Chapter III: ‘Home’ and ‘Homelessness’ in Rhys’s Caribbean Novels
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“I’m a real West Indian,” I kept saying, “I’m the fifth generation on my mother’s side.”

_Voyage in the Dark_, 41

Old time white people nothing but white nigger now, and black nigger better than white nigger.

_Wide Sargasso Sea_, 21

In her _Preface to Jean Rhys_, Elaine Savory asserts that Rhys was specifically a Caribbean writer with a Caribbean identity. It is only this identity, she further adds, that can hold together all the contradictory facets for which Rhys is classified differently as a Caribbean, English, or European novelist, as a feminist or anti-feminist author, as a white or white Creole writer. Plurality of themes, a desire for home and belonging, a search for self-definition, which is manifested in her writings, is familiar in the works of Caribbean literature.¹ Morgan, like Savory, also argues:

Much ink has been spilt over issues of homelessness, nostalgia, the centrality of the natal place, the creative schizophrenia and the aesthetic
fertility of the exilic condition. Significantly, this stance which has been echoed repeatedly [in the] work of the now canonized male and female West Indian writers... was first announced in 1934 by Jean Rhys. In other words, arguably, one of our earliest, major representative West Indian foremothers, by virtue of birth, stylistic innovation and thematic focus was a member of the planter class. (par. 6)

The female protagonists of Rhys sometime remain racially ostracised by the English for being West Indian. In her works, as in those of Kamau Braithwaite, Sam Selvon and Paul Marshall racial and ethnic identities are focussed. The portrayal of England, particularly of London by Rhys, in fact, is sometimes very similar to that of the contemporary West Indian writers like V. S. Naipaul and Samuel Selvon. In *Mimic Men*, Naipaul pictures London as an unfriendly city and Selvon’s *Lonely Londoners* compares the Londoners with insects swarming with pale stricken faces. Like Derek Walcott and Michelle Cliff, she exposes her traumatic but powerful attachment to Europe which gave her literary recognition and also reinforced her 'otherness.'

Journey of Rhys’s protagonists to an experienced and embittered adulthood through a different culture is similar to that found in George Lamming or Erna Brodber. As a Caribbean writer she exposes the racial and gender discrimination as is evident in the late twentieth century Caribbean writers such as Robert Antoni and Caryl Philips. O’Callaghan equates Rhys with such West Indian writers as Napier and Allfrey as their writings are counter-discourses intended to subvert the gaze of the colonizers. He argues: "...the most striking commonality in the work of all three writers is the attachment of the creole woman for her tropical landscape, which exercises a powerful influence.... The writers share an exquisite and clearly informed depiction of the Dominican landscape in all its specificity" (par. 15; emphasis original). Bradbury
emphasises the captivating scenic beauty of the islands with its heady perfume, light and colour to be the distinguishing characteristics found in the West Indian fictions. The novels describe ‘the dramatic shot-silk sunsets which precede a darkness that comes with the suddenness of a door slamming, the brilliant hues of the hibiscus and bougainvillea, the burnished feathers of the humming-birds’ (Bradbury, *Atlas* 282) which forms an integral part of the pristine beauty of the islands. He further argues: “The dominant motif in Caribbean writing is *a sense of place*, inspired by the brilliant hues of the islands” (Bradbury, *Atlas* 280; emphasis added). Rhys, in her works, truly assimilates, both consciously and unconsciously, the life, the colour, the music, the dance and the tradition of the natives.

The subject matter of Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea* is deeply rooted in the problems which had its origin in colonialism and independence and are dealt with by many other West Indian writers. Moreover, her writings also share certain common characteristics, like emphasising on the community, culture, nation, and race found here. On the whole, she, like the other West Indian writers, explores problem of the cultural admixture that forms a part of the Caribbean identity. Bruce King, reflecting on the themes in West Indian literature, finds that they “include the search for ‘roots’ and for identity, social and historical injustices, feelings of imprisonment, the desire for order, the discovery of traditions or a folk culture, and the creation of a new society” (7).²

The island of Dominica figures in Rhys’s works. It exists as a topographical and a social space fraught with complexities and ambivalence. Although she had loved the islands, the island of Dominica unambiguously cannot be equated with her home. Her writings display an ambivalent attitude to the islands. The fact that she was an outsider to the island, culturally, cannot be ignored. Even though she considered
herself to be the part of the island, she knew that she did not belong to it. Her unfinished autobiography *Smile Please* registers her acute sense of isolation and frustration:

I stared at the tree and tried to imagine myself at a party with a lot of people, laughing and talking and happy. But it was no use. I knew in myself that it would never happen. I would never be part of anything. I would never really belong anywhere, and I knew it, and all my life would be the same, trying to belong and failing. (124)

Their different ritualistic practices and their pageants alienated Rhys. Rhys’s two novels, *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, are set against the backdrop of the Caribbean islands. The two novels mentioned above underline the dilemma of the protagonists – they passionately long to identify themselves with the exquisite beauty and cultural richness of the islands but they eventually fail to do so. Their Creole/non-black identity is certainly a barrier. Thomas upholds:

> The representation inverts central topoi of European imperialism: by comparison with the usual feminization of exotic landscapes, for her the land is “entirely male”; and whereas European male travelers often write of these places using an erotics of sexual ravishment, Rhys implies an unreciprocated romantic ravishment. (24)

While analyzing Rhys’s Caribbean fictional works we cannot disregard the strong sense of the locale. Everything that is warm, colourful and gay belongs to the island and all the cold, grey and sadness is reserved for England. Anna, the protagonist of *Voyage in the Dark*, longs to be a black inhabitant native of the islands: “I wanted to be black. I always wanted to be black. I was happy because Francine was
there…. Being black is warm and gay. Being white is cold and sad” (27). On several occasions in her fictional works, in her unfinished autobiography Smile Please and in her letters, she defends her love for the islands. In her letter to Evelyn Scott in 1956, she speaks of her possessiveness of the islands:

I’m awfully jealous of this place (as you gather no doubt) I can’t imagine anybody writing about it, daring to, without loving it – or living here twenty years or being born here. And anyway I don’t want strangers to love it except very few whom I’d choose…. However I’ve an idea that what with rain, cockroaches, and bad roads etc Dominica will protect itself from vulgar loves. (29)

Rhys also tries to achieve a sense of the place by translating the rhythm of the native speeches in her works. Braithwaite had found that at times the rhythm of jazz is predominant in the West Indian writings, specially, the literary works concerned with folk forms and folk experiences. Localisation is achieved through ‘improvisation’ of images, melody and the repetition of a theme. Rhys’s nostalgia for her childhood spent in Dominica and the exquisite beauty of the native cadence find best expression, thematically and stylistically, in Wide Sargasso Sea. It is unfurled through the speeches of West Indian obeah's woman character Christophine. This is how she rebukes Rochester in patois for ill-treating Antoinette:

What did I do! Look! Don’t provoke me more than I provoke already. Better not I tell you. You want to know what I do? I say doudou, if you have trouble you are right to come to me. And I kiss her. It’s when I kiss her she cry – not before. It’s long time she hold it back, I think. So I let her cry. That is the first thing. Let them cry – it eases the heart.
When she can’t cry no more I give her a cup of milk – it’s lucky I have some. (124)

Braithwaite observes that “improvisatory effects can also be achieved through repetition of a ‘theme’ – the jazz ‘riff’ – a kind of collective response which marks the end of one improvisation and the beginning of the next” (329). Frequent repetition of words as ‘provoke,’ ‘kiss,’ ‘cry,’ and the omission of English lexical arrangement as ‘I am already provoked’ or ‘Don’t provoke me further’ or ‘You want to know what I will do’ or ‘I will say...’ etc. give more cadence to the speeches and captures the local dialect of patois. When speaking of ‘jazz novel,’ Braithwaite observes that they deal with a specific, clearly-defined, folk-type community, it will try to express the essence of this community through its form. It will absorb its rhythm from the people of this community; and its concern will be with the community as a whole, its characters taking their place in that community, of which they are felt and seen to be an integral part. (330)

Perhaps, even the black servant Francine’s stories and “nigger-talk” with Anna, who is the Creole protagonist of Voyage in the Dark, was detested by her step-mother Hester primarily because these have an admixture of patois, rhythmic and intonational. She hates the ‘sing-song voice.’ Rhys’s novels, however, are not always concerned with the indigenous experience. Consequently, jazz rhythm is not found in all the Rhysian fictions. She makes use of it only in the native articulations. Native speeches in her fictions are also not abundant. Only clips of short statements are spoken by other non-white West Indian native black girls like Francine in Voyage in the Dark and Tia in Wide Sargasso Sea. Only in Christophine is there a firm voice of protest in a language – patois – that contests Rochester’s English, and by implication
Creole characters in her novels do not use the patois dialect but they sometime appropriate the rhythm in their own speeches.

In two of her novels *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which will be dealt in this Chapter, the Creole protagonists are caught between home and non-home. Morgan notes, "Ironically, in grappling with the loss of Caribbean landscape as homeland, Rhys once again foreshadows the broader metaphorical issue of homecomings for Caribbean people... adrift within alien and alienating experiences who mediate between lost ancestral cultures, harsh poverty-stricken island societies and hostile metropolitan host cultures" (par. 33). In their own memory the Rhysian women protagonists have a vivid recollection of their lives in their 'homeland'. They find succour in these memories and have a strong desire to return to the islands. Their childhood lies scattered in the ruins of the past. Return to the land remains only a dream for them. They are imprisoned in England and have no means to travel back. They now live in an exilic condition that Salman Rushdie speaks of:

... exiles or immigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt. But if we look back [at]... our physical alienation... [it] almost inevitably means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost; that we will... create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands... of the mind. (10)

The two subsequent sections will focus on the two novels of Rhys *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* and will discuss the absence/presence of the Creole protagonists’ personal space/ 'home' in the West Indian islands.
Although published in 1934, *Voyage in the Dark* was the first novel to be written by Rhys and the narrative focuses on the earlier years of Rhys's experience when she had stepped into England. Frickey mentions that the scraps of incidents from her life that she had jotted down earlier served as the raw materials for this fiction. The story centres on a young Creole girl, Anna Morgan, who arrives in England with her step-mother Hester after their home 'Morgan’s Rest' in West Indies is sold by the latter. She, in England, is intimidated by Walter Jeffries, her boyfriend, and is later abandoned by him. Anna is also disowned by her step-mother. She has no means of earning and is forced into prostitution. The narrative ends with the abortion of the foetus as she does not have the means to nurture a child. Her love for the West Indies and her longing to return is evident throughout the novel.

A strong sense of kinship and family relationship which makes a 'home' is absent in Anna’s life. For instance, descriptions of filial relation around the mother figure or any specific details about her are not found within the narrative. Her father, Mr Morgan, is a white settler from England and is a planter who had cocoa, nutmegs and coffee plantations in West Indies. Her mother, perhaps, is a black West Indian. Anna’s fondness of the black culture and her 'sing song' voice makes it highly probable that she is his illegitimate child by a mulatto servant. Mr Morgan’s marriage to Hester is mentioned but his relationship with Anna’s mother remains blurred. Moreover, Hester belittles Anna’s Uncle Ramsey, also known as Uncle Bo, who belongs to her mother’s family. In her opinion, he is not a ‘gentleman’ as he has ‘populated half the island’ with his illegitimate children. This might indicate that Uncle Bo and his family are natives belonging to the island. From Rhys’s unfinished
autobiography, *Smile Please*, it is known that for a woman belonging to the English settlers class marriage was a necessity but it was not so with the black community.\(^6\)

Anna is one of Rhys’s “displaced West Indian subjects alienated by... [the] compulsory inscription in the metropole” (Murdoch 256). Anna finds herself in a drifting position as Hester shrugs off her responsibility. She falls into “the surrogate family structure... [which] provides neither warmth nor welcome; indeed, her stepmother, Hester, remains almost preternaturally absent, and on the one occasion when Anna turns to her for help, she is summarily rejected, with a lecture on the consequences of ingratitude” (Murdoch 258). As she knows that return to her islands is impossible, she takes up a job of a chorus-girl to earn her living. She falls in love with Walter Jeffries who, she thinks, will deliver her out of her misery. But she is deserted by him and thus a relationship that could potentially give her a sense of security is lost. As there are no other relations or means to earn her living she grudgingly makes herself ‘marketable.’ Her situation becomes more miserable when she finds that she has conceived Walter’s child. But the responsibility of the child is denied by the father and Anna is forced to abort it and the bonding that could have formed between the mother and her child is nullified. Family space for Anna had earlier dissolved metaphorically with the death of her father. The selling of ‘Morgan’s Rest’ also brings an end to the material existence of the homely space. For Hester it was only a brick and mortar building that was disposed of; for Anna it was a ‘period house,’ a *heim* (both the terms have been discussed in Chapter II) brimming with the memories of her lost childhood. In England, Hester’s residence was a non-Hestian space – it was an ‘unhomely home’ for Anna. She is denied the domestic warmth there. Psychological affinity for which Anna longed, thus, remains unrealized. The Caribbean islands for Anna turn out to be a ‘home/nation/state’ which posits a direct
contrast to her situation in England. Anna flits through multiple experiences in England. As Andrea Lewis explains: “From the outset the novel embodies a dichotomy between the peripheral West Indian colony and the central metropolis of England that accounts for Anna’s transience... it continually shows Anna’s ambivalent position that results in her growing isolation both within English society and from her West Indian past” (qtd. in Murdoch 259).

Rhys took great care when she wrote the fiction. She wrote to Evelyn Scott while she was shaping the novel:

Something to do with time being an illusion I think. I mean that the past exists – side by side with the present, not behind it; that what was – is.

I tried to do it by making the past (the West Indies) very vivid – the present dreamlike (downward career of girl) – starting of course piano and ending fortissimo. (Letters 24)

In her fictional works Rhys consciously blends the dream with reality. She omits time frames. The protagonists passing through the ordeals of a bitter reality and traumatic experiences usually look back when the present becomes unbearable. The hysterical and psychotic protagonists of Rhys are caught in between two time frames. Meaney observes, “The hysterical is troubled mainly by reminiscences... and is troubling because she will not distinguish between reminiscence and reality, past and present, internal or external. The hysterical and sorceress breach those boundaries” (178). With the collapse of rationality and the onset of psychological fragmentation, the mental process courses through its own aberrant logic. The collecting and ordering of heterogeneous and disconnected episodes of a dreaming mind no longer follows the received normative logic. Recollection of dreams is uncertain and fragmentary, but
the eloquence of such imperfect testimony is seen as a mode of communication of an entirely different order. Incongruence and incoherence of the dreams are recognized as the way of communicating the most complex and subtle things that are never perceived consciously or supraliminally. Strindberg, in his preface to *A Dream Play*, makes the following observation which is very relevant for the Rhysian women protagonists:

> Anything may happen; all things are possible and probable. Time and space do not exist: against an unimportant background of reality, the imagination spins and weaves new patterns; a blend of memories, experiences, free ideas, absurdities, improvisations. The characters split, double, multiply: they evaporate, crystallize, scatter and converge. But a single consciousness holds domain over them all: that of the dreamer. (qtd. in Bradbury, *Modernism* 85—6)

These two planes of reality and illusion have been fused by Rhys. In fact, Rhys, in most of her writings, presents a fictionalized reality in which the protagonists grope in the darkness in a state of schizophrenia. The splitting of her self is irrevocable immediately after Anna’s arrival in England. But her mind dreams of the happiness of her past childhood memories. When the residential places where she lodges in England are the ‘unhomely homes’ or *unheims*, the lost home in the islands is the ideal place where she longs to return. She unwillingly participates in all that happens to her in the present but she is sustained by the fossilized selective memories of the past that she has access to. As she engages consciously and reflects on the incidents that happen to her in England, her mind roams about the idyllic beauty and happiness she had in ‘Morgan’s Rest.’ Discrepancy between the desire and the reality makes Anna confused. Murdoch emphasizes Anna’s inclination to take a solitary refuge in
dreams. The last dream of carnival that she has after her abortion is studied by Murdoch as “Anna’s descent into madness.” It is “a hybrid state in which the dream—and Anna herself—straddles the boundaries of the real and the imaginary, since the condensation and displacement of the dream work amplify her doubleness of making her appear simultaneously whole and fragmented” (270). Geographically speaking, she drifts around England in search of a stable place. She takes help of imagination to discover West Indies in a new light and to recover her true identity. Thus, for Anna, the dream becomes her reality and the present a nightmare: “Sometimes it was as if I were back there and as if England were a dream. At other times England was the real thing and out there was the dream, but I could never fit them together” (7 – 8). It is in such a situation that schizophrenia occurs, and the borderlines between the two temporal planes and two topographical specificities blur. While moving in such a state of dream, it is difficult to maintain one’s own sanity. When the English reality becomes overwhelming for Anna, the West Indian memories get dimmer, blocking the source of life for her. She recognises this situation when she observes: “It was as if a curtain had fallen, hiding everything I had ever known” (7). One may legitimately ask about the nature of Anna’s West Indian experience. It is obvious that the West Indian islands has an immense psychological significance for her. Here stood her home ‘Morgan’s Rest,’ her family space. It was really a site for rest and repose, a vigorously interactive space. It belonged to her. The pleasant memories of her days spent with her father and her Uncle Bo, the boatman Black Pappy and the black girl Francine flood her mind with pleasure. It gets associated with black women selling salt fishcakes with trays on their head, the streets smelling of the black natives, of the sweet perfumes of frangipani, lime juice, cinnamon, and cloves. Anna Morgan recollects her nostalgic nights in West Indies:
The verandah long and ghostly – the hammock and three chairs and a table with the telescope on it – and the crac-cracs going all the time. The moon and the darkness and the sound of the trees, and not far away the forest where nobody has ever been – virgin forest. We used to sit on the verandah with the night coming in, huge. And the way it smelt of all flowers. (71)

The above extract offers a picture of calm, serene nights spent in proximity of nature which seems to be full of mystery and worthy of observation (‘telescope’). Nature has not been tampered with and here that the forest is ‘virgin’ and the night is huge, unlike in England where civilizational interventions cannot allow one access to nature with such serenity of mind and body. The mention of ‘hammock’ and ‘three chairs’ and ‘a table’ offers a perfect setting for not only nature watching, but also a perfect liaison with the fellow watchers. It is a description of family members existing together in perfect harmony, the attractions of nature acting as an effective catalyst.

The verandah in the above extract has a strategic advantage. It is the luminal space between the interior ‘home’ space and the wide open world of nature outside, a site that connects the two without any jarring effect. In the rustling ‘sound of the trees’ and in the call of the crickets, in the smell of the forest, in the silence of the moonlight and in the shadows of the night vibrate the pulse of the calm scenic beauty of the islands. The natural landscape can be enjoyed by the people sitting on the verandah, as the furniture items like chairs and tables – all part of the household, are kept here to offer a scope for a meeting point. By implication, the situation in the verandah with the presence of the home items suggests the existence of a cosy home where the arranged chairs convey a dialogic, interactive mood. Within the home, Anna’s soul-mate is Francine who helps transforming the house into a home. She
feverently longs to meet her lost playmate Francine, *la petite fille noire* (‘the little black girl’), with the sing-song voice:

... She’ll smile... and I’ll say Francine I’ve had such an awful dream – it was only a dream she will say – and on the tray the blue cup and saucer and the silver teapot so I’d know for certain that it had started again my lovely life... I only dreamt it it never happened.... (115)

Whenever Anna thinks of happiness and comfort, she relates it to Francine and to the island of West Indies: “The thing about Francine was that when I was with her I was happy” (58). Francine, standing in contrast to Hester, is drawn as a mother figure in this fiction. She serves as a substitute to the mother Anna did not have. Through her nurturing, caring, cooking and performing of the household duties, she acted as such a substitute. She is a homemaker which Hester is not. While commenting on her role in the novel, Kloepfer observes:

Francine, like the nurse Christophene and the black servant Tia in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, operates in a matriarchal rather than a patriarchal sphere; Hester and Francine, then, juxtaposed, embody the split between the respectable “femaleness” of white male culture and the rather lush, forbidden power of island women, a split that also replicates the two conflicting faces of the missing Créole mother. (449)

Francine becomes the ‘true’ primitive mother assisting her when she ritualistically takes her first step from girlhood into young adulthood. On the other hand, Hester is “connected in the daughter’s mind not with life but with death” (Kloepfer 450). Francine and Anna’s *tête-à-tête* poses a threat to Hester, as she, being an outsider, is unable to break through the language barrier and loses her control. Kloepfer mentions
further, that “language... to Francine, becomes a maternally connoted site of pleasure, a kind of luxurious, sensuous medium which the subject is glad to release itself into” (451). It also gives Anna an “access to a primordial expression that imitates and echoes the maternal body and voice” (451). This is the only person with whom Anna can identify herself, the only place to which she can truly belong. In every difficulty that she encountered, in every occurrence of sickness, she had found Francine beside her. Though Francine is in no way her relative, Anna finds in her a true kin, a member of the family in the wider sense of the term. Through all her activities she maintains the home space. Hester, by contrast, is associated with the ‘unhomely home’ and takes part in no such rituals of homekeeping either in England or in West Indies. But Francine’s memory of being despised by the whites for being a black girl makes her sad and she turns unfriendly to Anna leading ultimately to the collapse of the cordial relationship:

Her eyes were red with the smoke and watering. Her face was quite wet. She wiped her hands with the back of her hand and looked sideways at me.... But I knew of course she disliked me too because I was white; and that I would never be able to explain to her that I hated being white. Being white and getting like Hester, and all the things you get – old and sad and everything. (62)

Realization soon dawns upon Anna that as she is a white Creole, even Francine has disowned her. The intervention of colonial psychology and ideology destroys this relationship. Racism is a more potent force than human relationship. This was a very crucial moment for Anna, as it marks the sense of loss of home for her. With Francine’s spite, the heim for Anna becomes an ‘unhomely home’ or unheim as she is
crippled by the feeling of alienation and isolation. She clearly perceives that she is an outsider to the black culture.

Familial space that is non-existent in England is realized in the Caribbean islands in other forms also. She loved her father. Both of them loved the land and they went together to the fields when their ‘young nutmeg trees flowered.’ Anna with her keen sharp eyes inspected the buds to find if the plants were male or female. Her father’s failing vision made her realize that he was aging and that he would soon be frail. This made her feel miserable: “I felt I was more alone than anybody had ever been in the world before and I kept thinking, ‘No.... No.... No....’” (63). Mr Morgan perhaps married Hester anticipating that she would take care of Anna after his death. However, Hester, her step-mother, intrudes into the family space as an element of discord. An English woman who hated the island as strongly as she hated its black culture, she persuaded her husband to dismiss Francine, with the death of the father she sells ‘Morgan’s Rest’ and coaxes Anna to accompany her to England with the promise of better prospects. The two factors – loss of Francine as a friend and the loss of the ancestral house, which was a site of her childhood memory – contribute to her desperate state. In England, she is lost reminiscing about the dilapidated condition of their old house. Difference of the ground realities in the two places – West Indies and England – make Anna feel that her childhood home exists in some ‘other world.’ She recalls: “Thinking of the walls of the Old Estate house, still standing, with moss on them. That was the garden. One ruined room for roses, one for orchids, one for tree ferns. And the honeysuckle all along the steep flight of steps that led down to the room where the overseer kept his books” (45). Flowers decorate and bloom fresh with colours and life in ‘Morgan’s Rest.’ The flowers beautify the old house through their colours, concealing in the process its ruined state. In contrast to the natural
surroundings of the Old Estate, England is lifeless and colourless. She does not live in any ‘house’ or ‘home’ in England. Here she is a white Creole who lives her life in rooms of hotels.

Members of the white community of England are snobbish enough to detest both the Creoles and the islanders. This explains Hester’s hate for Francine. She rebukes Anna:

I tried to teach you to talk like a lady and behave like a lady and not like a nigger and of course I couldn’t do it. Impossible to get you away from the servants. That awful sing-song voice you had! Exactly like a nigger you talked – and still do. Exactly like the dreadful girl Francine. (56)

In the above extract one finds a colonialist discourse of ‘otherness’ that marginalizes the indigenous and Creole people. Hester here poses as a civilizational messenger. Her worst fear is that her step-daughter would be appropriated by the black culture, resulting in her cultural and linguistic pollution. The use of the word ‘teach’ is specifically very important here – she is not teaching as a mother only, she is also teaching as a representative of the colonizer. Francine with her ‘sing-song voice’ and with no ‘ladylike’ quality is the archetype of the colonized other, one who is to be despised. Hester along with her detestation of the island also hates everything associated with it. And Anna is no exception:

Morgan’s Rest! Call it Morgan’s Folly I told him.... Sell it! I should think I did sell a place that lost money and always has done and always will do every penny of money that anybody is stupid enough to put into it and nothing but rocks and stones and heat and those awful doves cooing all the time. And never seeing a white face from one week’s end
to the other and you growing up more like a nigger every day. Enough to drive anybody mad. I should think I did sell it. (54)

What to Anna is a home is a ‘folly’ to Hester. Hester reduces the home to ‘rocks and stones’ – a mere house, or more appropriately a property that can be sold. She associates it with heat and ‘awful’ cooing of doves, the presence of the ‘niggers’ and the absence of the ‘white faces.’ Here, one’s ‘home’ is looked from the perspective of a racist, property-minded English woman. Not only does she cheat Anna of her money but also shirks off her own responsibility once she is in England. Anna, in England, has no relations who can help her to buy her passage back. The affinity and warmth that she longs for is absent in this new space. Home, in the West Indies, gets abandoned and home in England remains unrealized. Denied the comfort and security in the domestic space by her step-mother, she drifts around, living as a temporal dweller in rooms of hotels. Rooms in hotels are ‘non-places’ which has earlier been discussed in Chapter II. They stand not as rooms of ‘her’ own, resisting as they do any attempt at personalization and permanence but exist as provisional residences or makeshift dwellings associated with instability. Here she is visited by temporary lovers. Murdoch explains: “Out of place and time, Anna is caught in the interstices of home and away; accepted fully neither by the one nor the other, she transforms this desire to belong into a desire to be desired, confusing lust and passion with the passion for Englishness” (259). England and its community do not accept her. The whites scornfully abuse her, treating her as an outsider. They call her variously – as an ‘infant’, a ‘kid’, a ‘baby’, ‘curious’, a ‘silly cow’, or a ‘hottentot.’ These names suggest how she is looked upon and looked down upon by the English. The basic thrust in the naming exercises is on her ignorance and innocence as an ‘other’ in activities ranging from commonplace social interactions to sensual ones. She must be
'taught' experience by the English. Racist slurs are also evident in words like 'hottentot.' Naming, as we know, is a very potent weapon for subjugating and stereotyping the 'other' and this is evident in her case also. She is mockingly called a 'virgin', suggesting her artlessness as a sexual partner. The attribution of features like innocence and curiosity to Anna is, in fact, the expression of, to quote Collins, "racial ideologies that portray people of color as intellectually underdeveloped" (65). At the same time, however, the apparent incomprehensibility of the Creoles in the eyes of the English reveals the limitation of the English psychology in the matter of perceiving other cultures.

Several times did Anna try to make the islands of West Indies vivid and life-like to her English acquaintances:

Sometimes the earth trembles; sometimes you can feel it breathe. The colours are red, purple, blue, gold, all shades of green. The colours here are black, brown, grey, dim-green, pale blue, the white of people's face - like woodlice. (47)

Such a description only serves to reinforce the otherness of the land. For them, Anna and her islands are an incomprehensible unreality. Hester, too, as has been seen earlier, was terrified of the islands. The West conceives the island as something mysterious, primitive, hot, threatening and sometimes alluring. It is often described even in erotic terms. They define its beauty in terms of wildness. It is in this spirit that Anna is alien to her associates in England. After the fight episode in the novel between Anna and Laurie, Joe tries to console Anna. But he is unable to understand why she still has a positive opinion about Laurie who for him is nothing but a tart. He thus mutters: 'I don't get you.... You are quaint, as they say over here' (109).
‘not getting you’ marks the English understanding of Anna the ‘other.’ When Anna and Laurie are once again together, Laurie offers her own opinion about Anna:

I think you are a fool, that’s all. And I think you will never get on, because you don’t know how to take people. After all, to say you’ll come out with somebody and then to get tight and start a row about nothing at all isn’t a way to behave. And besides, you always look half-asleep and people don’t like that. (110; emphasis added)

Anna Morgan, for the whites, is not only an outsider because she is different and difficult to comprehend but also seems to be ‘sluggish,’ another feature ascribed generally to the ‘other.’ The intolerant and snobbish attitude of the English is displayed through their attitude to the minor women characters. One can, for instance, cite the half-French girl, Germaine, brought in by Vincent to the country cottage just for the sake of amusement. For the English men, she is but an object to jeer at, as Walter says to Anna: “Vincent met her in Paris. She says she’s half-French. God knows what she is; she might be anything. But she really is rather amusing” (68). This general trait of considering the non-normative in terms of otherness is evident throughout the novel.

Walter, whom Anna trusts, brings temporary happiness and security. To win her confidence, he buys stockings, pays for food and lodging but finally deserts her. Anna has no other means to support herself economically and is ultimately compelled to act as an amateur or a prostitute. The status of a prostitute confines her to a ‘heterotopic’ space as has already been discussed in Chapter II. Prostitution itself is suggestive of a state of homelessness. It suggests an indiscriminate acceptance of all and sundry but not anyone in particular. It implies shifting from one person to
another, a life of restless continuum. She had earlier dreamt of building a nest with Walter that would be a substitute for the ‘Morgan’s Rest’ in some form or other. But after his betrayal through this relationship, she gets transformed into a marketable commodity. The bedroom space which is also an important domestic space, one that cements a relationship, is reduced to a space of physical exploitation.

Germaine, the French girl mentioned earlier, on her part, hated England and the English just like Anna. She says: “I wouldn’t be an Englishwoman... for any money you could give me or anything else” (70). But while Germaine lashes back at Vincent, her lover, for mocking her, Anna, having greater ferocity in her, assaults Walter by jabbing the butt of a cigarette in his hand for the same reason. Even the non-English girl, who acts as three-fingered Kate in the popular English films, makes herself an object to be ridiculed by dressing herself up as the English wanted her to. Either way it remains the same. English people will not let the non-English individuals appropriate ‘their’ English culture as ‘home’ culture. One who imitates the English accepts the superiority of the English; one who sticks firmly to their native culture also invites a colonial gaze. Ethel, the manicure woman, criticises the actress in three-fingered Kate. The girl is a foreigner who has agreed to put on red curls of hair which is a mismatch with her real hair which is short and black coloured. Audience can clearly distinguish between her real hair and the false curls and she is jeered at by the public. During the film Three-Fingered Kate Ethel criticises the actress and says Anna:

Couldn’t they have got an English girl to do it? It was just because she had this soft, dirty way that foreign girls have.... Everybody was laughing at her behind her back.... Well, an English girl wouldn’t have
done that. An English girl would have respected herself more than to let people laugh at her like that behind her back. (94)

Said speaking about the Occident and the Orient mentions that it is the definition of the centre that must be accepted by those residing in the margins. Therefore, it is the privilege of the Occident to judge the Orient:

Only an Occidental could speak of Orientals, for example, just as it was the White Man who could designate and name the coloureds, or non-whites. Every statement made by Orientalists or White Man (who were usually interchangeable) conveyed a sense of the irreducible distance separating white from coloured, or Occidental from Oriental; moreover, behind each statement there resonated the tradition of experience, learning, and education that kept the Oriental-colored to his position of object studied by the Occidental-white, instead of vice-versa. (228; emphasis original)

Anna, like other non-whites, is subjected to, and dissected by, this Oriental gaze. A relentless Oriental gaze can indeed disintegrate the personality of one like Anna who is already in a despicable state.

Anna’s identity, as has been mentioned earlier, is firmly linked up with the topographical and social space of the islands. Her level of comfort and definition is nullified in England where Englishness rules the centre, defining everything else as the other. When she is dismissed by Ethel, the woman who starts the manicure business with her, and is asked to leave, Anna realizes that she cannot reach the land of her heart’s desire. This makes her blurt out helplessly: “I can’t swim well enough, that’s one reason” (124). She does not have the means or the capability to cross the
immeasurable water body that separates her from West Indies. But the people with their English attitude cannot understand Anna’s plight. Anna is imprisoned in England as Antoinette is, as shall be discussed later, in her attic in the *Wide Sargasso Sea*. She has the desire to return to West Indies but she is forced to lead a mechanical life in England to which she has no emotional affinity. She knows that she is a voyager who is voyaging into a dark future:

‘And drift, drift
Legions away from despair.’

It can’t be ‘legions’. ‘Oceans’, perhaps. ‘Oceans away from despair.’

(90 – 1)

She cannot stop dreaming about the sea. She feels that only escape from England and a voyage across the vast sea can end her misery. In her attempt to escape, she confuses between the dream and the nightmarish reality. Her vision of fleeing from England also reveals her schizophrenic as well as her perplexed state of mind:

I dreamt that I was on a ship. From the deck you could see small islands – dolls of islands – and the ship was sailing in a dolls’ sea, transparent as glass.

Somebody said in my ear. ‘That’s your island that you talk such a lot about.’

And the ship was sailing very close to an island, which was home except that the trees were all wrong. These were English trees, their leaves trailing in the water. I tried to catch hold of a branch and step ashore, but the deck of the ship expanded. (140)
Her mind is split between the near-achievability of her destination – the Caribbean islands. The dream reveals the slips in her personality, its disintegration, the widening gap between what she desires and what she gets. Saito observes: “She cannot go either way and is trapped in the sea. It seems that this dream scene reveals that Anna is not allowed to identify Dominica as her home, even though she loves it and she does not belong to England either” (6). Dream emerges as a significant symbol which will be detailed in Chapter V. After her abortion, she, struggling in her pain, sets off for her homeland through imagination. She shifts to the memory of the colourful carnival that she had seen during her childhood in West Indies. She here mnemonically realizes her wish to dance with the natives which was earlier considered vulgar by her community there:

\[
I \text{ was watching them from between the slats of jalousies dancing along}
\]
\[
dressed in red and blue and yellow the women with their dark necks
\]
\[
and arms covered with white powder – dancing along to concertina-music dressed in all colours of the rainbow and the sky so blue....
\]
\[
I'm awfully giddy – but we went on dancing forwards and
\]
\[
backwards backwards and forwards whirling round and round. (157; emphasis original)
\]

Although Rhys’s own perception of the islands is very ambivalent, her representation of the protagonists’ longing for the place and their desire for the Caribbean identity is very strong. They desire to be one with the blacks. The novel begins with the image of birth in a new land: “It was as if a curtain had fallen, hiding everything I had known. It was almost like being born again” (7). And the novel ends with the abortion of the foetus. It is a reminder of the loss of a potential relationship.
The warmth, and liveliness, and the vibrant colours of the black community, as noted earlier, has a strong attraction for Anna. She equates her life with that of a player who acts in different parts of a play. The first part is played in West Indies; the second in England; the climax is reached with the budding of relationship with Walter Jeffries. Second part of the play includes her battle for survival in the cold country and her desertion by Hester and Walter. Her conceiving and abortion brings the final end to her voyage but not to her struggle for a fresh start. *Voyage in the Dark* ends with a promise for Anna as the doctor assures: “Ready to start all over again in no time…” (159). The ending of the novel, however, remains ambiguous. Her new beginning comes with no promise. It is a start in the same cold, grey country with the memory of the loss of the foetus and of her islands.

II

In *Voyage in the Dark* Anna Morgan’s sense of home, as has been seen in Section I, is identified with her father and the black girl Francine. It is also topographically idealized in the islands of West Indies. Similar treatment is found in *Wide Sargasso Sea* where the home space is identified with Christophine, the black ‘mammy’ and topographically West Indies remains a point of reference. The novel is a narrative of Antoinette who also spends her life exactly in the same countries—the Caribbean islands where she is born and brought up, and England where she migrates with her husband. With the burning of the Coulibri Estate owned by her father and with his death, Antoinette moves to a smaller place and here she lives with her mother who develops insanity immediately after her sick son dies. She is sent to a convent for
her care and education as the infirm mother can neither nurture nor care for her
daughter. The convent is more a cloistered space than *heim* where she and her mother
are rebuked and called a “zombi”\(^\text{10}\) by her co-mates. Her step-father arranges her
marriage with a gentleman from England. The rest of the story is a complex narrative
of her life with him both in West Indies and England.

*Wide Sargasso Sea* is a rewriting of Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847). Rhys felt that justice was not done to the Creole woman in Brontë’s book. Therefore she took up the challenge of rewriting the novel filling up the gaps and silences. In a letter to Selma, Rhys writes:

> I’ve read and re-read “Jane Eyre” of course, and I am sure that the character must be “built up”…. The Creole in Charlotte Brontë’s novel is a lay figure – repulsive which does not matter, and not once alive which does. She’s necessary to the plot, but always she shrieks, howls, laughs horribly, attacks all and sundry – *off stage*. For me... she must be right *on stage*. She must be at least plausible with a past, the *reason* why Mr Rochester treats her so abominably and feels justified, the *reason* why he thinks she is mad and why of course she goes mad, even the *reason* why she tries to set everything on fire, and eventually succeeds.” (156, *emphasis original*)

Rhys had felt a strange sympathy for the silenced Creole wife of Mr Rochester. She had felt her to be a ‘poor ghost’ (qtd. in Frickey 178) whose concern should be voiced. And so in the re-writing of the same story, Rochester becomes a shadowy character in Rhys’s novel. As Lahiri posits: “This fact might encourage readers to interpret his existence in the text as every(English)man, one in whom Englishness is
quintessentially represented and who is wedded by history to the Creole past of British imperialism in West Indies” (par. 1). Antoinette’s story is foregrounded here as is West Indies with all its colours and sounds, all its beauties and mysteries. The effects of imperialism both on the Blacks and on the White Creoles are made prominent. Englishness which was celebrated in *Jane Eyre* is severely critiqued here. Rhys herself detested England and Englishness much as Antoinette does. She, like Anna in *Voyage in the Dark* and Antoinette in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, longs to become a black woman in the island in the midst of its black natives: “… I prayed so ardently to be black, and would run to the looking-glass in the morning to see if the miracle had happened…. Dear God, let me be black” (Rhys, *Smile Please* 42). Strongly fascinated by the Black culture, she had felt that the islanders were more alive and that they very much formed an indispensable part of the island surroundings. She shared a mixed feeling for the black people who surrounded her.11

The non-acceptance of the Creoles by the black people is explored in the love-hate relation between both Anna and Francine in *Voyage in the Dark* and between Antoinette and Tia in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Antoinette wants to be like Tia, eating from the calabash, or swimming in the pond but Tia detests her not on moral grounds but because of the political hatred that existed between the natives and the Creoles. Tia steals her new dress, takes her coins, calls her white cockroach, and finally Antoinette is rejected when she runs towards Tia and her family so that she can continue staying with them in Coulibri:

Then, not so far off, I saw Tia and her mother and I ran to her, for she was all that was left of my life as it had been. We had eaten the same food, slept side by side, bathed in the same river. As I ran, I thought I will live with Tia and I will be like her. Not to leave Coulibri. Not to
go. Not. 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. (38)

Carr interpreted the image in terms of the policy of imperialism: "... like the face in the looking-glass the image she sees is herself, yet not quite herself; the politics of imperialism have both made them alike and separated them forever" (60). Tia and Antoinette, both are the victims of political hatred. They are close friends but the violence practised by the Blacks also affects the tender mind of Tia. She imitates the hostility of her community elders when she throws a stone at Antoinette. But genuine feelings for Antoinette makes her weep to see her friend hurt just as the attachment to Tia makes Antoinette run to her. True bond between a native and a white Creole can never materialise because of the intervention of the history of imperialism, the sociology of racism and their impact on the psychology of the individuals on both sides of the divide. Strong bond of love and affection that is denied to Antoinette exists between Tia and her mother.

Antoinette does not have any scope for consolation from her familial space. Family, as has been mentioned in Chapter II, is an integral element that transforms a house into a home. But this remains unrealized for Antoinette. Since childhood she longs for care and warmth from her mother. But she is denied this and the desire in her never dies: "I made excuses to be near her when she brushed her hair, a soft black cloak to cover me, hide me, keep me safe" (19). Her mother remains more preoccupied with her brother’s ailment and with the concern for the Coulibri Estate rather than with her. She remarries and Mr Mason’s intrusion into the family creates
further turmoil and destruction. Male members pose threats to the domestic peace in some way or other. Antoinette’s own father was a drunk and a womanizer, her ailing brother was a constant source of anxiety, her stepfather is arrogant enough to enrage the natives with his proposal of importing slaves even after Emancipation. Finally, Rochester whom Antoinette marries also ends up as an oppressor. The males endanger the domestic peace rather than promoting it, doing more harm than protecting. When Antoinette still relies on Rochester for love and acceptance, quite contrastingly, Christophine who has a stronger personality defies her own husband, asserts her own self by isolating herself from him and her sons. Antoinette seeks homeliness in her association with the Black natives who surrounded her. Their blue-black maid, Christophine, had nursed and taken care of her. Christophine, who was her mother’s wedding present, ultimately become a substitute for the mother figure. Kubitschek, emphasizing the relation between Christophine and Antoinette, comments: “Antoinette receives emotional sustenance only from Christophine, originally a slave who was a wedding present to Annette and is... the only functioning adult in the household” (23). Antoinette’s longing for a mother figure makes her love Christophine all the more. With her own mother turning insane after her brother’s death, she is sent to a convent. Later the role of Christophine becomes more important after Antoinette is married to Rochester. She, from the beginning, has seen through Rochester’s plan of marrying Antoinette. She has the courage to say it directly to Rochester’s face: “You think you fool me? You want her money and you don’t want her. It is in your mind to pretend she is mad. I know it. The doctor say what you tell them to say” (132). She implies that Rochester constructs Antoinette’s madness as part of his plan to exploit the innocent girl and that the medical practitioner, who in all probability was white, was roped in to serve his own purpose. Antoinette, she feels, is
a victim to a well-planned scheme in which the girl’s step-father and Rochester are involved. Such networks of power grids often exploited girls in the Caribbean islands. The State was also a participant in the scheme because the legislations actually helped the process. Girls in the West Indies were denied the right to own property and with their marriage, the husband became the legal heir of the share of property that belonged to them. In this novel, Rhys highlights the dangers of this practice. The Property Act made young girls an easy prey to exploitations by the European men. Rhys herself refers to this Act in a letter to Wyndham: “The West Indies was (were?) rich in those days for those days and there was no “married woman property Act”. The girls... would soon once in kind England be Address Unknown” (271; emphasis original).

For Rochester, Christophine is an obeah woman and a practitioner of black magic. He hates her as she always comes forward to help Antoinette whenever she senses that she is in danger. He is shrewd enough to understand that Christophine protects Antoinette and is her strength and he strives to break Christophine’s bond with her. Both Antoinette, defined as mad and hysterical, and Christophine considered a sorceress, become deviant figures and thereby are excluded from the ‘normal’ society. While speaking of women in general and of ‘mad’ woman in particular, Gilbert states:

As culture has constructed her, ‘woman’ is ‘the dark continent’ to which woman must return.

But returning, a sorceress and a hysterical – that is a displaced person – every woman must inevitably find that she has no home, nowhere.... (qtd. in Meaney 9; emphasis original)
Inclusion into the category of ‘sane’ women’ depends on one’s acceptance of the social norms. For the Rhysian female characters, social space becomes a ‘heterotopic’ space, more a place of exploitation than one of belonging. Their defiance earns for them an otherness – a Creole, a hysteric, a sorceress, a prostitute, an insane. In her article ‘Voyage in the Dark: Hers and Ours,” Andrea Dworkin comments:

Rhys creates women who are perceived by men as pieces, bought on the market, but the woman herself says what life is like: describes the man and the transaction and her feelings before and during and after, her existence within the framework of his existence and simultaneously her existence outside the sphere of his imagination altogether: the woman who is the piece... and who at the same time sees, feels, knows, who has bitter wit and sharp irony, who is caustic, who lives in what men dignify for themselves as an existential despair, who must survive in a world men make smaller than her intelligence.” (1; emphasis added)

Dworkin projects here the limited nature of man’s world and of his imagination. She analyses how he artificially constructs the woman and tries to measure her up within the confines of that ‘small’ framework. But the woman’s imagination and intelligence are bigger than that and, consequently, she ‘describes’ her own existential world with ‘bitter wit’ and ‘sharp irony.’ Antoinette’s own response to the gendered world she finds around her, and Rhys’s representation of this, are testimonies of the fact.

Like the inscrutable Antoinette, the island too with all its mysterious force and beauty always remains incomprehensible to Rochester. Antoinette, as Rhys wrote in a letter, becomes ‘a symbol of the elusive place’ (281). This association of the character with the landscape is interesting because the projection of the ‘womanhood’ on the
land is also indicative of the white man's fear of the mysterious woman/land and
simultaneously his desire for the 'inconceivable' and the exotic (woman/land). This
aspect has also been noted by Kineke. She states: “The patriarchal equation of woman
and land, and the intense male scrutiny to which the virginal status of each is
subjected... signals Rhys’s awareness of the projection of white male fear and desire
onto both landscape and woman” (295). Rochester can never love the islands and
considers himself to be a perpetual outsider: “I was tired of these people. I disliked
their laughter and their tears, their flattery and envy, conceit and deceit. And I hated
the place” (141). But Antoinette has a strong liking for the place which is why she
herself is like the inscrutable island. She makes it clear that she wants to stay in her
place which is her home: “I wish to stay here in the dark... where I belong” (112).
The garden of Coulibri Estate in the Caribbean islands, on the contrary, is deliberately
based on the Edenic model, reminding us of Lucifer:

Our garden was large and beautiful as that garden in the Bible – the tree
of life grew here. But it had gone wild. The paths were overgrown and
the smell of dead flowers mixed with the fresh living smell. Underneath
the tree ferns, tall as forest tree ferns, the light was green. Orchids
flourished out of reach or for some reason not to be touched. One was
snaky looking, another like an octopus with thin long brown tentacles
bare of leaves hanging from a twisted root. (16 – 7; emphasis added)

The Caribbean islands are imagined as Edenic in nature because of its pristine beauty,
innocence of the natives and their happiness within the community life. But inherent
in Rhys’s description is a suggestion of outside interference that might bring about the
fall. The beautiful but problematic nature of the description is outlined by the
reference to the ‘wild,’ ‘dead flowers,’ ‘snaky,’ ‘octopus,’ and ‘tentacles.’ So unless and until the negative elements are uprooted which is possible perhaps only in imagination, it cannot be re-established as an ideal place. The racial hatred within a nation and colonial intervention worsen the situation. The ‘wildness’ of the islands shows the resistance of the islands to be ‘pruned’ or ‘cultivated’ by any outsider.

The island of Jamaica is indeed her home to which she has a sense of belonging. She has been happy to stay there until Rochester steps in and generates bitter experiences for her. She has loved him strongly but his personal betrayal and his politics of imposition of an identity on her makes her rue Rochester. It is because of this that the land she holds dear to her heart becomes a place of detestation. She observes:

But I loved this place and you have made it into a place I hate. I used to think that if everything else went out of my life I would still have this, and now you have spoilt it. It’s just somewhere else where I have been unhappy, and all the other things are nothing to what has happened here. I hate it now like I hate you and before I die I will show you how much I hate you. (121)

Rochester brought about a split between her and the land. He is even an active agent who instils a sense of hate and disgust. His existence in her land and her own association with him pollutes her attitude to the Caribbean islands. She, on her part, feels alienated from the land, because of the intervention of the ‘outsider’ who understands neither her nor the land she represents. Instead of considering her as a normal human being and a companion, Rochester is obsessed with her incomprehensibility. For him, she is no more than a commodity, ‘bought in the
market,' one who should be conquered and ruled. She is reduced to an 'object.' As Catherine Mackinnon notes, "objectification is alienation" (541). Her desire to belong to the a 'home space' is thus thwarted. Rochester’s discourse of the 'foreignness'/'otherness' of the land and its people poses a threat to Antoinette’s psychological and topographical affiliation to the islands that defines her.

Rochester’s attempt to re-name Antoinette is another manifestation of alienating her from her ‘home’ and to ‘rescue’ her from the mysterious and ‘strange’ identity linked up inescapably with the landscape and its culture. Antoinette refuses to accept the new identity manifested in the proposed first name, and retorts: “Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name. I know, that’s obeah too” (121). She invests the concept of ‘obeah’ with new meanings applying it to Rochester who detests ‘obeah’ and, at the same time, is afraid of it as black art. Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin observe that naming is another imperial mission to appropriate and confirm the colonizer’s domination:

... ‘naming’ becomes a primary colonizing process because it appropriates, defines, captures the place in language. And yet the process of naming opens wider the very epistemological gap which it is designed to fill, for the ‘dynamic mystery of language’ as Wilson Harris puts it, becomes a groping step into the reality of place, not simply reflecting or representing it, but in some mysterious sense intimately involved in the process of its creation, of its ‘coming into being.’ (391 – 92)

Antoinette spells out how her own identity evaporates when she is called by her English name ‘Bertha’: “Names matter, like when he wouldn’t call me Antoinette,
and I saw Antoinette drifting out of the window with her scents, pretty clothes and her looking-glass” (147). Louis James associates this re-naming with Rochester’s cruelty. He observes, “Rochester kills Antoinette by destroying both her identity of place and her identity of soul” (qtd. in Nunez-Hurrell 290). He takes her to England where she could be relegated to the margins and where he can take full command. She is even torn away from the island getting geographically dislocated, forced into the Englishness of a country that meant nothing to her. Jamaica is Rochester’s non-home as England is for Antoinette. Rochester’s Thornfield Hall is symbolic of oppression, cruelty and dominance. The new name is in conformity with the English coldness. Antoinette would be subjected to the coldness and bitterness once she is put into Rochester’s ‘home’ space at the Thornfield Hall.

Susan Lydon analyses that the pattern of domesticity found in Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, *Villette*, and Rhys’s *Sargasso Sea* is similar. In these novels, she observes, women are not provided the safety of home: “Patriarchal homes in these novels are largely either non-existent or presented as dangerous places that threaten the female protagonists who must choose either to suffer abuse or to leave home, abandoning their roles as angels of the hearth” (23). Both England in general and Thornfield Hall in particular, are such ‘dangerous places’ for Antoinette. She is considered a mad woman there and imprisoned in an attic in Rochester’s castle. She has lost the count of the days or the beauty of her looks. Her identity itself has been completely effaced: “There is no looking-glass here and I don’t know what I am like now. What am I doing in this place and who am I?” (147). She is denied the means of self-recognition which is intimately connected with one’s own identity. When Antoinette is sent to Mount Calvary Convent by her Aunt Cora after the burning of Coulibri Estate, the nuns there too are denied a mirror which was considered to be a superfluous item.
They must renounce materiality. However, Antoinette recalls that the looking-glass was so essential that the nuns disobeyed the strict convent rules. They secretly arranged for looking at their reflections in a cask of water. This convent sans looking-glass was not her ‘home’ because the concept of self-recognition as an indispensible part of identity formation cannot be found there. It was a temporary ‘refuge, a place of sunshine and of death’ (47) where she, like the nuns, was ‘safe’ and sheltered but was not happy. Thus, within the convent space the ‘home’ or ‘heim’ and the ‘unhomely home’ or ‘unheim’ overlap. C. Calhon observes:

Identity is linked to interdependent problems of self-recognition, and the recognition by others…. Recognition has undoubtedly become the most problematic component of identity because of the social changes of modernity…. Problems concerning recognition or non-recognition are totally connected with the problems of self-recognition. (qtd. in Renault 121)

By foregrounding the absence of the means of self-recognition, Rhys points out that patriarchal structure would not allow women to have a look at themselves, to have a self-assessment or even self-appreciation. In such a context Antoinette was simply faced with a crisis of identity.

Martin and Mohanty define identity as the relation of a subject to his or her home. Rosemary too emphasizes it when she states that “identity is shaped by the individual’s experience of home” (26). Antoinette’s identity is fractured as she could not relate herself to any object or persons in England. The state she lives in – a state between sanity and insanity – offers a penetrating insight into the truth of her own life:
...this cardboard world where everything is coloured brown or dark red or yellow that has no light in it. As I walk along the passages I wish I could see what is behind the cardboard. They tell me I am in England but I don't believe them. We lost our way to England. When? Where? I don't remember, but we lost it…. When I woke up I was in a different sea. (148)

The ideal England of her dream remains unfulfilled as she wakes up to her state of imprisonment in her husband’s ‘home.’ While walking through her life’s passages, Antoinette also longs to communicate with her nostalgic past. She walks down memory lanes. It leads her to communicate with objects and persons fossilized in time. The touch, smell and the softness of her red dress in the attic evokes her lost past, her sweet childhood years and those related to her, and also the happy hours spent with her lover Sandi, the Creole boy. The memory of the sweet home of the past makes her aware of the bitter ‘home’ of the present. Thus, home, for Antoinette, becomes, in the present context, ‘menacing places that serve as catalysts for female agency’ (Lydon 23). She remembers everything relating to her past. Her journey towards ‘insanity’ becomes a woman’s search for sanity, and the passage along her life, indeed, becomes a passage to escape the dissolution of the self.

For Antoinette home cannot be topographically arrived at. She revolts against the English home of Rochester which she associates with dark experiences and confinement. Domestic space here is based not on love but on subjugation. She knows that the Sargasso Sea, which topographically is a small water body surrounding West Indies, has broadened psychologically to mean the space that creates a barrier between the protagonist and the land of her desire. From her present location in England, she looks forward to the Caribbean islands she has left behind. She seeks not
the actual sea route which becomes impossible to follow. She rather takes a more evocative route – the memory fossilized in her red dress which takes her back to her desired home. Since Rochester’s castle becomes a symbol of oppression, she sets it on fire, and in the bright redness of the lively flame, all the forgotten colours of the past come back. Here, she sees the beautiful dancing images of the fragrant flowers of Jamaica blooming with all its colours – the fragrant orchids, stephanotis and jasmine and also of Christophine, her Aunt Cora, and of her childhood friend Tia calling her, sitting in front of the Coulibri pool. It is a transformed scene – Tia appears not with hatred but with love:

I don’t know how long I sat. Then I turned around and saw the sky. It was red and all my life was in it. I saw the grandfather clock and Aunt Cora’s patchwork, all colours, I saw the orchids, and the stephanotis and the jasmine and the tree of life in flames…. I heard the parrot call as he did when he saw a stranger, *Qui est là? Qui est là?* and the man who hated me was calling too, Bertha! Bertha! (155)

The images contained in the above extract are very significant because they specify Antoinette’s mindset right at the moment. Through the collage of images revived from the past – of women like Aunt Cora, of birds, and flowers– she integrates these images of the Caribbean islands into a paradisiacal home. Although, the colour red has a devastating connotation for the Thornfield Hall and its owner, it has a positive implication for Antoinette. She sees her entire life is compressed in the redness of her dress and the flames in which all the flora and fauna and even the individuals, now purged of the racial hate, form an integral design. The patchwork is an artistic creation in which women of the land revel and Aunt Cora’s patchwork, thus, carries the
connotation of the cultural landscape of the place. Similarly, the parrot Coco is part and parcel of the memory of her land and its cry ‘Qui est là? Qui est là?’ (‘Who is it? Who is it?’) poses questions regarding whether one is an integral part of the land and its culture or a total stranger altogether. Rochester is truly a stranger. He is also ‘intent upon destroying Antoinette’s identity’ which is unmistakably linked up with the land. She must, therefore, destroy all attempts to perpetrate the domination, and must emancipate herself. The fire, therefore, serves as a double edged weapon here – one that destroys (Rochester and the Thornfield Hall) and one that recalls all the bright memories of the past.

The memory of Aunt Cora, Tia and the exotic Jamaican surroundings gives Antoinette a sense of belonging that Rochester’s Thornfield Hall cannot offer. Her dream and her act of leaping into the fire have been interpreted in different ways. Louis James sees this as positive. He comments, “In England, she preserves her passion and a world of sensation and images that reflect her knowledge of reality. At the end, she asserts the values of heat and light against darkness” (qtd. in Nunez-Hurrell 292). Look Lai finds in them Rhys’s Creole protagonist’s oneness with the native people. Nunez-Hurrell asserts that Antoinette is rejected by Rochester for her attachment to the island, its culture and the natives, and she ‘chooses them even though her own world does not accept her oneness with them. She does so... because, in Tia’s beckoning, she sees cause for hope for their compassion and forgiveness” (292). The fire at Coulibri had earlier threatened the very concept of home for the white Creoles but, by contrast, the fire in Thornfield Hall ensures a warmth and a sense of protection she had lost:

Suddenly I was in Aunt Cora’s room. I saw the sunlight coming through the window, the tree outside and the shadows of the leaves on
the floor, but I saw the wax candles too and I hated them. So I knocked them all down.... one caught the thin curtains that were behind the red ones. I laughed when I saw the lovely colours spreading so fast.... I went into the hall again.... It was then I saw her – the ghost. The woman with streaming hair. She was surrounded by a gilt frame but I knew her. I dropped the candle... and it caught the end of a tablecloth and I saw flames shoot up. As I ran or perhaps floated or flew I called help me Christophine help me and looking behind me I saw I have been helped. There was a wall of fire protecting me.... (154)

In the gilt frame she sees the projection of her English half Bertha whom she abhors. The anxiety to flee from her English identity is quite evident here, and in the images of Aunt Cora and Christophine she takes refuge. She rejects her ‘English’ identity and the Englishness of the Thornfield Hall and asserts her Jamaican self. Antoinette’s home is here like the ‘period house’ which has been discussed in the preceding chapter. Her childhood in Coulibri Estate, though non-existent, is now re-lived by her through the aid of memory.

The ending of the novel is positive. She jumps into the fire. The more the flames leap up and spread , the more beautiful patterns of her childhood memories are visualized. With the burning of Rochester’s castle her identity and the memory of her island ‘home’ become more prominent. Through her death she reunites with the people who were a part of her happy childhood; it is a transformation from the painful experience of the present life to a painless state of imaginary communion with the past. The ‘mad’ woman confined to the attic space gets over her temporary insanity and regains her Caribbean affiliation. The recovery of her old pyscospace offers her a kind of sanity. Memory becomes her home and a refuge.
Antoinette seeks “refuge outside a traditional home” (Lydon 23). It has been seen that her attempt to find the warmth of the hearth failed thrice – firstly, she encounters the coldness of her mother, saw the burning of Coulibri and faced rejection by Tia and her mother; secondly, she realized that she is the unloved wife of Rochester; and finally her confinement in the attic in the Thornfield Hall ushers in her ultimate sense of homelessness. Consequently, she feels unhomely both in Jamaica and in England. Only the memory of the pleasant experiences serves as a kind of surrogate home. The mnemonic journey to the past in fact defines her identity. She finds succour in her private images. The conflicts of her social world are resolved in a distinctly individual way. The final self-definition, as it emerges, can perhaps be possible only in relation to the happy memories of the idyllic past.

III

The two women protagonists discussed in this chapter – Anna Morgan and Antoinette – undergo sufferings due to geographical and cultural dislocations. They were born and brought up in the Caribbean islands but later they shift to England. Anna’s English step-mother, Hester Morgan, creates the impression that Anna will have better prospects in England, while Antoinette is forcibly shifted there by her husband Rochester. Both the protagonists are disillusioned because England in reality is not the place as they had imagined it to be. Perhaps, Jean Rhys projected her own personal experience on to her protagonists. Prior to her first visit to England, Rhys had a positive picture of the place. In her incomplete autobiography *Smile Please*, she writes:
I pictured it in the winter, a country covered with snow and ice but also with millions upon millions of fires. Books... talked... very rarely of cold. So I concluded that either the English didn’t feel the cold... or that everybody had a fire. (63)

In a letter to Diana Athill, however, she writes: “You see – I have never liked England or most English people much – or let’s say I am terrified of them. They are a bit terrifying don’t you think?” (280). She had, humorously, coined the term ‘unterglubstamilch’ to describe the ‘very naïve... very spiteful’ Anglo Saxons. Similarly, her protagonists also find the place cold and unwelcoming. They feel themselves exiled as they are “wrenched from home, family, everything pleasant and familiar, and forced into a world that is cold and hostile...” (Simpson 1). Moreover, the English people were snobbish and unkind. In her novels Rhys paints the country quite negatively as she had found it in her real life. Her narratives focus more on the ‘unhomely home’ and ‘nonhome’ rather than on real home. Her protagonists are, more properly speaking, homeless – ‘people without place’ (Cresswell 109). Home, for them, exists more in its absence. It cannot be found in their family environment, nor in the troubled socio-cultural reality of the colonial; neither in the post-colonial situation, or in any man-woman relationship.

Through a selective memory they re-live it in the form of Adorno’s ‘period house.’ In Rhys, in fact, home exists in the Caribbean islands as a ‘conceived space’ (mappable topographical space); within the black community and culture as the ‘perceived space’ (socio-cultural space). But, for her protagonists, the perceived and the conceived spaces are either temporary or absent. These spaces are realised only through a ‘lived space’ (space of imagination), in Lefebvre’s sense of the term, eventually, in their mindscape.\(^\text{12}\)
The titles of both the Rhysian novels are impregnated with immense symbolic connotations. The darkness that Rhys speaks of in *Voyage in the Dark* can be equated with the concept of the primordial darkness that exists before the creation itself takes place. This darkness is also akin to the darkness of the womb where the fetus, in the state of formation, lies secured. The darkness thus can be considered as a positive symbol suggesting a promise of a new beginning. It is evident that the future of the protagonists of the two novels in England itself is dark, but, symbolically, darkness can also be a location of nothingness from where a renewed beginning can be possible. Anna’s journey begins in the darkness across the water in search of light. Anna, longing for a change, muses, “If it could go back and be just as it was before it happened and then happen differently…. Soon he will come in again and kiss me, but differently. He will be different and so I’ll be different. It’ll be different. I thought, ‘It’ll be different, different. It must be different’ (20 - 1). The emphasis on the word ‘different’ but ‘differently’ creates a sense of urgency to find the old place changed and more receptive to her. Through her transcendental imagination she desires to transform a ‘nonhome’ to a ‘home.’ In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, too, Antoinette’s desire is not to return to the Jamaican islands as it exists but to an ideal Jamaica, a space where she will be accepted and with which she can identify herself. It is an idyllic home that the protagonists have in their mind. They resort to the selective memories of the happy past. The traditional home that they have in reality is nonhome. Their longing is for the pre-origininary home, a home that is existent in the region of ideas and that of the ideal – ‘…that which always is and has no becoming; and… that which is always becoming and never is’ (Plato 8).
The next chapter will focus on the European novels, and trace the journey of the protagonists in quest of their home. This will be discussed more elaborately in the next chapter.

Notes

1. Elaine Savory observes about Rhys:

   Like Caribbean culture, her writing is both metropolitan and anti-metropolitan, both colonial and anti-colonial, both racist and anti-racist, both conventional and subversive... her textuality demonstrates a refusal to be absolutely coherent and therefore an acceptance of unresolved ambiguity, ambiguity which permits creative innovation and which is in effect politically anarchist, in the sense of resisting centralized and authoritative readings of experience. (x)

The perils and traumas of cultural dislocation and the longing for the home culture, as is evident in Rhys, can also be found in the writings of many West Indian writers as Samuel Selvon, George Lamming, Derek Walcott, V. S. Naipaul and Edward Braithwaite. Selvon’s masterpiece *A Brighter Sun* (1952), for instance, focuses on the consciousness of the Black community residing as the marginalized in relation to the Whites. His book *The Lonely Londoners* (1956) concentrates on the lonely West Indian exiles residing in the hem of England. Lamming’s *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953) reveals the colonial setting; *Season of Adventure*, the achievement of independence; and the post-independence uprising in *Water With Berries*. Although Walcott’s writings display and dramatise the
division within him, his works aim at reconciliation, acceptance and compassion. In his poems “Ruins of a Great House” and “A Far Cry from Africa,” Walcott sometimes identify with both sides, in the context of the relationship between black people and the white, colonizers and the colonized. Naipaul’s is the voice of an exile. He knew that he belongs neither to the colony of Trinidad, nor to India or England. His writings deal with the problems of the newly independent nations. His works like The Mystic Masseur (1957), Miguel Street (1959), A House for Mr Biswas (1961), The Mimic Men (1967), and Guerrillas (1975) deal with the problems faced by the people inhabiting the post-colonial world. Braithwaite’s The Arrivants explores the history of the New World as well as the problems of the literary imagination. His poems express the “black consciousness” of the sixties and the seventies through sophisticated literary techniques.

2. Rhys’s works reveal most of the thematic concerns spoken of by Bruce King. However, Braithwaite did not acclaim Rhys as a West Indian novelist. When Wide Sargasso Sea was categorized as Caribbean he contended that “white creoles cannot ‘meaningfully identify or be identified, with the spiritual world’ of the contemporary West Indies.... That spiritual world is essentially the culture of the “black ex-African majority”” (qtd. in Hulme 74). Contrary to Braithwaite, Wilson Harris thought the colour of the author is irrelevant and Wide Sargasso Sea, according to him, is West Indian because regional myths have been unconsciously woven into the fabric of the novel.

3. Rhys’s feeling of dislocation and non-belonging is profoundly highlighted through Antoinette’s vacillation in Wide Sargasso Sea. Antoinette feels secure
within the confines of Jamaica. She thinks, “I am safe.... There is the tree of life in the garden and the wall green with moss. The barrier of the cliffs and the high mountains. And the barrier of the sea. I am safe. I am safe from strangers” (23). Rhys also felt that the wild crags that surrounded the islands protected the island from foreign intruders. But though Antoinette felt protected in Jamaica, like Rhys, her alienation is aggravated by the rejection of the natives. She speaks of her own ambivalent situation:

It was a song about a white cockroach. That’s me. That’s what they call of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave trades. And I’ve heard English women call us white niggers. So between you I often wonder who am I and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all. (85)

4. Obeah is a term which depicts the religious, magical and supernatural practises derived from the African sources and performed in the English speaking community of the Caribbean. Between seventeenth and twentieth century, the term was used by the European colonizers to refer to any African based supernatural practice. This included specific religious systems such as myalism or kumina in Jamaica, or the shango in Trinidad. Many African-Caribbeans use the term ‘obeah’ to signify these rituals. However, obeah is more popularly used for the practices of charms, spells or the application of medicinal herbs to obtain good health, bring monetary prosperity or a successful marriage or love. It is also used for mischief making like inflicting illness, ruining prosperity or bringing misfortune to another. Obeah is Christophine’s spiritual power through which she enjoys supremacy over Rochester and his culture. It, at the same time, reveals her
marginality and protects her. The practices of African religious rites were prohibited by the colonizers. Mardorossian notes that, “It is traditionally represented as a source of resistance that assisted in slave rebellions and inspired fear and awe among believers” (1078). Braithwaite, however, observes that although it was “associated in the [white] Jamaican European mind with superstition, witchcraft, and poison... [whereas] in African Caribbean folk practice, where religion had not been externalized and institutionalized as in Europe, the obeah-man [sic] was doctor, philosopher, and priest” (qtd. in Mardorossian 1079).

5. Morgan shows the desire for home in the Caribbean consciousness through Braithwaite’s “Postlude/Home” the poet questioning the locational crisis of a black individual in Western metropolitan cities such as Paris, Brixton, Kingston and Rome. A similar situation finds expression in a song by Keith Anderson:

I’ve got to go back home
It must be somewhere else
Or I would kill myself
‘Coz I can’t get no clothes to wear
Can’t get no food to eat
Can’t get a job to get bread
That’s why I got to go back home...
There is no gladness, nothing but sadness
Nothing like a future here...
That’s why I got to go back home

Even if I have to run... (Bradbury 281)
The poet Derek Walcott also expresses the exilic condition of the homeless Caribbean as "homecomings without home."

6. The black women were granted more freedom by their community. Marriage which was a necessity for the women of the English settlers was not forced upon the black women. Rhys critically observes in *Smile Please*:

> In those days a girl was supposed to marry, it was your mission of life, you were a failure if you didn’t. It was a terrible thing to be an old maid....old maids who seemed perfectly happy, indeed happier and livelier than the married women, didn’t affect the question at all....

> Black girls on the contrary seemed to be perfectly free. Children swarmed but negro marriages that I knew of were comparatively rare. Marriage didn’t seem a duty with them as it was with us (51).

7. Francine’s songs and stories celebrate elements of orality:

> She was always laughing, but when she sang it sounded sad. Even very gay, quick tunes sounded sad. She would sit for a long while singing to herself and ‘beating tambou lé lé – ... when she wasn’t working

> Francine would sit on the doorstep and I liked sitting there with her.

> Sometimes she told me stories, and at the start of the story she had to say ‘Timm, timm,’ and I had to answer ‘Bois Seche’ the song (58 – 61).

Feminist critics, like Trin-Minha, mention that orality subverts the patriarchal linear history. Kloepfer connects Francine’s language with the maternal sphere,
frightening and illusive to the inheritors of the Symbolic. Her sing-song patois is beyond the superstructure of form – fluid, pulsating, contracting, beating, throbbing, pumping and exploding in a kind of jouissance. It is a space of “indeterminate,” articulation replete with sound, voice, and music, an incantation that reaches back towards the lost mother” (452).

8. The word ‘hottentot’ is often used in a pejorative sense. It stereotypes people who look different and have other cultures. Anna is one such woman who is stereotyped. It is interesting to note that Saartje (or Sarah) Baartman, a ‘hottentot’ woman was brought from South Africa in 1819 and exhibited in London and Paris. Known as “Hottentot Venus” she aroused considerable popular and ethnographic interest as every part of her anatomy became the object of curiosity and ‘scientific’ scrutiny. Anna is similarly subjected to similar English gaze. Although quantitatively less intense, the gaze was qualitatively similar. For details see the section on “Fetishism and Disavowal” (264-290) of the chapter entitled “The Spectacle of the Other” (Chapter 4) written by Stuart Hall (223-290). This is included in Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices edited by Stuart Hall (London: Sage, 1997).

9. The fiction very closely resembles Rhys’s own family history in Dominica. It was in the year 1824 when Rhys’s maternal great grandfather, John Potter Lockhart bought the ‘Genever’ (present day Geneva) Plantations in the British colony of Dominica. In 1837, he expired and his widow was left to run the estate. But after the Emancipation Act, in the year 1844, there was the ‘Census Riots’ or ‘La Guerre Negre,’ an uprising of the black natives. The rioters destroyed the entire estate burning it down along with all the Lockhart possessions and raiding it.
Again, in 1930 the arsonists burned down the remaining of the Geneva Estate. When in 1936, Rhys had visited Dominica she was greatly disturbed by this incident. It becomes noteworthy that Antoinette, like Rhys, was a Creole and belonged to the generation of the slave-owning Creole community. Coulibri Estate, in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, becomes representative of the Geneva Plantations destroyed by the natives. Around the ruins of the Geneva House in Grand Bay, there was a garden overlooking the estate descending down to the river. This garden with its river has been described by Rhys in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. In her letter to Wyndham, she writes about the draft of *Wide Sargasso Sea*: “... it's the story of an West Indian house burned down by the negroes who hate the ex-slave owning family living there. The time is 1839, the white Creole girl aged about 14 is the ‘I’” (214). Hulme emphasizing the traces of Rhys’s own personal life in *Wide Sargasso Sea* comments, “*Wide sargasso sea*, as a writing out of that family history, a kind of extended autobiography or creole family romance, is offered as in some sense a ‘compensation’ for the ruin of that family at the time of Emancipation, a compensation, though, which also serves to occlude the actual relationship between the family history and the larger history of the English colony of Dominica” (76).

10. A ‘zombi’ is a dead person who looks as if alive or it might be a living person who has already died. It might also be the spirit residing in a place. It can be malignant but at times it is propitiated with sacrifices or offerings of flowers or fruits.

11. Rhys felt differently towards the Black people like her nurse Meta, her friend Francine, her groom and her housemaid Victoria with whom she grew up. She
hated Meta for telling terrifying stories of zombies, souciers and loups-garoux. Meta had also created in her a fear for cockroaches and she also treated her severely. Rhys's child psyche was so much affected that it had a strong hold even on her adolescent mind. She, in Smile Please, bitterly registers: "...in any case it was too late, the damage had been done. Meta had shown me a world of fear and distrust, and I am still in that world" (32). The ill-feeling that the natives nourished towards the colonizers find expression in the treatment meted out by Meta. Rhys, was a sensitive child, and perhaps realized that if she as a black, Meta would be more tolerant. On the other hand, she loved her black friend Francine, the groom and her housemaid Victoria. She was allured by the native culture. Unlike the whites, they laughed a lot though they seldom smiled. They could walk a long distance without being fatigued and could carry heavy weights with ease. They, with their songs, drums, dance, colourful costumes and pageants, merged with the beauty and mystery of the tropical islands. Rhys laments: "Every night someone gave a dance, you could hear the drums. We had few dances. They were more alive, more a part of the place than we were" (Smile Please 50).

12. Association of identity with multilocality made Henri Lefebvre emphasize on the 'trilectics' of spatiality which is formed through the three-way dialectic between perceived, conceived and lived space. According to his classification, the mapable topographical space is the 'conceived' space, the socio-cultural the 'perceived' and the imaginary the 'lived' space.

13. The darkness in its primordial state becomes symbolic, reminding us of the darkness which was in itself the core of creation. As the Holy Bible narrates, "In
the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the spirit was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light” (1). Darkness and water, the first of the elements, led to the formation of the creation of light, the land and the species. Land and water then became the home. So even Anna might have felt that if she could have plunged back into this state of formlessness, into the biblical darkness, then she could have been reborn as something different and could have belonged to a particular place, and not to non-places.