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“他者”的声音

——吉恩·瑞斯西印度小说中的抵抗话语

Voices of the “Other”: Counter-discourse in
Jean Rhys’s West Indian Fiction

张峰 著



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Abstract

This dissertation endeavors to make a New Historical and Postcolonial study of Jean Rhys's West Indian fiction (*Wide Sargasso Sea*, *Voyage in the Dark*, and four short stories). By writing back to the British colonial discursive field of the 19th century, Rhys's works engage in an attempt to rewrite the colonial "history" shaped by Eurocentric ideology, thereby giving voice to the once marginalized and silenced West Indian "Other." By interrogating, appropriating, and dismantling Eurocentric discourse, the "subalterns" manage to articulate themselves. Due to differences within the "liminal space," they speak with not one but multiple voices. As a whole, these voices constitute a strong postcolonial counter-discourse.

To legitimize and maintain colonial domination, the British Empire establishes a colonial discursive field based on a variety of canonical texts, in which the West Indians are represented as the "Other" against which the British "Self" is constructed. As a postcolonial counter-discourse, Rhys's West Indian fiction writes back to this discursive field, lays bare the lies of the British "civilizing mission," exposes contradictions and ambivalence within colonial discourse, and more importantly, explores the issue of postcolonial identity. Due to the cultural hybridity borne of European colonization of the West Indies, Rhys's white Creole protagonists Antoinette and Anna Morgan are forced to occupy a stairwell-like "Third Space," which blurs established cultural boundaries and defies a clear definition of cultural identity. This

"in-between" position brings about traumatic experiences but simultaneously provides a vantage point for resistance against the colonial representation that is largely based on the Self/Other dichotomy. Meanwhile, with the black art of Obeah, the decolonizing fire, deliberate silence, body, and the creolized "english" as their weapons, black and colored Creoles represented by Christophine deliver a counterblow to colonial power, and engage in a resistance in violent and non-violent ways. These various forms of counter-discourse lay a solid foundation for the project of challenging Eurocentric discourse and rewriting colonial history.

With "Introduction" and "Conclusion" included, this dissertation is composed of six chapters. The body part covers four chapters. Chapter One "Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Counter-discourse" functions as the theoretical framework of the whole dissertation. Two related schools of literary theory are employed: New Historicism and Postcolonialism. It first examines the content and purpose of colonial discourse and then elaborates some postcolonial counter-discursive strategies with a focus on mimicry as camouflage, and cultural hybridity as a double-edged sword. Chapter Two "West Indian 'Other' in the British Colonial Discursive Field" intends to set the target of criticism for the following chapters. It examines how the image of West Indians as "Other" is established in the 19th-century British colonial discursive field. Chapter Three "Colonial Encounter on the Imperial Periphery" focuses on *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and three short stories with the intention of making a detailed analysis of the colonial encounter on the imperial periphery, the first "contact

zone” of the colonizer and the colonized. The major argument is that West Indian Creoles manage to have their multiple voices heard through a resistance against colonial power in different ways. Chapter Four “Colonial Encounter in the Imperial Center” concentrates on *Voyage in the Dark* (1934) and the short story “Let Them Call It Jazz” (1962) with an aim at analyzing the colonial encounter in the imperial center, the second “contact zone.” The major argument here is that the colonial subjects, who immigrate to their “Mother Country” with a hope of seeking fortunes, love, and happiness, are faced with racial and cultural prejudice from the metropolis, and this, combined with a hopeless nostalgic return to their homeland, results in their ambivalence and traumatic memories. Their experiences prove that the “heart of darkness” lies right back in the imperial center. On the other hand, though living as outcasts, they never give up the resistance against colonial power by penetrating colonial darkness, exposing colonial evil, appropriating European culture, keeping a live memory of the Caribbean culture, and speaking Caribbean “english”—a language of their own.

Key words: Jean Rhys, writing back, postcolonial counter-discourse, “Other,” cultural hybridity, mimicry

内容摘要

本文试用新历史主义与后殖民主义文论解读英国现当代小说家吉恩·瑞斯的西印度小说（《藻海无边》、《黑暗中的航行》及四个短篇小说）。通过“逆写”英国19世纪的殖民话语场，瑞斯的作品试图改写被欧洲中心主义意识形态不断刻写的殖民历史，从而给那些一度被边缘化和被迫失语的西印度“他者”们以说话的机会。通过质问、挪用、消解欧洲中心主义话语，昔日的“贱民”们终于发出了自己的声音。由于“阈限空间”内部存在的差异，他们的声音表现出多样性特征，而作为一个整体，这些声音则构成了一种强有力的后殖民抵抗话语。

为使其殖民统治合法化并长期维持下去，大英帝国利用各种“经典”文本建构了一个庞大的殖民话语场。在这个话语场中，西印度人被塑造成下贱的“他者”，并被剥夺了说话的权利。作为一种抵抗话语，瑞斯的作品向这个话语场发起了反击，揭发了大英帝国“文明使命”的谎言，暴露了殖民话语内部的矛盾，并深入探讨了后殖民身份问题。由于欧洲对西印度群岛殖民化所导致的文化混杂，瑞斯笔下的克里奥耳白人主人公安托瓦内特与安娜·摩根被迫置身于楼梯井状的“第三度空间”，她们的文化身份也因文化界限的模糊而无法得到清楚的定义。这种摇摆不定的“夹缝”处境给她们带来了痛苦的经历，但同时也为抵抗以自我/他者二元对立为基础的殖民表述提供了有利地位。在与殖民者的交锋中，以克里斯托芬为代表的克里奥耳黑人与混血人种则以加勒比地域文化为根基，以奥比巫术、反殖烈火、故意沉默、身体、克里奥耳英语等为武器直面殖民霸权，用暴力与非暴力革命方式实践着自己的反抗。这些抵抗话语为挑战欧洲中心话语、改写殖民历史奠定了坚实的基础。

论文主体由四章组成。第一章“殖民话语与后殖民抵抗话语”确立了整篇论文的理论框架。本章首先检视了殖民话语的内容与本质，然后概述了后殖民抵抗话语的性质与形式，进而集中阐述了两种重要的后殖民抵抗话语策略：具有“伪装”特点的“模拟”与具有“双刃剑”特征的“文化混杂”。第二章“英国殖民话语场中的西印度‘他者’”试图为第三、第四两章树立批评与“逆写”的靶标。通过分析19世纪英国殖民话语场中历史、科学、文学三种话语形式中的代表性文本，本章考查了西印度“他者”形象是如何确立起来的。第三章“帝国边缘的殖民遭遇”通过分析《藻海无边》和三个短篇小说（《他们焚书的那日》、《重访安的列斯群岛》及《先驱，啊，先驱》）论证了在殖民者和被殖民者的第一个“接触区”内，西印度“贱民”们以各种方式抵抗殖民霸权从而发出了自己的声音。第四章“帝国中心的殖民遭遇”通过分析《黑暗中的航行》及短篇小说《让他们称其为爵士乐吧》中西印度移民们在“母国”所受到的种族、文化歧视及其无望的思乡之情，证明帝国中心才是“黑暗的心脏”。另一方面，尽管生活在“母国”的底层，这些流亡者们并未放弃与殖民霸权的抗争。他们通过揭露殖民罪恶、挪用欧洲文化、坚守加勒比文化等方式在帝国中心发起了一次又一次反抗。

关键词：吉恩·瑞斯，逆写，后殖民抵抗话语，“他者”，文化混杂，模拟

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Introduction

Although forgotten for decades and thought dead during her lifetime, Caribbean-British writer Jean Rhys (born Ella Gwendolen Rees Williams, 1890-1979) has ultimately achieved an international reputation, a reputation that came only late in her lifetime and has since continued to grow. In a 1974 article written for *New York Times Review of Books*, Alfred Alvarez, the English writer and critic, called Rhys “the best living English novelist.” Writing a week after Rhys’s death in 1979, Alvarez again praised her as “one of the finest British writers of this century.” Rhys’s masterpiece *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which won her the W. H. Smith Literary Award and the Heinemann Award of the Royal Society of Literature, established her reputation as a great feminist and postcolonial writer.

So far, over 20 monographs and several hundred articles have attested to Rhys’s reputation as a major 20th-century novelist.¹ Critics are of different persuasions, highlighting very different aspects of her work. Most of them take all of Rhys’s fiction²

1 According to the MLA bibliography provided by Gale Databases, over the period from 1972 to 2007 there are about 437 items related to Jean Rhys, including books, book articles, journal articles, and dissertation abstracts.

2 Rhys’s novels can be generally divided into two categories according to the setting and the identity of characters: 1. “Continental Novels,” set in the Continent and with European characters, like *Quartet* (1928), *After Leaving Mr Machenzie* (1930), and *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939). 2. “West Indian Novels,” set in the West Indies, like *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), or set in London but with a West Indian protagonist, like *Voyage in the Dark* (1934). Rhys also published three collections of short stories: *The Left Bank and Other Stories* (1927), *Tigers Are Better-Looking* (1968), and *Sleep It Off Lady* (1976), in which the stories may also roughly fall into these two categories.

as their object of study and have done some in-depth research from the feminist perspective,¹ examined the mother-daughter bond,² and the relationship between gender, colonialism, and modernism.³ Teresa F. O'Connor's *Jean Rhys: The West Indian Novels* (1986) is the only monograph entirely devoted to Rhys's two West Indian novels: *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*. She links the colonial vision of alienation with the theme of gender in Rhys's personal life and directs to the autobiographical elements in Rhys's novels. Research related to the present study roughly falls into two categories: one focuses on *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a canonical counter-discourse against Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*; the other centers on Antoinette's Creole identity. In the first category, Gayatri C. Spivak's essay "Three Women's

1 For instance, Thomas F. Stanley's *Jean Rhys: A Critical Study* (1979) focuses on Rhys's female aesthetic and privileges the view of Rhys's heroines as passive victims; Helen Nebeker's *Jean Rhys: Woman in Passage* (1981) provides an archetypal reading centered on female myths through Freudian and Jungian psychoanalytic models; Nancy R. Harrison's *Jean Rhys and the Novel as Women's Text* (1988) explores Rhys's feminist poetics and focuses on "the recording of a woman's unspoken responses within the set framework of masculine speech or discourse" (63). See also Abel Elizabeth, "Women and Schizophrenia: The Fiction of Jean Rhys," *Contemporary Literature*, 20 (1979): 155-77 and Mary Lou Emery, "The Politics of Form: Jean Rhys's Social Vision in *Voyage in the Dark* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*," *Twentieth Century Literature* 28:4 (Winter 1982): 418-30.

2 See Caroline Rody, *The Daughter's Return: African-American and Caribbean Women's Fictions of History* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001) 133-49. See also Victoria Burrows, *Whiteness and Trauma: The Mother-Daughter Knot in the Fiction of Jean Rhys, Jamaica Kincaid and Toni Morrison* (London: Palgrave, 2004) 25-40.

3 For instance, Mary Lou Emery's *Jean Rhys at "World's End"* (1990) argues that Rhys's novels question colonial and sexual ideologies and explore the political implications of modernism; Coral Ann Howells's *Jean Rhys* (1991) argues that "through her fiction Rhys constructs a feminine colonial sensibility becoming aware of itself in a modernist European context" (5).

Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" (1985)¹ and Helen Tiffin's article "Post-colonial Literatures and Counter-Discourse" (1987) both identify Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a postcolonial² counter-discourse. In the second category, the "in-between" identity of the white Creoles³ represented by Antoinette is a hot topic discussed by some critics. However, most of them only provide this issue with explanations based on West Indian history or Rhys's family history. They consider it as tragic and address this issue

1 In this frequently-quoted essay, Spivak challenges Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's view that Bertha Mason represents "Jane's truest and darkest double: she is the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self Jane has been trying to repress ever since her days at Gateshead," and she explores the colonial discourse embedded in *Jane Eyre*. To Spivak, Jane Eyre's feminist individuality and progress is achieved at the cost of Bertha, the non-western "Other." For Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's view, see *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination* (New Haven, Conn. and London: Yale UP, 1979) 356-62.

2 The term "postcolonial" is used here to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day for the reason that there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression. For details, see Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back* 2.

3 According to *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* (2000), the term "Creole" has a variety of different and sometimes contradictory meanings. It originally referred to European descendants born in the West Indian or Spanish American colonies and indicated a claim of racial purity. It was also used to refer to natives of other racial groups born locally rather than imported to the European colonies. The adjective "white" was often added to distinguish white from black Caribbeans. However, over time and place in colonial history, it came to signify both full European ancestry and mixed racial ancestry, generally some European ancestry mixed with other races resulting from colonial history. Beginning in the 19th century, the term was increasingly used to indicate hybridity, whether racial mixture or linguistic and cultural mixture of European and African practices. If used not capitalized, it refers to a language that has evolved from a pidgin but serves as the native language of a speech community, like English creole and French creole. In this dissertation the word "Creole" is used to refer to all those born in the West Indies, regardless of their skin color and ancestry.

mainly through an analysis of Rhys’s family background¹ as well as the historical context of the West Indies. For instance, both Veronica Marie Gregg’s *Jean Rhys’s Historical Imagination* (1995) and Elaine Savory’s *Jean Rhys* (1998) emphasize the historical and autobiographical elements in Rhys’s novels.

The present study intends to explore Jean Rhys’s West Indian fiction in the context of a heated debate within postcolonial studies around the representation of black Creoles in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. On the one hand, Spivak and her followers argue that it is impossible for the subaltern² to speak. The reason is, as argued by Spivak, that the native black servant and Obeah woman³ Christophine is “tangential to a narrative written in the interest of

1 For instance, Peter Hulme, “The Locked Heart: The Creole Family Romance of *Wide Sargasso Sea*,” *Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory*, eds. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1994) 72-88. Their research is largely based on Rhys’s manuscripts, which are preserved in the McFarlin Library, University of Tulsa; Evelyn Scott Collection, Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin; the British Museum; and the possession of Francis Wyndham, Rhys’s literary executor.

2 The term “subaltern” is drawn from Antonio Gramsci’s “On the Margins of History: History of the Subaltern Social Groups” (1934). Used interchangeably with “subordinate” and “inferior rank,” subaltern may stand for the dominated and oppressed groups, whether of class, race, gender or in any other way.

3 As defined in *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary* (2000), “Obeah” is a system of religious belief and witchcraft of African origin, practiced among blacks chiefly of the British West Indies, the Guianas, and the southeastern U.S., and characterized by the use of sorcery and magic ritual. The practice originates in the worship of the snake god Obeah, the spirit of evil, and includes animal sacrifice. Obeah-man or woman, the leader in the practice of Obeah, is usually associated with power and influence of Obeah in his or her use of sorcery, magic rituals and witchcraft. For details about Obeah, see Joseph J. Williams, *Voodoo and Obeahs: Phases of West Indian Witchcraft* (Binghamton: The Vail-Ballou Press, 1932) 108-208. For the relationship between Obeah and West Indian fiction, see Kenneth Ramchand, *The West Indian Novel and Its Background* (London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1983) 123-31.