him and he was kind and nice to her. He
got a doctor to examine her and spoke to the landlady who had earlier threatened to evict her. The very room looked larger after his visit. Later on, she went to his house. Though there was a conflict inside her, she gave in to the temptation of making love. For days after that, she was haunted by the memory of it and yearned to be with him. He gave her gifts of money, pretty clothes and country holidays. Everything seemed good but soon it was all over. Anna received a letter from Walter's friend Vincent offering her plenty of advice but ending the affair. This made Anna panic; she sent a telegram to Walter who agreed to meet her for the last time. She wanted to tell him many things: "I imagined myself saying very calmly, the thing is that you don't understand. You think I want more than I do. I only want to see you sometimes, but if I never see you again, I'll die. I'm dying now really, and I'm too young to die" (97). At the meeting however she felt his awkwardness and knew that he hated her. The affair ended and Anna moved on again.

Thereafter she picked up many men but she had no illusions at all. She thought of the hibiscus flower she had admired in childhood. It was so red and
beautiful with its golden tongue hanging out. It was sad to think that it was dead. Her pride in herself had likewise ended. Her pregnancy and the abortion that followed marked the end of her self destruction.

**Wide Sargasso Sea** depicts the marginalized first Mrs Rochester of *Jane Eyre* as the protagonist. Charlotte Bronte elicits the reader's sympathy for Rochester but Jean Rhys presents the traumatic experiences of the woman stamped with the stigma of insanity. In her article, "Jean Rhys's **Wide Sargasso Sea**: The Other Side/Both Sides Now", published in *Caribbean Quarterly*, Paula Grace Anderson makes the following comments: "**Wide Sargasso Sea** is a book about being a woman, a particular type of woman in a particular cultural environment, at a particular point in history. It is also about a particular environment and its psycho-cultural reality. It is also novel about the dualism of life" (1982, 59).

The novelist juxtaposes the heroine's stream of consciousness with that of Rochester to unravel the mystery of human relationships. The lady's relationship is explored in terms of power. From the very beginning
Antoinette is powerless. In fact all the women characters are. One and all they are pitted against institutionalized masculine hostility. Antoinette's mother had married Mr Mason for protection but he had failed her. He in turn had been attracted by her fascinating sensuality. When she became violent following the traumatic experiences, he left her in the care of a coloured couple who even abused her sexually. Before dying Mr Mason entrusted his son Richard with the responsibility of taking care of Antoinette, to assuage his conscience. Richard conveniently handed her over to Rochester.

The second part of the novel reveals Rochester's thoughts about his marriage: "It was all very brightly coloured, very strange, but it meant nothing to me. Nor did she, the girl I was to marry. When at last I met her, I bowed, smiled, kissed her hand, danced with her. I played the part I was expected to play. She never had anything to do with me at all" (64). Once the marriage was over, he gave himself up to sensuality. They made love but he felt very little tenderness towards her. This made her desperate and she
appealed to Christophine for help. Christophine's answer to Antoinette's lament that her husband did not love her is significant: "When man don't love you, more you try, more he hate you, man like that. If you love them, they treat you bad, if you don't love them they after you night and day bothering your soul case out" (91).

Christophine helped her with obeah but the result was disastrous. Rochester was repelled thinking that he had been poisoned. On the rebound he had laughing sex with the Negro girl Amelie. This was too much for Antoinette; her love changed to hate and she declared that before she died she would show him the extent of her hatred. The feeling of hate was reciprocated by Rochester who felt that he had been bought by her money. He took his revenge by taking her away from the magic and loveliness of Jamaica to be shut up as a captive in cold, grey England.

Apart from Antoinette's relationship with Rochester, another relationship is also touched upon. In childhood, a cousin of hers, a coloured boy Sandi, had come to her aid. He had taught her a few tricks of
survival. It was his name that Daniel Cosway had taken to hint that she was unchaste. In the last part of the novel, the mad Antoinette remembers a previous experience: "I took the red dress down and put it against myself. 'Does it make me look intemperate and unchaste?' I said that man told me so. He had found out that Sandi had been to the house and that I went to see him. I never knew who told, 'Infamous daughter of an infamous mother', he said to me" (152). The red dress reminded her of fire and what she must do.

Annie Palmer, the white witch of Rosehall, also dies a violent death. Her tragedy is brought about through rivalry in love. The coloured girl Millicent may be compared to Amelie in Wide Sargasso Sea. Millicent, however evokes sympathy in the reader whereas Amelie leaves with the money given her by Rochester. Annie Palmer also does not elicit any sympathy. Throughout the novel, it is Rutherford's waxing and waning fascination for Annie that is dominantly portrayed. In his case, it is Millicent who evokes a feeling of tenderness rather than Annie. Yet, her beauty and sensuality attract him like a moth to the flame.
The first meeting between Annie and Rutherford is described with all the aura of romanticism. "It was as though an electric shock had passed through him. He found himself gazing into a pair of eyes which he thought the most beautiful he had seen. They were black and of a peculiar, penetrating brightness; they looked through you, gazing intently into them you became conscious of nothing else; they absorbed you" (34). On her side, she scrutinized him openly seeing him as a man, not as a book-keeper. Ashman saw this by-play and felt jealous. Annie Palmer did not seem to care; she invited Rutherford to her residence.

Rutherford went there as a guest eager to get to know the mistress of Rosehall. The next morning he returned as her lover. In her company he forgot everything else except the fact that he wanted her. In the morning, he was full of uneasiness. He was used to decorum and worried about the gossip that would be circulated by her servants. Annie seemed to be strangely impervious to that. He was also startled to think that he had succumbed so easily to customs of the Caribbean. Marriage with her was out of the question.
His father would neer approve of marrying a lady who had buried three husbands before him. She was also older than he and in the morning she did not appear as enticing as she did in the night, the lines on her face could be seen. Moreover, her desire shocked him: "He believed that she loved him, that he loved her also; yet he knew, felt that hers was a volcanic passion, that hers was a tempestuous temperament, wild as the sea fronting Rosehall, when it was lashed to fury by the winds that rushed down from the north, fierce as the storms that sometimes raged over this country, devastating it in an hour or two" (67). Rochester in Wide Sargasso Sea feels the same about Antoinette. In both these cases, the cold Englishmen fail to comprehend and are bewildered by the natural sensuality of the white Caribbean woman. They would have understood Negro women behaving with such abandonment but they failed to understand white women giving in to sensuality. They were fascinated by them but they were also critical.

Rutherford's involvement with Millicent offers a contrast to his relationship with Annie. When Millicent came to him as his housekeeper, he was
surprised and amused when she offered to do more than cook and clean for him. She was no ordinary Negro girl but was good looking, free and educated. Her grandfather enjoyed a higher status among the Negroes as a well-known obeahman. After spending the night at the Great House, Rutherford returned to his lodgings to find Millicent extremely anxious about him. When she warned him against the evil designs of Mrs Palmer, Rutherford was irritated. On seeing that her feelings were hurt, he apologized to her. Millicent told him about the deaths of the people who had gone there before him. She openly declared that she loved Rutherford. This was so amusing that he pondered thus: "This was extraordinary, two women, one white, the other brown and both indubitably handsome in their respective ways had told him within very few hours that they loved him. This was flattering to his vanity but he perceived that jealousy might be engendered between the two; this brown girl already spoke as one bitterly jealous" (73 - 74).

Jealousy did flare up when Annie arrived suddenly at his lodgings to find him with Millicent. Annie tried to convey her contempt by calling Millicent
a thief but Millicent openly defied her. Enraged, Annie tried to whip Millicent and Rutherford had to intervene. At the critical juncture Millicent's grandfather Takoo arrived there and took her away. Before she went, Millicent insulted Annie by calling her a murderess and a witch. This provoked Annie to seek revenge. When Rutherford pointed out that her behaviour was distasteful and not lady-like Annie retorted sarcastically that Rutherford too had become the typical West Indian gentleman: he had gone from her embraces into the arms of a coloured girl. Antoinette in Wide Sargasso Sea makes a similar comment about Rochester's involvement with Amelie: he was no better than the white planters whom he had criticized for cohabiting with the slaves.

The flame of revenge was lit in Annie's heart when Rutherford tried to defend Millicent. She decided to kill Millicent through witchcraft. Finding her whereabouts through Ashman, Annie went there in the middle of the night and inflicted a mortal injury. In the beginning, Rutherford did not believe the tales of witchcraft but when he went to see the girl he felt
sorry for her. Millicent thought Annie responsible for her plight. So Rutherford went to Annie and begged her to help the girl. Millicent had touched his heart by worrying about his safety even in the midst of her own pain. This made Annie even more jealous. She knew that even if she helped Millicent she would lose him to Millicent. At the ceremony arranged to exorcise the evil spirit feeding on Millicent's body, Annie sent another apparition which pronounced Millicent's doom.

Unknown to her, Rutherford had gone to watch the ceremony. He had seen her own part in it and it revolted him. The next day, he went to see her and openly accused her of witchcraft and murder. He threatened to go to a magistrate if anything happened to Millicent. The girl's grandfather who had helped Annie in murdering her husbands, would turn king's evidence. Annie realized that Rutherford no longer loved her, the coloured girl had taken him away from her. With great pride she declared that he could go to the authorities with his wonderful story but no one would believe it especially as his witness was a black obeahman. After he left her in bitterness, she realized the danger she
was in. With pain in her heart, she asked Ashman to get rid of Rutherford before he could harm her. She thus pronounced the death sentence of the only man she had ever loved. The future stretched out before her, empty and desolate with her overseer holding his dangerous knowledge over her head like a sword.

When Rutherford went to see Millicent for the last time, he was devastated with grief. He had taken a doctor along to help her but he could do nothing. Her last words to him were to take care of himself. She died the same night and Rutherford announced his decision to leave Rosehall the next day. The same night, the Negroes stormed Annie's house under the leadership of Takoo. By some stroke of fate Rutherford happened to reach there, along with Rider. Seeing Annie in this helpless condition his attitude changed. His racial pride and sense of chivalry prompted him to fight for her safety. He also felt vaguely that he loved her still. "If needs be, he was prepared to give his life for her" (244). In spite of his efforts, she died at the hands of Takoo.
The tragedy of Annie Palmer was brought about by her use of her extraordinary powers. Had she been an ordinary woman, she might have lived comfortably with a planter husband. The absence of children might also have affected her nature by making her ruthless and cruel. In the case of Antoinette the inability to control her affairs brings about her tragedy. She too had no children to love and cherish. As for Anna Morgan, she was forced to abort her foetus as she did not know who the father was. Only Jane Burrell achieves fulfilment through motherhood by giving birth to a little boy "the splitting image of his father."

Jane Burrell unlike the other three had pragmatic ideas about marriage. Jane and her friends view man-woman relationships purely from the point of view of material advantage. In the village, Jane did not have anything to do with the boys apart from talking to them. She knew that they were interested only in getting what they could out of a girl without spending any money. After reaching Kingston, the first man who tried to establish contact with her was Cecil, Mrs Mason's nephew. At first she was awkward and nervous,
not knowing how to handle his increasing interest in her. Her fear was that his aunt would see him. As the days passed by, her confidence grew and she also realized that she did not like Mr Cecil. Cecil tried his best to woo her by giving her small amounts of money. Cleverly, Jane accepted the money but refused to have anything to do with him. This made Cecil angry. He accused her of stealing but Jane raised her voice in protest bringing Mrs Mason to the spot. The same day, Jane left Mrs Mason's household to stay with Sathyra.

Jane's next encounter was with Mr Sampson, Sathyra's boyfriend. When Sathyra announced that a boyfriend of hers was going to call on her, she expected Jane to take the hint and make herself scarce. Jane was too inexperienced to do so. She stayed with Sathyra throughout the meeting with disastrous results. Mr Sampson liked Jane because she was simple and straightforward. When she agreed with his opinions he felt flattered. Sathyra however, was a hard, calculating female who wanted to extract the maximum from Sampson. She knew that men like him would make love to half a dozen young women at once. In Jane she
saw a potential rival. As the evening progressed, she became more and more angry. In the end, she asked Jane to leave her premises saying that Mr Sampson wanted to move in with her.

The third encounter Jane had was with Mr Curden, her foreman at work. He was a married man with family. So when she first saw his friendly interest in her she suspected nothing. When the other employees pointed out that it was not just friendship, she declared that she did not want to have anything to do with a married man. Mr Curden however would not leave her alone. When she started leaving early, he questioned her about it. She lied to him that she was staying with her parents. This made him suggest that she should get independent lodgings. Jane replied that she preferred to stay with her folks. After this, the foreman became distant in his attitude and exacting in his supervision of her work.

In the meanwhile Jane became acquainted with Vincent Broglie, a newcomer to the neighbourhood. A child belonging to one of the neighbours died. As the mother had no money for the funeral expenses, Jane came
forward to collect the money from the other residents in the yard. When she approached the newcomer, he surprised everyone by donating four shillings. Later on it was he who accompanied Jane to the burial as there wasn't enough funds for a grand funeral. While coming back from the churchyard Mr Curden saw Jane in the company of Vincent. He had also found out that she had lied to him. The next day, he confronted Jane with these two items of knowledge. Jane explained that Vincent was only a neighbour. This led him to put a proposition before Jane: she should move in with him as his mistress. Jane did not want to do this but her job was at stake. So she asked for a little time to think it over. Curden was willing to wait only for one week.

Jane found herself in a fix. It was then that she thought of Vincent Broglie as an alternative:

She had said that Vincent was nothing to her and that was true, she had said that she was nothing to him and that was still more true. But she had been proud to be seen driving with him yesterday, he was much younger than this man, he was single, he was generous too, and was probably quite as well paid as the foreman. But how would that help her? (162)
Unlike Anna Morgan, in *Voyage in the Dark*, Jane Burrell used her head. In the days that followed Jane made earnest attempts to get close to Vincent. Her interest in his activities made him take her to the union meeting. He thought that her doubts about the proposed strike would be cleared there. The speeches did not convince Jane as to why the strike was essential. She told Vincent that he was being foolish in jeopardizing his job. This made Vincent irritated. He told her not to interfere in things she did not understand.

As the week passed, Jane became resigned to her fate. Curden arranged new lodgings for her and she was asked to move in on Monday. With a heavy heart, she bid goodbye to all her neighbours including Vincent. Vincent was busy with the preparations for the strike but he felt sorry to hear that Jane was going to give in to Mr Curden. She had earlier told him all about it. Jane advised him once more against going on strike. She also declared vehemently that she hated Curden and wished that she could live with Vincent. Vincent realized that Jane was a dependable kind of girl
who liked him for himself. He decided not to let her go to Curden. He in turn, backed out of the strike. As a result of this, the two were able to climb the social ladder together. It is Jane's practical side that helps her make a success of the marriage.

Religion: The Caribbean set up gives religion a prominent place in its day-to-day activities. This does not mean, however, that people are staunch believers. In fact, the very situation is full of irony. The white colonizers had condescended to baptize their African slaves at the insistence of the missionaries but their activities were often against the tenets of Christianity. The slaves had brought their deity, 'obi' of African origin and continued to worship him even after conversion. The worship involved the supernatural and was banned by the law as witchcraft. Though the black slaves worshipped Jesus and Mary with great fervour, they also indulged in the practice of obeah side by side. People who were capable of calling the spirits were in great demand in the Caribbean. Not only the Negroes, but the white people too resorted to obeah sometimes to cure illnesses, to destroy enemies or to
succeed in business or in love. The conflict between Christianity and obeah thus becomes a prominent motif even in the novels of the white writers.

Of the four novels under consideration, two novels, Wide Sargasso Sea and The White Witch of Rosehall, give prominence to the practice of obeah. In Voyage in the Dark obeah is mentioned but Jane's Career makes no reference at all to obeah. This is all the more striking because the protagonist is black.

Jane's parents were hardworking, God-fearing Jamaican peasants. Prior to her departure to Kingston, they invited one of the village elders to give Jane some good advice. The description of the black preacher is given with humour and irony. Though he tries to look dignified in shoes and collar, some of the effect is lost because of the soiled nature of his clothes. His advice to Jane likewise sounds ludicrous with its mixture of peasant dialect and Biblical archaisms:

"Jane", he continued impressively after a pause, "Kingston is a very big an' wicked city, an' a young girl like you who de Lord has blessed wid a good figure an' a face must be careful not to keep bad company. Satan goeth about like a roaring lion in Kingston seeking
who he may devour. He will devour you if you do not take him to the Lord in prayer. Do you work well. Write to you' moder often, for a chile who don't remember her parents cannot prosper. Don't stay out in de street in de night, go to church whenever you' employer allow you. If sinners entice thee, consent thou not. Now, tell me what I say to you." (2)

When Jane repeated his instructions back to him, he was pleased. Reaching Kingston, she found that Mrs Mason had double standards. She and her family attended church but she grudged her servants the same facility. When Amanda, her servant wanted every alternate Sunday off, she was most sarcastic: "All right, Amanda, I hope goin' to church will do you good. Everybody go to church now; in fact the church is making ladies and gentlemen of everybody. It don't prevent people from lying and stealing though" (79). This shows her attitude that grudges even religion to the working class. She preferred her servants to be pious, chaste and good without going to church and without getting married.

Jane's basic honesty won her many friends. Her generosity was also appreciated by the lady who lost her baby. It was Jane who took the lead in collecting money
for the funeral. It was in this connexion that she met Vincent for the first time. Though Jane did not marry Vincent till after her son was born, one might excuse her on the grounds that it was a common practice among the coloured population of the West Indies. They did get married eventually in the very church attended by Mrs Mason. The church wedding, in the presence of family and friends, marks the social recognition of Vincent and Jane.

Anna Morgan in *Voyage in the Dark* though white, looks on the Christian faith with a certain amount of irony. While roaming around with a friend Maudie, they met a preacher who was trying to instil the fear of God into the people. Nobody seemed to listen to him. All they could hear were the words, God... the wrath of God... etc. The situation appeared funny and Maudie laughed at him. The man got angry at this and started shrieking after them that their sins would find them out. This infuriated Maudie; she felt that the man was insulting them because they did not have a gentleman with them. Anna felt that the man was thin and cold with little, sad eyes. She wanted to talk to him and
find out what he was really thinking of, as his eyes had a blind look, "like a dog's when it sniffs something." The author underlines the inefficacy of religion that has nothing to offer the lonely woman except a few meaningless words.

On another occasion Anna remembered the injunctions of Mother St. Antony in her convent school. This happened after she had given in to Walter for the first time. Mother St. Anthony had told them: "Children, everyday one should put aside a quarter of an hour for meditation on the Four Last Things. Every night before going to sleep - that's the best time - you should shut your eyes and try to think of one of the Four Last Things" (55). The Four Last Things were Death, Judgement, Hell and Heaven. Anna lay still and thought of death; her old self had died. The little girl with her innocence had become a thing of the past. She had given in to a man before marrying him, without any surety of a marriage in the future. She felt guilty and ashamed: "That was when it was sad, when you lay awake at night and remembered things. That was when it was sad, when you stood by the bed and undressed, thinking,
when he kisses me, shivers run up my back. I am hopeless, resigned, utterly happy. Is that me? I am bad, not good any longer, bad. That has no meaning, absolutely none. Just words. But something about the darkness of the streets has a meaning" (57).

Though white, Anna Morgan could not completely escape from the myths of obeah in childhood. Francine, the Negro girl liked hanging pictures of Jesus and Mary in her bedroom. But whenever, she started telling stories, she would use the obeah ritual of saying, 'Timm Timm' to be answered by 'Bois seche.' In England, after a bout of sickness Anna remembered the mountains of the Caribbean that were haunted and obeah. She remembered stories of obeah women who dug up dead bodies to cut off their fingers. In England they sounded unreal but Anna's eyes looked red, like the eyes of soucriants, who were spirits that fanned you to sleep and sucked your blood. When Anna identifies herself with the soucriants, it projects her own loss of self-esteem. She is no longer, a good, desirable woman - she is a bad, blood sucking harpy.
The conflict between Christianity and African obeah becomes a major issue in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Antoinette, the white creole girl, received no solace whatsoever from the Christian faith. In the poverty-stricken days of her childhood, it was Christophine's reputation as an obeah woman that kept them going. However, on the night of the fire, religion did come to their rescue in a strange sort of way. When surrounded by the hostile Negroes, Mr Mason started to pray. It was then that something happened. The author's description is ironic: "Mr Mason stopped swearing and began to pray in a loud voice. The prayer ended, 'May Almighty God Defend Us!' And God who is indeed mysterious, who had made no sign when they burned Pierre as he slept—not a clap of thunder, not a flash of lightning—mysterious God heard Mr Mason at once and answered him. The yells stopped" (36). Ironically however, it was their parrot, Coco, that saved them. It had its wings clipped and could not fly. So it fell down from the roof, burning. The Negroes believed that it was unlucky to kill a parrot. This superstitious dread made them stop and move aside for the white people to flee. The crisis, however, was not over. Before
they could get into the carriage, they were stopped by a man carrying a machete. He wanted to kill them, for he was afraid that they would go to the police. Aunt Cora stepped forward and told him that they should be allowed to go, for the boy Pierre was badly hurt. This made the man comment about black and white burning alike. Aunt Cora retorted back:

"They do" she said. "Here and hereafter as you will find out very shortly."

He let the bridle go and thrust his face close to hers. He'd throw her on the fire, he said, if she put bad luck on him. Old white Jumby, he called her. But she did not move an inch, she looked straight into his eyes and threatened with eternal fire in a calm voice. "And never a drop of sangoree to cool your burning tongue", she said. He cursed her again but he backed away.  

After their escape, Antoinette was sick for a long time. When she recovered, she was sent to a convent. The nuns there tried to make the children good and pious by telling them stories of the saints. Even as a child, Antoinette was skeptical. Her traumatic experiences had left indelible impressions on her mind. She used to have terrible dreams that tormented her. When she asked the nuns why terrible things happened in the world, they could give her no convincing reply. So
she resented their cloistered lives and their feeling of security. Her mother's insanity was a terrible wound to her. When she died, Antoinette could not cry. She tried to pray for her but the words seemed to fall to the ground.

In spite of her convent upbringing, it was to Christophine she turned when things started going wrong with her marriage. Christophine had warned her that obeah was not for 'beke' or white people. When Antoinette continued to beg, she gave her a potion to mix in Rochester's drink. The altered taste made Rochester think that he was being poisoned. He was horrified and repelled.

In contrast to Antoinette, the man who described himself as her illegitimate half-brother always talked in terms of God and retribution. The belief in God did not prevent him from wrecking the marriage of Antoinette who had not done him any harm. He also told Rochester about Christophine having been imprisoned earlier for practising obeah. This helped Rochester to deal with her. The last part of the novel depicts the so-called Christians ill-treating a helpless
woman. Rochester changed Antoinette's name to Bertha. Earlier, when he had called her that, she had protested that it was obeah to change a person's name. She felt that Rochester had found out that her mother was called Annette and had hence changed the name. Rochester's intention was to erase Antoinette's Caribbean identity. He succeeded, for the mad, unkempt woman shut up in the attic had no resemblance at all to the lovely girl with pretty clothes that Antoinette once was.

The name symbolism is carried over to her caretaker too. The lady in charge of her was called Grace Poole. She had accepted the job out of monetary considerations and had no solace to offer the lonely woman dubbed mad by her husband. In the end, Antoinette re-enacted the story of Coco, the parrot with clipped wings when she jumped off the burning building. She thus brought ill luck to her captors.

In _The White Witch of Rosehall_ De Lisser delineates the bad effects of obeah and witchcraft by focussing attention on Annie Palmer. In spite of the efforts of the missionaries, the use of obeah was prevalent in the Caribbean. Obeahmen like Takoo were
feared and respected. The bad deeds of such people were
condoned out of fear. Annie Palmer had used the power
of witchcraft to subdue a superstitious people but
ultimately it brought about her doom. In the case of
Takoo too obeah brought him only misery and tragedy at
the end.

When Robert Rutherford arrived in Jamaica he
was fresh, young and chivalrous with a deep sense of
religion and morality. As he was not superstitious, he
was incredulous when he heard the tales of sorcery and
witchcraft connected with Annie. On his first visit to
the Great House, Annie herself told him of the ghosts
that haunted the house but he paid no heed. But when he
started kissing her, a thunderous noise filled the house
and all the lights went out. Though Annie explained it
as a door banging shut in the wind, he suddenly
remembered the three dead husbands of Annie and felt
alarmed. The next day Millicent too warned him about
Annie's use of witchcraft. Though he was irritated by
all this foolish talk, he excused the girl on account of
her sincerity.
Later events made Rutherford change his mind. When Annie inflicted a mortal wound on Millicent, Takoo, her grandfather became Annie's enemy. He had earlier helped Annie to murder her husbands. Rutherford found himself caught in the feud between Takoo and Annie Palmer as he was the bone of contention between Annie and Millicent. In the war between Haitian witchcraft and African obeah, no one enjoyed the ultimate victory. Though Takoo killed Annie to avenge his granddaughter, he was shot by Ashman.

The novel portrays the strange rituals of witchcraft in vivid detail. To scare the Negroes and control them, Annie used to conjure up apparitions. One such apparition was a three footed horse that struck them with holy terror. Only Rider, the unfrocked priest-turned-book-keeper, kept his cool. Annie inflicted an injury on Millicent by staring fixedly at the door behind which Millicent was sleep. She also placed a cardboard piece with the picture of Millicent in a coffin outside the room along with a child's skull smeared with blood. Her sorcery had its desired effect. Millicent woke up and started yelling. A bruise
appeared on her chest and she firmly believed that a 'Hige' had sucked her blood. To get rid of the foul spirit, Takoo arranged an elaborate ceremony of exorcism. To the accompaniment of drumming and chants, a snow white kid was sacrificed and Millicent was bathed in its blood. At the critical juncture, Annie sent another apparition, a huge bull that the Negroes called 'Rolling calf'. This frightened the Negroes who scattered calling to Jesus. The fright had made them come out of the trance like state which was alien to the Christian faith they now professed. The exorcism failed and Takoo lost all hope.

The Christian faith is projected in the novel through Rider, an unfrocked priest. His addiction to drink had resulted in his losing his job as a preacher. Thereafter he had wandered around seeking different jobs. He had ultimately, come to Rosehall as a book-keeper. In spite of his dissolute state, his training in religion brought him respect on a number of occasions. It was he who tried to explain to Rutherford the mystery of witchcraft and its sway over the superstitious multitude. He accompanied Rutherford when
he went to see Millicent for the last time. When the
doctor was unable to do anything for the dying girl,
Rider stepped forward to administer religious solace to
a tormented soul. The waiting Negroes were greatly
affected on listening to his serious voice repeating the
words of prayer and comfort. Many of them knelt down
and started praying forgetting their participation in
the heathenish ritual of the night before. Because of
his kindness to Millicent, Takoo spared his life when
the Negroes rose up in revolt.

Politics: The political angle seems to be more
important to the black writers than to the white
writers. In black writing, political affiliations play
a crucial role in the development of identity. The two
novels by Jean Rhys exemplify the comparative lack of
interest in politics among the white writers of the
Caribbean. In these two novels Rhys portrays the sexist
politics of power: the male predator versus the female
victim. In the case of De Lisser, a conservative
pro-establishment stance is taken by him.

The lack of a sense of belonging becomes a
crucial factor in both Wide Sargasso Sea and Voyage in
the Dark. Though *Voyage in the Dark* is set in England in the period just before the First World War (1912-14) the volatile political events of Europe are not touched upon at all. Anna's dilemma has a timeless quality to it; its significance is universal. In *Wide Sargasso Sea* the period is the 1830s just after the emancipation of slaves. The hostility between the races had upset previous equations and the white masters had turned victims at the hands of the Negro slaves. Apart from the individual story of Antoinette's family, mention is made of other white people too, like Mr Lutterell, but the political angle is not explored in depth. Antoinette is depicted as having no voice at all in determining her destiny. Her only act of self-assertion occurs at the end of the novel when she escapes from her living Hell by setting the house on fire.

De Lisser's novels portray the political angle from the viewpoint of his own political affiliation to conservatism. In *Jane's Career* the political angle is projected in connection with the strike call given by the printer's union. Vincent Broglie, enjoying the benefits of a good paying job, was lured into the union
by the excitement offered. The union leader's political jargon sounded profound to his unaccustomed ears and he was fired with enthusiasm to fight for better wages and working conditions. Under the influence of the union leader he started feeling that the lot of the printers was indeed miserable. De Lisser is most sarcastic in his description of the members of the union: "The most enthusiastic members of the union were the men who were out of work, and had been so for some time. Their support was moral for it was long since they had been in a position to contribute financial aid to anything; steady work had never appealed to them, it being regarded by them in the light of tyranny and oppression" (81). Here the intention of the author is obvious. By portraying these people as parasites on society, De Lisser underlines the foolishness of the working class who are led by them.

Jane came to know about the union when a meeting was arranged in Broglie's house to whip up enthusiasm for the strike. The people of the yard, being poor and uneducated, listened with interest to the fiery speeches given by the leaders though they could
not comprehend the meaning. One by one the speakers listed their demands and grievances till the listeners felt that the printers were the most downtrodden of the working class. One of the speakers even voiced his protest that the printers were denied the right to wear swords, a privilege they had earlier enjoyed. Jane had listened carefully to the speeches, not because she was interested in politics, but because she wanted to catch the attention of Vincent Broglie. When the meeting was over, Jane went up to him and asked him what would happen if the strike failed. Her peasant wisdom with its inherent pragmatism made her wonder how Vincent would survive if he lost his job. Though the doubt had occurred to him, he told Jane confidently that the workers would never fail.

Thinking that the rhetoric of the union leader would convince Jane of the feasibility of the strike, he took her to another bigger meeting. The union leader's adages were culled from cheap American publications. All the workers were favourably affected by his pronouncements but Jane was not convinced. She felt that Vincent was running a grave risk of losing a good
paying job. She told him explicitly: "But it seem to be all foolishness dat man was talkin'. If you leave your good job wid a lot of other people, none of them can help you; an' suppose anyone go behind your back an' ask for it, what you would do?" (174). Vincent resented her attitude and told her to look to her own affairs. But the doubt she raised remained in his mind to torment him.

Broglie's employer was a white man who was fond of him. He was sorry to see Broglie among the strikers. On the eve of the strike, he tried his best to dissuade him. The other workers saw Broglie talking to 'the Enemy' and called him back. This deepened his feeling of doubt. When Jane came to see him to announce that she was leaving the yard, she talked to him again about the foolishness of going on strike. She herself was forced to accept a man she did not like out of economic necessity. When Broglie heard this, he made up his mind. He went back to work and was teased by the workers on strike. His employer however was pleased with him. Within two weeks the whole thing blew over when the union leader went away. The workers realized
that they had been cheated. Broglie, however, received a raise. Six weeks later he was promoted to the position of foreman. Broglie also offered asylum to Jane believing firmly that it was her wisdom which saved him. De Lisser uses the strike to expose the fraud of political leaders who exploit the poverty stricken masses.

The *White Witch of Rosehall* projects racial politics as they were the most important in the period presented in the novel, December 1831. The Negroes were discontented with the slave owners as they believed that the decree of emancipation had already come from England, but was being withheld from them by the white planter class. There were sporadic outbursts of violence and the white owners had to rule the slaves with an iron hand.

On Rosehall estate things were under control. Ashman, the overseer, was efficient and ruthless but Annie Palmer had the power of witchcraft to aid her. The Negroes hated her but her control over the spirits frightened them into submission. She also had them
flogged mercilessly. The author comments that had she lived fifty years before, she would not have hesitated to flog a slave to death.

An incident is described in the novel that sheds light on contemporary politics. Mr Hancock, an attorney connected with the local militia, called on Rosehall's mistress with an important message. All the white men on the estate were asked to attend the meeting. Mr Hancock had received information that the Negroes were likely to revolt in the days following Christmas. The Negroes were usually granted three holidays for Christmas. That year, one day happened to be Sunday; so they wanted one more day. The white plantation owners did not feel that the demand was just and therefore refused it. But they were afraid of the Negroes rising in revolt. Mr Hancock's attitude represents the opinion of the white people in general:

"The government, Mr Ashman, is secretly with these missionaries and slaves - we are in a devil of a position when it comes to getting justice and our rights, I can tell you. The Government backs up the Negroes whenever it can; this governor seems to have been sent out to do nothing but that. We'll never get fair play from him any more than from the English government; so we have to do what we can for ourselves. But there's a good lot of fight left in us still!" (175)
He, like the other white men, believed that the slaves had nothing to complain about. The plantation owners were afraid of the blacks and ruled them with an iron hand. Added to that, was the boredom of the Caribbean set up which offered no channels of creativity. Most of the white men lived dissolute lives drinking and womanising in excess. Though Hancock was aware of the situation at Rosehall, he preferred not to interfere. He felt that white people should stick together in a crisis. This in fact was the attitude of the entire white population. When Rutherford threatened Annie Palmer with exposure, she laughed at him because she knew that no white magistrate would convict her, a white woman, for practising witchcraft.

Rutherford hated Annie for what she did to Millicent but later on his hatred changed to compassion when he saw her a helpless victim at the hands of the Negroes. His only consideration was that she was a white woman and that the attackers were her inferiors. The Negroes on the other hand felt justified in killing a woman who was responsible for so many deaths. When Rider implored Takoo not to kill Annie, Takoo replied that she deserved hanging more than anyone else:
"I sentence her to death, as chief an' leader of the people of St. James. You talk about me an' dese men hanged, Mr Rider? It is the white men who have to look for themselves now, for we are all free from tonight -- every slave in Jamaica is free -- and we taking to the mountains to fight until the damn slave owners here acknowledge our freedom. It come from England an' they keeping it back. Very well, we will take it ourself, even if some of us have to die for it. I expec' to die, but dese men with me will live free for ever. And before I die dis woman will; she will go before me. No power from hell or heaven can save her!" (243 - 244)

A personal vendetta became a political murder. Annie Palmer's destiny was to die at the hands of the people she had terrorised.

Narrative Styles and Techniques: The narrative style adopted by the author underlines his concept of selfhood. This becomes all the more relevant in terms of inter-racial relations and gender issues. Of the two authors, Jean Rhys prefers the first person narrative while De Lisser adopts the narrative mode of the omniscient author. In Rhys's Voyage in the Dark Anna Morgan relates the whole story and it becomes poignant in terms of the feminine perspective. In Wide Sargasso Sea, except for the second part and a small portion of the third part, the narrator is Antoinette. Part II
presents the thoughts of Rochester and in Part III a small section is devoted to Grace Poole who relates the tale of the mad Antoinette. These sections complement Antoinette's depiction of herself by presenting the other side of the picture. In the case of De Lisser's novels, the mask of the omniscient narrator helps him to offer comments on the characters and events. This is more evident in Jane's Career as the protagonist is black and of a different milieu from the author. In this novel he makes use of the Jamaican peasant dialect in the conversation of the Negro characters. In The White Witch of Rosehall, a similar method is adopted to underline the difference in culture. The author's use of dialect is condescending rather than sympathetic. Though Jean Rhys too makes use of deviations from standard English in the speeches of the Negro characters, they are reduced to the minimum. The purpose served is not ridicule as in De Lisser but irony. The white creole heroines are presented as more vulnerable than their black counterparts by Jean Rhys.

Thus the search for identity assumes different forms in the four novels. One factor that is common in these novels by white writers is the reversal of
colonial relations. Anna Morgan, in *Voyage in the Dark* is exploited by white people in England in the same manner as her own ancestors had exploited the slave women. The colonial relationship is thus reversed. In *Wide Sargasso Sea* the reversal occurs twice, once in Antoinette's childhood with the blacks burning her house and later by her white husband who locks her up. A Negro girl and Antoinette's coloured half-brother play prominent roles in wrecking her marriage. In *The White Witch of Rosehall*, the powerful Annie Palmer, is defeated in love by a coloured girl and killed in revenge by a Negro. In *Jane's Career* the black girl Jane achieves social recognition on par with her erstwhile mistress, the coloured woman, Mrs Mason. At the same time it is to be noted that Jane achieves this not by negating but by accepting the values of the white race. De Lisser with his bias towards political conservatism criticizes the coloured population but portrays the white people as dignified and worthy of respect. Even the wicked Annie Palmer achieves a certain dignity through her death, in his other novel, *The White Witch of Rosehall*. 