

hello today I'm going to be discussing 00:03 post-colonialism 00:04 the Caribbean and Jean Rhys Wide
00:07 Sargasso Sea so in order for us to and 00:12 this is a build-up to a discussion on 00:16 Wide
Sargasso Sea we have to understand 00:19 a little bit about post colonialism both 00:22 in terms of
post-colonial theory and how 00:25 it might apply to literature post 00:28 colonialism is a body of thought
00:29 primarily concerned with and what I'm 00:31 going to go through here is a variety of 00:33 slides
that describe and outline various 00:37 tenants of post-colonial theory so this 00:40 is a body of thought
primarily concerned 00:42 with accounting for the political 00:44 aesthetic economic historical and social
00:48 impact of primarily European colonial 00:52 rule what is colonial rule colonial rule 00:56 is one
country one power moving into 01:01 another country supplanting various 01:05 aspects and various
institutions of 01:07 culture and installing their own 01:11 cultural ideology is cultural 01:13 philosophies
cultural institutions and 01:17 we're gonna be talking today about the 01:18 Caribbean even here I've
already 01:20 mentioned European colonial rule but 01:23 this is something that has taken place 01:25
throughout history one country in purely 01:29 coming in and taking over another 01:30 country and in
printing over the native 01:34 country cultural institutions in history 01:38 we've been talking primarily
about the 01:40 18th through the 20th century and we're 01:42 also going to talk about what it means
01:44 to be post-colonial here in just a 01:46 moment the world we inhabit is 01:49 impossible to know
without acknowledging 01:51 colonialism or colonial history and as 01:55 we see in this presentation in
the 01:58 Caribbean and places around the world 02:00 there is a combination a change of 02:05
trajectory an imprinting hegemony of 02:09 European colonial rule over other 02:12 native countries what
is post and post 02:15 colonialism or neo colonialism post 02:19 means it comes after but we have to
02:21 think about this term both in terms of 02:24 well in in many different ways in terms 02:26 of politics
and economics in terms of 02:30 geography it doesn't mean that once an 02:32 imperial power has left a
colony let's 02:35 say that the colony returns to a place 02:39 that existed in time before the colonial
02:41 power came and imprinted itself over 02:45 that native culture so perhaps in terms 02:48 of
geography that colonial power may 02:51 have left but in terms of thinking about 02:55 that culture and
the ways with which 02:57 that culture has been changed that is 03:00 part of post colonialism and that
hasn't 03:03 laughed and in the native country has it 03:05 returned to a pre colonial society 03:09
cribbing Islands that gained 03:11 independence in the 20th century and the 03:13 point here that I want
to make is that 03:15 that you will notice that all of these 03:18 countries gained their independence in
03:21 the 20th century that this is not 03:23 something that we're talking about that 03:24 took place in
the 19th or 18th or 17th 03:27 century that for many of these island 03:30 nations thinking about
themselves as an 03:33 independent people is a fairly recent 03:36 phenomenon here this is just the the
03:38 Caribbean islands so this is a process 03:42 that began in the Caribbean with 03:45 European
contact with Christopher 03:46 Columbus in 1492 03:48 and just to sort of recap some major 03:50 facts
that I've covered in some earlier 03:53 presentations that within a hundred 03:55 years of first European
contact nearly 03:58 90% of all native peoples and the 04:00 Americas are dead through war and 04:03
genocide but primarily through disease 04:06 and this is important because then this 04:09 made it in
many ways easier for European 04:13 powers to imprint their culture on these 04:15 colonized peoples
and that then 04:18 facilitated the middle passage and the 04:22 importation of slaves from Africa which

04:25 then populated the Caribbean in order to 04:28 work on the sugar plantations so post 04:33 colonialism is concerned with forms of 04:35 political and aesthetic representation 04:36 it has been committed to accounting for 04:40 globalization and global modernity yes 04:43 when you have one culture collide or one 04:46 culture introduced or interact with 04:49 another culture both of those cultures 04:52 are changed but what happens to the 04:54 colonial to the to the colonized culture 04:57 what happens to the native country that 05:00 doesn't have the sort of political and 05:02 economic power in post-colonial theory 05:05 economics goes hand-in-hand with 05:08 cultural institutions and cultural 05:11 change post-colonial theory has been 05:14 invested in reimagining politics and 05:17 ethics from underneath imperial power so 05:19 there's a hierarchy of power and we're 05:24 gonna see in just a moment that there is 05:26 really a kind of dichotomy binomial 05:28 dichotomy in terms of the way that we 05:31 look at Western and Eastern powers it 05:34 has been interested in perpetually 05:36 discovering and theorizing new forms of 05:39 human and justice from environmentalism 05:40 to human rights and oftentimes we think 05:43 about the economy with the colonizer and 05:47 the colonized two terms that I'm using 05:49 specifically from Elbert Memon ease the 05:53 colonizer and the colonized in terms of 05:56 indigenous versus the imperial powers 06:00 various so what are we talking about 06:02 here we're talking about the various 06:03 collisions of culture and just because 06:06 that one culture and maybe it's a 06:09 British culture we're talking about 06:10 primarily here goes into India or the 06:13 Caribbean or the French move into Africa 06:16 and their desire is to supplant that 06:20 native culture the colonial culture also 06:24 changes language technology sovereignty 06:28 and law close post-colonial theory is 06:32 interested in how these things change 06:34 language I think is one in particular 06:37 because the ways with which colonized 06:40 powers often then tell their story which 06:43 is what in many ways post-colonial 06:46 theory is about the recovery of lost 06:48 voices those voices often have to 06:52 express themselves not in their native 06:55 language but in the language of the 06:57 colonizing power we will be concerned 07:02 and discuss the construction or 07:05 destruction and reconstruction of 07:07 identities in three terms that often 07:10 come up in post-colonial theory 07:12 pertaining to identity that it is 07:14 doubled hybrid or unstable in terms of 07:20 the doubling of identity and I think 07:23 this term might come from w e-- d de 07:26 juez be do as du bois excuse me the 07:30 souls of black folk when he talks about 07:32 the double consciousness of identity 07:34 that african-americans experience within 07:37 American culture from African roots but 07:40 I think that this term applies also to 07:42 the colonized that in terms of identity 07:45 do they identify with their original 07:48 native culture which may have been one 07:51 or two or more generations behind them 07:54 and they may not even be familiar with 07:56 that or their new identity the identity 08:00 that is imparted to them placed over 08:04 their native identities from the 08:06 colonial powers so we're talking about 08:09 hybrid identities or hybridity to 08:12 express the soul the sort of multivalent 08:15 the multi-faceted complexity of identity 08:19 in colonial and colonized and in the 08:21 colonial and colonized dynamic and so 08:24 what can happen and we're gonna see this 08:26 in Jean Rhys Wide Sargasso Sea 08:29 we often have an identity that is 08:32 unstable one where here a protagonist or 08:36 an individual a subject is uncertain 08:39 about their identity that it shifts may 08:42 be dependent on context there was an 08:45 alteration of historical trajectories so 08:48 a native country in a 08:50 of people maybe on one

particular 08:52 trajectory in history development 08:56 culture technology and the colonial or 09:00 imperial power comes in and that 09:03 historical or that trajectory changes 09:05 significantly we need to think about 09:09 assimilation coercion oppression or 09:12 combination of these things 09:14 it is rare if it happens at all that 09:18 a colonized power that a colonized 09:22 people that a native people just says 09:24 okay come on in here and take over and 09:27 in print your culture and ideology on us 09:31 so there's a coercion and my point at 09:34 the bottom is that there's often 09:35 violence and trauma that are associated 09:38 with this as well the ways with which 09:45 the sort of BI bipolar if you will 09:51 hierarchy the East versus West in a very 09:56 in a very simplified oversimplified way 10:00 that often Westerners think about the 10:03 differences between Western powers and 10:05 the East terms such as the Occidental 10:09 the West versus the Orient or 10:11 Orientalism what do these terms then 10:15 represent in these very sort of neat 10:18 over generalized terms they are code for 10:21 that the West is represented as ordered 10:25 civilized cultured and normal as opposed 10:30 to this and this is part of the ideology 10:31 the justification for what Western 10:35 powers the colonizer has done the East 10:39 is represented by the West so here the 10:41 East does not represent itself the West 10:44 represents the East as having base human 10:48 desires that they are chaotic confused 10:52 illogical mysterious and civilized or 10:57 excuse me uncivilized 10:58 the image that I have over my right 11:01 shoulder here Orientalism 11:03 by Edward Sayid in the late 1970s this 11:07 was one of the early texts that scholars 11:10 point to that discussed the differences 11:14 between East and West and was really one 11:17 of the seminal texts that many scholars 11:19 suggest of post-colonial theory so some 11:24 questions perhaps for us to consider 11:26 when does assimilation become diversity 11:30 and can it become diversity the terms of 11:35 hybridity versus integration you know is 11:39 a society can a society become a melting 11:42 pot or does it become fractured and stay 11:46 fractured and what moments in time what 11:50 moments in history would posit that a 11:53 diverse society becomes fractured or a 11:55 diverse society blends itself together 11:58 in a kind of hybridity can one return to 12:03 a pre colonized period of tribal 12:04 communal regional or national and 12:06 cultural history so is it the fantasy of 12:11 colonized peoples to return to a pre 12:15 colonized state it might be a fantasy 12:18 but is it a possibility and I think for 12:21 the most part the answer is no both 12:23 cultures engaging in this the struggle 12:27 for dominance primarily the 12:30 imperialistic and colonizing power in 12:32 printing culture over a native country 12:35 both of those countries have been 12:38 changed the native country however 12:41 cannot return to a pre colonized state 12:44 so what does that mean what are the 12:47 effects of and on the colonizer and the 12:49 colonized when does the colonizer become 12:51 a native a primary citizen and at the 12:53 end of colonial rule how does the former 12:56 colonialist fit in with Society 12:59 now that question is posed from the 13:03 colonialist perspective which we say 13:07 well the colonialists why are we 13:09 concerned with the colonialist and how 13:11 they might fit into a country that is 13:14 not theirs and I think that is a ver 13:17 appropriate question and something very 13:20 important for us to consider I asked 13:22 that question because I think it's 13:24 important for us to pose it in order to 13:26 understand the position that Antoinette 13:29 has in Wide Sargasso Sea 13:32 so in literature some of the themes that 13:36 we might come across and these are in 13:39 part I think that we can see the 13:41 relationship between post-colonial 13:43 theory

as a theory and how some of those 13:46 how some of the theory enters into the 13:49 literature so topics that we might come 13:51 across in the literature independence 13:53 themes of immigration national identity 13:58 and Allegiance 13:59 childhood resistance primarily to 14:03 colonial powers language how to 14:06 communicate experience in the language 14:08 that is no longer native and a revision 14:11 of history to include the colonized or 14:14 other voices this is a couple of quotes 14:19 here from post-colonial theorists one 14:23 from Hama Baba post-colonial critique 14:26 emerges quote from the colonial 14:29 testimony of third world countries and 14:32 the discourses of minorities within the 14:36 geopolitical divisions of east and west 14:38 north and south they intervene in those 14:41 ideological discourses of modernity that 14:44 attempt to give a hegemonic normality to 14:47 the uneven development and the 14:49 differential often disadvantaged history 14:52 of nations race communities peoples and 14:57 from a text that I mentioned earlier 15:01 from Albert nemenyi quote the 15:03 colonialist does not plan his future in 15:05 terms of the colony for he is there only 15:08 temporarily and invests only what will 15:10 bear fruit in his time the true reason 15:13 the principal reason for most 15:14 efficiencies is that the colonialists 15:17 never planned to transform the colony 15:19 into the image of his household nor to 15:21 remake the colonized in his own image 15:24 many also discusses the kind of 15:28 the quality of person that the native or 15:32 mother country sends to its colonies and 15:35 oftentimes according to many that the 15:38 colonialist is not the best of what the 15:43 native excuse me of what the mother 15:45 country has to offer 15:47 Europe if we take Europe as an example 15:50 they have a kind of class system where 15:55 titles represented where might where one 15:59 might exist and live in society not a 16:03 lot of upward movement always the 16:05 possibility I think of downward movement 16:07 but for the colonialist you could become 16:10 something more than you were and take 16:14 Christopher Columbus as an example 16:17 Christopher Columbus came from a 16:20 background that that did not entitle him 16:23 to lands and titles and all sorts of 16:26 other things 16:26 he became the ultimate colonialist 16:30 bringing European culture and beginning 16:32 a process that took place in the first 16:36 50 years first hundred years that were 16:38 obviously living in today but because of 16:42 Christopher Columbus's success he became 16:45 something more than he would have been 16:47 back in Europe back in Spain or back in 16:50 Italy so Jean Rhys some background some 16:58 background about Jean Rhys I think it's 17:00 important for us to have some 17:03 information about her it helps us 17:07 understand the text a little bit 17:08 although I think reading the text and 17:11 understanding more about the historical 17:13 period might be a little bit more 17:15 fruitful but there's been a lot of 17:16 thinking and writing about Jean Rhys 17:19 particularly because of the various 17:21 spheres of discourse that Jean Rhys sort 17:24 of operates in she was born 1890 and 17:27 died in 1979 she grew up on the island 17:30 of Dominica and perhaps some of you have 17:33 visited Dominica in the Caribbean lots 17:37 of islands to visit in the Caribbean 17:40 very beautiful islands 17:42 but it's important for us to understand 17:44 it's very important colonial history 17:46 Jean rise as you can see from the image 17:49 here was a white woman from a British 17:53 society she was born on Dominica and she 17:58 lived there until about the age of 16 18:00 she was alienated by her background she 18:04 lived most of her life in Europe most of 18:06 her life in Britain but she didn't feel 18:09 that she really belong there and some 18:13 scholars have pointed out that she was 18:15 both a

West Indian writer a European 18:17 modernist and a female writer and part 18:22 of the problem that Jean Rhys had in 18:25 terms of her identity in terms of her 18:28 being a professional in terms of her 18:30 being a writer was that when she 18:31 occupied one particular space 18:34 she felt alienated or was alienated 18:37 because she occupied these other spheres 18:40 of discourse as well so wide Sargasso 18:44 Sea published in 1966 this was her most 18:47 popular novel and I think it's difficult 18:50 in many ways for us to place I'm reading 18:54 Jean Rhys novel here as a post-colonial 18:57 text there's a very strong argument that 19:00 this novel is a modernist text we see 19:03 most most of the action comes through 19:06 the perspective of the characters and so 19:09 it's prejudicial these perceptions are 19:12 biased there's one of the important 19:15 themes of this text is the fracturing of 19:18 identity both important in post-colonial 19:22 theory post-colonial post-colonial 19:24 literature as well as modernist 19:27 literature so this could be read as a 19:30 late modernist text or a post-colonial 19:33 text and to to lend evidence to the sort 19:38 of thinking that this is a modernist 19:40 text that in the 1920s perhaps one of 19:44 the most fruitful periods the fruitful 19:48 decades of literary production you know 19:52 you have a lot of writers working 19:55 in publishing in the 1920s painters 19:58 philosophers Gertrude Stein Ernest 20:00 Hemingway machine Rises with one of the 20:06 expatriates Ford Madox Ford becomes his 20:11 mistress 20:11 so the 1920 is a particularly productive 20:15 period of literary history and so this 20:17 is where Jean Rhys is sort of 20:20 understanding literature so this is the 20:22 tradition that she is coming from so 20:25 she's outside of the main current so 20:27 when she is occupying one particular 20:30 space she as a writer feels alienated 20:33 because she also occupies these other 20:35 spaces as well she could be considered a 20:38 third world writer and a woman in exile 20:42 she writes in her autobiography good 20:45 morning midnight I have no pride no name 20:50 no face no country I don't belong 20:52 anywhere and I think that this quote 20:56 from her autobiography if I did not tell 21:01 you it came from her autobiography we 21:04 could see this spoken by Antoinette or 21:07 one of the other characters and Wide 21:09 Sargasso Sea I also want to bring up 21:12 absence versus loss now this is these 21:16 are definitions that are often used and 21:20 discussed in trauma theory and I think 21:22 it's important for us to consider them 21:25 here as well 21:26 what what is loss loss is something that 21:29 you have had whatever that might be a 21:33 positive experience foundation and 21:36 growing up something parents or whatnot 21:40 that is now gone and so now there's a 21:45 period of grieving there might be a 21:47 traumatic reaction to the loss of what 21:50 that thing or what that person was that 21:53 is no longer there absence is something 21:56 different both I think in terms of Jean 22:00 rise in post-colonial theory and in 22:03 psychoanalytic theory and trauma studies 22:05 absence is something different 22:08 there is a kind of vacuum that is 22:11 created for something that is supposed 22:13 to be there but not that that thing that 22:16 was there is was there now lost but that 22:20 thing is now that thing was not there in 22:25 the first place what is its relationship 22:28 to development of identity okay so it's 22:31 some terms for us to consider so Jean 22:35 Rhys grew up on Dominica a very 22:37 beautiful island in the Eastern 22:40 Caribbean and so you know we go to these 22:44 places at least in the old days some of 22:47 us might have had the opportunity to 22:49 Davitt to visit Dominica and some 22:51 Caribbean islands I highly highly 22:54 suggest when you go visit these places 22:57 if you have the opportunity in the 22:59 future when we

can fly' again to 23:01 consider its history the islands and the 23:04 Caribbean have a very very complicated 23:08 history and are very complicated 23:11 societies today and many of the islands 23:14 and I think Dominica is no different 23:16 than many of the other islands there is 23:18 a great discrepancy between the wealthy 23:22 and the poor and most of the population 23:26 of these islands live with a 23:28 considerable amount of poverty to make 23:32 things infinitely worse these i'm or 23:36 Dominica was devastated by a series of 23:38 hurricanes both in 2015 and in 2017 part 23:44 of the history of Dominica is that it 23:45 was owned by the French from the 1690s 23:47 to the middle of the 18th century and 23:50 then the British took over from 1763 to 23:55 1978 Dominica produced timber coffee but 24:01 like many of the Caribbean islands their 24:03 main staple was sugar cane and because 24:06 of the sugar cane industry both in 24:08 Dominica and in the Caribbean in general 24:11 this facilitated the by some estimates 24:14 15 to 20 million slaves brought over 24:17 from Africa in order to work the plant 24:22 so just for us to consider I mean you 24:26 might have looked at the title the Wide 24:27 Sargasso Sea and this is something that 24:29 you've never heard before 24:31 interestingly enough in a 2018 I'm not 24:36 sure I don't recall exactly what month 24:38 but in 2018 National Geographic did a 24:41 really nice article on the Sargasso Sea 24:44 so the Sargasso Sea is a region of the 24:47 North Atlantic Ocean bounded by four 24:49 currents the Gulf Stream in the West the 24:52 North Atlantic Stream the canary in the 24:55 east in the North Atlantic equatorial 24:58 and you can see in the map you can see 25:00 on the map over my left hand shoulder 25:02 North and South America and Africa and 25:04 Europe that the Sargasso Sea and you can 25:08 see the rotating currents in the 25:10 Atlantic this is a place that exists 25:14 that scholars refer to that scientists 25:17 referred to Jean Rhys what was certainly 25:20 not the first person and what is 25:23 interesting about the Sargasso Sea I 25:26 think for us to consider is that in this 25:30 is the location of the Caribbean the 25:33 Caribbean is located in the currents of 25:37 the Sargasso Sea that in her text 25:40 there's a death exists in a lot of 25:44 different ways the struggle and death of 25:48 identity the real death of various 25:51 characters the Sargasso Sea itself is 25:54 really a kind of Oasis if you will it's 25:59 an enigma of life there are no land 26:03 boundaries here it's characterized by 26:06 brown Sargassum seaweed and often in 26:10 calm blue water there is an incredible 26:14 diversity of marine life and in this 26:21 article in National Geographic and you 26:23 can find this more information about 26:25 this that animals have adapted 26:27 specifically to exist in Sargassum weed 26:31 in terms of their color terms 26:33 their ability to some animals can 26:36 exist on top of the seaweed other 26:38 animals exist just below that there are 26:41 various fish and other aquatic life 26:44 turtles that just exists in the 26:48 Sargassum weed and again this is really 26:51 about life and the stands I think in 26:53 many ways in contrast to some of the 26:56 things that are taking place in gene 26:58 arise novel the Sargasso Sea also houses 27:04 the North Atlantic Garbage Patch and so 27:09 we can see here I think the collision if 27:12 you will between human interaction and 27:16 the natural environment ok well this 27:21 just gives us a kind of background on 27:22 post-colonial theory on post-colonial 27:25 literature and a very brief introduction 27:27 to Jean Rhys and hopefully some context 27:30 that you can begin reading Wide Sargasso 27:32 Sea thank you